

2.2 Human Rights Human rights conventions

What	Human rights
Purpose	To help learners to understand the meaning and origin of human rights and their relevance to LGBT+ older people.
Target group	Teachers and trainers in vocational education and their students
Level	Level 2-3-4 in vocational education.
Execution	Extra support from the teacher might be necessary depending on the ability of the students to work independently
Sources	Country reports, Country reports presentation, Human rights watch

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) provides a set of minimum standards for how people should be treated and it identifies 30 key human rights across all sectors of society. The UDHR is not a legal document, but rather it is a 'declaration' – a statement of intent or guidance for the world.

However, the UDHR did inspire ten future **legally binding** international agreements, or Covenants. The first two of these signed in 1966 ensured key civil and social rights: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Civil and Political Rights are rights to civil liberty and equality including: right to assembly, freedom of expression, right to fair trial/justice, right to protection from discrimination, access to information, freedom from torture, right to privacy and respect for family life. Economic, Social and Cultural Rights are relating to the material necessities of life such as the right to: adequate housing, right to health, education, adequate standard of living and labour rights. Collectively, the UDHR, the ICCPR and the ICESCR is known at the **Bill of Rights**.

Sign up to these means that a government must make sure the rights are available to everyone in their country through laws or policies, and if they don't they are answerable before a court or other justice mechanism. Experience has shown that some elements of ICCPR and ICESCR rights need deeper address, producing other specific Covenants: for example, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984); the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991) and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006).

Activity 1

Look at the following video on [human rights](#) or this one on the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)

Activity 2

Work in small group and make a list of why human rights are important.

Activity 3

Review the website of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights ([UN Human Rights](#)) and

- i) check the status of human rights in your country
- ii) map a timeline for when your country adopted each Convention. Are there some conventions that are not yet ratified by your country?

Activity 4

Search the web and locate information on the function of the European Court of Human Rights

Keep on learning

- Doron I & Kate Mewhinney K (2007) [The Rights of Older Persons: Collection of International Documents](#). The Association for the Planning and Development of Services for the Aged in Israel
- Fish J. and Bewley S. (2010) [Using human rights-based approaches to conceptualise lesbian and bisexual women's health inequalities](#). *Health and Social Care in the Community* **18**(4), 355-362.
- Higgins, A., Sharek, D., McCann, E., Sheerin, F., Glacken, M., Breen, M., and McCarron, M. (2011). [Visible Lives: Identifying the experiences and needs of older Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender \(LGBT\) people in Ireland](#). Dublin: Gay and Lesbian Equality Network. ISBN 9780956102362
- Read about the history of same sex marriage from the Encyclopaedia [Britannica here](#).