

Recruitment Information

**Legal Officer**

Full time: 37 hours per week.

**March 2017**

# About the Scottish Human Rights Commission

**The Scottish Human Rights Commission is an independent public body with a broad remit to promote and protect human rights for everyone in Scotland. We are independent of government and parliament. We work as part of the United Nations (UN) human rights system, monitoring and reporting on human rights issues in Scotland.**

We work on a range of legal, policy and practical issues which affect people’s human rights in Scotland. We also coordinate and support the delivery of Scotland’s National Action Plan for Human Rights, now in its fourth year.

The Commission is accredited within the UN system as an “A Status” National Human Rights Institution. This enables us to report directly to the UN on human rights issues that affect people’s lives in Scotland.

The Commission was established by the Scottish Commission for Human Rights Act as an independent body with a number of general functions, including a general duty to promote awareness, understanding and respect for human rights, and to monitor law, policy and practice. The Commission also has certain legal powers. These include the power to conduct inquiries into the operations of Scottish public authorities, and the power to intervene in some civil proceedings.

Our Strategic Plan for 2016-2020 is available on our website at the following link: [www.scottishhumanrights.com/about/strategicplan](http://www.scottishhumanrights.com/about/strategicplan)

# About the Job

## General

**Job Title:** Legal Officer

**Working Pattern:** Full time

**Duration:** Permanent

**Team:** Strategy and Legal

**Reports to:** Head of Strategy and Legal

**Location:** Edinburgh

Occasional travel to other parts of Scotland and the UK may be required. Attendance at evening or weekend events may be required from time to time.

**Salary banding:** Grade 5 (£41,649 - £51,144)

## Overall purpose

To deliver professional and effective legal advisory and support services to the Commission. The role is also to develop and lead the Commission’s work in relation to its statutory legal functions of interventions in civil proceedings and conducting of inquiries.

## Key responsibilities

**1.** To provide advice on human rights law and the law of Scotland in support of all of the Commission’s work, in particular by contributing a human rights analysis to law and policy development and parliamentary engagement.

**2.** Where requested by the Commission, to develop, monitor, conduct reviews and initiate inquiries into the policies or practices of any Scottish public authority, ensuring that a legally compliant and methodologically robust approach is taken at all times.

**3.** To develop and lead the Commission’s work on strategic interventions in civil proceedings. This will require where requested by the Commission, and at the invitation of or with the leave of the court, to instruct interventions in court proceedings, support or oversee the development of any submissions arising in proceedings and any associated investigatory work.

**4**. To lead the Commission’s policy and external engagement activity in relation to issues related to civil and criminal justice and human rights, supported by other members of the team as appropriate.

**5.** To support other activities of team members, ensuring that all of the Commission’s work is informed by high quality advice on human rights law and the law of Scotland.

**6.** To work with other team members on the delivery of effective advisory, guidance, training and information to the public and other stakeholders, ensuring that awareness, understanding and respect of human rights in Scotland is promoted and enhanced.

**7.** To participate in ad hoc research activities to support the work of team members, ensuring that all research is carried out to a high standard using robust methodology and incorporating best practice.

**8.** To advise the Commission on compliance with the Scottish Commission for Human Rights Act 2006, as amended, at all times.

**9.** To advise the Commission on the requirements of the UN “Paris Principles” and international best practice among national human rights institutions; to contribute to the Commission’s engagement with the accreditation process of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) , and to support the Commission’s broader engagement with the GANHRI and the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI) where appropriate.

**10.** To support formal relationships between the Commission and other public bodies, including through advising on Memoranda of Understanding such as that between EHRC Scotland and the Commission.

**11.** Project management, potentially including budgetary oversight, within delegated authority within the context of the Commission’s operational planning.

**These are not intended to be exhaustive, but they highlight a number of major tasks that the post-holder may be reasonably expected to undertake.**

# Person Specification

## Qualifications

### Essential

**1.** Law Degree, ideally in Scots law.

**2.** Qualified as a solicitor, advocate or other equivalent legal professional, ideally Scots law qualified.

### Desirable

**3.** Human Rights qualification, ideally at post-graduate level.

## Experience

### Essential

**1**. Considerable (c. 5-7 years minimum PQE) experience as a practising lawyer, with exposure to the field of human rights.

**2.** Demonstrable up to date knowledge of human rights law, Scots law, court proceedings and general human rights issues.

**3.** Experience of translating legal documents into comprehensible public/stakeholder information.

**4.** Legal and policy research and analysis skills and experience.

### Desirable

**5.** Experience of working with public authorities, including government and parliament.

**6.** Project management experience and skills.

**7.** Experience of working with civil society and marginalised people.

## Competencies

### Essential

**1.** Excellent oral and written communication skills with ability to translate complex issues into accessible communications.

**2.** Demonstrable project development, delivery and leadership skills.

**3.** Applied political awareness with ability to advise on organisational responses to external environment.

**4.** Confidential and sensitive approach with a demonstrable ability to work with a wide range of people.

**5.** Well developed organisational skills with ability to prioritise workload and meet deadlines.

**6.** Able to work independently but also within a small team.

**7.** Attention to detail.

**8.** Excellent IT skills.

**9.** Flexible approach.

# Structure

The Commission consists of a full time Chair and three part time Commissioners, supported by eleven members of staff.

Chair

Business Manager

Communications and Participation Manager

Finance Assistant

Executive Assistant – Commission (PT)

Participation Coordinator (PT)

Commissioners x 3 (PT)

Head of Strategy

and Legal

Legal Officer

Research

Officer

Legal Officer –

Human Rights Based Approach

Policy

Officer

Executive Assistant – Projects (PT)

Communications Assistant (PT)

# Benefits

## Working Hours

This is a full time post. Working 37 hours per week.

## Flexible working

The Commission operates flexitime hours for all employees. The flexible working starting time band is 08:00 – 10:00 and the end time band is 16:00-19:00 Monday to Friday. Employees must be at work during the core hours of 10:00 – 12:00 and 14:00 – 16:00.

## Pay structure

The Legal Officer role is a grade 5 role within our pay structure.

Grade 5 (£41,649 - £51,144)

## Pension

Commission employees are eligible to join the Civil Service Pension scheme. From 1 April 2015, a new Civil Service pension scheme - Alpha - was introduced. Alpha is a Career Average pension scheme.

## Annual Leave

30 days annual leave

## Commitment to CPD

The Commission has a strong commitment to training and professional development and you will have access to training courses in core skills as well as policies to support continuing professional development.

# How to Apply

To apply for this position, please send a completed application form to the Commission, either:

By email: [recruitment@scottishhumanrights.com](mailto:recruitment@scottishhumanrights.com)

By post: FAO Executive Assistant

Scottish Human Rights Commission

Governor’s House

Regent Road

EH1 3DE

Download Application Forms at

<http://www.scottishhumanrights.com/news/opportunities>

Applications should demonstrate how you meet the criteria for the role as outlined in the job description and person specification.

If you need to provide information in a different format please contact us to discuss.

## Key Dates

The deadline for applications is 12 noon on **Monday 24 April 2017**

Interviews will take place on **Thursday 11 May 2017** in Edinburgh.

## Participation in interview

Reasonable travel expenses for standard class travel within the UK may be claimed by candidates shortlisted to attend interview.

Shortlisted candidates based outside of the UK can participate in interview by Skype.

## Equality and Diversity

If you would like to discuss adjustments to the recruitment process that would enable your participation please contact Clare Nicolson on 0131 244 3550 or by email to [recruitment@scottishhumanrights.com](mailto:recruitment@scottishhumanrights.com)

## Disclosure and Pre-Appointment Checks

The successful candidate for this post will be asked to apply for Baseline Security Clearance and a Basic Level Disclosure Scotland Certificate and/ or a country equivalent if the candidate has lived in another country in the past three years. We will undertake pre-appointment checks of references, ID and any education certificates listed in the application form. Confirmation of employment will be subject to these checks being completed satisfactorily. The Commission will facilitate and cover the cost of the checks and certificates. If you want to discuss this requirement, in confidence, at any time please contact Clare Nicolson by calling 0131 244 3550 or by email to [recruitment@scottishhumanrights.com](mailto:recruitment@scottishhumanrights.com) .