



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## **EQUALITIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE**

### **Human Rights and the Scottish Parliament**

21 January 2018

The [Equalities and Human Rights Committee](#) of the Scottish Parliament will soon consider the issue of 'Human Rights and the Scottish Parliament'. Brexit has brought human rights in Scotland and the UK into sharp focus. We'd like to hear from anyone who has a view on how the Parliament could enhance its approach to promoting and protecting human rights.

We encourage Scottish public authorities, civic society, those who work against discrimination or provide advocacy services to help people access their rights to respond.

You don't need to be a human rights' expert as we also welcome lived experience of fighting for your rights.

#### **Background**

The Scottish Parliament was founded in 1999 on four [key principles](#). These are Power Sharing, Accountability, Accessibility and Equal Opportunities. They seek to make the work of the Parliament rational, effective and inclusive process, leading to 'better legislation'. To provide an open, accessible and above all participative Parliament, which takes a proactive approach to engaging with the Scottish people – in particular those groups traditionally excluded from the democratic process.

The Scotland Act 1998 placed the [European Convention of Human Rights](#) (ECHR) at the heart of the Scottish Parliament by linking legislative competence to Convention rights drawn from the ECHR and also transferred responsibility for the implementation of all other international human rights obligations within devolved competence. These include the core United Nations treaties along with the regional human rights treaties of the Council of Europe and the European Union.

Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms that belong to every person in the world, from birth until death. They apply regardless of where you are from, what you believe or how you choose to live your life. They can never be taken away, although they can sometimes be restricted – for example if a person

breaks the law, or in the interests of national security. They include 'civil and political' rights, for example, freedom of expression, freedom of religion or conscience, freedom of assembly, the right to a fair trial, the right to privacy, and the right to vote.

Human rights also include 'economic, social and cultural' rights, for example, the right to an adequate standard of living, the right to adequate food, housing, sanitation and water, the right to education, and rights at work.

The [work of the Scottish Parliament](#), for example, legislating, conducting inquiries, adopting the budget, and overseeing the Scottish Government, covers civil, cultural, economic, political, and social rights. This work therefore has an immediate impact on the enjoyment of these rights.

### **What we need your help with**

The Committee wants to explore what more it could do to mainstream human rights into its procedures and practices. We would like to hear your views on—

#### **Participation and engagement**

- How the Scottish Parliament can empower people to make them more aware of their rights under domestic and international human rights law and to help build a strong human rights culture in Scotland?

#### **Parliamentary procedure and process**

- What further steps the Scottish Parliament could take to ensure that people's human rights are being taken into consideration when the Scottish Government and public authorities are creating policies?

#### **Accountability**

- What more could the Scottish Parliament do to ensure that international treaties, for example, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and other international human rights obligations are being followed in Scotland?

Please also tell us about any other comments you feel are relevant to the inquiry.

These questions are available in other languages, on request.

**THE CLOSING DATE FOR PROVIDING YOUR VIEWS IS 6.00 PM ON 16 MARCH 2018**

### **How to engage with us?**

[Please see our policy on how we treat the information you send us](#)

This policy is available in British Sign Language at  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6vJOPj0GIE>

This policy is available and as an MP3 audio file at:  
[http://www.parliament.scot/Audio\\_files/TreatmentOfWrittenEvidenceMP3\\_20141112.mp3](http://www.parliament.scot/Audio_files/TreatmentOfWrittenEvidenceMP3_20141112.mp3)



**You can send us your views by—**

Emailing us at: [\*\*equalities.humanrights@parliament.scot\*\*](mailto:equalities.humanrights@parliament.scot)

You can write to us at: **Equalities and Human Rights Committee**  
**Room T2.60**  
**Scottish Parliament**  
**Edinburgh EH99 1SP**

You can find us on Twitter: [\*\*@SP\\_EHRiC\*\*](https://twitter.com/SP_EHRiC)

You can find us on FaceBook: [\*\*https://www.facebook.com/scottishparliament\*\*](https://www.facebook.com/scottishparliament)

You can ring us: **0131 348 5223 or 0131 348 6040**

You can Text/SMS us: **07786 209 888**

We welcome calls using the Text Relay service or in BSL through  
[\*\*contactscotland-bsl.org/\*\*](http://contactscotland-bsl.org/)

You can ask questions online through live chat: [\*\*www.parliament.scot/live-chat\*\*](http://www.parliament.scot/live-chat)

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