



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee

Stephen Boyle
Auditor General for Scotland
Audit Scotland

9 May 2025

Dear Stephen

The Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee has been examining Scotland's progress in advancing the rights of disabled people, particularly in relation to independent living, access to services, and the effectiveness of policy implementation at both national and local levels. We are writing to Audit Scotland to request an assessment of how public authorities are delivering on their human rights obligations in these areas, particularly in light of the findings from the Scottish Human Rights Commission's (SHRC) report *Tick Tock... A Human Rights Assessment of Progress from Institutionalisation to Independent Living in Scotland* and the lived experience evidence received by the Committee.

The Committee has heard concerns about the slow pace of deinstitutionalisation, barriers to accessing social care and SDS, workforce shortages, and a lack of alignment between national policy commitments and local implementation. Given Audit Scotland's role in ensuring transparency, accountability, and effective public spending, the Committee requests responses to questions around this area. In particular, the following issues require urgent scrutiny:

1. Funding and Resource Allocation - To what extent are current funding structures and resource distribution effectively supporting the transition from institutional models of care to independent living? Are public authorities allocating resources in a way that ensures Scotland meets its legal obligations?
2. Effectiveness of Self-Directed Support (SDS) - Given previous Audit Scotland reports on SDS, has there been measurable improvement in its implementation? How are local authorities ensuring that SDS is administered in a way that genuinely supports disabled people's right to independent living?
3. Workforce Capacity and Training - How are workforce shortages and training gaps in social care affecting the ability of disabled people to access services? Are public bodies effectively planning for workforce sustainability, and is there adequate funding to support fair pay and recruitment?
4. Local Authority Compliance with Human Rights Obligations - What evidence exists to show that local authorities are delivering services in a way that upholds their human rights obligations, particularly in relation to housing, social care, and education?

Contact: Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee, The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP. Email EHRCJ.committee@parliament.scot. We welcome calls through Relay UK and in BSL through Contact Scotland BSL.

5. Accountability Mechanisms - Are current oversight and accountability structures sufficient to ensure that disabled people's rights are being upheld in practice? What improvements could be made to strengthen public bodies' compliance with human rights-based approaches?

Given Audit Scotland's role in ensuring transparency, accountability, and effective public spending, we would welcome your insights into these matters. The Committee would also appreciate an update on any ongoing or planned audit work relating to these issues.

Moreover, the Committee would welcome your reflections on what you are doing to ensure your own work is informed by a human rights based approach. This is something that was raised by witnesses in the course of the Committee's evidence session on International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on 29 April and the Committee and it would be helpful if you could set out any plans in relation to embedding a human rights based approach.

We would be grateful for a response by June 2025 and look forward to discussing these matters further.

Yours sincerely

Karen Adam MSP
Convener