

## 2.3 Human Rights Human rights and the older person

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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

Worldwide, people are living longer and ageing populations are increasing rapidly. While a person's rights do not change as they age, there is general agreement that older adults are an invisible group within a western culture that emphasises youth and economic productivity.

As a result many older people face negative attitudes associated with 'ageist' views that portray older people in a negative light. Consequently, as people age they are often considered a burden and face discrimination in relation to employment, education, transport and access to health and social care services – core sites of the implementation of human rights. As older people become more dependent on others or services, they also face barriers to their participation in society, their decision making, and they may lose some, or all, of their personal autonomy.

These multiple threats to their dignity can make them more susceptible to neglect, abuse and violation of their rights. Very often, these indignities will be borne in relative silence. If a person is older and LGBT, there is a heightened likelihood that their rights will be violated, as they continue to be an 'invisible minority within a minority' (Higgins et al 2011). Indeed research indicates that LGBT+ older people continue to be subjected to heterosexism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, violence and discriminatory practices both within and outside health and social care services.

It is important to realise, that from a human-rights point of view (or 'rights analysis'), people who are providing accommodation or services to older people are 'duty-bearers', and those older people are 'rights-holders'. Duty-bearers uphold the standards of the government under which they work (in public or private capacity), and the rights-holders have a legitimate claim to being able to achieve a level of dignity, or at least it not being violated or ignored.

### Activity 1

Review the [UN rights of the older person](#) and consider how they afford protection to all older people, including LGBT+ older people

### Activity 2

In small groups identify three strategies you would use to

- i) raise older people's awareness of their human rights
- ii) raise awareness of health and social practitioners of older people's human rights.

### Activity 3

Design a poster to be used to raise LGBT+ older people's awareness of their human rights

### Activity 4

In small groups: discuss the challenges older people experience in relation to their:

- i) right to work;
- ii) right to dignity and privacy;
- iii) right to exercise personal autonomy;
- iv) respect for diversity;
- v) right to sexual health and relationships.



### Keep on Learning

- Visit the United Nations website and read more about the work they are doing to enhance human rights for older people. You can access the website [here](#).
- Watch this short [YouTube video](#) which explores the ways older peoples' human rights are being denied.
- Visit the Global Alliance for the Rights of Older people and read their report [in our own words](#) which describes older peoples' experiences of ageism, discrimination and denial of human rights that they are subjected to in their everyday life.