About Us

NHS Health Scotland is a national Health Board working with public, private and third sectors to reduce health inequalities and improve health.

Our corporate strategy, A Fairer Healthier Scotland, sets out our vision of a Scotland in which all of our people and communities have a fairer share of the opportunities, resources and confidence to live longer, healthier lives.

Our mission is to reduce health inequalities and improve health. To do this we influence policy and practice, informed by evidence, and promote action across public services to deliver greater equality and improved health for all in Scotland.

Contact Details

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We are content for our response to be made available to the public and to be contacted in the future.

Key Messages:

- The right to health is a fundamental human right.

- The right to health is an inclusive right – it includes not only the right to health services, but to the wide range of factors that help us to achieve the highest attainable standard of health.

- NHS Health Scotland has been an active partner to the delivery of the New Scots strategy, which supports the integration of refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland.
QUESTION 1: As a public service provider, what support are you able to provide to asylum seekers and those with insecure immigration status. Also what are the main barriers to providing support in these circumstances.

NHS Health Scotland does not offer direct services to individuals or communities, but seeks to influence wider partners, including NHS Boards, to reduce the inequalities experienced by communities. Our responses to the following questions should be considered within this context.

The right of everyone to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health has been recognised formally in the UK since 1976 when the Government approved the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). NHS Health Scotland’s draft strategic plan for 2017/18 includes consideration of the human rights of asylum seekers and refugees in working to transform how public services improve health and wellbeing.

NHS Health Scotland has been an active partner to the delivery of the New Scots strategy, which supports the integration of refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland. NHS Health Scotland will continue to engage with the development of the next phase of this strategy in 2017 and support the Scottish Government to identify the health actions that should be included.

QUESTION 2: We'd also like to hear about how an asylum seeker or a person with insecure immigration status' need for support is assessed and what would make this assessment process easier, please make reference to any policies and procedures within your organisation.

While we do not offer direct support, we have an online toolkit to support human rights work; the Health Inequalities Impact Assessment (HIIA). Available online at:


This is integrated impact assessment incorporates;

- Health Impact Assessment
- Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Doing an HIIA helps services meet a range of legislative requirements, including the requirement to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA). A number of guides and resources are also available online to support this process:

**QUESTION 3:** If your area does not have experience of asylum seekers or dealing with people with insecure immigration status, it would be helpful to know what training, policies, guidance or procedures are in place, or being developed, to address support should it need to be provided in the future.

The right to health is a fundamental human right. NHS Health Scotland’s commitment to a human rights based approach (HRBA) and information on human rights can be accessed via our recently updated website:


NHS Health Scotland’s human rights approach is based on the PANEL principles. The PANEL principles offer a way to help the public sector, the third sector, communities and individuals to put human rights into practice. PANEL stands for Participation, Accountability, Non-discrimination, Empowerment and Legality. These PANEL principles will be central to our forthcoming strategic plan. NHS Health Scotland’s human rights work also involves a close working relationship with the Scottish Human Rights Commission, Strathclyde University and The ALLIANCE, in particular as joint conveners of the SNAP Health and Social Care Action Group. This has generated several outputs which can be accessed on NHS Health Scotland’s website.

NHS Health Scotland’s inequality briefing on [Human Rights and the Right to Health](http://www.healthscotland.scot/health-inequalities/the-right-to-health) articulates what the right to health is, what a human rights-based approach (HRBA) to health looks like and gives some suggestions as to how the approach can be used. NHS Health Scotland also funded research on [participatory action on the right to health](http://www.healthscotland.scot/health-inequalities/the-right-to-health). It was designed to directly empower the people who experience barriers to health, including asylum seekers, to participate, find solutions and share them with decision makers. This research demonstrates how human rights based approaches can draw out practical recommendations for change to service access and design.