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Equality and
Human Rights
Commission

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Statement from the Chair of the Equality and Human Rights Commission

Following the departure of Commissioners Baroness Jane Campbell and Bert Massie, the Equality and Human Rights Commission is reaffirming its commitment to the disability rights agenda. Accompanying this statement is the work programme for the Disability Committee for this year. It articulates a vision for disability rights and a roadmap for the Commission to deliver results for disabled people. The work plan demonstrates clearly how the Disability Committee is continuing its important work of promoting and working towards disability equality, in the heart of the Commission as a whole and with its full support. It highlights key projects such as the Commission's drive to tackle hate crime and hostility against disabled people and ensuring the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities is implemented effectively in the United Kingdom.

The Disability Committee is integral and essential to the work of the Equality and Human Rights Commission. The Committee's membership of disabled people ensures that the rights of disabled people are part of everything we do and every decision we take. Securing the Committee in statute, through the Equality Act 2005, was a major achievement by disability activists and organisations; and their ongoing involvement in advising the Committee's leadership has been critical to its success. The Commission cannot overstate the importance of these ongoing relationships with our disability stakeholders at both grassroots and national level.

The Committee has spearheaded some of the most significant work the Commission has undertaken, including our work on social care, our airline accessibility campaign, our support of the Sharon Coleman case which gave additional rights to carers and other people associated with disabled people, evidence to the Joint Committee on Human Rights regarding the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and establishing the Commission as the independent body to monitor the implementation on the Convention. Further research by the Commission confirmed shocking levels

of bullying of disabled people and we are putting in place a major programme to enable schools, local authorities and other organisations to tackle it more effectively. The Committee has also contributed to our integrated programmes such as Working Better and our Human Rights Inquiry.

The Committee's work, led first by Baroness Jane Campbell and latterly by Alun Davies, has been distinctively effective in its impact and efficient in its use of the Commission's resources to deliver its statutory mandate. The whole Board is behind its programme of work and is listening to it. The Committee continues to be led by Alun Davies. A new commissioner will be recruited to chair the Committee this autumn. Until then Alun or a representative of the Committee will attend all Commission Board meetings to ensure that disabled people's views are represented.

The Committee provides a model for how the Commission arranges its delivery to the people we support and serve. This is a tribute both to Jane Campbell, who set up the Committee with a clear understanding that we better serve the equality and human rights agenda when different interests work together, and to Bert Massie who was instrumental in establishing the Equality and Human Rights Commission as transitional commissioner from the Disability Rights Commission. The Commission thanks them for their work and commitment and acknowledges the experience and knowledge they brought to our collective endeavours. During 2009 Alun Davies has taken the Committee to the next stage, ensuring that it punches above its weight as part of a high-performing delivery organisation.

Disability equality and human rights for disabled people will always be a central part of the Equality and Human Rights Commission's work, and the involvement of disability stakeholders can only become more important as we progress towards the implementation of the equality bill. Among other programmes, the Disability Committee continues to work to ensure that the government's equality bill delivers the best possible result for disabled people.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Trevor Phillips', with a horizontal line underneath it.

Trevor Phillips

Chair, Equality and Human Rights Commission