



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Officeholders – Appointment of Accountable Officer for the Scottish Human Rights Commission

1 June 2023

Reference: SPCB (2023) Paper 41

Executive summary

1. The Chair of the Scottish Human Rights Commission, Ian Duddy, has tendered his resignation which has been accepted by His Majesty. Ian's final day in office will be Friday 16 June 2023. Ian is to be the Chief Executive Officer of the Scottish Covid Inquiry.
2. A recruitment exercise will be undertaken for Mr Duddy's successor by a selection panel following the summer recess. The legislation establishing the Commission, the Scottish Commission for Human Rights Act 2006, does not provide for the appointment of an acting Chair given the Commission has other members who can continue to discharge the Commission's functions.
3. However, as there will be a vacancy of more than 4 weeks in the office of the accountable officer, the SPCB will have to appoint an accountable officer. We have approached the Chair to ask if there is an individual on his Senior Management Team (SMT) who would be willing and able to undertake the role of Accountable Officer and the Commissioner has recommended Jan Savage. The SPCB is invited to agree that Ms Savage be appointed as the Accountable Officer from 17 June 2023.

Accountable Officer

Accountable Officer

4. Under Schedule 1 paragraph 13(1) of the Scottish Commission for Human Rights Act 2006, the SPCB must designate a member of the Commission or of the Commission's staff as the Accountable Officer. The Commission has four members – a full-time Chair and 3 part-time members who work 1-

day a week. As the full-time member, Mr Duddy was appointed as the Accountable Officer.

5. The Accountable Officer is personally responsible for the propriety and regularity of the public finances of their office, must sign the accounts and ensure that the resources of the office are used economically, efficiently and effectively.
6. If there will be a vacancy in the office of the Accountable Officer of more than four weeks, the SPCB must appoint another Accountable Officer.
7. The Chair is a Royal appointment but as the SPCB is aware, it will be invited to set the terms and conditions of appointment for the new Chair.
8. The Commission is currently undertaking a governance review and as the SPCB will be aware, there is the potential for additional functions being given to the Commission as a result of the Human Rights Bill that will be brought forward this parliamentary session. We would hope to have the benefit of any recommendations from the governance review (which is due to report in June) when we bring forward the SPCB Paper on the Chair's terms and condition of appointment, but as the Commission's new staffing structure has now bedded in, the SPCB may wish to consider whether the full-time Executive Director, who is suitably qualified to undertake the accountable officer role, should continue in that role and remove the duties from the Chair's role.

Recommendation

9. The Chair was invited to recommend a member of his SMT to be the Accountable Officer and he has recommended Jan Savage.
10. Ms Savage is the Executive Director at the Commission and has extensive experience as a senior leader in areas including corporate governance, human rights, communications, public affairs, and participation work.

Governance

11. All governance issues have been considered.

Resource implications

12. We would recommend that Ms Savage be given a modest one-off payment of £1k for taking on the additional duties as a result of Mr Duddy's resignation. **Does the SPCB agree?**

Publication Scheme

13. This paper can be published after the SPCB has made its decision and the Accountable Officer appointment letter has been issued.

Decision

14. The SPCB is invited to-

- (i) appoint Jan Savage as the Commission's Accountable Officer from 17 June 2023, and
- (ii) agree that she be given a modest one-off payment of £1k for undertaking the role.

Officeholder Services

June 2023