



Environmental human rights - what they are and why they matter

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Overview

- ERCS – who we are and what we do
- Scotland's environmental problems and impacts
- The human right to a healthy environment
- Real world examples
- How do we work together

- Our vision is of a Scotland where every person's right to live in a healthy environment is fully realised

Our work:

- Public education on environmental rights
- Free legal advice
- Advocacy in policy and law reform
- Strategic public interest litigation

Scotland's 'substantive' environmental problems...

Places

- Air, water & noise pollution
- Proximity to derelict land
- Environmental quality
- Access to greenspace & nature
- Health & wellbeing

People

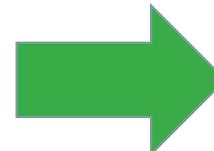
- Children, Older people, people with health problems
- Worse for marginalised groups
- Vulnerability to severe weather events

Distributional environmental injustice

Scotland's environmental 'procedural' problems...

Access to decision-making and holding public bodies to account

- Marginalised groups + poverty
- Less participation in local decision-making
- Less awareness of rights
- Access to justice – 'prohibitively expensive'



- Poor enforcement of planning and nature conservation law
- No credible threat of legal challenge
- Environment & nature destruction
- Climate emergency

Procedural environmental injustice

The human right to a healthy environment

Substantive

- 1. Clean air**
- 2. Safe climate**
- 3. Access to safe water and sanitation**
- 4. Healthy and sustainable food**
- 5. Non-toxic environments to live, work, study and play**
- 6. Healthy biodiversity and ecosystems**

Not yet part of Scots law

Procedural

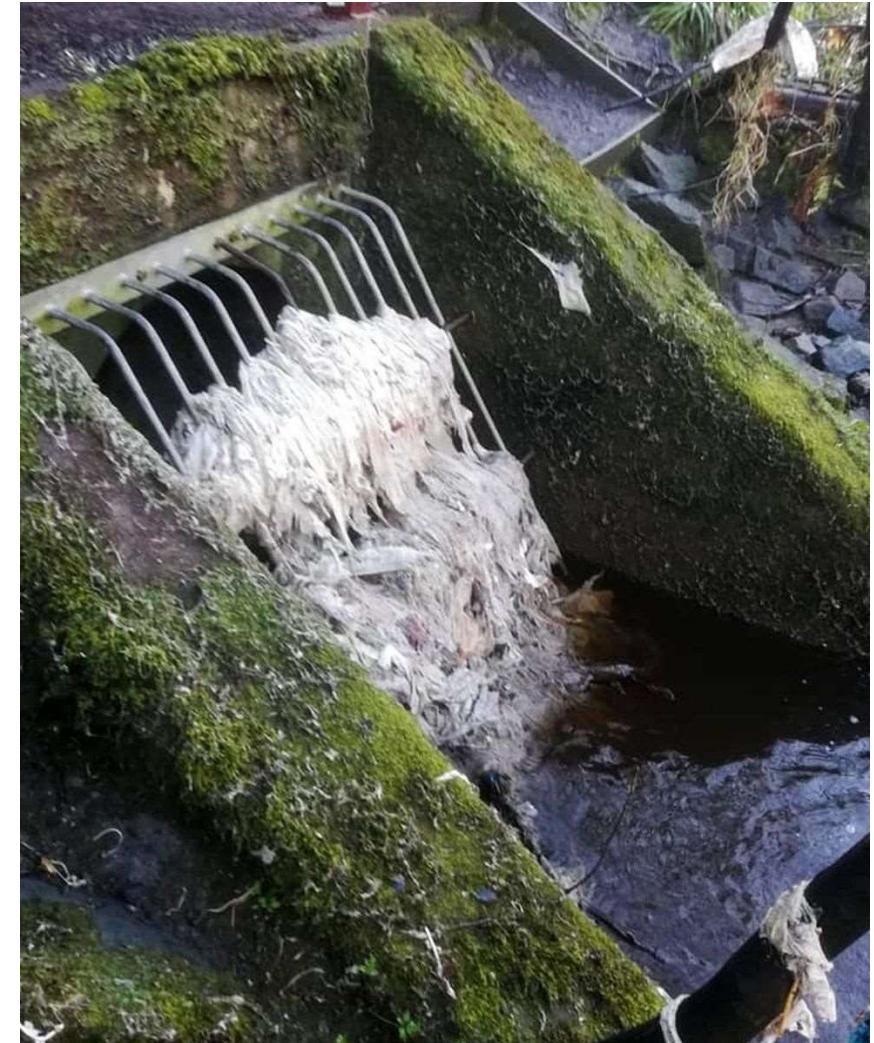
- 1. Access to information**
- 2. Public participation**
- 3. Access to justice and effective remedies**

Not fully implemented in Scots law

Sign the petition! - <https://www.ercs.scot/>

Examples

- Water pollution
- Air pollution
- Unjust planning



Sewage gathered at an overflow pipe that leads to the River Almond in West Lothian
(River Almond Action Group, 2021)

Access to greenspace and nature

- Access to greener, wilder spaces is essential for health and wellbeing – but in decline.
- Barriers to un/structured play and leisure are worse in deprived areas.
- We have advised on several cases on loss of green spaces



Inaccessible derelict greenspace in North Glasgow, 2018 (S Fifield, 2018)

How we can work together?



Free advice: <https://www.ercs.scot/get-advice/>

Sign the petition at www.ercs.scot

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Office number: 0131 358 0038

Freephone number: 0800 861 1738

Discussion...

- What are the environmental justice concerns for the people you represent/ work with?

For example: Greenspace, outdoor play, pollution, landfill, climate change, waste, recycling

- What/ How do we work together to exercise our environmental human rights?