

*The right to the highest attainable standard  
of physical and mental health*



Scotland's Civil Society Network to Defend and Promote Human Rights

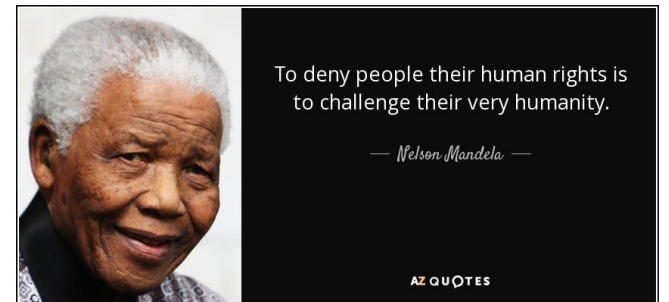
Charlie McMillan  
[www.hrcscotland.org](http://www.hrcscotland.org)

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# Making Human Rights real

Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home - so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world ... Such are the places where every man, woman and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere.

Eleanor Roosevelt, 1948





# Making Human Rights real

- We cannot 'give' people their human rights - they belong to everyone of us
- As a society, we choose to limit people's access to experiencing their rights, sometimes deliberately and sometimes unintentionally
- We do not experience our human rights in isolation - either from other people or from each of our rights
- Intersectionality is very important in understanding the interconnectedness of human rights



**INTERSECTIONALITY - THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE**

# Right to highest attainable standard of PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, Article 25 (1)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966, Article 12.1
- International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination 1965, Article 5
- International Convention on the elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women 1975, Article 12
- International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and their Families 1990, Articles 28, 43 & 45
- Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989, Article 24
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006, Article 25

# And yet...

- A [comprehensive independent review](#) of health and health inequalities in Scotland led by the Health Foundation shows that the health of Scots living in the most deprived local areas is being left behind the rest of society. Analysis carried out for the review shows that in 2019, there was a 24-year gap in the time spent in good health between people living in the most and least deprived 10% of local areas in Scotland.
- The review found that trends in the socioeconomic factors that influence health provide little indication that health inequalities will improve in future, underlined by increasing rates of extreme poverty.\*
- Leave no one behind, The Health Foundation, 2023

# Health inequalities - an intersectional lens...

- Physical health
  - Mental health
    - Women's health
      - Disabled people
        - Black and minority ethnic communities
          - Carers
            - People with learning disabilities
              - LGBT+ community





# Recommendations to the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights – Healthcare for All

- Those impacted by COVID 19
  - Clinically high risk
  - Vaccine Injured
  - Long COVID
- Action on poverty – including focus on Scottish Child Payment, BAME communities and disabled people
- Women's Health including pregnancy and maternal health
- Data gaps
- Affordable/Social Housing



# Recommendations to the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights – Healthcare for All

- Mental Health Law Reform
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- People with learning disabilities – deaths from preventable conditions
- National Food Security Strategy
- Right to a healthy environment
- Full report:

[ICESCR designed report - January 2025](#)





## Next steps...

- Continue to monitor and report on human rights abuses/infringements in relation to health inequalities
- Push for more accountability and a *meaningful* human-rights based approach to NHS reform and budgetting
- Prevention is better than cure!
- Continue to use evidence to influence Scottish Government, UK Government and United Nations
- Move forward with development of Scottish Human Rights Bill

