



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Christina McKelvie MSP  
Convener  
Equalities and Human Rights  
Committee

Via email

**Health and Sport Committee**

T3.60  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

Tel: 0131 348 5224

Calls via RNID Typetalk: 18001 0131 348 5224

Email: [healthandsport@parliament.scot](mailto:healthandsport@parliament.scot)

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Dear Christina

### **Inquiry into Human Rights and the Scottish Parliament**

Thank you for your letter to the Health and Sport Committee in relation to your above inquiry. My Committee having discussed your request have asked me to reply in the following terms.

The Committee welcomes this work by the Equalities and Human Rights Committee and considers it timely that this Parliament considers how well we have been taking human rights into account in all of our work and what more we could be doing to take them into account throughout our scrutiny functions.

As a Committee this session we have been mindful of human rights implications in aspects of work notably when scrutinising prison healthcare. It has also been a factor during our short looks at the provision and delivery of social care and mental health. Throughout each of those pieces of work we have been able to hear directly from service users and others directly affected.

Our predecessor Committee from last session could point to a number of areas where consideration of human rights was fundamental to legislative scrutiny they undertook, perhaps most notably when considering Bills seeking the right to die, organ donation and mental health.

You also ask about barriers to consideration of human rights issues and here we would point to a general absence of awareness of the rights and how they could or perhaps should apply. This lack of awareness probably, in general, exists across all

of our stakeholders as well as with the Committee. We wonder if this is an area in which the Scottish Human Rights Commission could assist in some way by raising awareness and delivering training.

As a Committee we are expecting to consider two pieces of legislation this year and we would expect human rights issues to be a factor in each. We are unclear as to the extent to which current procedures require impacts to be assessed and presented clearly against human rights and this is an area we anticipate we will be looking at closely throughout our scrutiny.

I hope these comments are helpful and the Committee wishes you well with this important piece of work, not least with the implications that will inevitably arise from the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lewis Macdonald". The signature is written in a cursive style with a blue underline under the first letter of "Lewis".

Lewis Macdonald  
Convener, Health and Sport Committee