

Commission Meeting Minutes

Date: 1 September 2025

Time: 09-30 - 16.30

Present:

Angela O'Hagan (Chair) AOH

Rosemary Agnew (Member of the Commission) RA

Shelley Gray (Member of the Commission) SG

Aaliya Seyal (Member of the Commission), AS

In Attendance:

Jan Savage, Executive Director (JS)

David Lees, (Head of Commission Secretariat and Business Support/minutes) DL

Jennifer Cannon (Head of Legal and Policy) JC, items 9 and 10 only

Rosie McIntosh (Head of Communications and Engagement) RM, item 9 only

Apologies:

Claire Methven O'Brien (Member of the Commission) CMO

List of Acronyms:

ARA: Annual Report and Accounts

ARC: Audit and Risk Committee

CoG: Code of Governance

ECHR: European Convention on Human Rights

EHRC: Equality and Human Rights Commission

IRG: Istanbul Reference Group

MoU: Memorandum of Understanding

NHRI: National Human Rights Institution

NPM: National Preventive Mechanism

SNAP: Scotland's National Action Plan for Human Rights

SPCB: Scottish Parliament Corporate Body

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed all in attendance, in particular the two new members, Rosemary Agnew and Aaliya Seyal, for their first Commission Meeting.

Apologies were noted from CMO.

2. Declarations of Interest

New members were invited to complete their Registers of Interest, to be published on the Commission website.

In relation to papers 10.2.4 and 10.3.1 a transparency statement was noted from AS to declare a previous working relationship with Citizens Advice Scotland.

RA noted, as a transparency statement, her current contracted work with SPCB on conduct of MSPs, which may be relevant in relation to agenda Item 8.1

JS declared, for transparency, previous working relationships with AS and RA.

ACTION 1: Issue Register of Interest forms to new members and request annual updates from for existing members, for completion and publication on the website

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were approved subject to noted amendments.

Members noted reference to the Istanbul Reference Group (IRG) and requested further information.

ACTION 2: Issue briefing on IRG to members of the Commission including membership and meeting information

4. Matters Arising/Action Log Review

The matters arising report was discussed, and the following additional points were noted;

An NPM overview meeting is to be included in the Member's induction programme and scheduled as soon as possible.

A comms focused induction day, including stakeholder mapping, and proposals on tone of voice and style guide is to be scheduled for completion by 15 December. Thereafter, media training for new members will follow.

In light of the current level of public debate, the Commission discussed Article 8 of the ECHR.

ACTION 3: NPM overview session to be incorporated into member Induction programme

ACTION 4: Comms focused induction session to be scheduled

ACTION 5: Staff to produce draft Commission position statement on Article 8 for members consideration

5. Chair Report

5.1. Update

The Chair's report was tabled at the meeting having been omitted from the pre issued pack in error. AOH provided an update, which was noted. Members noted the range and breadth of activities highlighted by the update.

5.2. NPM Update

AOH provided an overview of the NPM Scotland Subgroup activities, in her role as Chair. She provided an update on the NPM workplan which is available [here](#).

The actions and workplan of the NPM Subgroup are facilitated by the NPM Secretariat. An induction session on the NPM is being scheduled for members in Q3.

5.3. Induction Programme for New Members

The Induction Programme was tabled and noted by Members.

6. Member Report

SG updated that she has agreed to sit on the Ministerial-led Oversight group for Adults with Incapacity Reform on behalf of the Commission. She has also accepted an invitation to speak at the Neurological Alliance Scotland Annual General Meeting on 24 September.

It was noted that the deployment of members time will be discussed as part of the stakeholder engagement protocol and evolving practice.

7. Executive Director Report

Members noted the update provided by JS on matters of operational performance, corporate governance, and emerging issues and risks.

ACTION 6: A paper on key considerations for the SHRC in the establishment of the National Oversight Mechanism will be circulated by correspondence for Member input to inform initial SHRC position on draft provisions

A briefing meeting will be convened in September with all Members in relation to the MoU with the EHRC.

ACTION 7: Briefing session to be scheduled on the MOU with EHRC

An introductory session for Members with EHRC is being scheduled for October

ACTION 8: Schedule an introductory session between members of SHRC and EHRC Scotland members

8. Corporate Services

8.1. Code of Governance Updates

The current list of updates for the CoG were highlighted by DL. These were discussed and Members confirmed they were content to progress on this basis.

Revisions will be reviewed by the ARC for approval and subsequently tabled at the following Commission meeting.

ACTION 9: Paper to be tabled at October meeting with proposed changes to CoG

8.2. Annual Report and Accounts

The Annual Report and Accounts are in progress and scheduled for sign off at ARC on 22 September and thereafter at a Special Meeting of the Commission on 29 September.

A draft of the annual report to the Parliament will be circulated by correspondence for feedback via the Chair for final approval at the Special Commission on 29 September. Design work on this publication will follow thereafter.

9. Communications and Engagement

9.1. Towards a Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

RM joined the Commission meeting and presented to members on the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy. Members gave thanks and noted the contents of the presentation.

Following discussion, the contents of the paper were approved and a session with members to map stakeholder relationships will be scheduled.

ACTION 10: Schedule session with Members to map stakeholder relationships and strategic approach

ACTION 11: Executive to progress implementation of the protocol across the SHRC

10. Legal and Policy

10.1. Policy Update

JC joined the meeting to speak to and present papers for agenda items 10.1 – 10.3.

10.1.1. Parliamentary Engagement Update

Following discussion Members requested the development of a standard approach for developing and providing parliamentary advice and a strategic decision-making framework to support the standard approach and wider parliamentary engagement.

ACTION 12: Develop standard approach and strategic decision-making framework

10.1.2. Parliamentary Debate on SPCB Supported Bodies Landscape Review report

Members discussed the paper and recognised the broad range and complexity of issues raised. The approach outlined was approved subject to further development, highlighted in the following actions;

ACTION 13: Draft briefing for supported bodies landscape debate to be prepared for Commission approval by correspondence

ACTION 14: Briefing on mandate development to be constructed, to inform paper for publication later in the Autumn

ACTION 15: Develop paper on incorporation position to be tabled at next meeting for discussion on 29 September

ACTION 16: Circulate summary table of proposals in the Scottish Government Human Rights Bill Discussion Paper to new Members

10.2. Monitoring and Research Update

An update was provided on the current progress of the Spotlight Projects. Following discussion, Members commended the paper on the Poverty Spotlight and approved the approach.

ACTION 17: Progress with Poverty Spotlight based on approved approach

10.2.1. Research Strategy and Research Advisory Group Terms of Reference

It was agreed that the Research Strategy would not be published as a standalone output and instead would be incorporated into the overall Monitoring strategy, which would be published once approved.

Outstanding action for Members to meet with the existing RAG to be progressed.

10.2.2. Approach to Developing a Monitoring Strategy

Members gave thanks for the paper and approved the presented approach

ACTION 18: Monitoring Strategy to be developed, including incorporation of Research Strategy, for Commission approval

10.2.3. Rights Review Update

The Commission welcomed progress on the Rights Review programme. Members noted reference to the decision-making process and once approved, requested its publication in the interests of transparency.

ACTION 19: Circulate rights review process by correspondence to members for approval and published thereafter.

ACTION 21: Information flows on source of rights issue being identified will be monitored and reported to Commission meetings

10.2.4. ESC Rights - South of Scotland Methodology

The paper was well received by Members, recognising development of the approach through learning from the previous programme in the Highland and Islands. The proposal was approved, subject to further noted developments of the methodology and the following actions.

ACTION 22: Ethical framework to be sent to members

ACTION 23: Proposal on Member engagement to be circulated by correspondence ahead of October meeting

10.3. Legal Update

10.3.1. Development of a Litigation Strategy

CF joined the meeting to present the paper. The content and approach were commended and welcomed by Members.

It was noted the paper was to present an approach for developing a litigation strategy, which was approved, and members gave their thanks to the staff team for its development.

ACTION 24: Litigation Strategy to be developed and to include a decision-making framework

10.3.2. Scoping a Section 8 Inquiry

Following discussion on the paper tabled, Members invited a fully scoped proposal for an SHRC section 8 inquiry, to consider Article 3 concerns.

ACTION 25: Develop a fully scoped proposal to present to the Commission

11. Strategy and Governance

11.1. Chair of ARC Annual Attendance at the Commission

The Chair of ARC will be invited to the special purpose meeting of the Commission on 29 September to provide an Annual Report of the activities of the ARC.

ACTION 26: Invite the Chair of ARC to the meeting on 29 September

11.2. Reaccreditation

Members noted the timely progress achieved and that the reaccreditation submission would be made on schedule, by 30 September, ahead of the final submission deadline of 1 October.

ACTION 27: Final version with cover sheet confirming key message framework, comms approach, cover letter and amendment sheet to be issued to members in advance for assurance of final approval by Chair.

11.3. People and Culture Progress Update

JS presented the paper. The content was noted by Members, who gave thanks for the progress update.

12. AOB

12.1. Next Meeting(s):

- 29 September – single purpose meeting for approval of the Annual Report and ARA.
- 27 October – Commission Meeting (standard)

ENDS.