



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body
Thursday 12 March 2026 (Session 6)

Inclusive Parliament Review – Dignity at Work

Executive summary

1. To present the findings and recommendations of the Dignity at Work Review, conducted as part of the Inclusive Parliament Review Programme, and invite the SPCB to agree next steps.
2. The review sets out a series of Parliament-wide recommendations to strengthen prevention, clarify expectations, modernise reporting routes and improve consistency of support across all employment groups.
3. The SPCB is invited to consider and agree the findings and recommendations, recognising both the strong foundation of positive practice and the seriousness of the issues requiring system-wide action.
4. The Inclusive Parliament Review: Review of our Dignity at Work Arrangements Report is provided in Annexe A to this paper. The report itself is accompanied by the following annexes:
 - Annex A: Terms of Reference for the Review of our Dignity at Work arrangements
 - Annex B: Inclusive Parliament Review update to MSPs and MSP staff from Presiding Officer
 - Annex C: Inclusive Parliament Review update to all SPCB staff from Chief Executive
 - Annex D: Dignity at Work Arrangements Survey 2026 Report
 - Annex E: Stakeholder Briefing - bullying, harassment, culture and behaviours
 - Annex F: Benchmarking with other legislatures – Policy and reporting arrangements and approach comparison
 - Annex G: Draft Zero tolerance statement
 - Annex H: Scottish Parliament complaints process
 - Annex I: Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme (ICGS) complaints handling process [independent service for UK Parliament]

Issues and options

Background

5. The Clerk/Chief Executive commissioned the Dignity at Work Review in light of strengthened statutory duties from the Worker Protection (Amendment of the Equality Act 2010) 2023 and forthcoming requirements within the Employment Rights Act 2025.
6. The review assesses whether current arrangements across Parliament are sufficiently robust, accessible and aligned with Parliament's commitment to dignity, respect and courtesy for all who work in, interact with and visit Parliament.

Key elements of the review

7. The review assessed:
 - the clarity and accessibility of current policies
 - confidence in reporting processes
 - the support available to MSPs, MSP staff and SPCB staff
 - opportunities to strengthen early resolution
 - consistency of induction and understanding of behavioural expectations.

Review findings

8. The review identifies clear areas of strength. Staff consistently described positive, supportive team environments and a strong sense of value and respect in their immediate teams. Many managers were recognised for creating inclusive psychologically safe cultures. MSPs who contributed to the review demonstrated openness, constructive challenge and a strong commitment to ensuring that Parliament is a safe and professional place to work. Staff engagement highlighted many examples of thoughtful leadership and day-to-day behaviours aligned with the SPCB's values.
9. Alongside these strengths, the evidence highlights serious structure weaknesses, particularly in relation to reporting arrangements, the support available to MSP staff, and the consistency with which behavioural standards operate across different employment groups. Addressing these issues is essential to meet statutory duties, rebuild confidence and reduce the risk of further harm.
10. Evidence from surveys, engagement activity and confidential disclosures highlights significant barriers to speaking up, inconsistent levels of support, and a longstanding perception that concerns involving MSPs are less likely to be addressed consistently.
11. It is important to recognise the unique employment arrangements that exist at Parliament. Unlike organisations operating under a single employer and unified governance structure, Parliament comprises multiple and distinct employment models: MSPs are individual employers; Parliamentary Groups have their own staffing structures; and the SPCB is the employer for parliamentary staff. These

REFERENCE: SPCB (2026) – Paper 22

differing responsibilities limit the extent to which Parliament can adopt a centrally controlled, uniform approach. Policies, expectations and reporting routes must therefore work effectively across different legal contexts, management arrangements and levels of support.

Review recommendations

12. The Review identifies a number of systemic and cultural barriers that limit the effectiveness and consistency of current Dignity at Work arrangements. These include challenges arising from multiple employment models, inconsistent reporting routes, variable levels of support, and cultural factors that may reduce confidence in speaking up. The evidence indicates that these issues have persisted over time and require coordinated action to be addressed effectively.
13. In light of strengthened statutory duties and the expectations placed on employers – SPCB, MSPs, Parliamentary Groups - by both the law and the public, there is a clear urgency to ensure that their arrangements are robust, fair and aligned with legal and public expectations. The full set of actions proposed to achieve this is provided in the accompanying Review Report, and SPCB members are invited to consider and agree these in full.
14. Together, these measures will support the SPCB, MSPs and Parliamentary Groups to meet their obligations, protect staff, and uphold a safe, respectful and courteous environment across the parliamentary community.
15. **Action: The SPCB is invited to consider the findings and recommendations set out in the Review Report.**

Governance

16. Governance considerations, including equalities, legal duties and health and safety requirements, have been central to the review. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed and will continue to be refined as work progresses. Identified impacts relate primarily to the experiences of underrepresented groups and will inform implementation planning.
17. This work sits within the wider Inclusive Parliament Review programme, with routine reporting provided through quarterly performance reports and updates to the SPCB.
18. Legal duties arising from the Worker Protection Act 2023 and the Employment Rights Act 2025 were key drivers for the review. They place strengthened responsibilities on employers regarding prevention, reporting, whistleblowing and transparency. Health and safety considerations, including the duty to provide a safe working environment, were also integral to the review's assessment.

Resource implications

19. The work is being delivered within existing staffing and budgetary resources. No additional resources are required at this stage. Any resource implications arising

REFERENCE: SPCB (2026) – Paper 22

from implementation of the recommendations will be assessed and presented in line with SPCB's governance arrangements as part of the next phase of work.

Publication Scheme

20. It is proposed that this cover paper is published in line with the SPCB's Publication Scheme once the SPCB has considered the report and agreed the recommendations. The final review report will also be published.

Next steps

21. Subject to the SPCB agreeing the report and proposed recommendations. The next steps will include:

- Finalise report for publication.
- Joint letter issued from Presiding Officer and the Clerk/Chief Executive to MSPs and their staff, and SPCB staff including Review Report.
- Implementation planning.
- Engaging with the SPPA Committee in Session 7 on areas requiring their consideration.
- Developing further communication and induction materials.
- Providing further updates to the portfolio member and SPCB as work progresses.

Decision

22. The SPCB is invited to:

- consider the Dignity at Work Review report findings and its recommendations; and
- agree to progress to implementation planning, with further updates to the SPCB as required.

Director of People, Communications and Inclusion
March 2026