



# The Right to Life

Article 2 of the Human Rights Act

The right to life is one of the 16 human rights (also called Articles) in the Human Rights Act.

**When could the Right to Life matter to me?**



When there is abuse or neglect in detention or care which could lead to death.



If you are thinking about taking your own life whilst in hospital or in detention and public officials know you are at risk of suicide but don't protect you.



If you tell the police that you think your life is in danger, or that threats have been made against your life, and they don't do anything to protect you.



If healthcare professionals (such as doctors or nurses) refusing to give you life-saving treatment because you are living with learning disabilities and / or autism.



A health or care professional cannot deliberately take away your right to life.

**What do health and care workers have do about my right to life?**



They have to **RESPECT** your right.  
This means not deliberately taking away your life.



They have to **PROTECT** your right.  
This means taking reasonable steps to protect your life when public officials know (or should know) that your life is at real and immediate risk. This risk could be from another person, or from yourself (if you have suicidal thoughts whilst in the care of services).



To **FULFIL** your right.  
This means investigating when officials may have been involved in a death or failed to act, for example if a person staying in a residential care home takes their life.

**Bryn's Story**



Bryn is 60 years old and lives in supported living. Bryn has complex learning disabilities and people can find it really difficult to understand what Bryn is telling them.



Staff noticed that Bryn started sitting in his chair to go to sleep. They were worried that he might have problems with his heart, so they called in Bryn's doctor.



They had a meeting with the people involved with Bryn's care to work out what needed to be done. At this meeting Bryn's doctor said because Bryn had a learning disability and had no quality of life, he would not organise a heart scan for Bryn.



Right to life  
(Article 2)



Right not to be discriminated  
against in relation to any  
of the human rights listed here  
(Article 14)

Bryn's Mental Capacity Advocate was also at this meeting. She had been to a workshop on human rights run by the British Institute of Human Rights. She didn't think that Bryn's rights were being respected. She knew that Bryn had:

- **the right to life** (protected by Article 2 in the Human Rights Act)
- **the right to be free from discrimination** (protected by Article 14 in the Human Rights Act)



At the meeting Bryn's advocate asked the doctor if he would have arranged a heart scan if anyone else in the room was in this situation. The doctor said he would. The people at the meeting then agreed that Bryn should get his scan.



The advocate had to keep asking the doctor to organise the scan and eventually it was arranged for Bryn to have a heart scan. However, it had taken so long to organise it was too late to treat his heart condition and sadly Bryn died.

Article 2- Right to life

You can watch a video of Bryn's Story on Youtube. [Click here.](#)

