

SHRC

Scottish
Human Rights
Commission

Annual Report

2022-23

What next for human rights in Scotland?

Human Rights Bill for Scotland;

Human Rights

accountability; cost of living

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The new Human Rights Bill for Scotland is a landmark opportunity to build a country where all people can live with human dignity.

The opportunity to strengthen human rights obligations in Scots Law presents a moment to reflect on the whole system - legislation, policy and resources - required to make human rights real. We hear all too often that when it comes to human rights in Scotland, the warm words of rhetoric rarely match the cold, harsh reality of lived experience.

In the year 2022 to 2023 the Commission has refocused its priorities on addressing this gap. We have undertaken a major programme of strategic and operational transformation to support the realisation of a society where everyone can name and claim their rights.

Over the year ahead we will work with and for the people of Scotland to bring their rights to life.”

Jim Farish, Shelley Gray, Claire Methven O’Brien
Members of the Scottish Human Rights Commission

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It has been a year of significant change and positive development for the Commission. As its first Executive Director, I look forward to leading the team to work together with the Members of the Commission and our next Chair to deliver an ambitious Strategic Plan for 2024-28. Together, we look forward to delivering greater accountability in the protection and promotion of human rights in Scotland.”

Jan Savage
Executive Director

SHRC

Foreword

Transition – that has been the theme of the year 2022-23 for the Commission and for Scotland. Not least, there's been an increasingly divergent human rights agenda at Westminster and Holyrood, including UK Government proposals to repeal the Human Rights Act, the foundation through which all our rights are protected in law.

It's also true that, whilst Scotland has developed a strong human rights narrative in policy and legislation since 2006, its impact hasn't yet been fully felt in progressive outcomes in people's lives.

Currently, there is a movement to establish a series of new public bodies (Commissions and/or Commissioners) in Scotland to uphold the rights of particular groups of people. The Commission believes this should be seen as a positive challenge to reform accountability mechanisms and the ways individuals can access justice around systematic denials of their human rights.

The Commission is part of that system and so it must look to itself also. Our mandate grants some powers to intervene in legal cases, conduct inquiries, inspect places of detention, and protect and promote human rights. But these powers have significant restrictions. For example, the Commission is the only human rights body in the UK which cannot provide advice to individuals or raise legal proceedings with duty bearers. And in reality, the Commission is a small team with limited resources – but with limitless ambition to serving the people of Scotland.

The Commission has called for the strengthening of human rights laws in Scotland for more than a decade, leading up to the key moment in June 2023, when the Scottish Government launched its proposals for a new Human Rights Bill. This is also a rare opportunity to reshape the mandate, powers and function of the Commission. Ultimately, that is a decision for the Scottish Parliament, but the Commission is clear it is ready and willing to step up to the challenge, and to play a key role in the national conversation about the systems, powers and processes that are needed to truly make rights real.

At operational level, the Commission appointed its first Executive Director this year, who took up the role in January 2023. This key role has provided stability to its operations and governance. The Executive Director has delivered leadership of the team's work to shape an ambitious transition plan for 2023/24, and oversight of the successful delivery of an independent Governance Review.

The Commission made the decision to appoint an independent expert to undertake a review of its governance arrangements in early 2023. This reflects a wider process of transformation to ensure the Commission is as effective as possible in its role as Scotland's National Human Rights Institution (NHRI). The Commission has welcomed the conclusion of the independent Governance Review and its recommendations as they relate to the Commission.

The process of implementing these recommendations has already begun. The Governance Review recognises that the Commission is already on a positive trajectory in 2023.

We would like to thank the outgoing Chair Ian Duddy for leading the Commission during 2022-23 and all Commission Members and staff who served the organisation.

As a Commission, we have sought to bring a renewed focus on the purpose, priorities, visibility, impact and engagement of the organisation as a public body tasked with protecting and promoting human rights in Scotland.

Significant progress has been made, with a focus on strengthening the foundations of the Commission and the adoption of a Transition Plan in March 2023 for the year ahead.

We will continue to bear witness and to report on areas of concern, taking an evidence-based approach to human rights. The Commission has identified four key areas which we will spotlight in the year ahead which are:

- ➔ Access to Justice
- ➔ Human rights of prisoners, with a focus on access to mental health support
- ➔ Human rights of people who have learning disabilities and autism detained in hospital and group settings
- ➔ Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of people in the Highlands and Islands

We will also be developing the Commission's fifth Strategic Plan, which will be laid before Parliament in early 2024. To inform this, the Commission is already testing new ways of working and will engage with key stakeholders, and visit communities across Scotland to look at human rights issues at a local level and to gather evidence to guide our areas of focus.

It has been a year of significant change and positive development for the Commission. We look forward to working together with the whole team and our next Chair to deliver an ambitious Strategic Plan for 2024-28. Together we will work hard to protect and promote the human rights of the people of Scotland.

Jim Farish, Shelley Gray, Claire Methven O'Brien
Members of the Scottish Human Rights Commission



Jan Savage

Executive Director and Accountable Officer
Scottish Human Rights Commission



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About the Commission

About the Commission

The Commission keeps watch over human rights in Scotland. We strive for a fairer society where everyone can live with human dignity.

We are an independent, expert body that works for the people of Scotland; we investigate, listen, speak up for rights and respond when things go wrong.

We also guide those with responsibility for human rights and hold them to account to fulfil their duties, including the Scottish Government, local authorities and other public bodies.

Human rights empower people to realise their individual and collective potential. It is our vision to build a Scotland where all people can name and claim their rights and public services are designed to achieve this. Our work is rooted within the human rights based [PANEL principles](#).

Participation

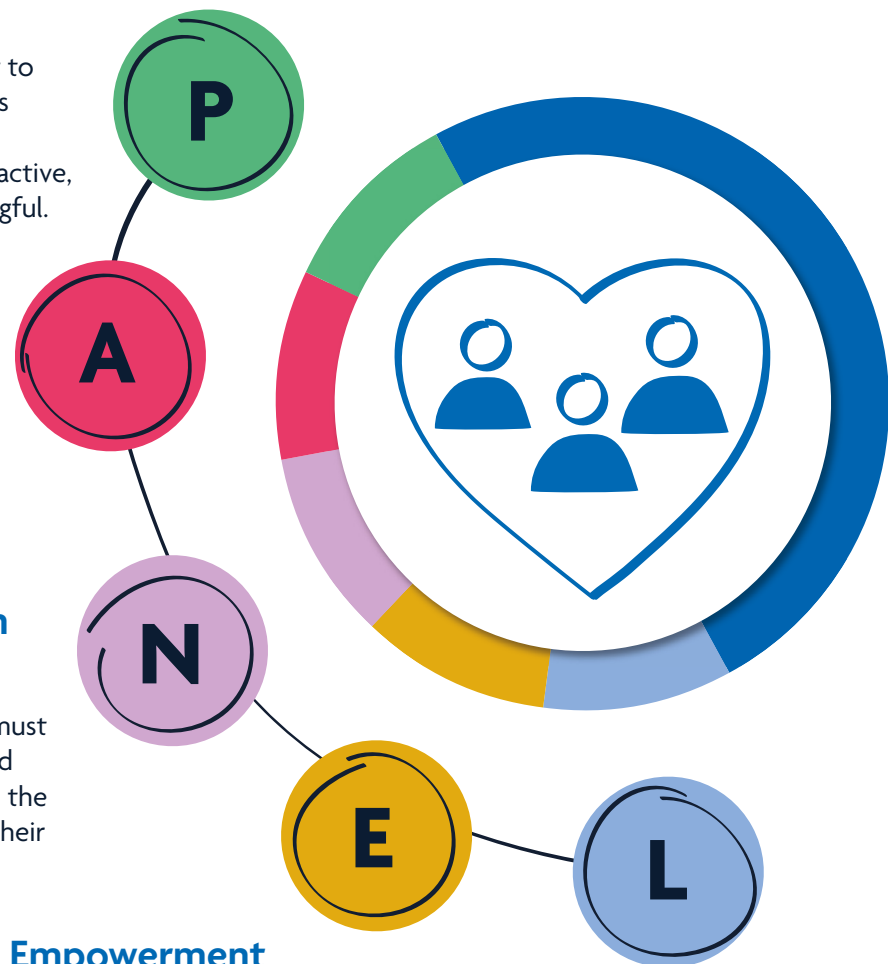
Everyone has the right to participate in decisions which affect them. Participation must be active, accessible and meaningful.

Accountability

There should be monitoring of how people's rights are being affected, as well as remedies when things go wrong.

Non-discrimination and equality

All forms of discrimination must be prohibited, prevented and eliminated. People who face the biggest barriers to realising their rights should be prioritised.



Empowerment

Everyone is entitled to claim and exercise their rights. Individuals and communities should be fully supported to take part in developing policy and practices which affect their lives.

Legality

Approaches should be grounded in the legal rights set out in domestic and international laws.

Our mandate

The Commission is a public body, funded by but fully independent of the Scottish Parliament. Our legal mandate is laid out in the [Scottish Commission for Human Rights Act 2006](#).

Our main functions, powers and duties are:

- ✓ To promote awareness, understanding and respect for all human rights to everyone, everywhere in Scotland, and to encourage best practice in relation to human rights
- ✓ To recommend changes to law, policy and practice
- ✓ To promote human rights through education, training and publishing research
- ✓ To intervene in relevant civil court cases
- ✓ To conduct inquiries into the policies and practices of Scottish public authorities
- ✓ To promote and protect the human rights guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), which form part of the law of Scotland through the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Scotland Act 1998, as well as other human rights which are guaranteed by international conventions ratified by the United Kingdom (UK)

Scotland's National Human Rights Institution

The Commission is also part of the international human rights system, We are accredited with 'A' status as Scotland's National Human Rights Institution (NHRI).

'A' status gives the Commission the right to speak at the United Nations and report directly on how human rights are being experienced in Scotland, completely independently of the Scottish Government.

'A' status is designated by a committee of peer NHRIs from around the world, following an extensive review of the Commission and our work in Scotland, under the umbrella of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) and the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. [The SHRC's most recent accreditation report](#) commends our work and recommends increases to the Commission's resources and changes to its underpinning legislation to strengthen its operations.



The Paris Principles

NHRIs are accredited with an internationally-accepted quality label, on the basis of our compliance with a set of standards called the [UN Paris Principles](#).

The key pillars of the Paris Principles are pluralism, independence and effectiveness.

The Paris Principles require the Commission to:

- ➔ be given the power to promote and protect human rights and have as broad a mandate as possible;
- ➔ have a foundation in national law;
- ➔ have autonomy from the government with independence guaranteed by statute or constitution;
- ➔ have a mandate based in universal human rights standards;
- ➔ demonstrate pluralism and independence in the selection and appointment of members;
- ➔ have adequate resources and adequate powers of investigation; and
- ➔ have a responsibility to work with both civil society and the state.

Our Priorities



Our Priorities

Our Strategic Plan 2020-2024

The Commission operates against four-year Strategic Plans, which are developed with internal dialogue, external consultation with relevant actors, approved by Members of the Commission and laid before the Scottish Parliament.

The Commission's fourth Strategic Plan was published in March 2020 and became operational in 2020-21. It established four Strategic Priorities for the Commission's work from 2020-2024:

- 1** Progressing understanding and strengthening legal protection of economic, social and cultural rights
- 2** Strengthening accountability for meeting human rights obligations
- 3** Building wider ownership of human rights
- 4** Advancing best practice locally and sharing our learning globally



The SHRC team at work on strategic priorities.

These priorities were the basis for Commission activity during 2023.

The reporting period of this Annual Report captures an overview of the activities and associated impact in 2022-23 against those priorities.

It also contains year-to-date updates on the Commission's activities in the calendar year 2023 under the leadership of the new Commission members and Executive Director.







Purpose, People and Performance

For 2023-24, the Commission under its new leadership developed a supplementary internal Transition Strategy to support the Commission in moving forward towards increased impact and engagement. This identifies key priorities for the final year of the 2020-24 Strategic Plan period and secures a steady transition to the next Strategic Plan.

The Transition Strategy focuses on 'Purpose, People, Performance.' These priorities reflect the Commission's external environment, the arrival of new leadership in the Commission and the need to strengthen the operations and governance of the Commission ready for the opportunities ahead.

A set of key performance indicators (KPIs) and a performance scorecard were developed. These are monitored quarterly by the members of the Commission to track progress and delivery against the Commission's mandate.

In 2023-24 the Commission will deliver on the following three key strategic objectives.

SHRC Strategic Objectives 2023-24	
Strategic Theme	Strategic Objective
	 <p>Increase impact, visibility and maximise capacity of the Commission as Scotland's human rights watchdog</p>
	 <p>Ensure the Commission is fully resourced with a skilled, supported, valued and stable workforce.</p>
	 <p>Be a trusted, authoritative, accessible and credible public body which can demonstrate impact for rights holders and effective use of public funds.</p>

Focused work across the Commission is being undertaken to enable delivery against these objectives. The Commission's outputs are being structured accordingly into key thematic programme areas. This is being supported by strategic influencing and stakeholder engagement plans to increase the impact and visibility of its work. Finally, work to strengthen its Corporate Governance foundations is being delivered to ready the Commission for its next formal strategic planning cycle 2024-28.

Our Transition Strategy 2023-24: 'One Commission'



Vision, Mission and Values

Purpose, People, Performance

Priorities

Thematic
Approach

Stakeholder
Engagement
& Influence

Corporate
Governance

Strategic Enablers



Our priorities for 2020-24

Progressing understanding and strengthening legal protection of economic, social and cultural rights

Strengthening accountability for meeting human rights obligations

Building wider ownership of human rights

Advancing best practice locally and sharing our learning globally

A Year of Transition

In 2022-23 the Commission experienced transition of key personnel and members of the Commission.

Following the end of the previous Chair of the Commission's tenure on 31st March 2021, a new Chair joined the Commission in June 2022, demitting office in June 2023.

Over the course of the first half of 2022-23, three Members of the Commission demitted office.

Three new Members of the Commission were appointed by the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB) in Summer 2022, and took up office in September 2022.

The Executive Director was appointed in September 2022, arriving at the Commission in January 2023, and appointed by SPCB as Accountable Officer in June 2023.

The independent Governance Review made the recommendation that the Accountable Officer role should be removed from the Chair responsibilities and that the next Chair should be appointed on a part-time basis. This is to ensure a clearer distinction between operational and strategic leadership.

The role of Commission Chair is vacant at the time of writing. SPCB will recruit the new Chair on behalf of the Scottish Parliament in late 2023 on a part-time basis.

Performance



Performance

In this section we show how we achieved impact and influence against the Commission's four Strategic Priorities for 2020-2024 and take a look at the wider activities of the Commission in this reporting period.

A year in numbers

In 2022-2023 we delivered...

12,500 followers
on the Commission's social
media platforms

54 practical actions
launched in Scotland's
second national action
plan for human rights

130 million
'Opportunities To See' our human
rights messages in print media
across the UK

937 mentions of human rights in the
Scottish Parliament and

128 mentions of the Commission

3 reports to Treaty
Bodies monitoring
the human rights
performance of
Scotland at the
United Nations

And across Scotland we witnessed...

11 proposals for new Commissions
or Commissioners to uphold the
human rights of specific groups of
people in Scotland

1 proposed
Human Rights
Bill for Scotland

Achieving our strategic objectives for human rights in Scotland



Strengthening understanding and legal protection of economic, social and cultural rights in Scotland

Following the Scottish Government's announcement of its commitment to bring forward a new Human Rights Bill for Scotland, the Commission's priority throughout 2022-23 was to ensure the proposed legislation delivers the greatest possible protection and promotion of human rights for the people of Scotland.

Whilst this extends beyond economic, social and cultural rights, in line with its 2020-24 strategic objectives, the Commission has delivered work on providing advice on the approach to incorporate the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) into Scots Law.

We engaged with stakeholders throughout the year, including an event to launch our key report [Building A New Human Rights Framework for Scotland](#) and hosting a series of roundtables, meeting with 127 participants through the reporting year and beyond.

After intensive work up to April 2023 and into the next period developing our strategy and analysis, we published our response to the Scottish Government's consultation in October 2023. The Commission also launched a major series of [new reports](#) to inform the next phase of our work on this landmark moment for Scotland, including a paper on the potential new powers for the Commission as part of a reformed Scottish human rights system.

Beyond the work to inform the approach to Incorporation, the Commission also focused work on promoting understanding of economic, social and cultural rights in Scotland.

At an appearance before the Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee in February 2023, the Commission raised concerns that Scotland might not be meeting some of its most basic obligations under international human rights law, relating to ESC rights. Minimum core obligations (MCOs) are those that countries need to comply with at all times and in all circumstances, for example, ensuring everyone has access to essential food and basic shelter.

The Commission highlighted that in Scotland, a lack of available data makes it difficult to know if the government and local authorities are actually complying with MCOs.

Our Policy and Legal Development Officer, Luis Felipe Yanes, said: "While it is important to recognise that public resources are limited, government and local authorities should make sure that they are complying with minimum core obligations as a matter of priority. To protect the most disadvantaged people and ensure a dignified life for all in Scotland, the most basic obligations of economic, social and cultural rights need to be met urgently, today."

The Commission also continued its work on promoting a human rights based approach to budgeting in a series of blog posts and evidence to the Public Finance Committee and the Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee in September 2022, to inform its 2023-24 pre-budget scrutiny process.



Luis Felipe Yanes and Dr Alison Hosie give evidence at the Scottish Parliament.

Dr Alison Hosie is the Commission's Research Officer. She said: "**The question often raised when debating how to spend our limited resources is 'how much will it cost?' The more appropriate question is 'what is the cost of us not doing so?'**

"Resources are limited and there will always be competing priorities. But having the key principles of human rights at the centre of decision-making enables tough decisions to be made in a way that respects, protects, and fulfils our human rights to the best of a public body's ability.

"Human rights budgeting provides not only a tool to hold decision-makers to account, but, crucially, a tool for public bodies to demonstrate their commitment to international, and soon-to-be domestic, human rights obligations."

2

Strengthening accountability for meeting human rights obligations

“The rights enshrined in the Human Rights Act (HRA) touch all areas of our lives. Our family life, freedoms, privacy and right to be protected by the state from violence and harm... At the Commission, we’re clear the Human Rights Act works well to protect our rights... it’s a valued law that makes Scotland a fairer, more equal place to live. It also reflects the principle that human rights are universal – we don’t need to earn or justify why we deserve them.”

Head of Legal and Policy,

Scottish Human Rights Commission
Writing in *The Scotsman*, April 2022

As the UK Government moved at pace with its proposals to repeal the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA), the Commission engaged strongly with stakeholders and developed a programme of public commentary to strengthen our work promoting the positive impact of the HRA. This included issuing letters to the [Prime Minister](#) and the [Secretary of State for Justice](#), and providing briefings to the House of Lords and to the UK Parliament Joint Committee

on Human Rights Legislative Scrutiny.

Our message was widely reported in the Scottish media and Peers in the House of Lords highlighted our concerns in their speeches. We also focused on the threat to the Human Rights Act in our reporting to the United Nations, as part of our

[Universal Periodic Review](#)

[recommendations](#) in April 2022. Our [Human Rights Day briefing to the Scottish Parliament](#) was referred to by Parliamentarians during the debate.

At the time of writing, the UK Government’s proposals to repeal and replace the Human Rights Act had been abandoned.

The Commission also spoke out on the impact of the UK Government’s proposed [Illegal Migration Bill](#), focusing on its implications for the human rights of people in Scotland and the threat to the international human rights system. Our intervention was highlighted in the UK and Scottish Parliaments.

The Commission prioritised evidence gathering around the proliferation of asks for new public bodies to uphold the human rights of particular groups of people in the final part of 2022-23. A report outlining the Commission’s analysis of the root causes of this trend was published in a key report:

[At A Crossroads: Which Way Now for the Human Rights System in Scotland?](#) This report recognised the lived experiences of rights holders at the heart of asks for new public bodies and provided an opportunity to reflect on the powers and functions of the Commission as part of the human rights accountability system in Scotland.

Finally, the Commission monitored the Scottish Government’s approach on the potential routes to support the passage of the UNCRRC incorporation Bill, which was passed by the Scottish Government in March 2021, but which the UK Government challenged on legislative competency grounds, via Section 33 of the Scotland Act.

While the Commission continues to consider opportunities to deploy its Litigation and Intervention Strategy, general capacity constraints meant this area of work was paused again during 2022-23. This has been identified as a priority area of focus in the Transition Strategy for 2023-24. Similarly, the Commission has not deployed its power of Inquiry in 2022-23 or indeed in any year. The challenges experienced by the Commission to date in making use of this element of its mandate have been explored in a paper published in June 2023. This is an issue which the Commission is keeping under review in 2023-24.



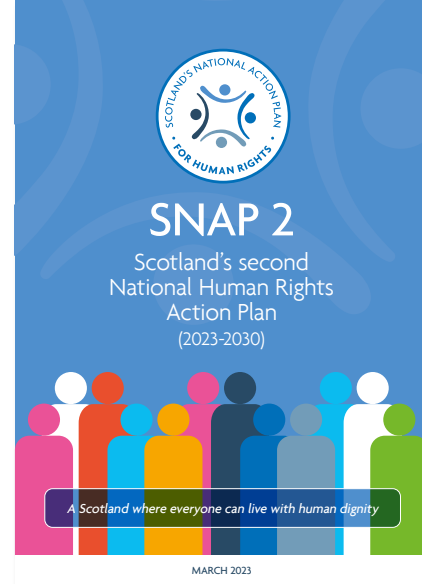
3 Building wider ownership of human rights

It is a critical time for human rights throughout the UK and SNAP2 is a crucial report for Scotland. Produced by those closest to the issues, it tells us there is much to do to make rights real across Scotland, ensuring everyone can access their human right to a decent standard of living, housing, healthcare and education, amongst other issues.

The Commission has been at the heart of developing this approach to a national human rights action plan, led by people who are experiencing rights in different settings, from the start. It is now the responsibility of duty bearers to make sure this vision for a Scotland where everyone can live with human dignity is realised.”

Ian Duddy

Former Chair (2022-23)
Scottish Human Rights Commission



This year the Commission successfully supported the development of [Scotland's second National Action Plan for Human Rights, SNAP2](#).

It was published on 30th March by the independent SNAP Secretariat, hosted by the Commission, and sets out a framework for promoting and protecting human rights in Scotland, designed by some of the people closest to the issues.

SNAP 2 puts forward 54 practical actions to target some of the crucial issues, from the right to a decent standard of living to healthcare, climate change and education.

SNAP 2 highlights eight priorities:

1. Achieve a decent standard of living.
2. Improve health, wellbeing and the environment.
3. Enhance education and work.
4. Protect private and family life.
5. Ensure justice.
6. Learn from COVID-19.
7. Realise a human rights culture.
8. Plan and support incorporation of human rights treaties into Scots law

The Commission has played a key role in the development of SNAP2 from the start and will work closely with everyone involved to monitor its implementation. We [wrote to the First Minister in April 2023](#) to recommend that SNAP2 be an early priority of his Government.

An independent evaluation of the Commission's Lived Experience Leadership Group (LELG) was undertaken in 2022-23. Its conclusions led to the Commission adopting a fresh approach to its participation work, which will strengthen the organisation's ability to deliver on this outcome for the final year of the 2020-24 Strategic Plan and inform the 2024-28 Strategic Plan.

4

Advancing best practice locally and sharing our learning globally

This year the Commission attended the United Nations in Geneva to provide evidence to the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) Universal Periodic Review process (UPR) and to the Committee considering Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights in the UK.

The UNHRC used the Commission's evidence, [Scotland's Human Rights Report Card](#), as part of a review of the UK's human rights performance over the past four years and made recommendations for action to the UK Government, which were published in March 2023.

The Commission issued a joint response with the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and you can [read and watch the full statement](#).

The Commission also submitted [written evidence to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#) in December 2022, and attended the Committee in person to deliver oral evidence in a closed session of the Committee in March 2023.

The Commission focused on the rising cost of living and the impact that this is having on people in Scotland to access their rights to an adequate standard of living.

Finally, the Commission forged a key role in its membership of the UK Independent Mechanism established to monitor progress of the state in delivering on the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.

We collated key evidence to inform the UN CRPD Committee in its follow up to its 2016 Inquiry into the impact of the welfare reform agenda on the human rights of disabled people in the UK. The Commission worked with Inclusion Scotland, a respected Disabled People's Organisation (DPO) to collate and present the lived experience of disabled people in Scotland to inform this evidence, which was delivered to the UN in August 2023. See page 29 for more information.



Eilidh Dickson, Policy & International Officer at the Scottish Human Rights Commission, speaking at the UN in Geneva.

The Commission at work

In 2022-23, the Commission delivered a broad range of activities towards its strategic goals and vision for a Scotland where everyone can name and claim their human rights.

The Scottish Mental Health Law Review

The Scottish Mental Health Law Review (SMHLR) was commissioned by the Scottish Government in 2019 to investigate how human rights could be better realised and protected in mental health, incapacity and adult support and protection legislation. The Commission provided expert advice on a range of issues to the Review, including the rights of disabled people and involuntary care and treatment. In May 2022 we published our [submission to the Review](#) and later welcomed the final report and its emphasis on taking a human rights based approach.

In 2023-24, the Commission is working to deliver two spotlight projects which are impacted by the Mental Health legal framework in Scotland; firstly, a project to prioritise the lack of action on mental health needs in prisons; and secondly, a project to witness the experiences of people who have learning disabilities and autism who are detained in institutional settings under the Mental Health Act.



“The Commission has, for many years, advocated the reform of mental health and capacity law towards supportive and enabling legislation, focused on delivering access to human rights, as opposed to governing restrictions on them... This requires the participation of people who experience mental ill health, and, crucially, an explicit engagement with what international human rights standards say, and what they mean in practice in Scotland.”

[Human Rights and the Mental Health Law Review](#)

Cathy Asante

Legal Officer,
Scottish Human Rights Commission

Human Rights budgeting

Putting human rights at the heart of budgeting is a powerful tool for social change, a message the Commission has continued to promote and develop this year.

We have a long-established programme of work in this area and have seen a visible increase in understanding of human rights within budget processes this year. For example, through the Open Government Partnership Action Plan work, we secured an agreement from the Scottish Government to participate in an Open Budget Survey review process in 2023. This is a major step forwards for best practice in human rights budgeting and Audit Scotland has also agreed to take part.

In 2022-23, we focused much of our approach on how a human rights based approach (HRBA) to budgeting could help tackle the cost of living crisis and poverty across Scotland. Written analysis from the Commission was referenced in reports from the Finance and Public Administration Committee and the Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee.



Human rights in places of detention

The Commission has pursued a wide range of work to promote and protect human rights in places of detention such as prisons, police custody and remand centres.

In December we spoke to BBC News about [human rights breaches in Scottish remand settings](#).

The Commission's then Chair, Ian Duddy, said:

“There is a direct impact on the human rights of those held on remand and their families who are waiting for them to be sentenced and also the victims who are waiting for justice.”

Monitoring places of detention

The Commission is one of 21 members of the United Kingdom's National Preventive Mechanism (NPM), which examines how people held in places of detention are treated and makes recommendations to relevant authorities.

The Commission will Chair the Scottish sub group for the next two years.

Independent Review of the Response to Deaths in Prison Custody in Scotland

In 2021-22 the Commission co-published the Independent Review of the Response to Deaths in Prison Custody in Scotland, alongside His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland and the charity Families Outside.

Throughout 2022-23, we have been monitoring progress on the implementation of the Review's recommendations, including discussions with the Cabinet Secretary and External Chair Gillian Imery. Although some progress has been made, the pace of change is slow and our future work will primarily focus on implementation, accountability and transparency.



Scottish Parliament training and capacity building

In line with our Strategic Plan for 2020-2024, we have built on our work to engage with the Scottish Parliament, successfully ensuring that Parliamentary scrutiny is increasingly informed by human rights and by human rights based approaches in practice. For example, our Legal Officers delivered training to the Social Justice and Social Security Committee (SJSSC), with highly positive feedback.



“ I, along with other colleagues of the SJSSC, attended human rights training in the summer, which the Commission offered. My colleagues and I found that training very helpful, as it helped us to re-focus on bringing a human rights based approach to everything that we do. Consequently, I asked whether human rights training for Parliamentarians could, and should, be embedded as a matter of course – especially in the induction of new MSPs.”

Paul McLennan MSP

International Human Rights Day
Debate at the Scottish Parliament,
8 December 2022

Supporting a human rights based approach in public bodies

We have continued to provide input into the Museums Galleries Scotland project Delivering Change, including training around 40 staff on how to use a human rights based approach (HRBA) in their work.

This year we also provided guidance on a HRBA to the Independent Review of Inspection, Scrutiny and Regulation in Social Care; advised Audit Scotland on next steps to embed a HRBA in its work; wrote to the Deputy First Minister asking them to revisit the terms of reference for the Scottish Covid-19 Inquiry to make explicit reference to the need to apply human rights standards; and provided regular analysis on human rights considerations to the Expert Advisory Group on Ending Conversion Practices, to ensure the recommendations are grounded in international human rights law and best practice.

Working with human rights defenders

In 2022-2023 the Commission focused on building a stronger approach to its work with Human Rights Defenders through civil society engagement. We supported a visit by the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, hosted by the University of Dundee. And to mark Human Rights Day 2022, we deployed digital engagement to promote two new blogs from human rights defenders on our website.



Our then Chair Ian Duddy and Policy and International Officer Eilidh Dickson meet with human rights campaigners from the North Highland Women's Wellness Hub to talk about the challenges women face accessing healthcare in rural Scotland; pictured here with Rebecca Wymer and Kirsteen Campbell.



“Access to food is a fundamental human right. In times of crisis, governments need to prioritise funds to support those most at risk of food insecurity.”

Our Legal Policy Development Officer Luis Felipe Yanes spoke at an Emergency Food Summit, organised by The Larder in West Lothian. Pictured here with The Larder CEO Angela Moohan.

National Performance Framework

The National Performance Framework (NPF) is a Scottish Government initiative that measures progress towards realising a range of economic, social and environmental indicators and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

To help achieve its purpose, the framework sets out National Outcomes, with a series of indicators to measure progress.

In 2022, the Commission submitted evidence to the Finance and Public Administration Committee Inquiry on how the National Outcomes shape Scottish Government policy and spending decisions. We were also invited to join the NPF Expert Advisory Group on reviewing National Outcomes. Here, we frequently raised the inadequacy of the current indicators, pressing for the profile of human rights outcomes to be improved and stressing the need for better understanding of the human rights framework across the NPF.

Legislative and policy development and scrutiny

We submitted expert human rights analysis and evidence to a wide range of legislative and policy processes throughout 2022-2023. All of the Commission's policy submissions can be found on the publications page on our website. In the period under review, these included:



- ➔ [Submission to the Finance and Public Administration Inquiry on the National Performance Framework: Ambitions into Action.](#)
- ➔ [Submission to the Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee on the Gender Recognition Reform \(Scotland\) Bill.](#)
- ➔ [Response to the Mental Health Law Review consultation on proposals for changes to mental health and incapacity law in Scotland.](#)
- ➔ [Letter to the Deputy First Minister John Swinney MSP, asking that the Commission's earlier recommendations on the Terms of Reference for the upcoming COVID-19 Inquiry be revisited, to ensure they are as strong and clear as possible in terms of embedding human rights into the Inquiry.](#)
- ➔ [Response to the Joint Committee on Human Rights call for evidence to its Human Rights Ombudsman Inquiry.](#)
- ➔ [Response to call for evidence from the Finance and Public Administration Committee on Pre-Budget scrutiny of Scotland's public finances 2023-24: the impact of the cost of living and public service reform.](#)
- ➔ [Submission to the Scottish Government consultation on the Proposed Abortion Services Safe Access Zones \(Scotland\) Bill.](#)
- ➔ [Submission to the Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee's Pre-Budget scrutiny looking at the impact of human rights budgeting.](#)
- ➔ [Response to the National Care Service \(Scotland\) Bill.](#)
- ➔ [Submission to the Social Justice and Social Security Committee Pre-Budget Scrutiny 2023-24.](#)
- ➔ [Submission to the Joint Committee on Human Rights Legislative Scrutiny at the UK Parliament on the Bill of Rights Bill.](#)
- ➔ [Briefing to MSPs on the Scottish Government Debate on International Human Rights Days in December 2022.](#)
- ➔ [Response to the Scottish Government consultation on Scotland's Equality Evidence Strategy 2023-25.](#)
- ➔ [Submission to the Scottish Parliament's Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee on Retained EU Law \(Revocation and Reform\) Bill.](#)
- ➔ [Additional evidence in a letter to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child \(CRC\).](#)
- ➔ [Response to the Scottish Government consultation on Local Development Plans on defining Gypsies and Travellers.](#)
- ➔ [Briefing on Minimum Core Obligations and the Practice of the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.](#)

Social care reform

Our evidence to stage one of the Health and Sport Committee's consideration of the National Care Service (Scotland) Bill was widely reported in the Scottish media.

Our Policy Officer Frank Jarvis told the Committee that a lack of concrete human rights standards in the proposed 'charter' in the current Bill could risk the entire framework needing to be "retrofitted" later, saying

This year we also forged links with the Care Inspectorate project aiming to implement Anne's Law and improve social connection for care home residents, providing an outline of human rights standards to inform its work. The Commission also met with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Independent Review of Inspection, Scrutiny and Regulation in Social Care to offer advice on the human rights standards relevant to its review.

“The Bill requires further specification of human rights standards in order to make this a meaningful vehicle for delivering improved quality and consistency.”



Encouraging parliamentary engagement with Human Rights

The Commission engaged extensively with the Scottish Parliament during 2022-23, particularly in relation to parliamentary scrutiny of legislation, policy and decision-making. Analysis of mentions in Parliament of the Commission shows that:

- ➔ Human Rights were mentioned 937 times over the course of 2022-23, an average of approximately 78 per month.
- ➔ The Commission was mentioned 128 times, an average of approximately 11 per month.
- ➔ The Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee accounted for the highest number of SHRC mentions in Committees, with 29 attributable mentions accounting for 50% per cent of the total. This was followed by Finance and Public Administration (9) and Health, Social Care & Sport (8).
- ➔ The Commission was mentioned in 23 publications and 13 reports, encompassing those published by both the government and Parliament.

Source: Newsdirect

Communicating about human rights

Our news releases this year have included:

- ➔ [Commission opposes UK government's Illegal Migration Bill](#)
- ➔ [Commission urges First Minister to take action on new human rights plan for Scotland](#)
- ➔ [Scottish human rights "report card" submitted to United Nations: highlights threats to Human Rights Act, calls for action to tackle rights concerns across Scotland](#)
- ➔ [Commission welcomes the Scottish Mental Health Law Review](#)
- ➔ [Rising cost of living puts human rights at risk in Scotland, warns Commission](#)
- ➔ [Commission strongly opposes UK Government's Bill replacing the Human Rights Act](#)
- ➔ [Commission welcomes Council of Europe findings that UK legal reforms could "weaken human rights protections"](#)
- ➔ [Commission welcomes new Scottish COVID-19 inquiry Chair and commitment to embed human rights](#)



In this year of transformation for the Commission, the communications team also began to work with a new set of priorities for the organisation's external reach and reputation.

A Communications Strategy was revised to focus on bringing rights to life and a set of KPI indicators aligned to the new Transition Strategy to monitor impact and success.

We also commissioned new audience insight research to deepen our understanding of people's attitudes to human rights in Scotland; this will provide vital insights to inform our new strategic plan for 2024-2028 and will be shared with stakeholders as a capacity-building tool.

Our social media platforms are a key means of engagement and this year we launched a new LinkedIn account, enabling us to increase our digital reach, build relationships with new audiences and further raise awareness of the Commission.

On X, formerly know as Twitter, our 'best words', the hashtags and phrases which generated the most engagement, included:



**#RightsRemovalBill; 'human rights based';
#RightsBasedScotland;
#HumanRights, Illegal Migration Bill,
#NHRI; #RefugeeBanBil;' 'Commission protects';
#YourBudgetYourRights; #Justice; 'action plan,
#UniversalPeriodicReview;
#SNAP2; #Scotland; 'human rights protections';
#Equality; #MentalHealthLawReview;
#CostofLivingCrisis; 'economic social cultural';
#UnitedNations.**



We also achieved a strong profile across Scottish media this year, raising awareness of our key human rights messages with a wide range of audiences. Our spokespeople have contributed to range of print and broadcast media coverage, including in The Herald, The Scotsman, The Scottish Sun, The Orkney News, The Times Online, The Daily Record, The Glasgow Evening Times, Third Force News, the Journal of the Law Society of Scotland and the UK Parliament website, BBC News and STV.

Overall, the Commission's reach into print audiences achieved 130 million 'Opportunities to See' our work [Source: Onclusive].

Across media and social media coverage in 2022-23, our most popular themes were:

- 1 Defending the Human Rights Act**
- 2 Launching Scotland's second national action plan for human rights**
- 3 Opposing the UK Government's Illegal Migration Bill**



This year we participated in the Communications Working Group of the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI), sharing best practice with international partners and learning more about the day-to-day operations of communications teams from NHRIs across Europe.

Back home, we also provided external media training to our key spokespeople and delivered Plain English training to all staff to inform our submissions and other communications content.



Partners for good

As Scotland's NHRI, we are powerfully connected to the wider human rights community and committed to sharing, developing and learning from best practice in human rights protection.

The Commission is an active member of the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI), the Global Alliance of Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) and the Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (CFNHRI).

In this year we continued to participate in a range of work with our peers, including a valuable learning exchange visit with the NHRI in the Netherlands, where we shared knowledge on topics such as governance, international reporting and political advocacy.

We sent a representative to the annual meeting of NHRIs working on economic, social and cultural rights in Europe, organised by the Council of Europe in Bratislava.

Our then Chair also met with senior representatives of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, and the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, at the 'Four Jurisdictions' meeting in Belfast, to discuss ongoing work and areas of cooperation.

Responding to enquiries

During 2022-2023, the Commission responded to **187** individual enquiries by phone and email.

We received and responded to **19** Freedom of Information requests.



The Commission's then Chair Ian Duddy attended the Four Jurisdictions meeting.

Moving forward

Under new leadership, as part of its internal Transition Strategy, developed in March 2023, the Commission moved forward with a series of new projects designed to increase our reach and impact with a wide range of rights holders across Scotland. The Commission also engaged directly with the issues raised by the recent proliferation of asks for new public bodies to uphold the human rights of specific groups of people, to shape the national conversation around human rights concerns and what Scotland needs to do to truly make rights real. Here we offer an introduction to these projects and issues, which will be developed into 2023-2024 as a series of ‘Spotlight’ projects and considered within the Commission’s next Strategic Plan.

Shaping the new Human Rights Bill for Scotland



We responded to the Scottish Government’s consultation on the proposed new Human Rights Bill in October 2023, recommending that careful consideration be given to the legal approach to achieving the new legal framework, and urging the UK and Scottish governments to work together more closely. We also published three major new reports, part of an ‘Incorporation Series’ which will inform the Commission’s position as it continues to analyse the proposed legislation during the progress of the Bill.

BB Now, as the Human Rights Bill develops, is the time to ensure it will deliver real change for real people. This will also mean addressing barriers in accessing justice such as access to specialist human rights legal advice and simple, rights-based, complaints processes. It will mean strengthening the bodies that regulate and scrutinise human rights issues in Scotland and providing them with adequate resources and mandates.

“The Commission’s own role, as Scotland’s National Human Rights Institution, is an essential part of that picture. To effectively fulfil our role in protecting human rights we need sufficient powers to uphold human rights and challenge violations.

Jan Savage
Executive Director

At a Crossroads - which way now for the human rights system in Scotland?

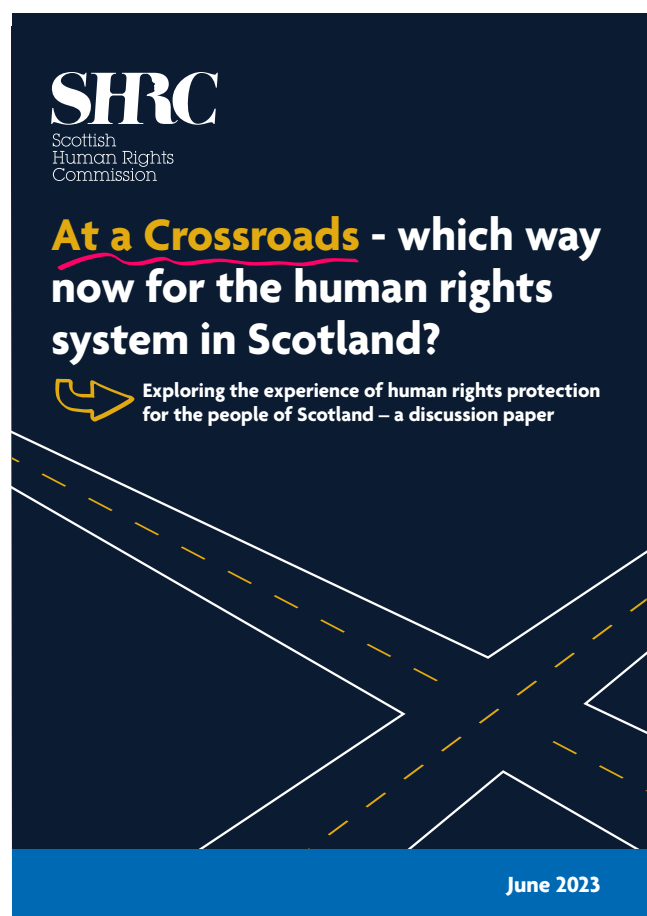
The Commission's Transition Strategy identified a clear need to deliver a more powerful impact for human rights in Scotland. As a result, the Commission published a new discussion paper, exploring the experiences of rights holders which are behind the increasing calls for new commissioners in Scotland and considering how to create stronger ways to protect human rights. The Commission's publication *At a Crossroads - which way now for the human rights system in Scotland?* was followed by a series of roundtables over the summer of 2023 to explore the reaction of civil society, MSPs, duty bearers and other public bodies and regulators to inform next steps. This will help to inform the Commission's next Strategic Plan for 2024-28.

Jan Savage is Executive Director of the Commission. She said,

“In our paper, we reflect on the real life experiences behind this trend [for calls for new Commissions/ers]. We consider why persistent challenges to accessing justice, or, a failure to see policy intent improve lives, may be leading to dissatisfaction with the current human rights framework; and ask what can be done now to build a system where everyone in Scotland can name and claim their rights.

“In an already cluttered and complex landscape for people to access justice, it will be important for the Scottish Parliament to consider the broader picture in the process of developing new public bodies, and not just the merits of each proposal.

We urge a national, cohesive approach to ensure the most important outcome is achieved: that people in Scotland are better supported to access justice – and public bodies are better supported to deliver public services which promote and protect human rights.”

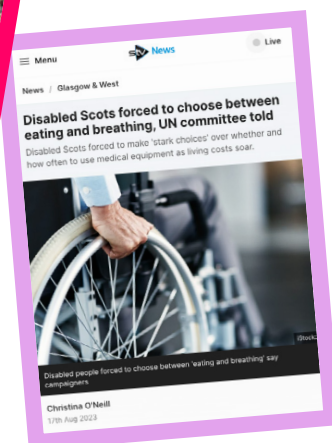


The Commission's own independent Governance Review also made recommendations to increase the number of its part-time Commissioners. This would improve pluralism and make sure that more experiences and perspectives are represented on the Commission. Whilst this would require legislative amendment of the Scottish Commission for Human Rights Act 2006, the Commission has accepted this recommendation in principle.

Commission tells UN that disabled people cannot wait any longer for progress on human rights

After an extended period of research and analysis, in August 2023 the Commission submitted a report to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) highlighting the lack of progress on human rights protections for disabled people in Scotland and the UK since its Inquiry into the impact of the UK Government's welfare reform agenda in 2016. Working in partnership with Inclusion Scotland and other Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) to learn more about lived experience of disabled people in Scotland accessing their rights, we reported to the UN that the cost of living, the COVID-19 pandemic and leaving the EU have negatively impacted the legal and economic situation for disabled people; and called for more protection of disabled people's rights to employment, independent living and an adequate standard of living.

We also published a powerful report from the Scottish Independent Living Coalition (SILC) – a group of disabled people's organisations which work in Scotland - outlining "unrelenting attacks" on disabled people's human rights. These reports achieved substantial media attention, leading the news across Scotland on that day and drawing widespread attention to the human rights concerns which the Commission will continue to focus on in the year ahead. One of the Commission's recommendations - that the Independent Living Fund be reopened to new applicants - was subsequently actioned by the Scottish Government.



Spotlight project: Access to Justice

Building on our work exploring the complexities of the human rights system in Scotland in response to the proliferation of calls for new public bodies, and to inform possible reform via the proposed Human Rights Bill, the Commission is making Access to Justice a priority focus of its work in 2023-24. As the first stage, in September 2023 it launched an extensive study investigating the challenges people in Scotland face in accessing justice when their human rights are violated. The paper, authored by Professor Katie Boyle, Professor of Human Rights Law and Social Justice at the University of Strathclyde, exposes a highly complex access to justice system in Scotland, which is fragmented, difficult to navigate, and often simply inaccessible to too many people.

The Commission will publish a second paper on Access to Justice later in 2023-24, following the journey of real complaints in the context of prisons and social care.

The Commission is also progressing with a further three spotlight projects in 2023-24:

- ➔ Human rights in prisons
- ➔ Deinstitutionalisation: human rights of people who have learning disabilities and autism detained in hospital and group settings
- ➔ Economic, social and cultural rights in the Highlands and Islands

The Commission will review the impact of this approach to prioritising its work and resources within its existing mandate to explore human rights denials and violations experienced by people in Scotland as part of the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan development process, and will gather evidence from civil society networks around future priority issues of human rights concern for 2024 and beyond.



“Far too many people in Scotland still experience denials of their basic human rights and dignity every day - and lack effective access to the mechanisms and means to challenge them. This discussion paper is our first contribution to promoting discussion - and action - towards more effective access to justice for all in Scotland.”

Claire Methven O'Brien
Member of the Commission

Organisational Development



Organisational Development

In 2022-23 our internal focus was on strengthening the governance and resilience of the organisation through a period of transition, supporting our employees while building our structural and operational capacity to deliver a bold and high-impact Strategic Plan for 2024-2028, engaging more powerfully with the people of Scotland and taking the next steps towards a Scotland where everyone can live with human dignity.

Our organisation

The Commission is a Scottish public authority and therefore has a range of accountabilities arising from this, including requirements to comply with all general Scottish public sector responsibilities and relevant legislation in areas such as freedom of information, equality, public procurement, data protection and others.

The Commission takes part in a range of networks and forums with other relevant public authorities to develop and share good practice where possible. We seek to utilise opportunities for joint working where this is an efficient and appropriate approach. We work particularly closely with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman and the office of the Children and Young People's Commissioner for Scotland, with whom we share office accommodation, enabling us to arrange joint training and information sessions.

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Scottish
Human Rights
Commission



Governance Structure

The Commission's governance structure provides for up to five Members – a Chair and up to four part time Members (working for one day per week).

Meetings of the Commission take place around 10 times each year, on an approximately monthly basis (with exceptions for key holiday periods). Minutes and agendas of these meetings are published on the Commission's website.

At year end 31 March 2023, three part time members and a full-time Chair were in post, supported by a full-time Executive Director who took up post on 1 January 2023.

Until December 2022, the Commission had one Sub-Committee, the Finance, Risk and Audit Committee (FRAC), which was chaired by a member of the Commission, and one Advisory Audit Board (AAB).

In 2022 these were both replaced with a single Audit & Risk Committee (ARC). The ARC met for its first meeting in December 2022, and is chaired by an independent Audit Advisory Board member, appointed by SPCB. As at year end 31 March 2023, it had met twice, December and March, and considered key issues around risk and the Commission's Governance Framework and continues to meet on a quarterly basis.

Independent Governance Review

Ahead of its next Strategic Planning cycle, the Commission decided to undertake an Independent Governance Review in 2022-23, which has been a key priority area of focus for the members of the Commission.

The process concluded in July 2023 with the members of the Commission accepting all of the recommendations and publishing a Vision Statement for the future development of the Commission.



The Scottish Human Rights Commission exists to serve the people of Scotland. The experiences we hear about daily tell us that many people are facing human rights challenges, worsened by the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis.

Established via an act of the Scottish Parliament in 2006, the Commission is Scotland's National Human Rights Institution (NHRI). We have a general duty to promote awareness, understanding and respect for human rights in Scotland.

Fifteen years since the doors of the Commission first opened in 2008, human rights in Scotland exist within an increasingly turbulent political and economic environment. We believe it has never been more important to have a robust NHRI.

As Members of the Commission, we share the responsibility of ensuring that the Commission operates effectively as an independent public body answerable to the Scottish Parliament, and as an NHRI. As an NHRI the Commission must satisfy the United Nations Paris Principles and submit to periodic re-accreditation. It must also align in its values and practice with international human rights standards, particularly those mentioned in its founding law, the Scottish Commission for Human Rights Act 2006.

The recommendations made by the Governance Review will ensure that the Commission fulfils these requirements and is well prepared for further growth and development of its mandate.

Together, the Commission is ready to face the opportunities ahead. We bear witness to people's daily experiences, work with others, and use our powers to help make rights real for all in Scotland."

Jim Farish, Shelley Gray, Claire Methven O'Brien,
Members of the Commission

Jan Savage, Executive Director

Operating environment: key issues

Staffing and reorganisation

During 2022/23 the Commission's work was delivered on a day-to-day basis by a staff team numbering 21 people, including all leavers and new starts, and on average 12.2 FTE. The staff team is organised into three departments. The heads of each department formed the Commission's management team, along with the interim Chief Operating Officer until 20 June 2022, and with the Chair of the Commission (operating in their executive capacity) thereafter.

Significant progress has been made to align the Commission's staffing structure to the incoming Commission's priorities and requirements with the recruitment of an Executive Director and Head of Business Support and Commission Secretariat. In addition, the vacant Head of Communications and Engagement post was permanently filled on 1 October 2022 and a part-time Business Support Officer was recruited.

A priority in 2022-23 was the preparation of a longer-term budget proposal for 2023-24 to bring further stability. The budget proposal for 2023-24 was approved by the Finance and Public Administration Committee of the Scottish Parliament on 28 February 2023. It included the creation of a new fixed term Legal Fellow position, and funding to replace vacant, permanent posts of Policy and Participation Officer and Communications and Digital Officer, to enhance outreach, educational work and engagement with stakeholders.

External policy environment

During the year, key developments took place in the broad external policy context which had significant implications for the Commission's work. These were:

- ➔ The Scottish Government's ongoing commitment to bring forwards a new Human Rights Bill for Scotland
- ➔ The UK Government's proposals to repeal and replace the Human Rights Act 1998
- ➔ The UK Government's proposals to develop an Illegal Migration Bill, which contains elements in contravention of the European Convention on Human Rights
- ➔ The emergence of proposals for new public bodies to uphold the human rights of particular groups of people - this has an impact on both the resource available to support public bodies and potential duplication of elements of the Commission's mandate
- ➔ The increasing challenge to the legislative competence of the Scottish Parliament on human rights or equalities related legislation via the Scotland Act 1998

This environment was recognised in the SWOT and PESTLE analysis that led to the Commission's Transition Strategy for 2023-25, designed to equip it to robustly meet current and future challenge while delivering on our human rights commitments to the people of Scotland.



Diversity and Equality

The Scottish Human Rights Commission promotes and protects the human rights of everyone in Scotland. In relation to the work of the Commission, we are working to increase awareness, recognition and respect for human rights, and make them more relevant and easier to apply in everyday life. In relation to the running of the organisation, the Commission takes a human rights based approach in our organisational governance. This includes promotion and demonstration of equality of opportunity and diversity which is central to our work.

Environment and Sustainability

The Commission's most recent [Sustainability Report for 2020-21](#) and [Biodiversity Report](#) are available on the Commission's website. Both of these reports are scheduled for review in 23-4. The Commission does not own land or buildings, or regulate land use, so our direct impact on the environment is mainly related to our shared building – energy use and waste – and staff travel, in particular overseas travel.



Anti-corruption and Anti-bribery

The Commission is committed to a robust approach to fraud prevention, detection and management. The Commission has a Fraud Policy Statement and additionally has a number of policies and procedures in place that support the detection and prevention of fraud for key processes where there is a greater vulnerability of fraud, corruption or bribery occurring. There have been no incidences of fraud in the current or prior year.



Business operations

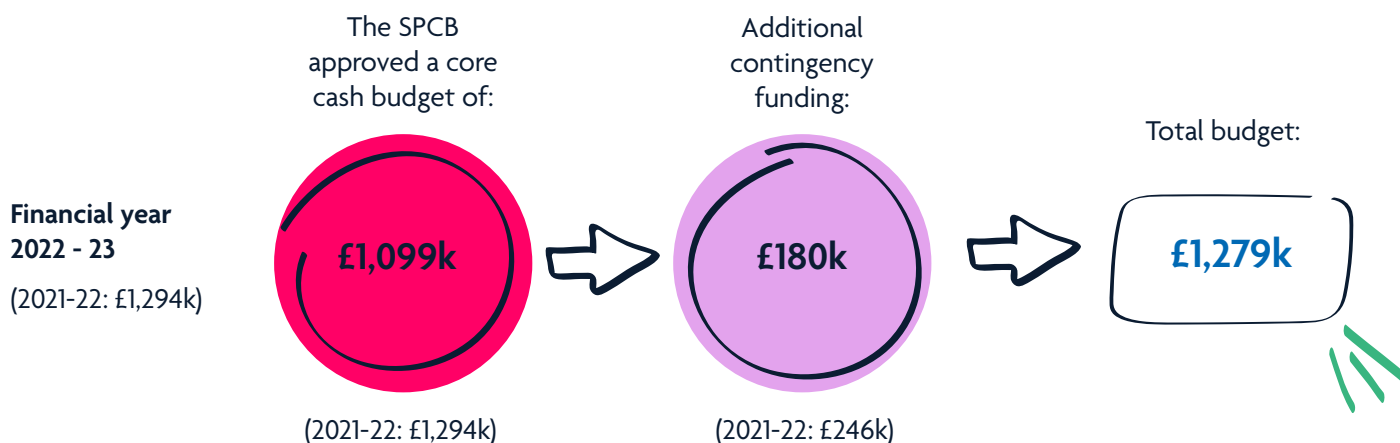
During 2022-23, we carried out a number of activities to successfully strengthen Secretariat and Business operations. This included finalising a service level agreement with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman to access shared key professional services such as finance and HR, mitigate the risks of single points of failure which are inherent in small organisations, streamline activities and create efficiencies. We also developed data and records management arrangements and cyber resilience processes to ensure they remain fit for purpose and accord with generally accepted best practice.



Financial Summary

Financial Summary

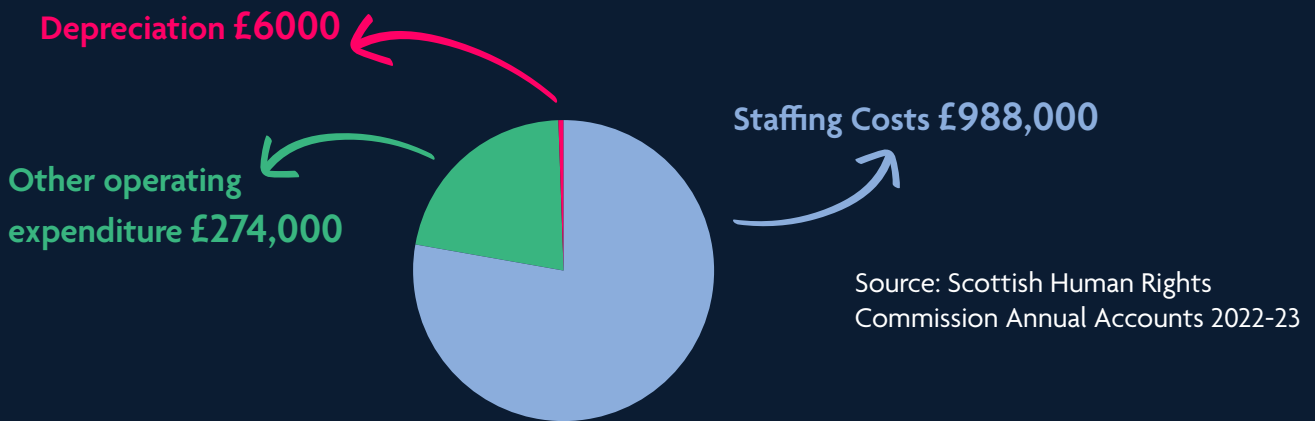
The Commission receives its budget on a cash basis from the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB). The SPCB approved a core cash budget of £1,099k for the financial year 2022-23 (2021-22: £1,294k) supplemented by an additional £180k from contingency funding (2021-22: £246k) to ensure stable staffing and a balanced budget; a total of £1,279k.



	2022-23 Budget £'000	2022-23 Expenditure £'000	Variance £'000	2020 - 2021 £'000
Net expenditure per the accounts	1,279	1,268	-11	1,219 (expenditure)
Capital Expenditure	-	-		3k
Total expenditure	1,279	1,268	-11	1,219
Adjustments				
Non-cash items		-6	-6	-6
Working capital (including cash)		-74	-74	17
Cash funding from SPCB	1,279	1,188	-91	1,233

The Commission's expenditure on operating activities for the year ended 31 March 2023 totalled £1,268 (2021-2022: £1,219). This was on staffing costs £988,000 (2021-22: £1,072), other operating expenditure £274,000 (2021-22: £144,000) and depreciation £6000 (2021-22: £6000).

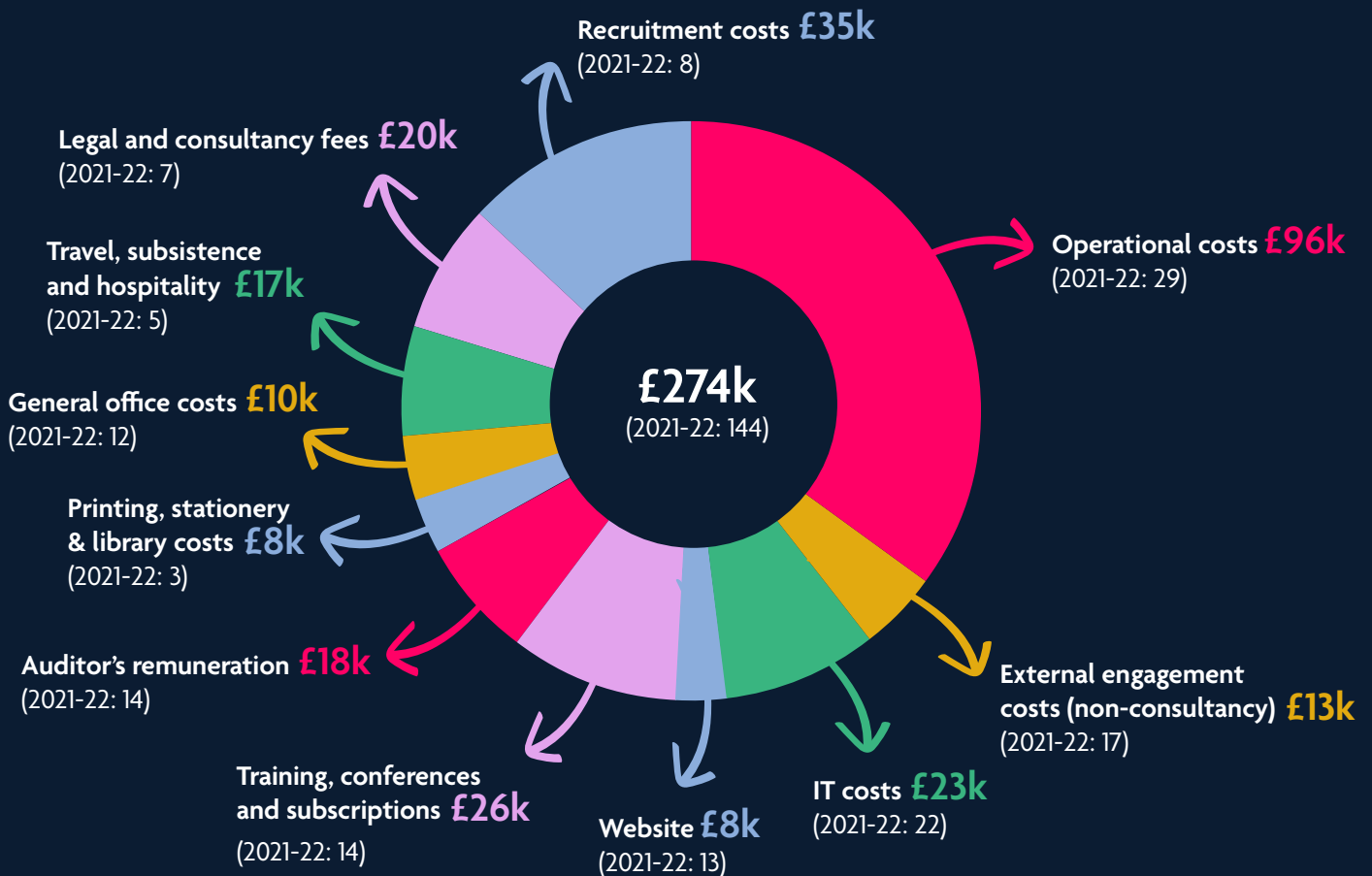
Net Expenditure 2022-23



Other operating expenditure 2022-23

The chart below illustrates the cost of operating activities by category of expenditure.

The Commission's net expenditure on operating activities for the year ended 31 March 2023 totalled £1,268. The chart below offers a more detailed breakdown of the additional operating expenditure. Excluding staff costs of £988,000 and depreciation of £6k, other operational expenditure amounted to £274,000, spent on the following categories:



A full copy of the Scottish Human Rights Commission Annual Accounts 2022-23 is available on our website www.scottishhumanrights.com

Who We Are

Who We Are

Members of the Commission 2022 - 2023

Members of the Commission are appointed by the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body.



Claire Methven O'Brien was appointed as Member of the Commission on 26 September 2022. Claire is a human rights lawyer and academic with more than 20 years' experience of advising governments, global businesses and international organisations on human rights matters. She is Reader in Law at the University of Dundee where she is Director of the LLM Business and Human Rights. She is also a Global Practitioner at the University of Strathclyde Business School, and an Honorary Lecturer at the University of St Andrews School of Management.



Jim Farish was appointed as Member of the Commission on 26 September 2022. Jim Farish is currently a board member of the Risk Management Authority having retired from the Scottish Prison Service in 2020. During his prison service career he held a number of senior positions including having been Governor of four prisons and he was also seconded to HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland, where he held the position of Deputy Chief Inspector.



Shelley Gray was appointed as Member of the Commission on 26 September 2022. Shelley has 20 years' experience in the third sector in roles spanning engagement, policy and strategy development and she is currently Head of Policy and Communications at Corra Foundation, where she has a focus on human rights, diversity, equity and inclusion and racial justice.



The Chair represents the Commission in a range of national and international contexts, provides leadership to the staff team and has overall responsibility for the Commission's accountability. The Chair of the Commission during the reporting period 2022-23 was Ian Duddy.

Ian Duddy took up office as full-time Chair of the Commission in June 2022 and led the Commission's strategy and operations through this reporting period. Mr Duddy demitted office in June 2023 to take up a senior post with the Civil Service. At the time of writing the position of Chair is vacant.



Executive Director

Jan Savage was appointed as the Commission's first Executive Director in October 2022 and took up post in January 2023. Jan leads and shapes the delivery of operational and strategic priorities across the Commission. She has experience in leadership, corporate governance, human rights, communications, public affairs, and participation work, with a particular focus on campaigns to achieve real change. In June 2023, she became Acting Accountable Officer for the Commission and this was made permanent in September 2023 following the conclusion of the Independent Governance Review.

Past members

Dr Anna Black, PhD is a GP, a non-executive member of the board of Public Health Scotland and an Affiliate Research Fellow at the University of Glasgow. She demitted office in September 2022.

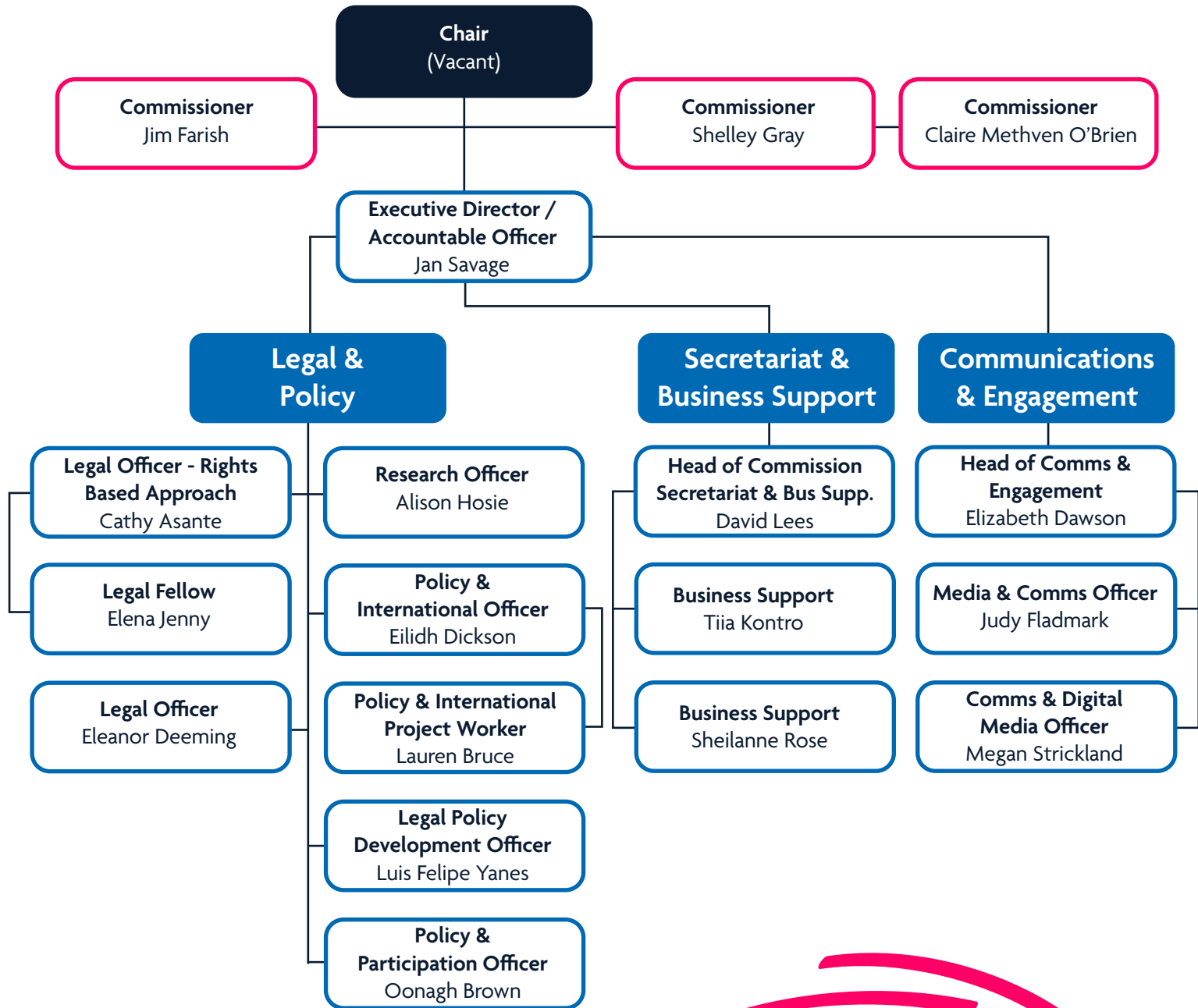
Jane-Claire Judson is Chief Executive Officer at Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland. She was previously National Director for Diabetes Scotland and is currently a non-executive member of the board of Public Health Scotland. She demitted office in June 2022.

Professor Jacqueline Kinghan is a human rights lawyer and academic with expertise on access to justice. She also works with charities and NGOs in Scotland on legal and social change projects. Dr Kinghan demitted office in June 2022.

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Our Staff

Our staff are experts in a wide range of backgrounds including international human rights law, domestic law, social policy and research, third sector campaigning, civil society advocacy, project management, journalism and public sector management. Together they promote and protect human rights through law, policy and practice.



Contact Us

General Enquiries:
hello@scottishhumanrights.com

Getting Involved in Our Work

The Commission welcomes the opportunity to work with people and organisations affected by human rights issues, and our work to promote and protect human rights more generally. You can keep in touch and get involved in our work in the following ways:

Website

Our website www.scottishhumanrights.com contains all of our policy submissions, reports to international human rights treaty bodies, case studies, training materials and other resources.

Social Media

Our Facebook, X (@ScotHumanRights), LinkedIn and Instagram (scothumanrights) feeds are updated regularly with news, information about our work and links to other relevant human rights information.



Projects

If you would like any more information about any of the projects or policy areas we work on, please email hello@scottishhumanrights.com

Annual Report

We welcome feedback on the content of our Annual Report, as well as ideas of what you would like to see in it in future years.

Accessibility

We're committed to making our communications easy-to-use and accessible for everyone. Our accessibility policy can be found on our website, along with some support tools:

Browsealoud

Our website includes software called Browsealoud which provides reading, speech and translation support for a range of people including those with dyslexia, low literacy, English as a second language, and/or mild visual impairments. This service is free and will help users to read all the content available on our website (including this Annual Report).

To begin using Browsealoud please visit our website and click on the logo. Then simply click on any text to hear it read out loud.

British Sign Language (BSL)

In Scotland, British Sign Language (BSL) users can use the contactSCOTLAND Video Relay Service (VRS) to contact all of Scotland's public bodies and third sector organisations for free. This service is available online via <http://contactscotland-bsl.org/> You can also download the app onto your smartphone and/or tablet (iPhones, Android phones, iPads, tablets etc).

If you have any queries about other support needs and would like this publication in another format such as large text, British Sign Language (BSL) or Braille, please contact:

hello@scottishhumanrights.com
or call 0131 297 5750



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