

SHRC

Scottish
Human Rights
Commission



Strategic Plan

2024-28

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Foreword from the Members of the Commission



This is the Scottish Human Rights Commission's fifth Strategic Plan. It was laid before the Scottish Parliament in April 2024.

The Commission is a small public body with a broad remit and strong ambition. It must decide carefully how to prioritise its limited resources to secure a positive impact on human rights in Scotland.

Our Strategic Plan sets out our aims and priorities for the next four years. It has been developed in a challenging environment for human rights in Scotland, and the wider world.

Scotland has developed a strong human rights narrative in policy and legislation since the Commission was established in 2006. On the other hand, evidence suggests that improved outcomes are not yet being felt where they matter most – in people's real lives, and the communities where they live. In some areas, outcomes affecting human rights have worsened in recent years.

Housing and homelessness, drug-related deaths, poverty, social care and issues affecting people in the criminal justice system, such as remand and deaths in custody, remain matters of acute concern.

Regressive UK Government proposals to repeal the Human Rights Act 1998, and even to withdraw from the European Convention on Human Rights, have contributed to a climate of unnecessary legal uncertainty for rights holders and public bodies.

People in Scotland also continue to face the longer term impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on their lives and wellbeing. At the same time, strains on public services and the cost of living crisis are aggravating social inequalities, while public finance projections remain challenging.

A survey conducted for the Commission in 2023 showed that people in Scotland are increasingly aware of human rights and support them. Yet fewer people today know where to turn if they have a human rights problem than they did four years ago. This aligns with other research we have conducted that has identified obstacles to access to justice for people in relation to civil, political and economic as well as social rights.

Linked to this, calls have been made to establish a range of new public bodies to uphold the human rights of particular groups of people. The need to advance enjoyment of rights, for instance, for disabled people, ethnic minority communities, and older people, is indisputable. We believe the Commission has a crucial role to play here. However, we can only deliver effectively as Scotland's human rights watchdog if we have the mandate, powers and resource we need.

A core theme for the Commission's 2024-28 Strategic Plan is accountability. We plan to re-focus our resources on using our mandate to monitor more robustly and consistently how human rights are being experienced. We will undertake more proactive work to spotlight areas of concern, and if necessary, request resources from the Scottish Parliament to use our powers of inquiry.



Jim Farish



Shelley Gray



Claire Methven O'Brien

We will retain capacity to ensure that we can be responsive to emerging issues, but given the evidence available to the Commission, we have identified four themes that we will focus on closely:

- The impact of poverty on human rights
- Human rights in places of detention
- Access to Justice
- Rights to remedy for specially-protected groups

In advancing these themes, the Commission is committed to working alongside people and communities, to document and bear witness to their experiences. We will listen and seek to help amplify their voices, and this will inform our work.

We will also continue to provide advice to the Scottish Parliament on human rights issues linked to proposed legislation. This will involve scrutinising measures to strengthen the human rights legal framework in Scotland, including the proposed Human Rights Bill. We will seek to support public bodies concerning their duties under this new legislation, and to prepare the Commission for its monitoring role.

We will likewise continue to report to the United Nations (UN) and the Council of Europe on how far the UK's international

human rights commitments are being met for people in Scotland. Based on the precedent of new powers granted to the Commission by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024, the Commission will seek to extend its mandate to fulfil a more robust role in upholding human rights in Scotland, including through legal proceedings.

We will strive to communicate effectively with our stakeholders in the Scottish Parliament, public bodies, civil society and across the legal community, and ensure our work is rooted in data, evidence, the rule of law, and accessibility. This will help us to fulfil our mandate to educate people about their human rights, and duty bearers about their human rights obligations.

We look forward to working with the Commission's expert staff team, our next Chair, the Scottish Parliament, civil society and others. As human rights watchdog, the Commission will serve the people of Scotland by protecting and promoting all of our human rights for the next four years.



**Jim Farish, Shelley Gray,
Claire Methven O'Brien**
**Members of the Scottish Human
Rights Commission**

We are Scotland's human rights watchdog

We are an independent, expert body that works with and for the people of Scotland; we monitor, listen, speak up for all of our rights and respond when things go wrong.

The Scottish Human Rights Commission (the Commission) is a public body created by the Scottish Commission for Human Rights Act 2006 to protect and promote the human rights of all people in Scotland.

“The Commission’s general duty is, through the exercise of its functions under this Act, to promote human rights and, in particular, to encourage best practice in relation to human rights.” [Scottish Commission for Human Rights Act 2006, section 2\(1\)](#)

The Commission is also part of the international human rights system. It is accredited by the United Nations (UN) as its trusted organisation to provide impartial evidence on the enjoyment of human rights in Scotland.

As Scotland’s National Human Rights Institution (NHRI), we comply with a set of standards called the [UN Paris Principles](#). Their key pillars are pluralism, independence and effectiveness.

The Commission is independent of Government. We are accountable to the people of Scotland via the Scottish Parliament.

You can read the Scottish Commission for Human Rights Act 2006 and the Paris Principles on our website at www.scottishhumanrights.com

Who are the members of the Commission?

The Commission has a Member appointed to Chair the Commission, by His Majesty, on nomination of the Scottish Parliament. The Chair is supported by up to four other Members of the Commission, working on a part-time basis, appointed and employed by the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB). Each Member of the Commission is appointed for a period of six years. The Chair can serve a maximum of eight years but is usually appointed for six years.

The Commission’s day-to-day work is led by its Executive Director. The Executive Director is accountable to the Scottish Parliament for delivery of the Commission’s mandated functions and resource, through a team of 15 staff with expertise in human rights law, policy, participation, communications and corporate governance.

To find out more about the current members of the Commission and its staff, please visit www.scottishhumanrights.com.

What does the Commission do?

Our job is to:



Monitor how human rights are being experienced in Scotland in people's communities and everyday lives



Shine a light on places where human rights are not being upheld



Report to the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the Scottish Parliament on areas of concern



Be an expert, objective and independent authority on human rights



Check if what law and policies say should happen is actually happening



Educate people about their human rights



Educate duty bearers about their duties to uphold people's human rights and help them learn how to do this



Help the Scottish Parliament make good decisions about the impacts of the legislation it passes on the human rights of all people in Scotland



Identify gaps and problems and bring them to public attention



Use our legal powers to enter places of detention



Use our legal powers to set up inquiries into areas of concern

SHRC
 Scottish
 Human Rights
 Commission

As a public body, we will always:

- Make sure we deliver the best value for money for the people of Scotland
- Deliver our work to the highest quality
- Demonstrate the impact of our work
- Make our work accessible to all
- Avoid duplicating the work of other organisations

As a National Human Rights Institution accredited by the UN, we will always:

- Maintain independence from the state
- Ensure that we have a pluralist membership of the Commission, representing different experiences and the breadth of democratic society in our consideration of human rights issues
- Ground our work in evidence and human rights standards

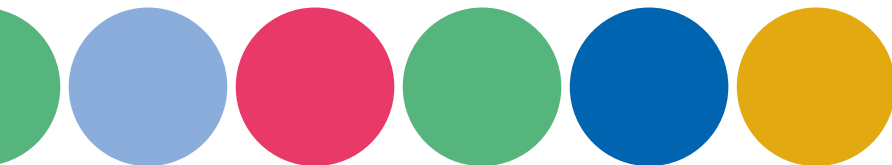
The language used in this document

Rights holders – people in Scotland who have human rights. That is all of us.

Duty Bearers – public bodies who have the responsibility (bear the duty) to uphold our human rights. For example, councils, the NHS, prisons, transport, housing associations.

Public Body – an organisation which is paid for by the public.

The State – the Government, the rule of law, the agencies who uphold that law – police, armed forces, border control, the courts.



How was this plan developed?

As required by Section 7 of the Scottish Commission for Human Rights Act 2006, the Commission has consulted with the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body and other stakeholders as follows:

Consultation with civil society and key stakeholders; in an online survey and stakeholder sessions attracting 130 responses.

In addition, the Commission undertook a programme of work throughout 2023-24 to inform its new Strategic Plan, as follows:

- **Commissioned research:** To help us understand what people think about human rights and how they access help and support we commissioned two new pieces of research: [Attitudes to Human Rights In Scotland report](#); [Access to Justice for Everyone report](#), available at www.scottishhumanrights.com.
- **Actioned research:** We identified new spotlight projects in 2023-24 to deepen our understanding of key human rights situations in Scotland, including places of detention, the deinstitutionalisation of people who have learning disabilities and autism, and the experience of people and communities in the Highlands and Islands.
- **Leading public debate:** We prompted stakeholder discussions about gaps in accountability in the human rights system in Summer 2023 with our publication *At A Crossroads*, which considered the themes

emerging from the recent proliferation of asks for new Commissions/ers to uphold human rights.

- **Internal review:** We completed an Independent Governance Review published in September 2023 and an internal review of participation in the Commission.
- **Internal consultation:** Commissioners and staff participated in strategy away days in February 2023, October 2023 and November 2023.
- **Human rights monitoring:** We reviewed available evidence including: Scotland's second National Action Plan for Human Rights (SNAP2); treaty monitoring cycles, particularly the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (2019/20); the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) (2022/23), and the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) 2023 Monitor.
- **Peer human rights organisations:** We engaged with the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI), the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) and other National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) including EHRC Scotland, and the office of the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland.

Purpose, Vision, Mission and Values

Our Purpose

We are Scotland's human rights watchdog

Our job is to work with people and communities to understand their experiences, hold public bodies to account where human rights are not upheld, and help them to do better.

Our Vision

A fairer Scotland where human rights are respected, understood, and where there is justice when things go wrong

Our Mission

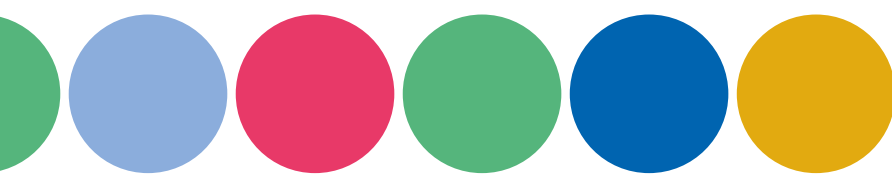
To be a strong, independent authority that works collaboratively to uphold everyone's human rights in Scotland

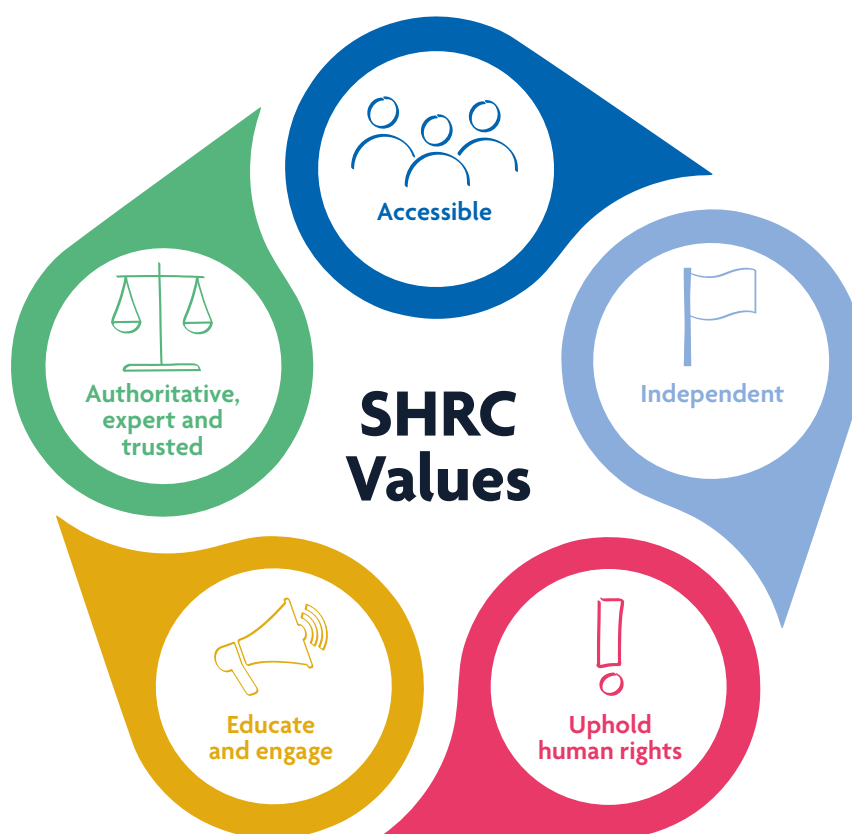
Our Values

The Commission delivers its work through the lens of a human rights based approach, known as the **PANEL principles**

- **P**articipation
- **A**ccountability
- **N**on-discrimination and equality
- **E**mpowerment
- **L**egality

Our values bring this to life.





We are accessible

We involve people in the work of the Commission on issues that affect their rights, and ensure our work is understood by all.



We are independent

We hold duty bearers to account by monitoring human rights standards in Scotland, the system of accountability, and using our mandate to take action where required. We are accountable to the people of Scotland.



We uphold everyone's human rights

Human rights belong to everyone. We recognise where bias, discrimination and power dynamics have an impact on human rights violations, and we take action on rights and groups most at risk.



We educate and engage

We help everyone to understand their human rights and make sure that decision makers are fully supported to develop policy and practice which affect people's rights.



We are authoritative, expert and trusted

We keep watch over national and international human rights law to help duty bearers understand the impact of their plans and actions on their human rights obligations, ensuring that this is rooted in rule of law, and easily understood.

“Any meaningful commitment to human rights must start from the ground up, with recognising the humanity of the people standing beside you...”

SHRC community stakeholder, 2023

How we work

Our approach

The Commission is established as a National Human Rights Institution. As such we are part of a global network of bodies accredited by the United Nations to monitor state compliance with international and national human rights law and treaties. We are independent of government.

It is the job of National Human Rights Institutions to use the rule of law to promote and protect the human rights of all of the people who live in any given country and assess the actions of the state on that basis. This is how the Scottish Human Rights Commission approaches its work.

The Commission uses data and evidence to understand human rights problems in Scotland. Where necessary, it undertakes or commissions new research where it is clear there are gaps.

We influence decision making to ensure that proposed law in Scotland meets human rights standards, and we have the powers to intervene in legal cases to make the law clearer.

We provide information, advice and guidance to improve compliance with the law.

Rooted in international human rights standards, the Commission provides assessment of the human rights at stake in respect of a given priority issue or proposed piece of legislation that has been presented to the Scottish Parliament.

Then we look at domestic law – how this has been interpreted through the courts in Scotland and throughout the UK.

Where we have access to it, we will also be informed by the experiences of people in the places where their human rights are being upheld or denied.

We then identify any recommendations for the Parliament to consider in its scrutiny of proposed legislation and policy, or outwith the legislative process. We also make recommendations to the state on the actions it should take to better uphold the human rights at stake.

We do not ‘take sides’. Our job is to make sure that everyone’s human rights have been duly considered and upheld, as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights requires. Our analysis and advice is publicly available for civil society and decision makers to inform their own consideration and advocacy.

However, in our work to monitor human rights denials, we will always firmly take the side of the people of Scotland and hold the state to account.

How we decide on our priorities

We have a broad mandate and a small team, so we have to make decisions about where to focus our time and resources.

In this strategic planning cycle, the Commission will not routinely respond to Government consultations, focussing instead on informing the scrutiny of proposed legislation in the Scottish Parliament. This may also require further prioritisation where we consider that there may be rights most at risk.

Every year, we will consider the evidence we have around potential violations and denials of rights, as well as the legislative programme. We will process this via a decision-making framework which will be publicly available via our annual operational plan.

This process is informed by consideration of evidence available to the Commission via our treaty monitoring work at United Nations and Council of Europe level, and via the legislative programme set by the Scottish Government and Parliament.

We will use this approach to decide how best to use the Commission's resources, which were £1.38m in 2023/24. The Commission will assess:

- whether new or planned work aligns with our strategic priorities;

- the evidence available to confirm the scale and severity of the problem;
- the potential for having a systemic and lasting impact, through our own powers, or other developments in the legislative, policy or regulatory landscape.

We will work collaboratively with other public sector bodies who may be able to implement changes that progress our findings.

We will share our recommendations with the Scottish Parliament who may wish to further consider our findings.

Given our limited resource, we must plan to be flexible too, in order that we can maintain capacity to respond to issues which emerge and develop over the course of this strategic planning cycle.

How we deliver

In everything we do, we strive at all times to be:

- **Ambitious** – for rights holders and each other.
- **Accessible** – we will ensure that we are being understood by different audiences.
- **Authoritative and accurate** – our work will be evidence-based, informed by applicable legal standards, and clear.
- **Curious** – if we don't know, we will ask. We want to understand the experiences of rights holders and communities.
- **Useful** – we strive to provide people with the information they need to make decisions and to do the right thing for all rights holders.
- **Respectful** – we respect different views across our democratic society. We use human rights standards to provide a route through issues which people and communities might find difficult.
- **Adding value** – we will not duplicate the work of other public bodies, or of civil society.
- **Trauma informed** – we recognise the impact of human rights violations and denials on people's lives. We recognise this in our approach to engaging with people directly. We will also recognise the impact of this on our staff and provide support.
- **Transparent** – we will be clear about the Commission's use of its resources to deliver its mandate and how decisions are made. We are accountable to the people of Scotland.

Our duties and powers

The Commission's duties and powers are set out in the Scottish Commission for Human Rights Act 2006. The Commission has a general duty to promote awareness, understanding and respect for all human rights – economic, social, cultural, civil and political – to everyone, everywhere in Scotland, and to encourage best practice in relation to human rights.

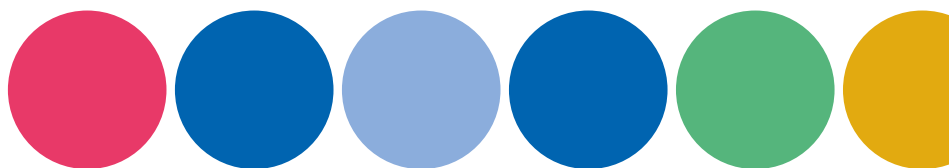
The Commission promotes and protects the human rights guaranteed for all people in Scotland by all of the international conventions ratified by the UK.

The Commission also has the powers to:

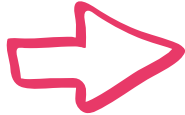
- conduct inquiries into the policies or practices of Scottish public authorities;
- enter some places of detention as part of an inquiry;
- intervene in civil court cases where relevant to the promotion of human rights and where the case appears to raise a matter of public interest.

The Commission has a statutory duty to avoid duplicating the work of others. We develop and maintain close working relationships with public bodies whose mandates share boundaries with ours.

We have a Memorandum of Understanding with the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). EHRC Scotland is the equality regulator in Scotland. This means that we communicate and collaborate as appropriate on the delivery of our respective mandates, and meet regularly to discuss complementary and aligned work. Similarly, we communicate regularly with the Children and Young People's Commissioner for Scotland, who has the mandate to uphold children's rights across Scotland, using the specific powers and duties of the Commissioner for Children and Young People Commissioner (Scotland) Act 2003.

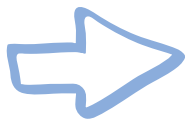


Strategic objectives 2024-28



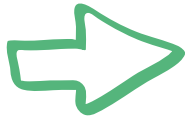
Purpose

We will deliver and extend our mandate to improve accountability for human rights in Scotland; and inform the Scottish Parliament on the human rights implications of proposed legislation.



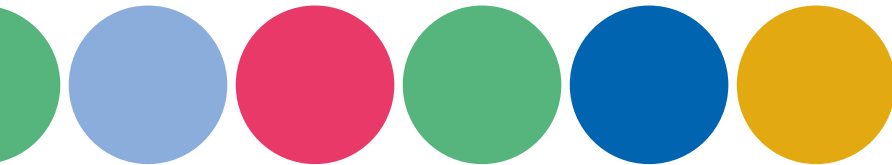
People

We will ensure that the Commission is informed by, and works alongside, people and communities throughout Scotland who have direct knowledge of how human rights are being experienced; and use our mandate to focus on poverty, places of detention; access to justice; and the rights of at risk specially-protected groups.



Performance

We will monitor and report on how human rights are being experienced in Scotland, and play our part in embedding a stronger human rights culture.



How we will achieve our 2024-28 strategic objectives

Purpose



Strategic Objective: The Commission will deliver and extend its mandate to improve accountability for human rights in Scotland; and inform the Scottish Parliament on the human rights implications of proposed legislation.

To deliver against this objective:

We will keep under review law and practice that impacts on the protection of human rights in Scotland.

We will provide advice to the Scottish Parliament on the human rights at stake in respect of proposed legislation for the benefit of everyone in Scotland.

We will place a particular focus on strengthening the human rights legal framework in Scotland through work to influence and scrutinise the proposed Human Rights Bill.

We will engage with the United Nations and Council of Europe treaty monitoring cycles, and promote this work to the people of Scotland through our communications and engagement.

We will participate in the UK National Preventive Mechanism (NPM).

We will fulfil our role as a member of the United Kingdom Independent Mechanism (UKIM) reporting to the United Nations under Article 33 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This will include collaboration with the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

Building on the internationally-recognised Belgrade Principles for National Human Rights Institutions, we will strengthen our working relationship with the Scottish Parliament, its MSPs, staff and its systems.

The Commission recognises the role of a thriving civil society as part of the human rights system in Scotland. We will engage strategically with civil society networks, seeking to add value through our mandate, and support their independence as human rights defenders.

We will pursue interventions in cases progressing through the Scottish courts on issues which impact on the human rights of people in Scotland. We may ask Parliament for the resource to use our current power of inquiry.

We will advocate for the Commission's effectiveness as an NHRI. We will explore and advise Parliament on opportunities to extend the mandate of the Commission to align with those of other NHRIs operating in the UK context, building on learning from international NHRIs to strengthen accountability for human rights in Scotland.

People



Strategic Objective: We will ensure that the Commission is informed by, and works alongside, people and communities throughout Scotland who have knowledge of how human rights are being experienced; and use our mandate to deliver focused work on poverty, places of detention, access to justice and the rights of at risk, specially-protected groups.

The Commission will develop and embed a new Participation and Engagement model throughout 2024-28.

To guide this, the Commission will establish a set of Participation Principles, which will shape how we engage directly with people to inform our understanding of how human rights are being experienced in Scotland today.

Building on the success of pilot work in the Highlands and Islands in 2023/24, the Commission is also committed to establishing outreach activity with regional communities across Scotland.

This will include monitoring and engagement across Scottish regions. It will also build a network of human rights defenders in communities across Scotland who have a direct link to the work of the Commission.

In addition, the Commission has identified four areas of human rights concern it believes require priority over 2024-28. These priorities will inform our annual operational plans, and how we make decisions about our work. However, we will also retain capacity to respond to emerging challenges to human rights in Scotland.

The four key priority areas of focus are:

1 The impact of poverty on human rights in Scotland

The Commission is concerned that persistent and systemic poverty in Scotland are linked to human rights denials for too many people. Our work in this area over 2024-28 will include a focus on the impacts of poverty, for example, on:

- Housing and homelessness
- Right to life and the highest attainable standard of health
- Dignity

2 Human rights in places of detention

The Commission is concerned about conditions of detention, including prison, custody, and mental health settings. Our work in this area will include a focus on:

- Right to life and deaths in custody
- Right to freedom from torture, and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, including restraint
- Access to justice in respect of remand arrangements, and of individual and systems level review of complaints and human rights issues.

3 Access to justice

The Commission is concerned that it is too difficult for people to access justice when they experience human rights denials or violations. This encompasses access to legal aid, availability of legal advice, and other issues limiting the effective accountability of public authorities to human rights standards.

4 Rights of specially-protected groups

The Commission is concerned about how human rights are being experienced by minority groups and groups of people

who have rights protected via international instruments in Scotland. This includes Gypsy/ Traveller communities, migrant workers and communities, and those whose rights are protected via the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD).

Performance

Strategic Objective: We will monitor and report on how human rights are being experienced in Scotland, and play our part in embedding a stronger human rights culture.



The Commission will prioritise work to improve its evidence base, informing how human rights are being experienced in Scotland, through a combination of its own contribution and advocacy for improved duty bearer data collection.

We will continue to raise issues with the UN treaty bodies and the Council of Europe reporting procedure and through the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process.

We will produce an Annual State of the Nation report, which will outline the developments in respect of progressing human rights and relevant domestic and international judgements.

We will develop our role in monitoring the Scottish Government's implementation of SNAP2, Scotland's second National Action Plan for human rights.

We will contribute as a member of the UK's Independent Monitoring Mechanism for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and participate in the UK's National

Preventive Mechanism under the Optional Protocol for the Convention Against Torture.

We will share outcome reports from the Commission's monitoring work with the Scottish Parliament in order to progress its roadmap towards becoming a guarantor of human rights. This will include strengthening parliamentary scrutiny of the Commission's findings, as well as following up on human rights recommendations made by the United Nations.

We will extend the model of our Highlands and Islands pilot spotlight in 2023/24. To support this we will make the case for resource to deliver regular local monitoring work. This will evidence how rights are being experienced at constituency level and inform State of the Nation reporting to Parliament.

We will commission further research to enhance our ability to monitor how human rights are being experienced and understood. We will commission our third cycle of research into public attitudes to human rights to track longitudinal change, and we will extend this approach for the first time to explore the attitudes and awareness of duty bearers.

We will develop strategic partnerships with public sector representative bodies and regulators to embed a human rights based approach at scale through capacity building and training resources, while safeguarding our independence.

We will continue to promote human rights budgeting as a tool for public bodies and regulators to embed a human rights culture.

Through the proposed Human Rights Bill, we will inform the development of a new Human Rights Scheme for Scotland. This will include exploration of options for an identified role for the Commission in the preparation for and delivery of the scheme and monitoring system.

Strengthening our organisation

The Commission is committed to being a trusted, authoritative, accessible and credible public body which demonstrates impact for rights holders and value for money for the taxpayer.

We will develop stronger awareness amongst our key stakeholders through a programme of regular stakeholder communications and community engagement, an agile social media strategy, and enhanced media profile as commentators, thought leaders and champions on key human rights issues.

We will continue the Commission's work as a learning organisation, which is equipped with the rights skills and staffing to deliver its mandate, and which continually develops as a good place to work.

We will ensure that the Commission is fully resourced with a skilled, supported, valued and stable workforce. We will develop a robust induction programme for the new Chair, and new Members of the Commission.

The Commission is committed to reflecting and engaging with all experiences and backgrounds which are reflected in modern Scottish society. We will develop and implement an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion strategy at the Commission.

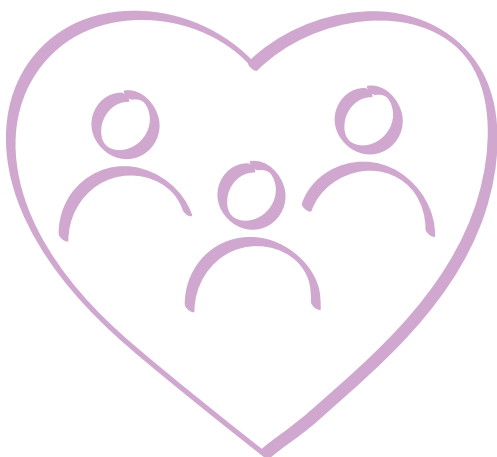
We will promote effective and meaningful employee engagement, particularly through our recognised trade union partner, PCS.

Continuing the work of the 2023 Governance Review programme, we will build a culture of value and respect for Commissioners and Commission staff.

We will embed a new Employee Handbook and support and supervision process across the Commission. Individual staff objectives will be aligned with the objectives of the Commission's strategic plan, and personal development plans will be aligned to this.

In addition to our mandatory training, the Commission will also invest in trauma-informed approaches to mainstreaming participation skills across its workforce, and in a programme of training in accessible communications.

We will work via our membership of the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI) and the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) to promote ongoing leadership and specialist skill development opportunities.

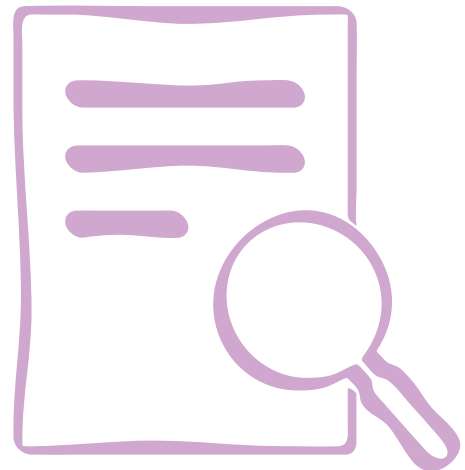


We will maintain a rolling programme of internal policy review, and will work through a streamlined Governance Framework to guide members of the Commission and staff through the successful operation of Commission business.

We will continue to focus efforts on the Commission's corporate governance arrangements, through continued work with our Audit and Risk Committee, chaired by an independent Audit Advisory Board member nominated by SPCB. On a day-to-day basis, risk will be managed through the Commission leadership team planning and monitoring, and reported through the Audit and Risk Committee. We will complete an annual programme of external and internal audit assurance.

We will continue to progress with our Shared Services Agreement with the office of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman to deliver key corporate functions of finance, budget, payroll and HR. A successful move to the Scottish Government eRDM system will derisk the Commission around its legacy data and records management system.

We will retain our "A Status" accreditation with the United Nations, including through dialogue with the Scottish Parliament where required.



Monitoring our impact

KPI framework

Performance of the Commission against these strategic objectives will be measured via a set of key performance indicators, approved and monitored by members of the Commission.

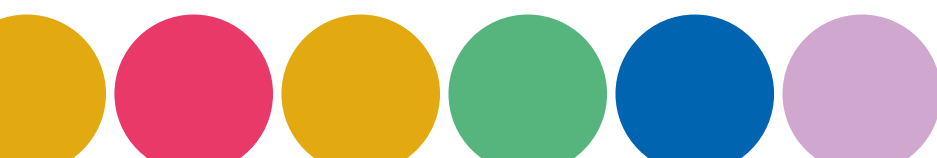
Quarterly reporting at Commission level against these key strategic performance indicators will provide a robust governance overview. Annual operational plans will be developed by the Commission team and sit beneath this Strategy.

A **Theory of Change** model for the Commission has been developed to inform the monitoring of impact across the 2024-28 strategic planning cycle. Commission staff will input into this on a monthly basis to track impact and contribution to embedding a stronger human rights culture in Scotland, where rights are protected and promoted, and there is accountability and learning where things go wrong.

Annual Reports to the Scottish Parliament

As required by Section 15 of the Scottish Commission for Human Rights Act 2006, the Commission will publish and lay an Annual Report before the Scottish Parliament to inform its scrutiny of the performance of the Commission.

The Commission will also participate in public evidence sessions with the Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee on its annual reporting.



Annual plans

The Commission will develop annual operational plans to deliver its strategic objectives for the next four years. While we will retain capacity to respond to emerging human rights challenges, draft outlines of the key anticipated content are included on the following pages.

Year One

In 2024/25 we will:

- Publish an annual operational plan
- Publish a report on economic, social and cultural rights in the Highlands and Islands
- Publish a report on deinstitutionalisation in Scotland
- Publish a report on human rights in places of detention in Scotland
- Conduct treaty monitoring
- Publish an annual State of the Nation report for Human Rights Day
- Prepare to implement the powers of the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024
- Influence the development and parliamentary scrutiny of the proposed Human Rights Bill
- Participate in the Finance and Public Administration Committee Inquiry: Scotland's Commissioner Landscape: A Strategic Approach
- Explore all options to extend the mandate of the Commission
- Develop a four year monitoring plan
- Induct a new Chair to the Commission for the period 2024-2030
- Recruit a new member of the Commission for the period 2024-2030
- Strengthen our input and relationship with the scrutiny work of the Scottish Parliament
- Scope new spotlight work
- Publish an Annual Report and Accounts

Year Two

In 2025/26 we will plan to:

- Publish an annual operational plan
- Complete year one spotlight reports
- Identify new spotlight work
- Conduct treaty monitoring
- Publish an Annual Report and Accounts
- Publish an annual State of the Nation report for Human Rights Day
- Support capacity building with public bodies ahead of Human Rights Bill implementation and monitoring
- Prepare to implement new powers as required by the Human Rights Bill as passed

Year Three

In 2026/27, we will plan to:

- Publish an annual operational plan
- Spotlights – evolve with new powers
- Conduct treaty monitoring
- Publish an Annual Report and Accounts
- Publish an annual State of the Nation report for Human Rights Day
- Continue to work on the implementation of Human Rights Bill powers and general functions of the Commission, as required by the Bill as passed

Year Four

In 2027/28 we plan to:

- Publish an annual operational plan
- Publish spotlight work
- Continue treaty monitoring work
- Publish an Annual Report and Accounts
- Publish an annual State of the Nation report for Human Rights Day
- Embed new powers and general functions of the Commission as required by the Human Rights Bill as passed
- Publish a four-year State of the Nation review
- Commission and publish a third evaluation of public attitudes to human rights

Financial plan 2024-28



The Commission submits its budget proposals on an annual basis for approval by the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB).

The forecast below is for four years, with the approved 2024-25 budget as a baseline, and includes indicative provision for annual uplift in staff costs of three per cent, and a two per cent indicative uplift in all other costs. These will be revised accordingly during the annual budget development process.

The Commission is a small organisation with a total staff complement of 14 FTE including officeholders. Around 80 per cent of the Commission's budget is in direct staff costs.

The objectives of this Strategy can be met within the 2024-28 financial plan. However, change is anticipated to the Commission's mandate and associated resource must follow to ensure any new requirements can be adequately addressed.

Indications of priority areas of work for the next four year period for the Commission as it transitions to an enhanced mandate have been noted below.

Scenario planning and independent business cases will inform any such requests to the SPCB and will inform the Financial Memorandum for the forthcoming Human Rights Bill and/or any review of the Scottish Commission for Human Rights Act 2006.

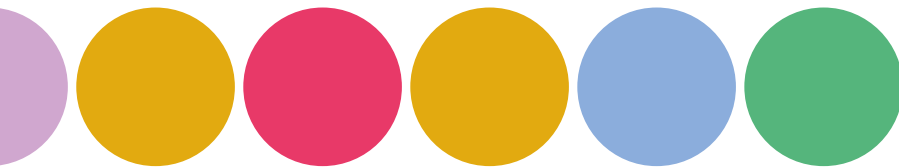
In addition, the financial memorandum for the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 indicates further resource for the Commission to deliver its new powers and general duties in respect of that Act. This will be reflected in the Commission's budget settlement in due course throughout 2024-25 as the Act reaches commencement stage. This is therefore not reflected in the financial plan below.

	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Strategic Priorities Costs	£185,120	£188,822	£192,599	£196,451
Staffing Costs	£1,175,000	£1,210,250	£1,246,558	£1,283,954
General Running Costs	£95,880	£97,798	£99,754	£101,749
Grand Total	£1,456,000	£1,496,870	£1,538,910	£1,582,154

Thank you

The Commission is grateful to the individuals and organisations who contributed to the development of this 2024-28 Strategic Plan.

The Commission also thanks the staff team for their work in both informing and producing this Strategic Plan.



Getting involved with our work

The Commission welcomes the opportunity to work with people and organisations affected by human rights issues, and our work to promote and protect human rights more generally. You can keep in touch in the following ways:

Website

More details about all of our work and publications can be found on our website at www.scottishhumanrights.com.

Social media

Follow us on our social media channels which are regularly updated with news, information about our work and links to other relevant human rights information:

- X (@ScotHumanRights)
- LinkedIn (Scottish Human Rights Commission)
- Instagram (@scothumanrights)
- Facebook (@scothumanrights)
- YouTube (@ScottishHumanRights)

Contact us

If you would like more information about any of the projects or policy areas we work on, please contact us in the following ways:

- Email hello@scottishhumanrights.com
- Telephone 0131 297 5750
- Write to us at Scottish Human Rights Commission, Bridgeside House, 99 McDonald Road, Edinburgh EH7 4NS.

Accessibility

We are committed to making our communications easy to use and accessible for everyone.

ReachDeck

Our website includes software called ReachDeck which provides reading, speech and translation support for a range of people, including those with dyslexia, low literacy, English as a second language and/or mild visual impairments. This service is free and will help users to read all the content available on our website.

To begin using ReachDeck, please visit our website and click on the ReachDeck button – a blue circle with a white figure inside it – to access the toolbar.

British Sign Language (BSL)

In Scotland, BSL users can access the Contact Scotland Video Relay Service (VRS) to contact all of Scotland's public bodies and third sector organisations for free. This service is available online via www.contactsotland-bsl.org. You can also download the app onto a range of devices, such as a smartphone or tablet.

A BSL translation of this Strategic Plan is available on our YouTube channel.

If you have any queries about other support needs or would like this publication in a different format, please contact us using the details on this page.



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