

National Collaborative: Activity Pack



A conversation on Human Rights and
substance use

Right to Health

The Right to Health

Everyone has the right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health

This means everyone has the right to services that support physical and mental health (it is not a right to be healthy; it is a right to services and conditions that enable people to be in good health).

The right covers services related to: prevention, harm reduction, rehabilitation, and recovery, for those affected by substance use and other health and social care services.

These services must be:

- available in sufficient quantity, and adequately funded;
- accessible, including financially and geographically;
- acceptable meaning respectful of the needs of the particular community, age and gender, and scientifically sound and respectful of medical ethics;
- of good quality, with a solid evidence base and
- non-discriminatory and non-stigmatising.

These services must also be delivered in a way that:

- is respectful of the inherent dignity of every person;
- is compliant with other human rights (e.g. the right to privacy which covers private medical history, and the need for informed consent for medical treatment);
- ensures that those who will be most affected by decisions are able to participate meaningfully in those decisions (have their views heard and taken into account).

People should also be able to effectively challenge practices and policies that breach these rights, and secure a remedy.



Questions

These questions are intended to focus discussion on the key requirements of the right to health. Some may find it useful to consider each question in turn. Others may prefer to use them as a prompt for discussion. Either approach is fine!

1.In Scotland, what stops people from using services and support for people affected by substance use? (including health and social care services, prevention, harm reduction, rehabilitation, recovery and other services)

2.Are these services: available, easy to find and use, and good enough? If not can you tell us why? What could change to make it better?

3.Are there examples where things are being done well which could be used to help make things better?

4.Do these services keep people's personal medical history private?

Do they help people to understand medical treatment they suggest by discussing it with them and checking that they understand this?

Do they ask for their permission before going ahead with any treatment? If not can you tell us what happens now and what you think needs to change?

5.Are people affected by substance use able to speak about issues they find unfair (such as where the right to health is not fulfilled as it should be) and are they able to fix/resolve these?

If not, what are the problems, and what do you think needs to change?