



'A Human Rights approach to Leadership'

2nd March 2026



How to use this pack

- ▶ Use this pack as part of your reflective practice, relating to your leadership development.
- ▶ Reflect on the session theme; using the **Our Focus** page to:
 - ▶ Ask yourself the **questions offered for consideration**
 - ▶ Choose one or more **blogs or resources** offered to help you reflect on the questions
- ▶ Read the **Enablers and Opportunities word-cloud** and **Call to Action** page to explore the themes, ideas, comments and take away points from the participants who attended the live event

Finally ask yourself:

- ▶ What have I learned from this experience, in the moment and now?
- ▶ What one thing will I do differently going forward?
- ▶ How can I commit to the actions I identified?

About Diversity Coffee Connect

Watch our 2 min animation on the aim and purpose of this programme

**Have you heard
about our
Diversity Coffee
Connect
programme?**



- ▶ Watch the video [here](#).

Our focus

In this session we explored the principles and approaches to leadership through a human rights approach when leaders at all levels make decisions.

Our colleague Sarah McDermott, Equality and Human Rights, NES, shared an opening perspective on the key principles of human rights, the PANEL principles as well as the FAIR approach. We explored some of the enablers and barriers to adopting a human right approach in our areas of work and best practices to take forward.

Resources offered for consideration



[Human Rights Act](#) (1998)



[Equality Act](#) (2010)



[Scottish Human Rights Commission](#)



[The FAIR approach - SHRC - Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment](#)

What are Human Rights?

Human rights outline internationally agreed minimum standards

They are based on core values of dignity, equality, freedom, justice and respect

They provide legal protection for us all (we are all rights holders), with specific consideration for marginalised groups

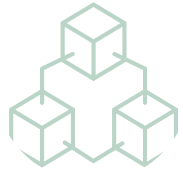
Those who have a responsibility to uphold rights are called duty bearers

Examples include the right to health; an adequate standard of living; social security; freedom of speech

Key Principles



They're for everyone:
Human rights are universal and apply to every single person.



They're all equally important:
Human rights are indivisible. You can't pick and choose which ones to follow.

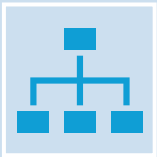


They all belong to the individual:
They don't need to be earned



They are interconnected and mutually reinforcing:
Rights rely on each other

Human Rights Based Approach



A human rights-based approach (HRBA) is a way of doing things, a framework for policies, programs, and decisions, that puts human rights at the very center. It's about moving beyond simply talking about rights and instead actively applying them in practice.



This can be used for decision making at any level – from strategic governance through to frontline practice by using the PANEL principles and FAIR approach.

PANEL Principles

- **P**articipation – Everyone has the right to participate in decisions which affect them. Participation must be active, accessible and meaningful.
- **A**ccountability – there should be monitoring of how people’s rights are being affected as well as remedies when things go wrong.
- **N**on-Discrimination and Equality – all forms of discrimination must be prohibited, prevented, and eliminated. People who face the biggest barriers to realising their rights should be prioritised.
- **E**mpowerment – everyone should understand their rights, and be fully supported to take part in developing policy and practices which affect their lives.
- **L**egality – approaches should be grounded in the legal rights that are set out in domestic and international laws
- Find out more from the [Scottish Human Rights Commission](#)

FAIR Approach

- The SHRC has developed the **FAIR** approach to help apply the standards and principles of human rights in practice. The basic steps of the **FAIR** approach are:
- **Facts** – what is the experience of those involved and the important facts to understand?
- **Analyse** – develop an analysis of the human rights at stake.
- **Identify** – identify what needs to be done and who is responsible for doing it.
- **Review** – make recommendations for action and later recall, and evaluate what has happened as a result.
- [The FAIR approach - SHRC - Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment](#)

What stood out to you?

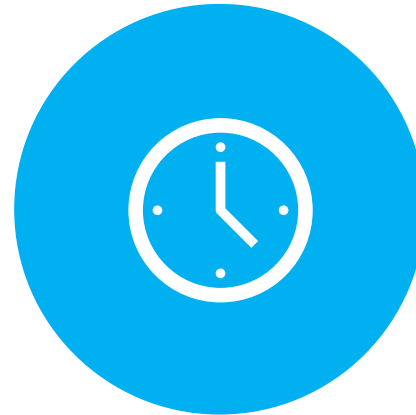


Group discussions

We invited our community to explore what this means for us, and what practical learning we can take away using breakout groups to enable real conversations and connections.



4 BREAKOUT ROOMS



TIME IN BREAK OUT
ROOM: **20 MINUTES**



EVENT DURATION: **60
MINUTES**

Call to action (I)

We collectively identified over 59 actions and insights, relating to *'one thing we can do'* following our session. Here are some of the themes!

Humanity & compassion

Panel principles-SHRC

Shared language

Survive and Thrive

'Generational differences in understanding'

Person-Centred

International commitments

Collaboration

Unfamiliar language

Consider our shared humanity - putting ourselves into the other person's shoes

[Click here to view responses in plain text](#)

Call to action (II)

We collectively identified over 45 actions and insights, relating to *'one thing we can do'* following our session. Here are some of the themes!

Interconnected rights

Shared Learning

Learn more about ethical decision-making.

Adopt FAIR framework in my approach

For everyone

Holistic approach

Think of human rights in a holistic way - intersectionality

Duty bearer

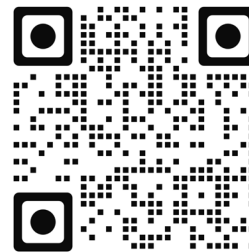
More awareness

Compassion

Meaningful participation

Ethical commissioning

Moving forward



Scan for
events



▶ Tell us more hello@leadingtochange.scot

- ▶ How did you use this Insights pack? What was useful or what would you like to see?
- ▶ We would love to hear your ideas for potential topics and contributors
- ▶ Do you have thoughts and learning to share? Would you like to write a blog or know someone who could? Our team can fully support you with this.

▶ To find out more, please explore

- ▶ [Our Equalities page](#) – links and resources in relation to our Diversity Coffee Connect Series, the Allyship Hub, Leadership blogs and more.
- ▶ [Our many leadership, sector and programme resources](#) available to read, watch and engage with from internal and external sources

- ▶ We hope to see you again soon at one of our [next events](#) – scan the QR code above to find out more



Leading to Change: What's on Offer



Website



Leading to Change
App



Does Compassionate Leadership Actually Matter?

This month we move from leadership fundamentals to the often misunderstood topic of **Compassionate Leadership**.

There is a bit of a 'mummys' reaction when the phrase is mentioned; some love the idea - leading with the heart, leading with the head - to do so with a balance and to be seen to do so, not to be seen to do so or even to do so.

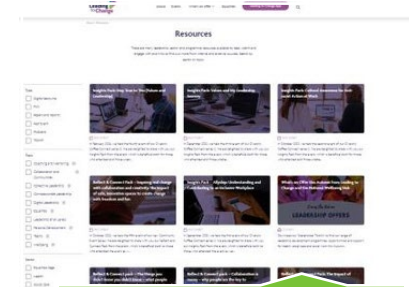
Friday Leadership
Emails



LEADING TO CHANGE
COMMUNITY EVENT SERIES

VIRTUAL EVENT

Events



Resources



Awesome Cards



Programmes



Podcasts



Allyship Hub



Inclusive
Leaders Hub

Click the thumbnails above to find out more or email the team: hello@leadingtochange.scot



Thank You!

