

Equality and Human Rights Commission Publication Scheme

Introduction and guide to the scheme

Legal requirement

Adopting a publication scheme is a requirement under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (referred to in this document as FOIA). This Act promotes greater openness and accountability across the public sector by requiring all public authorities to make information available proactively, through a publication scheme.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission, like all public authorities, has a statutory duty to adopt and maintain a publication scheme that has been approved by the Information Commissioner.

What is a publication scheme?

A publication scheme is a document that describes the information a public authority publishes or intends to publish. In this context, 'publish' means to make information available routinely. The scheme is not a list of the actual publications (because this will change as new material is published or existing material revised); it is the public authority's commitment to make available the information described. The aim of the new scheme is to encourage maximum disclosure but at the same time reduce the burden on public authorities.

A publication scheme must set out the classes, or categories, of information published. It must also make clear how the information described can be accessed and whether or not charges will be made to access the information.

About our publication scheme

The Equality and Human Rights Commission's publication scheme has been prepared in line with the new model publication scheme that all public authorities have been required to adopt since 1 January 2009. It is a guide to the information routinely published or information intended to be published by the Commission. It is a description of the information about the organisation and the work that is made publicly available.

The publication scheme will help you to find all the information that the Commission publishes or will normally make available. For ease of use, the information in this scheme is grouped into broad classes.

The publication scheme has been approved by the Information Commissioner and is available on the website:

www.equalityhumanrights.com or on request from the Commission's Knowledge Officers at the address below or via email: knowledgecentre@equalityhumanrights.com

Charging policy

The Commission's publications are generally free unless stated otherwise in the introduction. Information available on the website: www.equalityhumanrights.com can be downloaded free of charge.

Hard copies of publications can be requested via the website or from the Customer Support Unit. Charges are not normally made for hard copies of publications, although the number of reports requested by any one individual or organisation may be limited, or multiply copies charged for.

Any charge levied will be in accordance with the Commission's charging policy.

Copyright policy

All material in the scheme website is owned by or licensed to the Commission, and it is protected by copyright, trademarks or other proprietary rights and laws. Unless it is indicated in the material that it is Crown owned or otherwise, it may be reproduced free of charge, in any format or medium, provided that it is done so accurately and material is not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Equality and Human Rights Commission copyright and specify the title of the document or publication.

If you have any enquiries regarding copyright information not published on the Commission website, please email David Sparrow, Library and Information Centre Manager: david.sparrow@equalityhumanrights.com

If you require information about using material owned by the Crown, please visit the HMSO website at www.hmso.gov.uk or telephone them on 01603 621000.

Obtaining information and right of access to information

Under FOIA, you have a general right of access to all information held by the Commission. This right covers information recorded in any form and obtained from any source, not just documents published by the Commission. Access requests must be made in writing, by post, by fax or by email, and must include your name and address.

You may be required to pay a fee because of the expense involved in finding and supplying the information or to cover the actual cost of photocopying and postage. You will be notified in advance if a fee is likely to apply to your request.

Public authorities like the Commission must respond to requests within 20 working days:

- Confirming whether any information is held.
- Enclosing a copy of all information that can be released.
- Explaining the exemptions applying to any information withheld.

Most of the information described in this scheme is available on the Commission's website at: www.equalityhumanrights.com or is available as paper copies.

If you wish to make a request, require advice on accessing information, do not have access to our website, cannot find information or wish to obtain paper copies, please write to the address below or email: knowledgecentre@equalityhumanrights.com

You can also request information by completing a form.

Complaints, comments and enquiries

It is important that this publication scheme meets your needs. If you find the scheme difficult to understand or have suggestions as to how the scheme might be improved, please write to the address below or email knowledgecentre@equalityhumanrights.com

Knowledge Officers
Equality and Human Rights Commission
3rd Floor
Lancaster House
67 Newhall Street

Birmingham
B3 1NA

England helpline: 0845 604 6610

Classes of information published by the Commission

In preparing the scheme, the various classes of information that is made available, or will be made available, have been considered. Most of the information detailed below is, or will become, available on the website. These classes will be reviewed on a regular basis and this scheme will be updated regularly as the Commission and its policies and strategies develop.

The seven classes of information are:

1. Who we are and what we do.
2. What we spend and how we spend it.
3. What our priorities are and how we are doing.
4. How we make decisions.
5. Our policies and procedures
6. Lists and registers.
7. The services we offer.

1. Who we are and what we do

Who we are

The Equality and Human Rights Commission was set up under the Equality Act 2006 and opened on 1 October 2007. It combines the responsibilities and powers of three previous (legacy) equality commissions (that had responsibility for promoting disability, race and sex equality in Britain) with other equality and human rights issues.

Details about the Commission's and its aims can be found at:

www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/aboutus/pages/aboutus.aspx

Board and committees

The Commission is led by a board which is made up of a non-executive Chairman and Deputy Chair, a Chief Executive and 14 non-executive

Commissioners. The board provides strategic oversight and direction for the Commission.

In addition to the board there are three statutory committees:

Disability Committee

Scotland Committee

Wales Committee

There are also a further five decision-making committees:

Legal Committee

Grants Committee

Audit and Risk Committee

External Affairs Committee

Remuneration Committee

A description of the board and committees' terms of reference and membership, agendas and minutes will shortly be available on the Commission website as web pages and as Word documents or PDF files that can be downloaded.

Commissioners

Biographical details about the Commission's Chairman, Deputy Chair, Chief Executive and 14 current Commissioners are available at:
www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/aboutus/whoweare/pages/commissioners.aspx

Statutory committee members

Biographical details about the members of the three statutory committees are also available.

Organisational structure

The Commission currently has four group directorates (Strategy, Legal, Corporate Management and Communications) plus national directorates in Scotland and Wales. Each directorate is led by a Group Director, with support from a Director and Divisional Heads or a National Director. As a new body, the Commission's interim organisational structure is currently being revised. Once it has been updated, it will be available on the website.

Corporate management team

The four Group Directors, the National Directors for Scotland and Wales, and the Chief Executive make up the senior management team responsible for making collective and corporate decisions on key matters affecting the Commission. Dr Nicola Brewer, Chief Executive and Accounting Officer, leads this team.

Location and contacting the Commission

The Commission has principal offices in Manchester, London, Glasgow and Cardiff. It operates a helpline service in England, Scotland and Wales. Details about how to contact the Commission can be found at:

www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/pages/contactus.aspx

What we do

The Commission is working to eliminate discrimination, reduce inequality and protect human rights, and to build good relations, ensuring that everyone has a fair chance to participate in society. Details about the Commission's areas of work can be found at:

www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/aboutus/whatwedo/pages/whatwedo.aspx

Broadly speaking, the Commission's areas of work include:

- Enforcing the law.
- Influencing the development of the law and government policy.
- Promoting good practice.
- Raising awareness through campaigns, events and communications.
- Fostering better relations.
- Developing understanding and evidence.

Briefings

As part of its work to influence policy and legal developments, the Commission often produces briefing papers on issues of relevance. This is in order to inform those involved in introducing changes or taking action about the Commission's view. Details about these briefings can be found at:

www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/policyresearch/briefings/pages/default.aspx

Consultations

The Commission undertakes its own consultations and frequently responds to consultations from Government. Details about incoming and outgoing consultations can be found at:

www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/policyresearch/consultations/pages/consultations.aspx

Human rights submissions

As an official human rights body, one of the Commission's roles is to submit evidence and reports to the various international human rights committees, relating to the situation in Britain. Details about these various reports can be found at:

www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/policyresearch/hgsubmissions/pages/default.aspx

Research projects

The Commission undertakes and commissions research across Great Britain in order to add to the body of knowledge about equality and human rights issues and to ensure that any work carried out is evidence based. Details about the research projects expected to result in published reports can be found at:

www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/policyresearch/research/Pages/default.aspx

Research and consultation in Scotland

The Commission is committed to delivering research projects and responding to consultations on various aspects of equality in Scotland. Details about this work can be found at:

www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/scotland/research/pages/researchinScotland.aspx

Using legal powers

Part of the Commission's remit is to enforce equality legislation and encourage compliance with the Human Rights Act. The Commission's enforcement powers allow it to investigate whether organisations and businesses are complying with their legal duties regarding equality. Details about the investigations being carried out, or already concluded, can be found at:

www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/policyresearch/usinglegalpowers/pages/default.aspx

Legal updates

Details about updates from the Commission's legal team on developing areas of law can be found at:

www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/policyresearch/legalupdates/pages/varioussitedefault.aspx

2. What we spend and how we spend it

This is a brief introduction on the Commission's source of income, information about projected and actual income, and details on expenditure, tendering, procurement and contracts.

Income

The main source of income for the Commission's activities is funding received (grant-in-aid) from the Government Equalities Office (see: www.equalities.gov.uk). The Finance Director is required to monitor compliance and avoid default in accordance with the Framework Document and the provisions of the Treasury Management Policy.

Additional income is generated from charges the Commission is allowed to make for its information and conciliation services as defined by Sections 13 and 27 and recovery of costs under Section 29 of the Equality Act 2006.

The Commission allocates resources in accordance with its business plan for each year, having regard to the priorities set out in the three-year strategic plan 2009–2012. More details can be found at: www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/aboutus/mission/pages/visionmissionandpriorities.aspx

Capital programme

The nature of the Commission's business means that it is not asset or capital intensive. Consequently, there is a small capital allocation, representing a very small percentage of the total budget.

Annual statement of accounts

Annual statement of accounts covering the periods 18 April 2007 to 31 March 2008 and 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009 are currently being prepared. Once approved, they will be available to download from the Commission website. Printed copies may also be requested.

Budgets and variance reports

Papers containing updated performance and budget information are presented regularly to the Commission's board.

Financial statements for projects and events

This information will be contained in the annual statement of accounts when published.

Audit reports

For each year, the Commission agrees an annual internal audit plan as the basis to form an annual opinion on the adequacy of the internal controls assurance. Audit reports are presented to the Audit Committee regularly.

Pay and grading structures

Commissioners' fees and expenses have been paid in accordance with the terms and conditions of Commissioners' appointment, issued by the (Department of) Communities and Local Government, the then appointing Sponsor department, and in accordance with their terms and conditions of appointment.

The Commission's pay structure for staff is approved by the sponsor unit, the Government Equalities office. Expenses are claimed in accordance with the Commission's expense policy.

Contracts awarded and their value

The Commission publishes information for prospective suppliers and interested parties regarding procurement-related issues and contract opportunities for the Commission that can't be procured through our current contractual or framework arrangements. Contracts with a value above the European Union (EU) threshold that are advertised through the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) will also have an OJEU award notice published, at the end of the procurement exercise. Details of this can be found at:

www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/aboutus/procurement/pages/tenderingopportunities.aspx

Procurement procedures

The Commission publishes all contracts with a value above the EU threshold through the OJEU. During 2009, the Commission intends to develop a section on its website for the publication of other contract opportunities.

The Procurement guide, currently being revised, is for all staff involved in buying goods and services. It provides information on the legal framework that applies to all procurement in the public sector, and the policies and procedures on procurement and the responsibilities of managers.

3. What our priorities are and how we are doing

Business plan 2008/9

The Commission's 2008/9 business plan sets out the aims and strategic priorities for its first full year of operation. It describes what the Commission wants to do, how the work is relevant to Britain's entire population and how resources will be used to best effect. Details of this can be found at:

www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/aboutus/mission/Pages/BusinessPlan0809.aspx

Our priorities and key delivery targets for 2008/9

The Commission has four strategic priorities:

- Analyse, define and target key equality and human rights challenges.
- Change policy and organisational practice to provide better public services alongside an efficient and dynamic economy.
- Engage and involve the public from disadvantaged communities and areas.
- Anticipate social change, develop new narratives and reach new audiences in ways that strengthen equality and human rights.

To achieve these strategic priorities, the Commission has developed 12 key delivery targets to cover all areas of its work. These range from lobbying for landmark legislation, including a new Equality Act, to developing a multimedia digital strategy.

Strategic plan 2009 – 2012

The Commission has a statutory duty to publish a three-year strategic plan and the first will be published in April 2009. The plan will set out a clear vision and strategy for April 2009 to March 2012, as well as describing the priorities and programme of work for that period. The development of a clear strategy for work is seen as critically important. The strategy – which binds together all the parts of the Commission's broad remit into one plan and which is developed through involvement with stakeholders – will be key in helping the Commission achieve its vision of social change.

Once the three-year strategic plan is published in April 2009, it will be available to download from the Commission website or as a hard copy on request.

Business plan 2009/10

The business plan for 2009/10 is currently being prepared. It will be aligned to the priorities listed in the three-year strategic plan to be published in April 2009.

Annual reports

The annual report is submitted annually to the Secretary of State for Women and Equalities in accordance with the Equality Act 2006. The 2007/8 report reflects the Commission's activities from 1 October 2007 to 31 March 2008. The first full-year report for 2008/9 will cover the expanded remit and how the Commission has performed in achieving its priorities and key delivery targets. When published, both will be available for download from the website or as hard copies on request.

Wales Programme

The Wales Programme sets out priorities for our work in Wales taking into account the Commission's strategic framework. Details of this can be found at:

www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/Wales/publications/pages/walesprogramme20089.aspx

4. How we make decisions

This is a brief introduction on the Commission's policy proposals and decisions, decision-making processes, internal criteria, and procedures and consultations.

Board and committees

The board meets bi-monthly every other month. A summary of the decisions made is published on the Commission's website. The decision-making committees meet on a bi-monthly basis. Their agendas and decisions will be available for download on the website shortly. The Disability and Scotland Committees meet bi-monthly and the Wales Committee meets four times a year. Their agendas and minutes will be available for download on our website shortly.

Corporate governance framework

This sets out the responsibilities and procedures of the board, Chairman, Commissioners and Committees, including the code of practice for members on handling conflict of interest. The Commission is currently writing a guide to the corporate governance framework. Once completed, it will be available to download from the website or as a hard copy on request.

Operational programme board

This board is responsible for the overseeing the portfolio of programmes and projects being undertaken by the Commission.

Scheme of delegation

The scheme of delegation sets out the level within the Commission at which different types of decision can be taken. The scheme currently covers financial management procurement and contractual matters. The Commission is currently reviewing its scheme of delegations.

5. Our policies and procedures

The Commission currently has the following policies:

Human Resources

- Working for the Commission
- Learning and Development Policy
- Equality Schemes
- Terms and Conditions Policy
- Attendance Management Policy
- Capability Policy
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Fair Treatment at Work Policy
- Induction Policy
- Leave Policy
- Retirement Policy

Information Management and Technology

- Freedom of Information
- Complaints
- Conflicts of Interest

- Registration of Interests and Gifts and Hospitality
- Data Protection
- Records Management and Document Retention
- Health and Safety
- Accessibility Guidelines
- Writing and Publishing Guidelines

Corporate Governance

- Corporate Governance Manual (in development)
- Framework Document

Finance

- Standing Financial Instructions
- Risk Policy and Fraud Policy
- Procurement Policy

6. Lists and registers

The Commission holds the following registers and lists:

Asset register

The Commission's asset register contains information on fixed property assets and IT equipment held across Commission offices.

Register of interest gifts and hospitality

The Commission holds a register of interest of members and senior officers, and gifts and hospitality provided to Commissioners and senior members of staff.

Library catalogue

This catalogue contains a list of all the bibliographic items found in our Library and Information Centre's holdings.

7. The services we offer

The Commission offers the following services:

Briefings and consultation responses

The Commission's briefing papers and consultation responses can be found at:

www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/policyresearch/briefings/Pages/default.aspx

www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/policyresearch/consultations/pages/consultations.aspx

Campaigns and projects

Information on the Commission's current campaign work and projects can be found at:

www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/projects/pages/default.aspx

Codes of practice

A list of current Codes of Practice issued by the former commissions containing practical guidance on matters such as promoting equality of opportunity and eliminating discrimination in particular fields, organised by strand, can be found at:

www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/foradvisers/codesofpractice/pages/codesofpractice.aspx

Conferences and events

Details of events and conferences the Commission is organising or participating in (along with any follow-up reports and presentations), and events organised by others that are closely linked to the work of the Commission, can be found at:

www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/newsandcomment/eventslisting/pages/events2.aspx

Equality newsletter

This is a regular, free subscription e-bulletin service, ensuring you receive all the latest news and stories from the Commission delivered straight to your email inbox. You can read back issues and subscribe here:

www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/newsandcomment/newsletter/pages/equalitynewsletter.aspx

Guidance for advisers

This section lists some of the guidance materials produced by the former commissions as well as guidance produced by external organisations, who have given the Commission permission to link to their materials:

www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/foradvisers/pages/default.aspx

Helpline advice

The Commission runs national helplines in England, Scotland and Wales offering advice and information to anyone who wants to know more about their rights or responsibilities in relation to equality and human

rights. The helpline advisers are trained to deal with a variety of calls, from responding to requests for particular documents or information to providing referrals to specialist legal advice. More details are at:

www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/aboutus/helpline/Pages/Advicefromourhelpline.aspx

Information for businesses and organisations

Here you will find practical information for education and training providers; employers; public authorities; service providers and other organisations to help them meet their duties and promote fairness and dignity in their respective areas of work.

www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/forbusinessesandorganisation/pages/default.aspx

Legacy commission archived websites

Here you will find the three legacy commissions' websites. The content of these sites has not been updated since September 2007, so may no longer be legally accurate and should not be seen to reflect the policies of the Equality and Human Rights Commission. Furthermore, they will not remain active indefinitely.

www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/aboutus/history/Pages/Legacycommissionwebsitearchives.aspx

Legislation

Here you will find links to key UK equality and human rights legislation:

www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/foradvisers/keylegislation/pages/keylegislation.aspx

News and comment

Here you will find news releases and statements to the media on various aspects of the Commission's work since October 2007.

www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/newsandcomment/pages/newshome.aspx

Publications

Here you will find a list of the most recent Commission publications with downloads, a list of the most significant legacy commission publications and an online ordering facility.

www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publicationsandresources/pages/publications.aspx

RSS Feeds

Here you can access frequently published information by subscribing to our RSS feeds services.

www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/newsandcomment/Pages/RSSfeeds.aspx

Speaker's Corner

Here you can find independent comment and opinion on equality and human rights issues. Join the debate by contributing your reactions to the articles.

www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/newsandcomment/speakerscorner/Pages/SpeakerCorner.aspx

Your rights

This section guides you through the rights that you have, how to use them and the situations in which they apply.

www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/yourrights/pages/default.aspx

Review of this scheme

The Commission is a new organisation, and is developing rapidly. As part of the Commissions work, the information that is made available and the way in which this is done will be reviewed regularly. It is therefore likely that the structure and content of this scheme will need to change often to reflect developments within the Commission.