



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Equalities and Human Rights Committee

Work Programme

September 2017 – June 2018

The EHRC's work programme for the period September 2017 to June 2018 will include the following work themes—

1. [Scrutiny](#) of Scottish Government's proposed budget for the financial year 2018 to 2019 with a focus on delivering equalities and human rights;
2. Ongoing consider the impact of withdrawal from the European Union on equalities and human rights in Scotland (Brexit);
3. [Scrutiny](#) of the Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Bill;
4. [Scrutiny](#) of the Historical Sexual Offences (Pardons and Disregards) (Scotland) Bill;
5. [Consideration](#) of how the Scottish Parliament scrutinises human rights;
6. [Consideration](#) of Prisoner Voting in Scotland; and
7. Inquiries into the transition from education into employment for young people with protected characteristics or who may have difficulty accessing employment due to language or social origin or other personal attributes.

Some key principles will underpin our work. The EHRC will seek to—

- consider both equality and human rights aspects through each piece of work we undertake;
- review our progress annually, or more frequently if circumstances dictate;
- focus on where our work can add the most value, avoiding unnecessary duplication; and

- complement the work being undertaken by key organisations and other parliamentary committees.

We have also identified some other themes of interest—

- the commencement of the socio-economic duty in Scotland;¹
- the Public Sector Equality Duty;²
- additional powers devolved to Scotland which enable the Equality Act 2010 to be added to;³
- the UN concluding observations.⁴

Please Note: this programme may be liable to amendment at short notice to take account of other parliamentary business which may be referred to EHRC, such as primary and secondary legislation, or other topical subjects which might arise. Revisions to the work programme will be published as soon as possible.

Notification alerts and calls for evidence

To keep up to date on our work please follow the Committee on Twitter: [@SP_EHRC](#)

If you wish to be included in our email distribution lists for our calls for evidence on our work, or to receive our newsletters, please send your email address to: equalities.humanrights@parliament.scot

Your data will be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998

Committee meetings

When the Scottish Parliament is [sitting](#) the EHRC normally meets at 9.30am each Thursday morning. Meetings are usually [open to the public](#) and are

¹ The socio-economic duty was established by Section 1 of the Equality Act 2010 but is not yet in force. It is a legal duty on public authorities to consider the impact that their decisions will have on narrowing socio-economic inequalities. The Scottish Government has given an undertaking to implement the socio-economic for public authorities in Scotland: <http://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/priorities-speech-taking-scotland-forward>

² The Public Sector Equality Duty was established by Section 1 of the Equality Act 2010 and came into force in April 2011. It is a legal duty on public authorities to, amongst other things, promote equality, prevent discrimination and Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic (As set out in the Equality Act 2010) and those who do not: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-equality-duty>

³ Sections [37](#) and [38](#) of the Scotland Act 2016 devolved new powers to the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Ministers in terms of equal opportunities and the public sector duty regarding socio-economic inequalities. One of this is the power to implement the socio-economic duty in Scotland.

⁴ UN Concluding Observations are assessments made of the implementation of core international human rights treaties by a state which is party to those treaties (such as the United Kingdom). Concluding Observations are issued by the respective treaty body set up to monitor their implementation. More information on the treaty bodies is available here: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/Pages/TreatyBodies.aspx>

[broadcast](#) on the Parliament's website. Papers for the [next meeting](#) of the Committee, as well as for [previous meetings](#), are available online.

Contact the Committee

If you wish to contact the EHRC, please contact the clerks to the Committee by email at: equalities.humanrights@parliament.scot. You can also telephone the clerking team on 0131 348 5223 or 0131 348 6040.

You can write to the Committee at:

Equalities and Human Rights Committee
Room T3.40
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh EH99 1SP

Committee Work Programme September 2017 – June 2018

Title	Committee Intent / Action Undertaken
Scrutiny of the draft budget for financial year 2018 to 2019	We are examining the Scottish Government's 2018/19 budget proposals with a view to looking at how the budgetary process can best support and deliver equalities and human rights. This will build on the recommendations of the Budget Process Review Group.
Impact of the UK's withdrawal from the European Union (EU) on equalities and human rights in Scotland (Brexit)	We are continuing to monitor the potential impact the UK's withdrawal from the EU will have on equalities and human rights by holding a series of scoping session to gather information on. It is likely we will hold a further session on this topic in the run up to, and following, the UK's withdrawal.
Human Rights and the Scottish Parliament inquiry	<p>When the Scottish Parliament was founded, it was written into the Scotland Act 1998 that all laws we make must be compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998. Human rights issues have always been considered by the Parliamentary committees, but in 2016 they were added to the remit of a single committee. The Equal Opportunities Committee became the Equalities and Human Rights Committee, with a particular responsibility for looking at human rights issues.</p> <p>We will conduct an inquiry to examine how the Parliament can adopt the best possible approach to considering human rights. The inquiry will consider human rights under three main themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation and engagement, • Parliamentary procedure and process, and • Accountability <p>We are undertaking a phased approach to this work. Phase one will seek written briefing on the scrutiny of human rights and equalities by other legislatures in the UK; international comparisons of best practice in the monitoring and scrutiny of human rights, and baseline information on UN concluding observations relevant to Scotland. This information would then inform the next phase.</p> <p>Phase two will seek the views of an expert panel to shape the engagement activities and public evidence gathering. We will also undertake</p>

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	engagement exercises at locations around Scotland, as well as undertake a fact-finding visit to European Institutions, based in Strasbourg.
Prisoner Voting	On foot of a request from Patrick Harvie MSP in June 2017 regarding the issue of prisoner voting, we will undertake an examination of the issue of the ban on prisoner voting in Scotland in the wake on both UK and ECHR court rulings on this issue. We aim to report on this issue by summer 2018.
Transition from education into work	<p>We intend to target an intersectional theme (where two or more equality characteristics combine).</p> <p>Through our stakeholder evidence sessions we identified the transition from education to work as a key area of focus. This will enable the Committee to pursue discreet inquiry areas within this theme, allowing us to build on the work already agreed. This will also facilitate some follow-up work on inquiries undertaken by previous Equal Opportunities Committees.</p> <p>We plan to hold a series of mini-inquiries in the early part of the session to identify gaps and highlight best practice. These will continue throughout 2018.</p>
Follow-up work	<p>We will be following up on the recommendations we made from our budget scrutiny and inquiry work in 2017, on-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universities and disability: 2017-18 draft budget scrutiny; • Destitution, asylum and insecure immigration status in Scotland; • Bullying and harassment of children and young people in schools; <p>We are specifically looking at progress made with recommendations concerning Scotland's Gypsy Traveller communities.</p> <p>Throughout our work programme we will take opportunities to follow-up work undertaken by previous Equal Opportunities Committees, where relevant.</p>

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Scrutiny, partnership and oversight	We will also take evidence from the Equalities and Human Rights Commission, the Scottish Human Rights Commission and the Commissioner for Children and Young People in Scotland on their annual work programmes. This will be scheduled for mid-2018.
Other work	<p>Apart from the items listed above, we expect to consider other items as a matter of course, such as-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Petitions; • Subordinate legislation; • Legislative consent memoranda; • European issues (other than Brexit).