

Minister for Victims and Community Safety
Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Via email only: MinisterforVCS@gov.scot

Date: 16 July 2025
Our reference: SHRC202537

Dear Minister,

Baseline assessment of the UK under the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence ("the Istanbul Convention")

As Scotland's National Human Rights Institution, we welcome the recent publication of the Group of Experts (GREVIO) Evaluation Report on legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention). We also note the Scottish Government's comments on the report, as published by GREVIO.

Violence against women and girls and domestic violence as covered within the Istanbul Convention are deeply ingrained and pervasive human rights violations affecting people in Scotland. Recognising both the importance of and the scope and depth of the Convention, the SHRC worked alongside victim-survivors and expert support organisation through the development of a parallel report to inform GREVIO's assessment to ensure that our findings reflected the reality of their experiences against Scottish policy intentions.

Among other issues, our own report highlighted:

- the challenges of service sustainability in a competitive and short-term funding environment;

- the personal impacts and described trauma of the navigating the criminal justice system as a victim-survivor;
- and the intersecting and compounding challenges that women and girls navigate, for example, the impacts of No Recourse to Public Funds and immigration rules for migrant women affected by domestic abuse.

Noting the refreshed Equally Safe Strategy and associated Delivery Plan, we are pleased that the Scottish Government has pre-emptively committed to develop an action plan to implement the Istanbul Convention recommendations. This practice is one that we routinely recommend to the Scottish Government following international human rights monitoring.

Ahead of the Scottish Government's development of this action plan, I would welcome an opportunity to meet with you to share our reflections on the evaluation and key findings from our engagement in this process.

I would welcome the opportunity for this discussion at your earliest convenience and reiterate the SHRC's support for the Scottish Government proactive response to delivering on its human rights obligations in the field.

Yours sincerely,



Angela O'Hagan
Chair of the Commission