Scottish Human Rights Commission

# Commission Meeting Minutes

1 June 2026
10:00 - 16:00
Bridgeside House, Edinburgh

## Present

- Angela O'Hagan (Chair) AOH
- Aaliya Seyal (Member) AS
- Claire Methven O'Brien (Member) CMO
- Rosemary Agnew (Member) RA
- Shelley Gray (Member) SG

## In attendance

- Jan Savage (Executive Director) JS
- David Lees (Head of Secretariat and Business Support) DL
- Jennifer Cannon (Head of Legal and Policy) JC
- Tiia Kontro (Minute Secretary) TK

## Apologies

- Rosie McIntosh (Head of Communications and Engagement) RM

## List of acronyms

- ARC: Audit and Risk Committee

- CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- ECHR: European Convention on Human Rights
- EHRC: Equality and Human Rights Commission
- ENNHRI: European Network of National Human Rights Institutions
- NPM: National Preventive Mechanism
- SCA: Sub-Committee on Accreditation
- SPCB: Scottish Parliament Corporate Body
- UNCRC: United Nations Convention on Rights of a Child

## 1. Welcome / Declarations of interest

1.1 The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all Members and attendees.

## 2. Declarations of interest

2.1 No declarations of interests were registered in relation to any of the agenda items.

2.2 As transparency statement, AS noted that LSA is acting on behalf of a client in one of the cases the SHRC is considering  intervening in.

2.3 Transparency statement, the Chair notes upcoming international academic conferences and confirmed own name publications.

2.4 CMO noted that due to the late issue of the Commission papers on Wednesday 27th May 2026 she had not been able to read any of the papers in advance of the meeting.

2.5 Other Members confirmed that they had read the papers.

2.6 Members noted capacity pressures, and sought assurance that action would be taken to ensure timely issue of Commission paper packs.

**Action:  Papers to be issued within one week of Commission meetings.**

## 3. Minutes from Previous Meeting(s)

3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 13 April 2026 were approved with minor revisions.

## 4. Matters Arising

4.1 The Action Log was reviewed and update shared on key points.

4.2 The Risk Register has been updated at Risk 19.0 to expand beyond implementation of new UNCRC powers, to include broader risks related to use of all SHRC enabling powers. Updated Risk Register will be presented at the next ARC meeting.

## 5. Chair Report

5.1 The Chair provided an update and summary of relevant meetings and engagements since the previous Commission meeting in April, which was noted.

## 6. Member Report

6.1 The Members provided an update and summary of relevant meetings and engagements since the previous Commission meeting in April, which was noted.

## 7. NPM Update

7.1 RA shared an update and summary of relevant work of the NPM, which was noted.

7.2 The Commission discussed the resourcing of NPM and impacts of it on the Commission's work. It was noted that it may be beneficial to ensure any NPM related costs are noted separately.

7.3 Members discussed the potential reputational risks arising from the Commission's different roles within the NPM structure. It was agreed that a formal view will need to be agreed on the NPM model and the role of the SHRC within the model.

**Action: A future discussion with Members to formulate an official view on the current NPM model.**

**Action: Action to be taken to ARC to record resourcing risk on the Risk Register accurately.**

## 8. Executive Director's Report

8.1 The Executive Director report was tabled on matters relating to operational performance, corporate governance, and risk. The following additional points were discussed.

8.2 A proposal was put forward for members to discuss SCA reaccreditation recommendations in detail with a colleague from ENNHRI. Members agreed.

**Action: A session to be tabled with ENNHRI colleagues on the SCA recommendations.**

8.3 An update was shared on progress against the People and Culture interim resourcing plan. It was noted that increased Member activities and Commission meetings require increased support which the resourcing plan aims to address.

8.4 The Commission discussed the UNCRC implementation report, noting that it is due to Scottish Government and SPCB to provide assurance on the phased funding approach.

## 9. Comms and Engagement

### 9.1. Comms and Engagement Update

9.1.1 In absence of RM due to work travel, JS shared a brief update on recent communications activities. Members noted the updates. Any comments were invited to be made via correspondence.

### 9.2. Style Guide (Tone of Voice)

9.2.1 Draft Style Guide (Tone of Voice) paper was tabled for discussion.

9.2.2 Members welcomed the Guide.

9.2.3 Members requested further consideration and harmonisation of the use of words "female" and "male" as nouns and adjectives with appropriate CEDAW and Equality Act 2010 wording.

**Action: section about use of words "female" and "male" to be reconsidered and updated final draft shared with Members.**

## 10. Legal and Policy

JC joined the meeting to present the legal and policy update.

### 10.1. Strengthening the Human Rights Legal Landscape

### 10.2. Stronger NHRI for Scotland

10.2.1 The two papers, which had been shared with Members previously, were tabled. It was noted that feedback from Members has been received via correspondence and will be collated and implemented. Final versions of both papers will be shared with Members for approval via correspondence.

10.2.2 Members discussed potential of building composite stories and other ways of using stories to support the messaging. It was agreed that SG would discuss with RM to share ideas and knowledge on how to best incorporate this.

10.2.3 Both papers will be reviewed against feedback received and shared for final approval via correspondence.

10.2.4 SLT committed to taking the feedback on both papers and adapting to include in Style Guide for all staff.

**Action: Final versions of both papers will be shared with Members for approval via correspondence. Policy Update and emerging issues**

Policy Update paper was presented and noted. Any comments were invited via correspondence. The following specific policy developments were discussed:

#### 10.2.1. <u>ECHR Statement</u>

10.3.1.1 Members discussed the recent Chisinau declaration from Council of Europe. It was noted that the SHRC had submitted views ahead of the declaration via ENNHRI and a joint statement with the UK NHRIs. Members discussed potential further action from the SHRC.

10.3.1.2 It was agreed that a draft position statement based on the Member conversation will be developed for inclusion in the briefing for Members for any further engagement with external stakeholders. It was agreed that statement should acknowledge and articulate the impacts on rights realisation in Scotland. It was agreed that there would be no public statement from SHRC at this time.

**Action: Draft position on Chisinau declaration to be circulated by correspondence for member approval.**

### 10.2.2. EHRC Code of Practice

10.3.2.1 Members discussed the recently published EHRC Code of Practice. CMO noted and all Members agreed that duty bearers require clear guidance on how to act in compliance with human rights obligations aligned to this Code.

10.3.2.1 Members discussed, and agreed that further familiarisation of the Code of Practice during the 40-day parliamentary period will be required to inform SHRC analysis and understanding.

10.3.2.2 Members agreed to table a more substantive discussion for the July Commission meeting and requested a briefing on the human rights implications of the Code as laid before the UK Parliament.

**Action: July Commission meeting to include an agenda item on EHRC Code of Practice.**

**Action: Briefing to be tabled for Members on the human rights implications of the draft Code of Practice.**

## 10.3. Monitoring and Research Update

10.4.1 Monitoring and Research Update paper was presented and noted. Any comments were invited via correspondence.

## 10.4. Legal Update

10.5.1 Legal Update paper was presented and noted. Any comments were invited via correspondence.

## 10.5. New Scottish Parliament - status report and discussion

10.5.1 JC shared a post-election update of the new Scottish Parliament which was noted. The following discussion points were noted.

10.5.2 Members agreed to prioritising relationship building with newer MSPs and parties the SHRC has not engaged in the past aiming to demonstrate common areas of interests and highlighting SHRC work.

10.5.3 It was agreed that senior engagements will be prioritised for Chair, and other Members will be fielded for other MSP meetings as required.

10.5.4 Members discussed engagement with new SPCB members and relationship management with other officeholders as a priority.

10.5.5 Members noted media reports about changes to sex and gender data collection by the Scottish Parliament about MSPs. Following a discussion about the legal basis for the SHRC interest in this area, Members agreed to establish the position via SPCB, and thereafter, if necessary, to raise with the SPCB.

**Action - programme of MSP meetings to be progressed throughout the Summer**

**Action - establish status update on collection and publication of sex and gender data by the Scottish Parliament about MSPs**

## 11. Corporate Governance

### 11.1. Executive Scorecard Q4 2025 - 26 closeout

11.1.1 Executive Scorecard on Q4 2025-26 closeout report was shared and noted. Questions and comments were invited to be submitted via correspondence.

### 11.2. SCA Reaccreditation Outcome

11.2.1 The Commission was recently reaccredited as an A status NHRI. Chair and Members noted formal thanks to all staff members involved in the work completed in preparation for the reaccreditation.

11.2.2. JS presented a paper on the SCA Reaccreditation outcome. Members discussed the recommendations and comments arising from the SCA Reaccreditation outcome. It was noted that, as per previous conversations during the meeting, a session will be scheduled to discuss some of the items in detail with ENNHRI colleague.

11.2.3 Members agreed that SHRC should use reaccreditation as part of its key messaging on strengthening Scotland's NHRI.

### 11.3. Operational Plan 2026 - 27

11.3.1 Operational Plan for 2026 - 27 was tabled. The following discussion points were noted.

11.3.2 Members sought further information on the Human Rights Budgeting Toolkit workstream. It was noted that at the Chair's request, a discussion has already been scheduled to familiarise the Members with the SHRC work on Human Rights Budgeting in a broader sense and that further information on the work on the Budgeting Toolkit will be included in the session.

11.3.4 Members discussed how best to record any continuing work from previous Operational Plan periods. Members agreed that a section should be added to reflect when operational priorities impact on planned work.

11.3.4 Members approved the Operational Plan 2026-27.

## 12. AOB

Next meeting will be held on 6 July 2026.

AOH and CMO left the meeting.

TK left the meeting.

## 13. Commission Single Issue Committee

The Chair of the Commission Single Issue Committee provided an update to the Commission. No minutes were recorded of the session.

ENDS.