

Ms Kaukab Stewart  
Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP  
Via email to: [ehrcj.committee@parliament.scot](mailto:ehrcj.committee@parliament.scot)

August 2023

Dear Ms Stewart

## **Pre-Budget Scrutiny 2024-25**

As you are aware, the Scottish Human Rights Commission is the National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) for Scotland and has a general duty to promote human rights for everyone in Scotland. This requires us to monitor carefully developments in Scottish policy and legislation and ensure that we deploy our resource effectively in the pursuance of our mandate.

We are aware of the survey from the Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee on the general awareness and understanding of the impact of the Scottish Government's spending and taxation plans on rights holders.

Given this welcome focus in the Committee's Pre-Budget Scrutiny on responses from the general public this year, the Commission will not submit a response to the survey. The Commission will however be submitting evidence to the Social Justice and Social Security Committee and the Criminal Justice Committee to inform their Pre-Budget Scrutiny process.

However, the Commission would like to welcome the EHRCJ Committee's focus on how it can involve the public more in its scrutiny of the Scottish Government's spending plans. Fiscal policies are often perceived to be inaccessible to most people. Understanding how much the people of Scotland know about the Budget and which areas affect them is an important step towards meaningful participation.

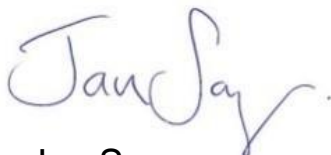
A key element of a Human Rights Based Approach is Participation: People should be involved in decisions that affect their rights. As the budget is the government's key policy document that sets out how it intends to invest in its priorities, it is critical that decisions are informed by citizen participation.

Meaningful participation, as well as accessible information, implemented throughout the policy cycle, from design of budgets and tax codes to allocation of expenditure, implementation, and evaluation, can help improve this accessibility.

The participation of rights-holders as an "informal oversight mechanism" can help to strengthen the formal oversight provided by Parliamentary Committees. They can provide and shine a light on the perspective of lived experience, in particular, where that lived experience is being failed by poor budgetary processes and/or decisions.

We, therefore, very much welcome the Committee's focus this year and would welcome the opportunity to discuss the findings of this scrutiny when available.

Kind regards



Jan Savage

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