

Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice
Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Via email: CabSecforSJ@gov.scot

11th June 2025
Our reference: SHRC202532

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

Proposed SHRC Powers - Human Rights Bill

I write to confirm that the Scottish Human Rights Commission has received the current proposals from the Scottish Government to amend the Scottish Commission for Human Rights Act 2006 via the proposed Human Rights Bill. We understand that these proposals are due to be published over the summer in a discussion paper that will provide the Government's current thinking on its proposed Human Rights Bill.

The Commission has now had opportunity of an initial discussion of these proposals which are, in broad terms, aligned with what the Commission has previously called for in its October 2023 paper 'A Stronger Human Rights Commission for Scotland.' Some other proposals, such as supporting courts to implement judgements, will require further detailed discussions with Government, the legal profession, and civil society organisations, as these were not advocated by the SHRC.

In the coming months, we will further analyse the Government proposals as they are published, with a view to ensuring that they meet the expectations and character of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) in line with the requirements set forth in the UN Paris Principles and protect our functional independence.

Our aim will be for Members of the Commission to agree a final preferred approach to amending the Scotland Commission for Human Rights Act 2006 to best service the function of Scotland's NHRI. We will confirm our position in writing later in 2025.

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Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'A. O'Hagan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Professor Angela O'Hagan
Chair, Scottish Human Rights Commission

c.c. Minister for Equalities