

## Equality and Human Rights Commission Business Plan 2017-18

**From:** scotland [<mailto:scotland@equalityhumanrights.com>]

**Sent:** Monday, April 03, 2017 4:15 PM

**Subject:** Equality and Human Rights Commission's Business Plan

I am delighted to share the Commission's Business Plan for 2017 – 18, which outlines our core priorities for the year ahead.

### [Business plan 2017 to 2018](#)

The context in which we work is constantly evolving, but many of the equality and human rights challenges we are seeking to tackle are worryingly persistent. The UK's decision to leave the EU, ongoing debates about the legal framework for human rights and the continued evidence of entrenched inequalities facing some in our society mean that our need to act strategically to achieve improvements is greater than ever.

We have made some tough decisions about the areas on which we should focus in 2017/18. Our approach is to work on fewer, bigger issues, in a more sustained way, and we have prioritised issues where there are opportunities to use our unique powers to make a real difference both in Scotland and across GB.

Highlights of the plan include:

- Seeking to ensure that vital equality and human rights protections are not weakened by our departure from the EU, that opportunities to strengthen the law and infrastructure protecting our rights are seized.
- Improving access to justice by sharing advice and intelligence with the advice sector and others dealing with discrimination complaints.
- We will continue working closely with partners from across civil society, law enforcement, the Scottish Government and their Race Advisor, Kaliani Lyle, to tackle race inequality, hate crime & identity-based bullying. We will also continue our work on addressing the findings from 'Is Scotland Fairer', the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey and the Morrow Report.
- Building the evidence-base to allow appropriate scrutiny of the UK Government's welfare and social security policies. We will publish our analysis of whether reforms to date have infringed people's right to an adequate standard of living or disproportionately disadvantaged some groups.
- Working with the Scottish Government as it develops its proposals for delivering newly devolved social security provisions. This will allow

the Commission, civil society and Government to assess whether social security policies are doing enough to uphold people's rights.

- Completing our formal inquiry on the extent to which the right of disabled people to independent living is supported by the provision of accessible and adaptable housing and tenancy support services.
- Continuing to focus on fair employment. We will work with the Scottish Government and employers to adopt the recommendations set out in our strategy for reducing gender, disability and ethnicity pay gaps, and work with the Fair Work Convention as we continue to support the private sector to make a real difference to the working lives of pregnant women and new mothers.
- Preparing for our next 'State of the Nation' review analysing progress on equality and human rights in Scotland and ensuring that our findings and recommendations influence the work of government, parliament and public service providers.
- Developing work with the Scottish Government to ensure equalities is at the heart of their approach to Inclusive Growth, in particular through major investment programmes such as:
  - The commitment to build 50,000 affordable homes by March 2021.
  - City Deals – we will work with the Scottish Government, Local Authorities, private sector, third sector and others to ensure that this major investment in jobs, houses and infrastructure benefits all Scots, particularly women, ethnic minorities and disabled people in terms of increasing access to skills and training opportunities.

The scale of the challenge ahead and the need for strong delivery, coupled with a significant reduction to our budget, mean that it is more important than ever that the Commission is organised in the best way to deliver maximum impact. We believe that we now have in place a resilient and sustainable organisation that will deliver against our vision and objectives.

We value our engagement with you and look forward to continuing our work together in collaboration and partnership as we strive to make Scotland a fairer place for all. If there any specific aspects of our plan that you would like to discuss please do get in touch.

Yours sincerely

**Dr Lesley Sawers**

Scotland Commissioner