

Equality and Human Rights Commission

Business Plan

2017/18

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Introduction from the CEO and Chair

We are delighted to introduce the Equality and Human Rights Commission's Business Plan for 2017/18.

Our Strategic Plan 2016/19, on which we conducted an extensive public consultation, sets out how we will deliver our mandate, set by Parliament, to challenge discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, and protect and promote human rights. In this Business Plan we outline the coming year's work programme in support of our four Strategic Aims.

Over the past year we have implemented a number of changes internally, which will help us to better address the deep-seated inequalities and human rights violations facing Britain today. We have made some tough decisions about the areas on which we should focus this year. In 2017/18 we will work on fewer issues, in a more sustained way, using our unique tools more strategically to achieve change. We have prioritised issues where we are best-placed to make a real difference, using our enforcement and investigatory powers. Our new ways of working will allow us to make optimal use of our more limited resources and to work more effectively across England, Scotland and Wales. We will focus more on evaluation of our impact.

The Commission is ready to confront a new set of challenges as Britain prepares to leave the European Union. We are lucky to live in a country with a significant heritage of treating people fairly, with dignity and respect. We believe that Britain must retain its status as a global exemplar. In the next year we will work to ensure that vital equality and human rights protections are not weakened by our departure from the EU. We will also maximise opportunities to strengthen the law and infrastructure protecting our rights. We think this will help heal the divisions brought to the fore during and since the referendum campaign.

We will take our work on access to justice in a new direction, which will see us share our expertise on equality and human rights with advisors and those providing alternative dispute resolution services. This year we are also investing significantly in our legal team, to promote access to justice in respect of equality and human rights cases. We will build on the success of our recent pilot, in which we invited requests for funding for cases involving disabled people's rights, by extending that invitation to cases relating to other issues. We will continue to press for changes to UK Government policy on access to the courts and tribunals.

Equality and human rights issues affect us all in our everyday lives. In 2016, we published the biggest ever review into race equality in Britain, which looked across education, employment, housing, pay and living standards, health, criminal justice and political participation. It revealed that while for certain people life has become fairer over the past five years, for others progress has stalled and for some – in particular young Black people – life on many fronts has become more challenging. In 2017/18, we will continue to call for a comprehensive new race equality strategy from the UK Government, which recognises the interrelationship between different elements of people’s lives and includes stretching new targets to reduce race inequality and discrimination.

A major project for 2017/18 will be to build the evidence base which will allow appropriate scrutiny of the UK Governments’ 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 discriminated against people with certain protected characteristics. We will work with the Scottish Government as it develops its proposals for delivering newly devolved social security provisions. This will allow the Commission, civil society and governments to analyse whether social security policies are doing enough to uphold people’s rights.

We will undertake a formal inquiry to examine 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.

Our high-profile employer-led campaign ‘Working Forward’ will enter a new phase in 2017/18, as we continue to support the private sector to make a real difference to the working lives of pregnant women and new mothers.

Finally, we will begin work on our next ‘state of the nation’ review – our comprehensive analysis of equality and human rights in England, Scotland and Wales. Like our last review in 2015 (‘Is Britain Fairer?’), our findings and recommendations will not only influence the work of governments, Parliament and public service providers, but will also become the evidence base for our strategic priorities going forward.



Rebecca Hilsenrath, Chief Executive



David Isaac, Chair

About the Commission

Our vision

We live in a country with a long history of upholding people's rights, valuing diversity and challenging intolerance. The Commission seeks to maintain and strengthen this heritage while identifying and tackling areas where there is still unfair discrimination, or where human rights are not being respected.

Our role

The Equality and Human Rights Commission ('the Commission') was established by Parliament under the Equality Act 2006 to help safeguard and enforce the laws that protect all our rights to fairness, dignity and respect. We use our unique powers to help make Britain a fair society in which everyone has an equal opportunity to fulfil their potential.

The Commission operates independently and aims to be an expert and authoritative organisation, reputed as a centre of excellence for evidence, analysis and legal expertise. We strive to be an essential point of contact for policymakers, businesses and public bodies.

Our statutory powers give us a range of tools to drive equality and human rights improvements, and we use these selectively and proportionately to achieve our objectives. We work with other organisations and individuals to advance fairness, dignity and respect, but we are ready to take tough action against those who abuse the rights of others. We act as:

1. A **catalyst for change**, enabling and encouraging improvement by bringing people together to devise solutions, and building capacity in other organisations to help them to effect change. Where appropriate, we use our statutory inquiry powers to explore systemic issues, gather evidence and develop possible solutions.
2. An **information provider**, helping people understand their rights and responsibilities and improve compliance with the law.

3. An **influencer**, using our legal expertise, research, insight and analysis to influence public policy and inform debates.
4. An **evaluator**, monitoring the effectiveness of the laws protecting people's rights to equality and human rights, and measuring progress in society.
5. An **enforcer**, using our strategic enforcement powers, including our statutory investigation powers, selectively to protect people against serious and systemic abuses of their rights and to clarify equality and human rights law, alongside our efforts help organisations to comply with equality and human rights standards.

As a United Nations (UN)-accredited National Human Rights Institution and a National Equality Body, we work with bodies in Scotland and Northern Ireland, across Europe and internationally to protect and promote equality and human rights.

Highlights of the work we delivered to fulfil our role during 2016/17 are at **Annex A**.

Work programme for 2017/18

Our Strategic Plan for 2016/19 sets out our four Strategic Aims. These will guide our work over that three year period.

Strategic Aims for 2016/19

1. **Significant impact** – to secure advances in equality and human rights in priority areas
2. **A strong evidence base** – to provide authoritative analysis and insight
3. **Sustainable infrastructure** – to ensure an effective and sustainable infrastructure to protect rights in practice
4. **Improved capability** – to be an expert, independent and authoritative national body.

On the following pages we set out the work we will do in 2017/18 in relation to each of our Strategic Aims, the objectives we have set ourselves and how we intend to achieve them.

Strategic Aim 1 - Significant impact

To secure advances in equality and human rights in priority areas

Our aim is to have a significant and systemic impact on society in relation to a range of pressing equality and human rights issues.

Our Strategic Plan prioritised a number of areas for action. These are set out below, together with the work we plan to take forward for each in 2017/18. In some cases this will involve substantive work this year, while in others we will undertake scoping and initial research in preparation for focused activity in the third year of our Strategic Plan.

In addition to the activities specified below, we will seek out opportunities to use our unique enforcement tools and our strategic litigation powers to challenge human rights abuses and those who fail to comply with legal duties in the Equality Act 2010, particularly in relation to the issues prioritised in our Strategic Plan. We will also seek to protect, uphold and strengthen the laws protecting equality and human rights. Our plans to ensure an effective legal framework to protect rights in practice are set out in more detail under Strategic Aim 3.

Exiting the European Union

As the UK prepares to leave the European Union (EU), we will work to ensure that our vital equality and human rights laws are not weakened, and that the UK Government sets out a positive vision for the protections the UK will maintain in its own right, once we leave EU laws behind. We will seek to remove barriers for those who feel distant from or disengaged by politics, and to re-establish an environment where people can meaningfully engage in free and fair elections, have their voices heard and influence the decisions that affect us all. We will also seek to ensure that the laws and systems to protect against hate crime are fit for purpose.

Education

Children have a human right to a high quality and broad education that is accessible and helps them achieve their potential. This is an essential basis for enjoyment of other rights, including participation in the labour market.

In 2017/18 we will focus on tackling identity-based bullying in schools and influencing the curriculum. We will encourage policy makers, practitioners and regulators in England, Scotland and Wales to actively address identity-based bullying and promote respect for diversity. We will:

- press governments and regulators to commit to concrete activities to improve leadership and accountability for tackling identity-based bullying in schools and education authorities
- equip schools to overcome barriers to monitoring and reporting on bullying
- encourage and support governments and teacher training organisations to improve training for teachers on identity-based bullying
- seek opportunities to influence the curriculum to improve how schools teach children about equality, human rights and identity-based bullying
- look for opportunities to use our regulatory and litigation powers to reinforce the rights of pupils to an education free from discrimination and harassment and, in the case of disabled pupils, with the provision of reasonable adjustments to remove barriers to their education

Work

When people can participate to their full potential in the labour market, they can be financially autonomous and business can make the best use of the available talent. Work is an important aspect of personal fulfilment, and the right to work and fair conditions at work are fundamental human rights. Some groups are disproportionately out of work, concentrated in low-pay sectors, experience poor treatment at work or face barriers to progression. The focus of our work in 2017/18 is on:

- encouraging governments and employers to adopt the actions set out in our strategy for reducing gender, disability and ethnicity pay gaps
- increasing membership of our business-led initiative to encourage employers to improve the experience of pregnant women and new mothers at work
- ensuring that high-calibre apprenticeships reduce employment gaps and occupational segregation
- conducting capacity building with trade unions to promote implementation of UN recommendations on access to work and working conditions
- seeking opportunities to use our regulatory and litigation powers to reinforce people's right to a workplace free from discrimination and harassment

Living standards

Everyone has a right to an adequate standard of living, including a minimum entitlement to food, clothing and housing. The focus of our work in this area in 2017/18 is on:

- Social security reform – We will publish our analysis of whether the cumulative impact of social security reforms has led to infringements of people’s right to an adequate standard of living or disproportionately disadvantaged some groups. This will build the evidence base to allow appropriate scrutiny of governments’ social security policies in the future.
- The right to a home – We will complete 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. We will also make recommendations for improvements.
- Refugees and asylum seekers – We will undertake work to assess whether refugees and asylum seekers arriving in Britain understand and are able to access the services to which they are entitled.

We will also seek opportunities to use our regulatory and litigation powers to reinforce people’s right to a standard of living in line with equality and human rights law, as well as access to transport for disabled people.

Health and social care

Everyone has the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. Health and social care services should be accessible to all and provided with respect and without discrimination, including to those who have particular needs.

Health and social care services are undergoing significant reform as the governments in England, Wales and Scotland look to deliver more effective services that are people-centred and often community-based. In the context of these reforms, we will seek to ensure that mental health services are appropriate for and accessible to people with distinct needs or facing particular barriers, such as children, older people, people from particular ethnic minorities, lesbian, gay and bisexual people, and transgender people. We will contribute to a clear understanding of what good practice looks like for such groups and influence national leaders to promote this understanding across the sector. We will also report to the UN Committee on the

Elimination of Racial Discrimination in relation to ethnic minorities' access to mental and physical health.

Security and detention

We all have a right to be free from torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and punishment, and to be protected against harm when in care or detention. In the criminal justice system there is a disproportionate representation of certain groups, such as people from ethnic minorities, and concerns about treatment of people in the system. Building on our previous work on security and detention, including our inquiry into preventing deaths in detention, we will push for better treatment in the criminal justice system by:

- seeking to influence the laws, policies, practices and inspection standards governing prisons and youth custody
- advising the independent review into over-representation of Black, Asian and ethnic minority people in the criminal justice system, and monitoring the UK Government's response to the review

Across the UK, there are concerns about the use of physical and/or chemical restraint in detention, healthcare, and some education settings. We will develop a human-rights based framework for all forms of restraint across different settings, such as in police custody, adult and children's prison, and healthcare. We will promote the framework for use by regulators, inspectorates and ombudsmen to ensure that they are taking a systematic human rights-based approach to monitoring the use of restraint.

Hate crime is a serious human rights abuse affecting, among others, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, people with a particular religion or belief, as well as disabled people. The spike in reports of hate crime towards immigrants and people from ethnic minorities in the wake of the EU referendum is a cause for significant concern. In 2017/18 we will work with key stakeholders, to call for:

- the laws and systems for regulating and monitoring hate crime to be more robust, coherent and better coordinated
- the effectiveness of current third-party reporting to be reviewed
- appropriate support for survivors of hate crime

We will also provide an updated report on hate crime to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

In addition, in 2017/18, we will seek opportunities to use our regulatory and litigation powers to reinforce the rights of people in the criminal justice system.

Participation

It is essential to a healthy democracy that everyone is able to participate in political and civic life, and has the freedom to express their opinions and influence the local and national agenda. Disabled people have a right to participate fully in all aspects of life, including community and cultural life.

In 2017/18 we will focus on:

- creating conditions which will enable more diverse political representation: we will work towards removing obstacles to more diverse political representation, including for young people, women, disabled people, transgender people, and people from ethnic minorities. In the run up to the EU referendum, we saw that people have a real desire to be more involved in politics, from which they currently feel disengaged
- ensuring disabled people can access football grounds: we will press Premier League clubs to meet their public commitment and legal duty to reduce the barriers to disabled people attending football matches by assessing their progress and taking enforcement action where appropriate

Race equality strategy

In 2016 we published 'Healing a divided Britain', which presented evidence and analysis demonstrating the challenges and different outcomes faced by people from ethnic minorities across all areas of life in Britain. In Summer 2017, the UK Government will publish their audit of public services which will reveal any racial disparities in provision. Building on these findings, in 2017/18 we will continue to press the UK Government to develop and implement a coordinated and comprehensive strategy to enhance race equality in Britain.

Concerted action to promote equality for disabled people

In 2017/18, we will be publishing our comprehensive report highlighting the grave and persistent inequalities facing disabled people. We will push for governments to take concerted action to address the key issues highlighted in the report and for gaps in the available data to be filled.

Strategic Aim 2 – Strong evidence base

To provide authoritative analysis and insight

One of the Commission’s core roles is to use research, analysis and insight to shed light on the challenges to fairness, dignity and respect across England, Scotland and Wales. Under the Equality Act 2006 we have a statutory duty to monitor progress in relation to equality and human rights in Britain.

We will continue to develop our research and intelligence function, building on our reputation as a centre of excellence through providing a robust evidence base on the equality and human rights issues people face in their everyday lives. This will inform our decisions on where, when and how we intervene and help influence developments in legislation, policy and practice that are relevant to our mandate.

We will also invest in our capability to assess and evaluate the effectiveness, impact and value of our work.

Measurement Framework and state of the nation review

To assess progress towards equal life chances and enjoyment of human rights in Britain, our 2015 report ‘Is Britain Fairer?’ and supplementary reports focusing specifically on England, Scotland and Wales, drew on a range of indicators from four separate measurement frameworks on equality, human rights, children and good relations.

In 2017/18, we are bringing together these separate frameworks into one. We need a coherent, up-to-date, single structure to enable us to draw on the best available evidence for our equality and human rights monitoring.

The single Measurement Framework will establish a consistent approach to identifying the core evidence the Commission needs to support its legal and policy work, to support the policy and influencing work of others, to write our next progress report on equality and human rights in Britain, and to fulfil our international treaty monitoring obligations. We have consulted extensively on proposals for our single Measurement Framework. It will be structured by domains, core areas of life such as education, work and health, and will explain what quantitative and qualitative sources we will examine.

Developing levers for change

In 2016/17 we published our report identifying what can be done to prevent and respond to discrimination, harassment and hate crime in England, Scotland and Wales. This examined the relationship between prejudiced attitudes and unlawful

discrimination, identity-based harassment and violence, the prevalence of unlawful behaviour based on prejudiced attitudes, and what is known about how to prevent or respond to unlawful behaviour related to prejudiced attitudes.

In phase two of this work we will focus on building capacity among smaller organisations for evaluating effective interventions. This will improve the evidence on ‘what works’ to tackle prejudiced attitudes and unlawful behaviour. We will work towards establishing a national barometer on prejudice and discrimination.

Strategic Aim 3 – Sustainable infrastructure

An effective and sustainable infrastructure to protect rights in practice

We have an important role to play in advising on and upholding the infrastructure which is necessary to protect rights in practice.

An effective legal framework

As part of our role as a National Human Rights Institution and National Equality Body, we advise governments on the effectiveness of the laws protecting equality and human rights. In 2017/18 we will:

- work with partners to safeguard the protection of equality and human rights in the law following the UK's departure from the EU, and look for opportunities to enhance and strengthen the legal framework in this context
- seek opportunities to strengthen equality and human rights protections in the context of increasing devolution
- continue to press for full implementation of the Equality Act 2010, as a means of helping to heal the divisions which became apparent in the run up to and following the EU referendum
- scrutinise any proposals for a British Bill of Rights with regard to our position that any changes to the current legal framework should not reduce the protections contained in the Human Rights Act 1998, nor weaken access to redress for breaches of human rights. We will explore how any future Bill of Rights could provide protection for fundamental rights the UK incorporates in its own laws as it leaves EU laws behind
- continue to support or take cases, or intervene in proceedings, which offer the opportunity to clarify the law, or prevent or address significant breaches of equality or human rights law, in accordance with our strategic litigation policy. We will give particular consideration to cases which advance the priority areas for action identified in our Strategic Plan under Strategic Aim 1
- press for the UK to remain a committed party to international human rights treaties and for the status of these treaties to be enhanced in domestic law, which will be particularly important as the UK leaves EU laws and oversight mechanisms behind
- seek to influence international and regional laws relating to equality and human rights, including, for example, engaging in proposals for an Older Person's Convention

We will also continue our work to raise the level of public understanding about what human rights are and why they are important, and to promote a more positive public discourse on human rights.

The Public Sector Equality Duty

We will promote the use of the Public Sector Equality Duty across the three nations as an effective lever to tackle persistent disadvantage.

In 2017/18 we will:

- provide expert advice to the UK Government’s review of the Public Sector Equality Duty to help ensure the Duty reaches its full potential as a mechanism to reduce inequality and disadvantage
- review our guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty to ensure it is accessible, simple and easy to use, and helps public bodies use the Duty to advance equality
- empower the general public through the provision of accessible and relevant guidance to challenge public body decisions that do not give regard to equality issues
- integrate use of the Public Sector Equality Duty into our own strategies for bringing about change on the issues identified under Strategic Aim 1
- strengthen our relationship with other regulators, inspectorates and ombudsmen, supporting them to embed equality and human rights into their accountability frameworks in order to strengthen leverage with public services
- finalise our monitoring of how Scottish public authorities have met the Public Sector Equality Duty specific duties and assess how well the duties’ aims have been met over a four-year reporting period in order to inform effective future legal and policy interventions

Equality and human rights disputes

Rights and legal protections are of no value unless people have access to justice when those rights are breached. We published a literature review highlighting concerns that recent changes to legal aid, the imposition of tribunal fees and reduction in the funding of the advice sector have reduced access to civil and family justice. There has been, for example, a 50 per cent drop in claimants pursuing pregnancy discrimination cases and a 59 per cent reduction in disability discrimination cases. In 2017/18 we will continue to promote access to justice by:

- influencing UK Government policy on key issues that create barriers to justice in the courts and tribunals, including the review of legal aid reforms
- working more closely with the advice sector and alternative dispute resolution systems in order to exchange expertise and intelligence
- using our enforcement and litigation powers to challenge barriers to justice
- promoting access to justice more directly, by funding cases relating to specific priority issues

Fulfilling our role as an National Human Rights Institution and Equality Body

The Commission monitors the UK's compliance with the international UN human rights treaties it has ratified. We put forward recommendations in order to influence the UN's conclusions in respect of the UK and to improve the UK's human right performance. We push for the UK to act on the UN's conclusions.

In 2017/18 we will:

- influence the examination of the UK's compliance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the Convention against Torture
- deliver follow-up reports to the UN in respect of the UK's implementation of recommendations from the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Committee on the Rights of the Child
- advise UK Government on actions needed to implement UN recommendations - this will be particularly important as the UK leaves the EU's laws and oversight mechanisms behind
- engage with parliamentarians to influence government policy and legislation in line with the UK's international human rights obligations

- support the voluntary and community sector to contribute to UN human rights processes
- develop a tool to track the actions of the UK and devolved governments to implement UN human rights recommendations

We work in partnership and cooperate with other National Human Rights Institutions and National Equality Bodies, including the Scottish and Northern Ireland Human Rights Commissions, to ensure that we learn from and share best practice across the world. We also contribute to the development of policy at the international level.

Our relationship with Government and Parliament

In 2017/18 we will continue to seek a closer relationship with Parliament, including through stronger accountability mechanisms. As the Commission is subject to periodic review by the Cabinet Office, we will make the case for changes to the arrangements governing appointments to our board, our funding and Government controls over our spending decisions, in order to increase our independence and ability to hold Government to account.

Strategic Aim 4 – Improved capability

An expert, independent and authoritative national body

Investing in our people

The Commission has a track record of delivering work that makes a difference to society as a whole and to individuals' lives. But the external landscape is changing. In order for us to ensure consistent impact and be the modern public service organisation that we need to be to deliver our vision, we need to change and develop with it. We must challenge ourselves and make sure that we are as effective as we can be to deliver our Strategic Plan. To do this we need to enhance our culture, establishing our organisation as one where we recruit, develop, reward, recognise and retain the best people with the right skills and expertise to perform our role effectively.

We developed a 'Great Place Plan' in 2015/16, setting out the actions we would take to bring about that transformation. It is built on our core values of fairness, dignity and respect, and focuses on three key areas:

- making sure all our people feel valued and supported every day through their career at the Commission
- building the necessary capability, capacity, expertise and relationships to deliver our work
- ensuring our governance and processes reflect those of an exemplary public service organisation

In 2016/17, we delivered the first phase of this Plan, including establishing a new Target Operating Model for the Commission, based on our new budget and the skills we need in order to deliver impact into the future. We have restructured the organisation into networks focused on strategy and policy, delivery, and improvement and impact. Our network leaders also have responsibility for one of each of the three countries covered by our remit – Wales, Scotland and England, respectively. We are confident that this will foster more effective joint working and shared learning, ensure our work is relevant in each country, and allow our people to work more flexibly according to organisational need.

We have also organised the way we work to focus on domains – core areas of life and experience, such as education, work and health. Multi-disciplinary teams have come together to develop and implement strategies to address the challenges in each domain and form the basis of the 2017/18 Business Plan. These teams include colleagues from policy, enforcement, research, legal and communications, as well as those with a particular specialism, such as the law and policy in Scotland or Wales, or the issues affecting disabled or LGBT people.

In 2017/18 will continue implementation of the Great Place Plan. We will increase employee engagement through improved learning opportunities, building greater capacity and capability in people management, increasing accountability, responsibility and autonomy, and improving our reward offer. We have set up new working groups to better engage and involve staff in the implementation of the Plan, and have launched a new online survey to ensure that we are listening to our people continuously. We will partner with Civil Service Learning to create a bespoke development programme for our people, which will focus on coaching and the development of leadership skills at all levels of the organisation.

We will also launch a new positive action programme, to introduce a renewed approach to developing groups currently underrepresented at senior levels in the Commission. This will support disabled people and those from ethnic minorities to progress their careers and fulfil their potential.

We will enhance our induction materials, to ensure that when they start work all our people are aware of equality and human rights legislation and have a practical understanding of the potential barriers facing those with protected characteristics.

In order to achieve the transformation we want to see in our organisational culture, we have also reviewed our estates strategy and in 2017/18 will improve each of our office spaces to encourage more creativity, innovation and collaboration. Our planned changes in Manchester will also result in significant savings on our budget through using space more efficiently and moving to a desk sharing model.

Improving our evaluation of impact and horizon scanning

A key part of our work over the next year will be on improving our understanding of and ability to demonstrate the impact of our work. We have introduced our own Impact Model to frame this understanding and promote consistency in the quality of stated outputs and outcomes. We have also used the Theory of Change methodology to develop our Business Plan. The Commission will be able to improve the evidence it can draw on to demonstrate how and where our work has been effective, and which approaches provide the best value for money.

In 2016/17 we introduced a regular Horizon Scanning Digest; a summary of emerging issues and trends, as well as opportunities and risks in relation to equality and human rights. It is an early warning system to promote discussion and consideration of topics which the Commission may decide to address. In 2017/18 we

will build on this to ensure we respond proactively to the most pressing challenges as they develop, and continually prioritise our work.

Investing in our communications

In 2017/18 we will continue to implement our communications strategy to ensure that we successfully promote our work and generate maximum impact. Our objectives are to inform the public, employers and service providers about their rights and obligations under equality and human rights laws, as well as engaging and shaping the national debate on equality and human rights. This will involve increasing our digital and social media reach.

In 2016/17 we launched a new version of the Commission's website. This has significantly improved the user experience and made it easier to find accurate and relevant information quickly. We have also seen engagement (measured by numbers of page views, sessions and users) increase significantly.

In the coming year we will make further changes so that our website is recognised as the authoritative site for information and guidance on equality and human rights. The focus will be on content improvements, making our advice more streamlined and accessible for a range of users.

On social media we have run numerous high-profile campaigns, including on hate crime and how it can be reported, which reached over 500,000 people. Our biggest successes were in engaging stakeholders to support our #PowertotheBump and #WorkingForward pregnancy and maternity campaigns. #PowertotheBump was a runner-up in the prestigious PR Week Awards for best public sector campaign. We have seen marked growth in engagement due to our diversification of content – as a result, we have increased our Twitter followers to 20,000.

In 2017/18 we will undertake research to understand what key organisations and individuals think about the issues we are working on, how we go about our work, and how we engage with our partners. This will form the basis of a new approach to strategic engagement, which will also include creating a comprehensive picture of who our main stakeholders are and any new mechanisms for engaging with them. This will be crucial to informing our priorities, our approach and our impact.

Last year we launched our new intranet and in the coming 12 months we will deliver continuous improvements so that it supports the Commission's new working practices. In January 2017, new Welsh Language Standards, set by the Welsh Language Commissioner, took effect. These place a duty on us to produce any

externally-facing materials that are relevant to the Welsh public in Welsh at the same time as the English versions. This includes any publications, documents, web pages, news stories and blogs. The Commission has a good reputation in Wales for providing content in the Welsh language, with around 90 per cent now available in Welsh. We want to build on this in the coming year.

The function will continue to use best practice methods in communications, using a clear evaluation framework to show the value and impact of our work.

In addition, we will develop a new approach to human rights education and information, covering human rights systems, issues and attitudes. We will focus particularly on contributing to and promoting more positive attitudes to human rights using effective and evidence-based methods and messaging.

The work of our Statutory Committees

The Commission has two statutory decision-making committees, one for Scotland and one for Wales. As well as informing the development of the Commission's Business Plan, these committees have their own work programmes.

The Disability Committee

The Disability Committee, which has played a hugely important role in guiding the issues on which we work, the way in which we address them and the positions we take, ceased to be a statutory committee on 31 March 2017.

Addressing the persistent inequalities and serious human rights abuses facing disabled people will continue to be a key priority for the Commission. The statutory Disability Committee will be replaced by a strategic advisory group, the Disability Advisory Committee, which will ensure that we continue to benefit from the expertise of a diverse group of disabled people. The new Committee will make sure that the issues affecting disabled people are appropriately reflected in the Commission's work programme.

The Scotland Committee

The Scotland Committee is a statutory decision-making committee and is responsible for ensuring the overall work of the Commission reflects the needs and priorities of the people of Scotland. The Committee works to maximise opportunities to promote and progress equality and human rights in the devolved context. It also advises on the impact of the Commission's wider work in Scotland, through consultation by the Board of Commissioners on matters affecting people there, and through advice and support to the Scotland Directorate. In the coming year, the Committee members will continue their programme of engagement around Scotland and will:

- advise the Board of Commissioners on the work of the Commission in so far as it affects Scotland

- consider proposals from the Scottish Government, Scottish Parliament and Members of Scottish Parliament, for example, in relation to social security and constitutional changes such as the UK's exit from the EU
- continue to engage with stakeholders in Scotland on delivering improvements in the priority issues arising from 'Is Scotland Fairer?' (2015) and support the work to deliver our next state of the nation review in 2018
- advise on the key strategies being developed and delivered across the Commission in 2017/18, including those that have been agreed as part of our new domain-based approach
- seek to maximise social returns, in terms of jobs and housing, on the significant public and private sector investment, using the City Deals as an example
- investigate the increasing use of guardianship orders, to ensure that disabled people's rights to the support they require to exercise their legal capacity are being fulfilled

The Wales Committee

The Wales Committee is responsible for the Commission's work to provide information, advice and guidance, and conduct research in Wales, and for advising the Welsh Government about the effect of legislation affecting only Wales. The Committee also advises on the impact of the Commission's wider work in Wales through consultation by the Board of Commissioners on matters affecting people in Wales, and through advice and support to the Wales Directorate.

In the coming year, the Wales Committee will continue their programme of engagement around Wales and will:

- inform and influence legislation, policy and decision-making in order to advance the protection and promotion of equality and human rights in Wales
- work to increase compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty, drive practical advances in equality, and reduce specific inequalities as identified in 'Is Wales Fairer?'
- seek to ensure that work under the Future Generations framework reflects and advances the Commission's equality and human rights priorities in Wales
- ensure public service providers in Wales include human rights considerations in service delivery
- increase access to justice for people experiencing discrimination in Wales

Our organisation and resources

Budget and resource allocation

The Commission's total indicative core funding for 2017/18 is £20.5m, comprising resource funding of £19.95m (£13.74m administration, £5.61m programme and £0.60m depreciation) and capital funding of £0.52m.

The programme figure includes discretionary programme. The Commission has delegated approval to spend this funding, subject to the arrangements contained in the Department for Education/Commission Framework Document.

Over the current Spending Review period, we will continue to reduce our costs while delivering our programme of work. Figure 1 below sets out the Commission's indicative budget allocation and Figure 2 shows the resource allocation across the key areas of work.

Figure 1 2017/18 Equality and Human Rights Commission indicative budget allocation

	2016/17 forecast out-turn total (£,000)	2017/18 budget total (£,000)
Administration	14,190	13,735
Programme	4,430	5,610
Depreciation	600	600
Resource	19,220	19,945
Capital	480	520
Total resource DEL	19,700	20,465

Note: DEL = Departmental Expenditure Limit

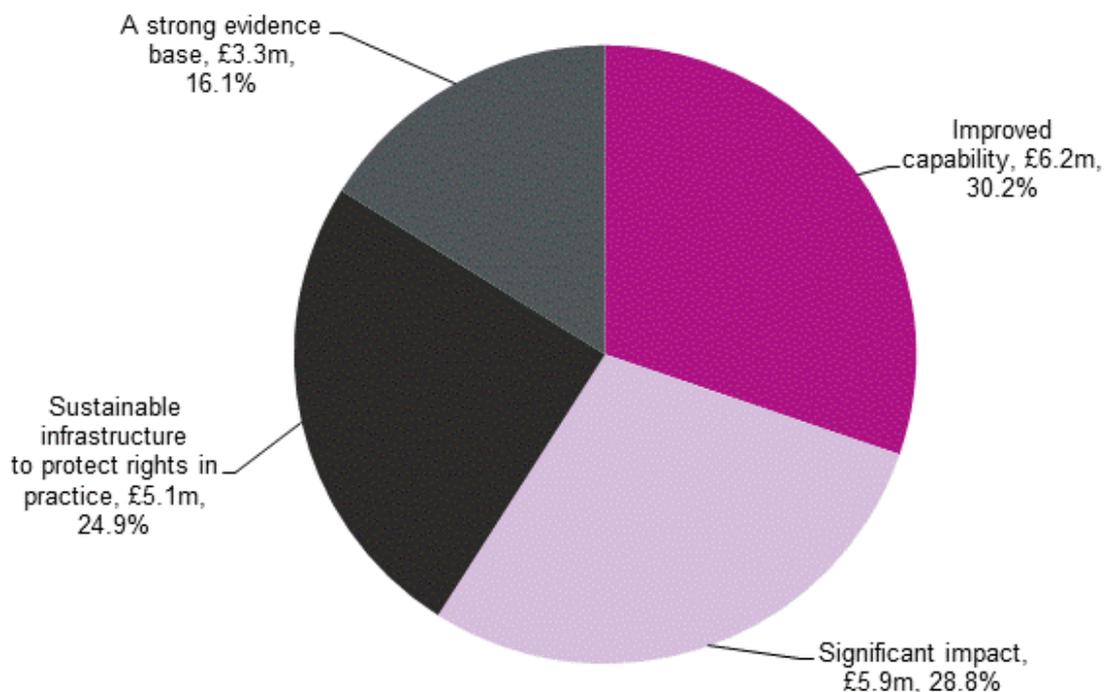
Figure 2 2017/18 Resource allocation by Strategic Aim

Figure 2 shows our allocation of resources across our four strategic aims. 'Significant impact' represents our work to secure advances in equality and human rights in priority areas. Our work to provide authoritative analysis and insight is represented under 'A strong evidence base'. Our work under 'Sustainable infrastructure' aims to ensure an effective and sustainable infrastructure for the protection of equality and human rights in practice. 'Improved capability' reflects our work to be an expert, independent and authoritative national body. This includes communications and engagement which supports our work to have a significant and systemic impact on society in relation to a range of pressing equality and human rights issues.

Delivering value for money

We aim to carry out all of our work efficiently. In common with other public bodies, our budget for the period 2016-20 has been reduced as part of the UK Government's Spending Review carried out in Autumn 2015 (see Figure 3 below). In 2017/18, we will continue to ensure we are delivering work with real impact and to manage our

organisation effectively using available resources, in line with our Great Place Plan. We have already rationalised our estates, leaving us with core offices in London, Manchester, Cardiff and Glasgow. We are also working to improve our office spaces to encourage more creativity and collaboration. Our planned changes in Manchester will result in significant savings on our budget through a desk sharing model.

Figure 3 Equality and Human Rights Commission funding allocation for 2016-20 Spending Review period

Budget	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Program	£5,920,226	£5,610,000	£5,321,000	£5,055,000
Admin	£14,494,803	£13,735,000	£13,028,000	£12,376,000
Total	£20,415,029	£19,345,000	£18,349,000	£17,431,000
Capital	£480,000	£520,000	£520,000	£520,000
Admin (depreciation)	£600,000	£600,000	£600,000	£600,000

Our governance and risk management

The Commission's Governance Framework sets out the roles and responsibilities of the Board of Commissioners, Committees and the Executive Leadership Team, and our approach to good governance.

The Commission is led by a Board of Commissioners, which sets our strategic direction and takes key decisions. The Board is responsible for approving the Strategic and Business Plans, monitoring our performance against those plans, and ensuring that we have appropriate systems of governance, accountability and control.

The Commission's two statutory decision-making committees, one for Scotland and one for Wales, will continue to inform the development of the Commission's Strategic and Business Plans. The Board is also supported by two advisory committees – the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, and the Human Resources and Remuneration Committee – and will be joined by the Disability Advisory Committee in April 2017.

The Executive Leadership Team, led by the Chief Executive, is responsible for developing and delivering the Business Plan in support of the Commission's statutory duties and Strategic Aims. It provides leadership, sets work priorities, monitors performance and manages risk, thereby enabling the Board to discharge its responsibilities.

Our risk management framework, policy and associated guidance provide a robust system of managing risk which is embedded across all our working practices. Our strategic risk register is underpinned by operational risk registers covering key areas of work, which are reviewed monthly by the Executive Leadership Team and reported to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

Equality objectives

Like other public bodies, the Commission must meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty. We have therefore identified and set equality objectives relating to all the work we do, our employment practices and our ways of working.

Each year we collate and analyse a range of equality information which helps us to identify and understand potential key issues across our functions. This is the basis on which we set our equality objectives.

We have also identified priority areas under which we will set specific equality objectives for our role as an employer, how we deliver services, and how we procure goods and services.

These are:

- using our new positive action programme to support currently underrepresented groups into senior roles at the Commission
- fostering an accessible and inclusive working environment for all our staff
- ensuring that our services are accessible and that users' experiences and outcomes are positive
- promoting equality within our supply chain, supporting our suppliers to embed equality and diversity practices within their own organisations and working practices

Our objectives for each of these priority areas are published separately in 'Our equality objectives'.

Measuring success

Performance management and reporting is central to the successful delivery of our Business Plan and ensuring that our work represents value for money. The measures against which we will judge our progress and success are set out in the separate Success Measures Annex to this Business Plan that will be published separately.

Annex A

Last year's delivery highlights

During 2016/17 we continued to build on the effectiveness and confidence of our organisation, delivering high-impact work to improve people's lives.

A major achievement was the publication in August 2016 of 'Healing a divided Britain', which presented our research into the life chances of people from ethnic minorities across education, work, health, criminal justice and participation. We used our findings to call on the UK Government to develop and implement a comprehensive race equality strategy incorporating stretching new targets to reduce race inequality that still pervades our society. The UK Government referred to our report in launching its race audit of public services.

We highlight some of our other successes below.

Education

To address the right to an education in relation to attainment gaps, bullying and exclusion in schools, in 2016/17 we:

- built our understanding of the education sector and developed projects for delivery during the remaining years of our Strategic Plan. These focus on identity-based bullying, the content of the curriculum as it relates to equality and human rights, and attainment gaps affecting groups sharing certain protected characteristics
- raised issues of educational attainment with relevant UN Committees, securing strong recommendations to take forward with the UK and devolved governments
- successfully influenced the Higher Education and Research Bill in order to promote transparency in access to higher education by disadvantaged groups
- raised issues in relation to lack of recording and reporting of identity-based bullying in schools with the UN, as part of our submission on the Convention on Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- used our pre-enforcement powers to remind schools of the rights of their transgender pupils to be treated in accordance with the gender to which they are transitioning, for example to have the correct name used at school

Work

To deliver on our aim to improve treatment at work across the protected characteristics, in 2016/17, we:

- published the findings from our investigation into the Metropolitan Police Service's conduct towards officers and staff who make complaints about discrimination on the basis of race, gender and sexual orientation. This has led to changes in the Met's working practices
- launched Working Forward, a major business-led initiative to make workplaces the best they can be for pregnant women and new mothers. This now has 100 members reaching over one million employees
- ran #PowertotheBump, a campaign to empower young mothers with information about their rights
- produced training modules in conjunction with ACAS and TUC on dealing with pregnancy and maternity in the workplace. In the last six months, over 15,000 people have accessed the training for managers and a further 16,000 registered users now have access to the trade union representative training through the TUC website
- released a report on how well the law protects individuals with a religion or belief (or lack of religion or belief) against discrimination, and produced decision-making tools and online training to help employers deal with staff requests related to religion or belief
- produced a short film and report that encourages employers in Wales to increase employment opportunities for Muslims by creating faith-friendly workplaces
- conducted research to identify the factors that contribute to gender, disability and race pay gaps, and developed a strategy for reducing these gaps. The findings will be published early in 2017/18
- published research on discriminatory recruitment practices in the UK, with a particular focus on any differences in treatment of British and foreign-born workers
- brought over 130 Welsh employers together at the Equality and Human Rights Exchange conference, 'A workforce for the future – challenges and opportunities'. Delegates committed to take action to improve diversity of the workforce by analysing data and reviewing recruitment procedures
- supported Mr Smith in his case against Pimlico Plumbers, helping to protect the rights of workers in atypical arrangements and, in some cases, those who work in the 'gig economy'

- worked with a national hotel chain to improve the equality and diversity training offered to staff after they lost a race discrimination case at an employment tribunal
- gave evidence to the UN Committees on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination covering equal access to work, working conditions and discrimination at work, which resulted in strong UN recommendations to take forward with the UK and devolved governments.

Living standards

In 2016/17, to deliver on our aim of tackling inequalities in living standards, access to appropriate housing and transport, we:

- reported on the impact of social security, tax and public spending on economic and social rights to relevant UN Committees, UN Special Rapporteurs, and in the context of the Universal Periodic Review of the UK, resulting in UN recommendations which clearly set out the UK's international obligations in this area
- launched our inquiry to explore whether the right of disabled people to independent living is supported by the provision of accessible and adaptable housing and tenancy support services, calling for evidence from disabled people, housing associations and other relevant organisations
- intervened in a case in which the Supreme Court held that reductions to housing benefit in cases of under-occupation amounted to unlawful discrimination where the effect was to reduce housing benefit for adult partners who could not share a bedroom because of disability, or where overnight carers were required for disabled children
- made legal submissions in a case which concluded that those claiming asylum as children should be treated as such and housed in child-appropriate accommodation until a legal age assessment has been completed
- successfully intervened in a case which now means that the spouses of refugees who leave their relationships because of domestic violence receive support for three months while their application for permission to stay in the country is considered. This will bring enhanced protection to survivors of domestic abuse
- provided greater clarity to disabled people using public bus services by supporting the successful case brought by Doug Paulley against FirstGroup Plc, concerning disabled people's priority in the use of wheelchair spaces on buses. We also pressed the UK Government to change the law on this matter in the Bus

Services Bill. In response, the UK Government committed to draw together a working group, including disabled people and the Commission, to develop the change required to the law

- assisted a disabled student's High Court case exploring whether the additional study time she was allocated by her university as a reasonable adjustment should be discounted when considering whether she is 'full-time' for the purpose of the student exemption from council tax. If successful this case will make it clear that Councils must take reasonable adjustments into account when determining if a student is eligible for a student exemption from council tax

Health and social care

In 2016/17, we gave evidence to relevant UN committees on the physical and mental health of children, ethnic minorities and disabled people.

We also worked with NHS Scotland to put in place a Scotland-wide action plan to improve access to British Sign Language provision for deaf health service users.

Security and detention

In 2016/17, in order to promote access to civil justice, we:

- promoted the right of those who experience discrimination to access the courts and tribunals by influencing UK Government proposals on employment tribunal fees and digitalisation of the courts, and by challenging employment tribunal fees in the courts
- continued to share our expertise on equality and human rights law with advisors through training, guidance and outreach to improve their ability to provide redress for victims of discrimination and human rights abuses
- ran a pilot aimed at promoting access to justice in the key areas of employment, education and access to services, offering funding for cases involving disabled people's rights
- highlighted barriers to accessing justice in our work to influence the conclusions of the UN Committee on Economic and Social Rights, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and in the context of the Universal Periodic Review of the UK
- successfully intervened in a case in which it was held that it was unlawful for the UK Government to detain an asylum-seeking child even when immigration

officers believed on the basis of a visual age assessment that he was an adult. This could lead changes in Home Office policy

- intervened in a challenge regarding legal aid restrictions on prisoners that limit their access to legal representation in Parole Board and other hearings, which can affect the length of sentence

To deliver on our aim to tackle overrepresentation in the criminal justice system, we:

- rolled-out new joint training with the College of Police on unconscious bias to police officers across England and Wales, after a successful trial showed it reduced bias in stop and search
- contributed to the review led by David Lammy MP into race discrimination and overrepresentation of people from ethnic minorities in the criminal justice system in England and Wales
- raised concerns in relation to the issues above with the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Committee on the Rights of the Child

In 2016/17, to protect the rights of people in care or detention, we:

- published our report on deaths following release from custody and detention, highlighting the need for better training, data collection and oversight mechanisms in relation to such deaths
- reported to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on the use of restraint and isolation in the secure youth estate, resulting in strong recommendations to the UK from the UN

In 2016/17 to deliver on our aim to reduce prejudice and identity-based violence, we:

- released a comprehensive report into crime and disability, looking at the number of disabled victims of hate crime, the proportion of disability-related crime incidents reported to the police, satisfaction with police handling of incidents, experience of crime in the previous 12 months and anxiety about being a victim of crime
- published major reports on prejudice and unlawful behaviour and hate crime, identifying what can be done to prevent and respond to discrimination, identity-based harassment and violence
- sought to influence Crown Prosecution Service policies on dealing with hate crime and the Home Affairs Select Committee inquiry into this issue, to ensure that the laws and systems for tackling this rights abuse are fit for purpose
- raised our concerns about the laws and policies regulating hate crime in our submissions to the UN human rights mechanisms, including the Committee on

the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the Universal Periodic Review

Participation

In 2016/17, to deliver on our aim of protecting the rights to privacy, freedom of expression and political and social participation, we:

- provided advice to Government and Parliament on the Investigatory Powers Bill to ensure that any interference with the right to privacy must have clear safeguards in place to protect people's freedom, particularly in relation to bulk interception powers
- filed submissions in two cases considering whether the UK Government's bulk interception of communications breaches the European Convention on Human Rights. Our objective is to clarify what a human rights compliant surveillance framework looks like
- published practical guidance for higher education providers in England and Wales on delivering the Prevent duty while fulfilling their obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty and respecting the right to freedom of expression
- updated our guidance on how to promote equality of opportunity and freedom of expression during election periods
- published 'Who Runs Wales? 2017', showing representation of those sharing different protected characteristics at senior levels across key areas of Welsh life, including politics, local government and the private sector
- reported on participation in political and public life and representation in decision-making positions to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- used our pre-enforcement powers so that a holiday company changed their practices and removed restrictions which automatically rejected bookings by same-sex couples
- used our pre-enforcement powers to persuade services providers to cease discrimination against and foster good relations with Gypsy and Traveller service users. This included businesses within the hospitality sector which had refused service to Gypsy and Traveller customers, and local councils and police forces which had made discriminatory public statements about Gypsies and Travellers

Treaty monitoring and the Universal Periodic Review

In 2016/17 we published reports on the UK's performance in complying with human rights treaties covering: economic, social and cultural rights; civil and political rights; children's rights; and race rights. We also launched our report on the Universal Periodic Review, influencing the recommendations that the United Nations committees make to UK and devolved governments.

We developed a programme of work to follow up on UN recommendations with the UK and devolved governments, Parliamentarians and civil society, ensuring that these hard-won recommendations are translated into human rights change. For example, our work on the Committee on the Rights of the Child's recommendations contributed to concrete action by the Department for Education, including the development of child rights impact assessments for use across UK Government, and a commitment to a training programme for public officials on children's rights.

Annex B

Our Commissioners

Our Commissioners (at 1 April 2017) are:

- David Isaac CBE (Chair)
- Caroline Waters OBE (Deputy Chair)
- June Milligan (Wales Commissioner)
- Dr Lesley Sawers (Scotland Commissioner)
- Susan Johnson OBE
- Professor Lorna McGregor
- Professor Swaran Singh
- Rebecca Hilsenrath (Chief Executive)

The term of appointment of Lord Chris Holmes (Disability Commissioner) ended in January 2017, as did that of Evelyn Asante-Mensah OBE and Laura Carstensen OBE. Rebecca Hilsenrath was appointed as Chief Executive in October 2015 and David Isaac as Chair in May 2016. The Commissioners and Rebecca are supported by an Executive Leadership Team who lead and manage delivery of our work.

Sarah Veale CBE is currently participating on the Equality and Human Rights Commission's Board as an observer.

Annex C

Our duties and powers

The Commission has a set of unique duties and powers under the Equality Act 2006 to help us fulfil our mandate. We have specific responsibilities and requirements under the UN Paris Principles and the European Union Equality Directives to ensure we maintain our status as a National Human Rights Institution and European National Equality Body.

General duty

Under the Equality Act 2006, the Commission's general duty is to exercise its functions with a view to encouraging and supporting the development of a society in which: people's ability to achieve their potential is not limited by prejudice or discrimination; there is respect for and protection of each individual's human rights; there is respect for the dignity and worth of each individual; each individual has an equal opportunity to participate in society and there is mutual respect between groups based on understanding and valuing diversity, and on shared respect for equality and human rights.

Equality and diversity

The Commission is also under a duty to: promote understanding of the importance of equality and diversity; encourage good practice in relation to equality and diversity; promote equality of opportunity; promote awareness and understanding of rights under the Equality Act 2010; enforce the Equality Act 2010; and work towards the elimination of unlawful discrimination and harassment.

Human rights

As a National Human Rights Institution we must: promote understanding of the importance of human rights through teaching, research, public awareness and educational programmes; promote awareness, understanding and protection of

human rights and efforts to combat discrimination, especially through use of media channels; make recommendations to Government, Parliament and other competent bodies on existing and proposed laws and processes that will impact on human rights; promote the harmonisation of national law, policy and practice with international human rights law and standards; encourage public bodies to comply fully with the Human Rights Act 1998, which incorporates the European Convention on Human Rights into national law; and cooperate with the UN and other bodies dedicated to promoting and protecting human rights, including by monitoring and reporting on Great Britain's compliance with the core conventions.

Contacts

This publication and related equality and human rights resources are available from the Commission's website: www.equalityhumanrights.com.

For advice, information or guidance on equality, discrimination or human rights issues, please contact the Equality Advisory and Support Service, a free and independent service.

Website www.equalityadvisoryservice.com

Telephone 0808 800 0082

Textphone 0808 800 0084

Hours 09:00 to 19:00 (Monday to Friday)
10:00 to 14:00 (Saturday)

Post FREEPOST Equality Advisory Support Service FPN4431

Questions and comments regarding this publication may be addressed to: correspondence@equalityhumanrights.com. The Commission welcomes your feedback.

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