

Human Rights: what's happening across the UK?

Everyone has human rights. Human rights are things which make sure everyone is healthy, happy and safe! For example, it is your human right to be able to go to school and have a good level of education!

You might have heard people talking about changing the law on human rights. It can feel a bit confusing because different things are happening in different parts of the UK.

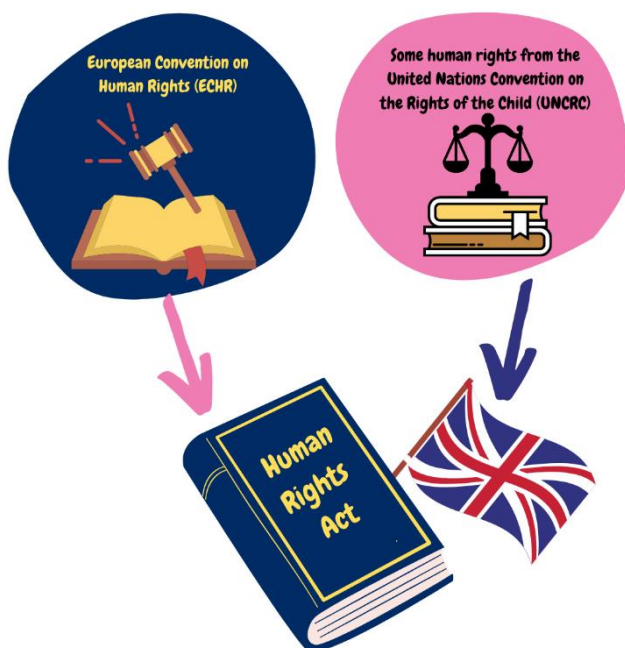
This sheet will help you learn all about what's happening. It looks at two things:

- Human Rights Act (which is the law for all over the UK) and
- plans for a new Scottish Human Rights Bill (which will only be the law in Scotland).

Whilst they sound the same, they are two very different things! Here we will talk about what these are, what they do and what countries they have an impact on!

The Human Rights Act

The Human Rights Act is more than 20 years old. Its job is to make sure that people in the UK have the same rights as other people in Europe.



Lots of countries in Europe made a promise to protect human rights. This promise was called the European Convention on Human Rights (or 'ECHR' for short). The Human Rights Act took these rights and put them into UK law. This helps make sure these rights are protected for everyone.

Children also have rights in a promise called the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (or 'UNCRC'). Some of these rights are protected in the Human Rights Act – but not all of them.

What countries does the Human Rights Act cover?

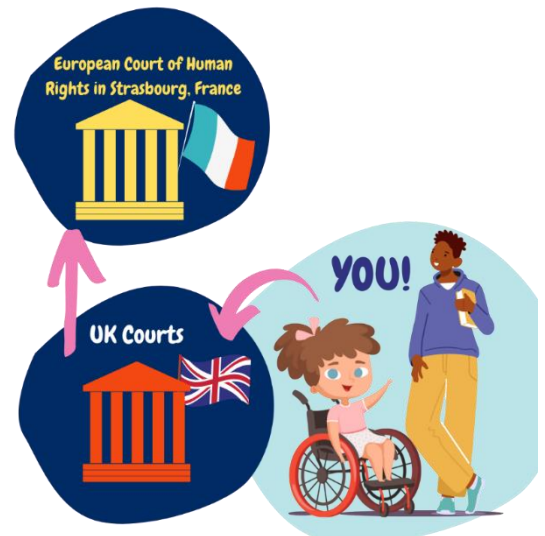
The Human Rights Act is a **UK law**. It covers all decisions and laws that are made in all parts of the UK. This means the laws made by Scottish Parliament and UK Parliament must follow the Human Rights Act.

🇬🇧 What does the Human Rights Act do?

It protects everyone's rights – including children. It helps make sure that even the most vulnerable children have their rights protected.

It makes public organisations (like the government, schools, hospitals and local councils) treat everyone with fairness, dignity and respect.

Children, young people and adults can use the Human Rights Act to make sure these organisations respect their rights. If a public organisation does something wrong, people can speak to a judge to get something done about it. The Human Rights Act means you can speak to a judge in the UK, instead of having to go to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, France.



The Human Rights Act has helped lots of children and families to get their rights. For example, it has helped families get access to enough money, it has also helped children who live in care to see their brothers and sisters.

🇬🇧 What does the UK Government want to do?

The UK Government wants to get rid of the Human Rights Act. It wants to make a new law called the 'British Bill of Rights'.

🇬🇧 What are our human rights concerns with the British Bill of Rights?

Although it sounds like the 'British Bill of Rights' will include lots of human rights protections – it **plans to reduce them!** This will have a bad impact on the human rights of children, young people and adults.

🇬🇧 Here are some of our human rights concerns over the UK Government's proposal for a British Bill of Rights

- It will make it harder to go to court if a public organisation does something wrong (public organisations including things like the government, schools, hospitals and police)
- It will treat people differently. Only some people will have their rights fully protected - that isn't fair!
- Children in the UK will have worse protection for their rights than children living in other parts of Europe.

🇬🇧 What can you do?

We hope you now know how important the Human Rights Act is! You can help to stop the UK Government from getting rid of it by telling them to keep the Human Rights Act and put the UNCRC into our laws.

Scotland's Human Rights Bill

The British Bill of Rights and the Human Rights Act **should not** be confused with the Scottish 'Human Rights Bill'.

A 'Bill' is an idea for a new law.

✦ What countries will the Human Rights Bill cover?

The Human Rights Bill will *only* cover Scotland.

It will only cover things that the Scottish Parliament is allowed to make laws about. This includes things like education, health, housing and transport.

[Learn more about the powers of the Scottish Parliament here.](#)

✦ What does the Human Rights Bill aim to do?

The Human Rights Bill aims to **put more** human rights into Scottish law. It wants to make four different international agreements part of our laws. These agreements protect the human rights of women, disabled people and minority ethnic communities.

✦ How was the Human Rights Bill created?

Back in 2019, the Scottish Government set up a group of experts to think about how we should protect human rights in Scotland. This group was called the [National Taskforce for Human Rights Leadership](#). It was tasked to listen to your thoughts on how the Human Rights Bill should work. With your help, the National Taskforce made [30 recommendations](#) to the Scottish Government. [You can find out about this work here.](#)

What is happening to the Human Rights Bill now and how can I get involved?

Scottish Government accepted the recommendations that were made and is now working to create this new law. Lots of children's organisations are helping Scottish Government with this.

