

Contents

Welcome from the CEO and Chair	3	Work programme for 2018/19	11	The work of our Statutory Committees	34	Contacts	43
About the Commission	6	Strategic Aims for 2016-19	12	The Scotland Committee	35		
Our vision	7	Strategic Aim 1: Significant impact	13	The Wales Committee	36		
Our statutory functions	8	Strategic Aim 2: A strong evidence base	23	Our organisation and resources	37		
Our role	9	Strategic Aim 3: Sustainable infrastructure	25	Budget and resource allocation	38		
		Strategic Aim 4: Improved capability	30	Delivering value for money	40		
				Equality objectives	41		

Welcome from the CEO and Chair



Rebecca Hilsenrath
Chief Executive



David Isaac
Chair

We are delighted to introduce the Equality and Human Rights Commission's Business Plan for 2018/19.

This will be the final year of our Strategic Plan 2016-19, in which we set out four Strategic Aims to guide us in delivering our mandate, set by Parliament, to challenge discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, and protect and promote human rights.

This year marks some significant anniversaries for equality and human rights.

We recently marked the centenary of the Representation of the People Act 1918, which for the first time gave some British women the right to vote. While it wasn't until a decade later that all women were enfranchised, the Act marked an important breakthrough for women's equality and opened the door for more women to engage in politics.

In addition, it is 70 years since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the UN General Assembly, to guard against a repeat of the atrocities of the Second World War. This milestone document underpins all international human rights law and continues to inspire work across the globe to ensure all individuals can enjoy dignity and justice without discrimination.

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It is also 70 years since the docking of the Empire Windrush, carrying the first wave of men and women from the Caribbean and marking a new era of diversity in Britain.

And finally, the Commission itself is celebrating its 10th anniversary year of protecting and promoting equality and human rights for all. We are proud of our achievements, and the progress made in British society during this period. But we are also acutely aware of the challenges that still remain to be tackled, if Britain is to be a country in which all individuals can be confident that their rights will be respected and that they will have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Our work programme this year seeks to address some of the key challenges we identified in our Strategic Plan, including the continued lack of diversity in politics; equality and human rights issues faced by people with mental health conditions, including the inappropriate use of restraint and detention; the pay gaps which still persist for women, people from ethnic minorities and disabled people, and the continued lack of a comprehensive Government strategy to address the entrenched inequality and disadvantage that people from our black and ethnic minority communities still experience in many areas of their lives.



In addition, we will be responding to new and emerging challenges, including the human rights concerns arising from the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower last summer, the renewed awareness of persistent sexual harassment of women, and ongoing debates about the law on gender identity.

Britain is facing a period of swift and unprecedented change as we prepare to leave the EU. We believe it is important for the Government to set out a positive vision of the kind of country we want to be outside the EU – one which is fair and inclusive and in which people's rights are respected.

We at the Commission are therefore working with the other UK equality bodies and National Human Rights Institutions, with the twin aims of ensuring that post-Brexit Britain maintains our strong equality and human rights protections and that it remains a respected world leader on fundamental rights.

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The Commission’s role to uphold rights and hold governments to account will be even more vital when Britain leaves the accountability arrangements which result from EU membership. This year we will undergo a Government-led ‘tailored review’ to examine our functions and powers and ensure we are efficient and well-governed.

During this process we will be seeking to protect and enhance our powers and independence, to ensure we can continue to provide effective challenge when we identify threats to equality and human rights.

At the same time, we will continue our work to support and develop our team to improve our expertise and impact, while delivering a further £1 million of the savings required of us in the Government’s last Spending Review.

A significant milestone this year will be the launch, in October, of ‘Is Britain Fairer? 2018’, our three-yearly report on progress on equality and human rights in Britain. We will use the findings and recommendations from this comprehensive examination of every area of life to inform and influence governments, parliaments and other organisations to make improvements.

The findings will also help us to develop our next Strategic Plan, due to be published in March 2019.

£1m

We will deliver a further £1 million of the savings required of us in the Government’s last Spending Review.

The aims we have set out in this Business Plan are ambitious, and the context in which we are working is challenging. But we believe the year ahead presents opportunities to use our unique powers to tackle all forms of discrimination and abuses of human rights and make Britain fairer for everyone.



Rebecca Hilsenrath
Chief Executive



David Isaac
Chair

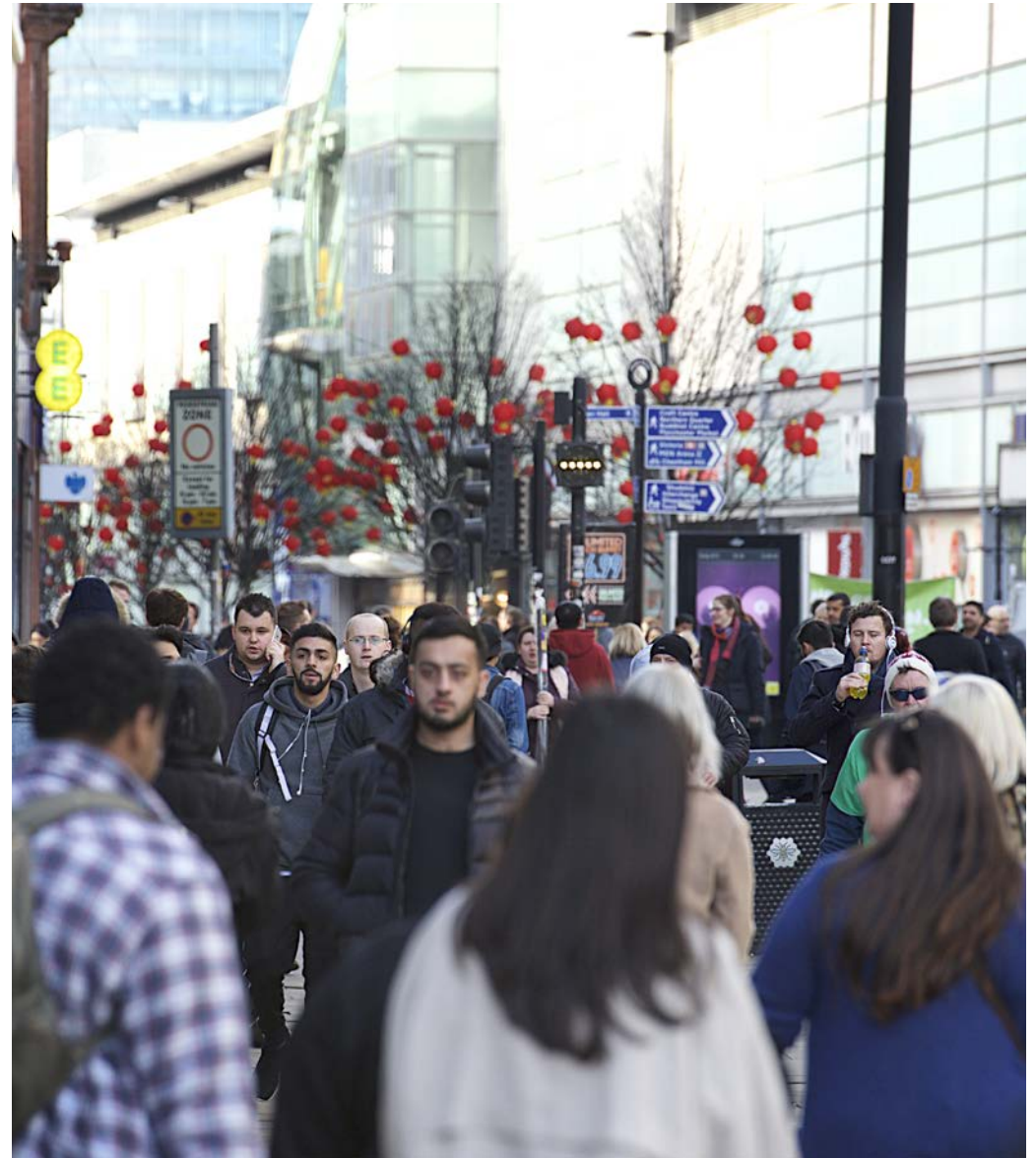
About the Commission



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 statutory functions

The Commission was established by Parliament under the Equality Act 2006 as Britain's national equality body and national human rights institution.

Under the Act we have a general duty to encourage and support 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.

As an equality body and National Human Rights Institution, we have specific statutory functions to help make Britain a fair society in which everyone has an equal opportunity to fill their potential, including:

- Measuring progress in society and reporting to Parliament on the state of equality and human rights in Britain.
- Advising Government on the effectiveness of equality and human rights legislation.
- Promoting awareness and understanding of rights, through education, training and guidance.
- Enforcing the law and investigating breaches, including assessing and enforcing compliance with the public sector equality duty.
- Providing legal advice, including taking strategic legal cases.
- Encouraging the harmonisation of domestic law, policy and practice with international human rights standards.
- Cooperating with the UN and other human rights bodies, including by monitoring Great Britain's compliance with the core Conventions.

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Our role

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 functions 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 to help organisations to comply with equality and human rights standards.

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

Our Board and Committees

The Commission is led by a Board of Commissioners, which sets our strategic direction and takes key decisions. The Commission has two statutory decision-making committees for Scotland and Wales which inform the development of our Strategic and Business Plans and oversee our work in Scotland and Wales.

The Commission also has advisory committees: the Disability Advisory Committee, Audit and Risk Committee and Human Resources and Remuneration Committee, which provide expert advice and guidance to the Board.



Work programme for 2018/19



Strategic Aims for 2016-19

Our Strategic Plan for 2016-19 sets out our four Strategic Aims which guide our work over that three year period.

On the following pages we set out the work we will do in 2018/19 in relation to each of our Strategic Aims, and the changes we want to see as a result of this work.



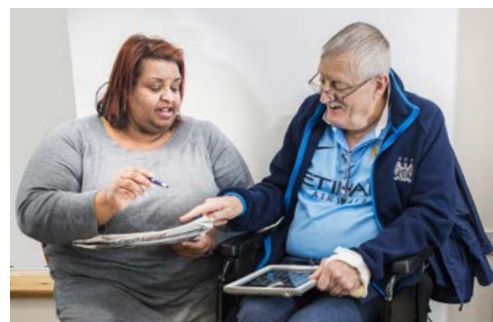
1. Significant impact

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.

Strategic Aim 1: Significant impact

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. The work we plan to take forward in each of these in 2018/19 is set out in this section.

Our strategies for achieving impact in each area involve using the range of our powers appropriately to highlight issues of concern, inform and guide improved practice, engage others in solutions and influence change.

In each area we will use our strategic enforcement powers to challenge human rights abuses and those who fail to comply with their legal duties under the Equality Act 2010.

This year, we will have a particular focus on the equality and human rights challenges faced by people with mental health conditions in many areas of their lives.

This is a critical time for mental health issues, with an ongoing Government review of the relevant legislation and increasing visibility of concerns across a range of sectors.

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Education

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

The evidence continues to show lower educational attainment among children with special educational needs and additional support needs, children from some ethnic groups, and those from low-income backgrounds.

Identity-based bullying affects half of all children, with some groups being particularly at risk, including lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender children, girls, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and those with additional support needs. Some groups are also disproportionately excluded from school, including poorer children, boys and those with support needs.

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In 2018/19, we will work to improve educational outcomes for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), additional support needs (ASN), additional learning needs (ALN), mental health conditions and children from certain ethnic groups.

We will:

- Hold a formal inquiry to examine the drivers and impacts of different types of school exclusions, and how and why they disproportionately impact on certain groups, and contribute to the Department of Education's school exclusions review.

- Develop a strategy for improving educational outcomes for different ethnic groups, in consultation with key stakeholders.
- Publish guidance on transgender pupils, to help schools by providing a clear explanation of the law, good practice examples and online resources.
- Support the Scottish Government to develop guidance, to help schools in Scotland better record, analyse and respond to incidents of identity-based bullying.
- Engage with local authorities in Wales to increase understanding of how to use the public sector equality duty to tackle identity-based bullying and reduce gaps in educational attainment.

Work

When people can participate to their full potential in the labour market, they can be financially autonomous and businesses 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.

However, some groups are disproportionately out of work, concentrated in low-pay sectors, experience poor treatment at work or face barriers to progression. These include younger adults, older people, disabled people, women, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, and some ethnic and religious minorities.

In 2018/19, our work to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to access, progress in and receive fair treatment at work will focus in particular on women, working parents, disabled people, and those with mental health conditions.

We will:

- Promote the use of positive action in apprenticeships to improve access to work for disabled people, people with mental health conditions and ethnic minority groups, and to help tackle occupational segregation between women and men.

- Support the members of our business-led initiative Working Forward to develop flexible working policies and practices that benefit a range of groups, with a particular emphasis on working parents and people with mental health conditions.
- Better inform employers across Britain on how to make reasonable adjustments for disabled employees, including those with mental health conditions.
- Drive implementation of the recommendations in our 2017 strategy to reduce gender, disability and ethnicity pay gaps.



- Seek to ensure high levels of compliance with the new gender pay gap regulations which come into force this year, by promoting good practice and using our enforcement powers promptly and effectively to address non-compliance.
- Press for implementation of our recommendations to prevent and improve responses to sexual harassment, including by promoting our guidance to employers.

Living standards

Everyone has a right to an adequate standard of living, including a minimum entitlement to food, clothing and housing. Unless people have the basics they cannot enjoy any of their other rights.

Our recent assessment of the cumulative impact of tax and welfare reforms between 2010 and 2017 shows that ethnic minorities, disabled people, single parents and women are adversely affected by the changes.

Reductions in spending on social security, health and social care services, and changes to funding for independent living have implications for disabled people's right to independent living and contribute to the isolation of some.

In 2018/19, we will focus on two key areas: social security and housing.

On social security, we will seek to ensure that the UK and devolved governments' policies and practice provide an adequate standard of living, help reduce the inequalities that result from socio-economic disadvantage, and provide effective support for people who share particular protected characteristics, especially disabled people and those with mental health conditions.

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We will also continue to press for full implementation across Great Britain of the socio-economic duty, a critical part of the Equality Act 2010 that requires particular public authorities to tackle the inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage.

We will:

- Support the UK, Scottish and Welsh governments to assess the cumulative impact of social security and spending policies to ensure they do not impact disproportionately on certain groups.
- Encourage public bodies covered by the socio-economic duty in Scotland to respond to the duty effectively in their work, and press for implementation of the duty in England and Wales.
- We will also conduct research into the impact within local authority areas in England of voluntary compliance with the socio-economic duty.

On housing, we will press for implementation of the recommendations from our recent inquiry into the availability of accessible, adaptable housing and assistance for disabled people in support of their right to live independently.

In addition, we will seek to improve understanding of how equality and human rights considerations could help to address the significant health and safety concerns that have been raised following the Grenfell Tower fire.

We will:

- Follow up on recommendations from our housing inquiry with the UK, Scottish and Welsh governments. This will include encouraging the UK Government to develop an accessible housing strategy, contributing to the Supported Housing and Social Housing Green and White Papers, and working collaboratively with the Future Generations Commissioner in Wales to influence local authority practice.

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- Promote our toolkits and guidance to support local authorities to ensure their plans and policies are compliant with the public sector equality duty and reflect the housing needs of disabled people. We will also advocate for disabled people's involvement at a local level to shape housing policy and practice across Great Britain.
- Highlight the human rights and equality dimensions of the Grenfell Tower fire as the public inquiry into the tragedy progresses, and examine what has happened to the survivors since the fire and whether enough is being done now to safeguard their rights.

Health

Everyone has the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. Our health affects the extent to which we can enjoy our other rights. Everyone should have access to good quality health care, without discrimination and with autonomy in decisions.

However, evidence indicates a broad range of inequalities in access to, and outcomes from, mental health services, including long delays for children and young people accessing services.

In England and Wales there is a significant disproportionality in the numbers of Black and ethnic minority people detained under the Mental Health Act 1983.

In 2018/19, we will advocate for the increased timely provision of NHS mental health services that are close to home, accessible and enable people to live fulfilled lives.

Critical to achieving this is improving access to early treatment and intervention, and ensuring that the law, policies and practices on mental health care respect equality and human rights.

We will:

- Encourage policy makers, practitioners and regulators in England, Scotland and Wales to improve the provision of mental health services, including through contributing to the review of the Mental Health Act 1983, considering the outcomes of the Scottish Government's review of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, and encouraging the Welsh Government to improve performance of the public sector equality duty to tackle inequality in mental health and to incorporate equality and human rights considerations into the implementation of their independent review of health and social care.

- Complete the scoping phase of a project with the Behavioural Insights Team to improve access to and uptake of Improving Access to Psychological Therapies, a service in England for people with depression and anxiety disorders.

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Justice and personal security

We all have a right to be free from torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and punishment, live without fear of identity-based violence, and to be protected against harm when in care or detention.

Evidence shows disproportionate representation of certain groups in the criminal justice system and concerns about treatment of people when they are in the system, including people with mental health conditions and learning difficulties.

In 2018/19, we will seek to improve the protection of the rights of people with mental health conditions and/or learning disabilities in the criminal justice system.

To this end, we will press for the increased use of reasonable adjustments for suspects and defendants with mental health conditions and learning disabilities, including through:

- Seeking to influence laws and policies in relation to the modernisation of the courts system, so that it does not impact negatively and disproportionately on people with certain protected characteristics in the criminal justice system.

- Identifying the reasonable adjustments that are currently made available in the criminal justice system across England and Wales, and the barriers to their use, and developing strategies to increase the ability of suspects and defendants to access them when required.
- Identifying gaps in current law and policy governing the provision of reasonable adjustments in the criminal justice system and developing strategies to address them.

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Rights and legal protections are of no value unless people have access to justice when those rights are breached. We have found that changes to legal aid, the recently reversed imposition of tribunal fees, and reduction in the funding of the advice sector have reduced access to civil and family justice.

In 2018/19, we will continue to seek to increase access to justice for individuals experiencing discrimination and human rights breaches by:

- Influencing the UK and Scottish governments to remove key barriers to justice in the courts and tribunals, including those resulting from legal aid reforms and the risks posed by the courts modernisation agenda.

- Conducting an inquiry into legal aid for individuals pursuing discrimination claims, focusing in particular on the mandatory 'telephone gateway' for individuals seeking civil legal advice.
- Continuing to provide high quality information and support to organisations offering advice and representation, through our pilot Adviser Support Service and online resources, so that they are better able to recognise discrimination or human rights breaches and support their clients.
- Promoting access to justice more directly, by funding cases relating to specific priority equality issues.

Identity-based violence is a serious human rights abuse affecting, among others, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and people of particular religions, as well as disabled people.

In 2018/19, we will seek to influence governments to strengthen the legal and policy frameworks that protect people from identity-based violence by:

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- Continuing to press for changes to the law and non-legislative measures to tackle violence against women and children and hate crime, including through participating in the Home Office hate crime action plan review and engaging with proposals for new legislation on domestic abuse.
- Encouraging the Scottish Government to support and implement the recommendations from Lord Bracadale's Scottish Hate Crime Legislation Review.

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. All people have a right to participate fully in all aspects of life, including community and cultural life.

Evidence shows that political participation and representation is low among young people, women, disabled people and people from some ethnic minorities. We also know that older and disabled people have limited access to transport services and can be isolated by lack of access to digital services.

In 2018/19, we are aiming to improve the opportunities for people from under-represented groups to fully participate in key aspects of society, through increased access to elected office, improving access to digital and transport services for disabled people in particular, and ensuring that freedom of expression laws are better understood and implemented to ensure certain groups are protected from harm and able to freely participate in dialogue and debate.

To this end we will:

- Promote our recently published guidance on political parties' obligations under the Equality Act 2010, including in relation to reasonable adjustments.

- Build cross-party support for the UK Government to provide adequate support to disabled candidates standing for elected office.

- Promote women's increased political participation and representation by working with a large civil society coalition to mark the centenary of some women's suffrage.

- Develop our understanding of how to increase access to transport and online services for older and disabled people.

- Produce guidance for higher education institutions and universities to ensure they better understand the potential restrictions on free speech of 'no platforming' policies, which ban certain groups from taking part in on-campus debates if their views are considered to be offensive or unacceptable.

- Produce resources for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and other groups to help them challenge offensive comments made by elected officials.

- Continue to press Premier League football 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 necessary.

Asylum seekers and refugees

Asylum seekers and refused asylum seekers who have exhausted their rights to appeal find it difficult to access public services, including healthcare.

In 2018/19, we will seek to improve asylum seekers' and refused asylum seekers' access to health services to which they are entitled. A vital part of this is improving their understanding of their rights to access healthcare.

Similarly, it is critical that healthcare providers are better able to meet the specific, practical needs of this group.

To move forward with this work in 2018/19 we will:

- Co-produce a map of rights, and information on how to access rights, with partners who work with asylum seekers and refused asylum seekers.
- Identify opportunities to develop resources for frontline health professionals to ensure they better meet the needs of asylum seekers and refused asylum seekers.

Restraint

We all have the right to be free from cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, and to be protected when in care or detention. There are widespread concerns about the over-use of restraint in England and Wales in social care, hospitals (including for detained patients) and the criminal justice system, and in immigration detention.

Research shows that it is being used disproportionately on groups such as disabled people and ethnic minorities, and inappropriately on children and young people.

In 2018/19, using our recently developed human rights framework for restraint, we will seek to influence a reduction in the use of restraint in healthcare, social care, special schools and detention settings.

In England and Wales, we will:

- Identify gaps in knowledge of the human rights obligations relating to restraint among staff and individuals in NHS care settings, special schools, prison, police custody, young offender institutions or immigration and removal centres, and develop resources to address these.

- Support regulators to take an equality and human rights-based approach to their regulation of restraint.
- Challenge policies and guidance where we think they are not compliant with the human rights framework for restraint.
- Respond to national consultations and influence legislation, including the Mental Health Units (Use of Force) Bill, and support reforms in policy and practice which reflect the principles in our human rights framework for restraint.

Strategic Aim 2: A strong evidence base

An important role of the Commission is to shed light on the challenges to fairness, dignity and respect across England, Scotland and Wales through research, analysis and insight.

We will continue to build 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 improvements in legislation, policy and practice that are relevant to our mandate to improve equality and human rights for people in Britain.



Is Britain Fairer? 2018

'Is Britain Fairer? 2018' will be our comprehensive report of evidence and analysis setting out the key equality and human rights challenges in England, Scotland and Wales and our recommendations to address these.

It fulfils our statutory duty to monitor, and report to Parliament on, progress on equality and human rights in Britain. It will be underpinned by the new single Measurement Framework we developed last year, and we have decided to report on progress every three years to align with our startegic planning cycle.

Our aim is for 'Is Britain Fairer? 2018' to set the national agenda for action on equality and human rights in the coming years and to inform our own new Strategic Plan, due to be published in March 2019.

It will also support better performance of the public sector equality duty by increasing the data available to public bodies about the key equality issues they need to address.

In 2018/19, we will:

- Publish 'Is Britain Fairer? 2018', and separate country reports for England, Scotland and Wales, and promote the findings and recommendations with governments, regulators, public and private sector organisations, third sector organisations, academics and researchers to inform their own priorities.
- Consider options for an interactive tool on our website to allow expert audiences to explore our data in more detail and access the information most relevant to their work.
- Use the findings from 'Is Britain Fairer? 2018' to set our priorities for our Strategic Plan 2019-22.

Data gaps and invisible groups

In 2018/19, we want to see improvements in the equality and human rights data landscape. In order to make continual improvements, we will work with the Office for National Statistics, government departments, third sector organisations, researchers and academics to address gaps in data on equality and human rights made visible by 'Is Britain Fairer? 2018'.

These improvements include increasing the suitability, comparability and availability of disaggregated statistics so that they provide the evidence base we need to identify and address equality and human rights challenges.

This requires an increased understanding of the data landscape, along with improved motivation and ambition in the research and data community to identify and address equality and human rights data gaps.

We will:

- Use our newly developed data gap assessment tool to assess the data gaps identified through 'Is Britain Fairer? 2018' and, where appropriate, develop strategies to address these.
- Encourage other organisations to address data gaps, including continuing to advise the Office of National Statistics on the inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity in the 2021 Census, and the Cabinet Office on the Government's Race Disparity Audit.

Strategic Aim 3: Sustainable infrastructure

As a National Human Rights Institution and National Equality Body, we have an important role to play in advising on, and upholding, the legal and institutional infrastructure which is necessary to protect rights in practice.

Protecting and promoting equality and human rights

A priority over the next 12 months will be to safeguard and enhance equality and human rights in Britain throughout the Brexit process, working with the other UK equality and human rights institutions and the third sector to increase our impact.

We want to ensure that none of our vital legal protections are lost as the UK leaves EU laws and oversight mechanisms behind.

In addition, we will seek to strengthen equality and human rights law where possible, including through enhancing the status of international human rights treaties in domestic law.



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Central to us achieving these priorities is increasing understanding of the importance of equality and human rights to people's everyday lives in Britain.

In 2018/19, we will:

- Provide advice to political decision-makers on gaps and weaknesses in the laws that protect our rights, and the effect on equality and human rights of new legislation.
- Seek to influence the UK's future trade agreements to ensure they include human rights requirements.

- Conduct research to understand the potential impact of the loss of EU funding on civil society, research, academic, training and employment programmes that address inequality and discrimination in the different regions in England, Scotland and Wales.
- Seek to influence the priorities of the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund to ensure it helps to reduce inequalities and heal divisions within our society.

- Seek opportunities to enhance legal protections for equality and human rights, including through seeking full implementation of the Equality Act 2010 and the reversal of repealed provisions, pressing for stronger protection from sexual harassment, recommending how international human rights obligations should be incorporated in domestic law, and responding to relevant consultations including on proposed changes to the Gender Recognition Act.
- Use evidence on public attitudes to human rights to seek to improve public understanding of the importance of rights in our everyday lives.
- Influence the school curriculum in England to ensure it includes education on equality and human rights.



Using our legal powers effectively

This year, we will continue to assist or intervene in cases and take enforcement action to highlight gaps in law, policy and practice, to secure increased compliance with equality and human rights law, in order to achieve better outcomes for people in Britain.

Our legal work is a key part of our approach to achieving sustainable impact on the priority equality and human rights issues we are addressing under Strategic Aim 1.

In 2018/19, we will:

- Seek to increase the volume of the Commission's legal work and achieve positive outcomes through our litigation, compliance and enforcement actions.
- Raise public and stakeholder awareness of our legal work, through contributing to and authoring articles or commentaries concerning equality and human rights issues, leverage media platforms to increase coverage and awareness of our legal work and improve legal content on the Commission's website.
- Continue our legal grants programme in order to improve the availability of high quality advice on discrimination and human rights for individuals.

The public sector equality duty

Organisations subject to the public sector equality duty must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

In 2018/19, we will continue to promote compliance with the duty across England, Scotland and Wales as a lever to tackle persistent discrimination and disadvantage.

To this end, we will:

- Develop an effective new public sector equality duty strategy building on our recent research into the effectiveness of the Duty, which takes into account the different contexts in England, Scotland and Wales.
- Complete the revision of our guidance for English and non-devolved public bodies to ensure it is clear and concise and leads to improved understanding of, and compliance, with the duty.
- Use the evidence and recommendations of 'Is Britain Fairer? 2018' to influence public bodies to address the most pressing issues for change.

Our relationships with regulators, inspectorates and ombudsmen

During 2018/19, we will work to strengthen our relationship with regulators, inspectorates and ombudsmen (RIOs), supporting them to embed equality and human rights into the frameworks they use to hold others to account.

We will:

- Conduct a review of our current RIO Forum to ensure it is an effective way of working together and sharing best practice in driving progress on equality and human rights. We will also seek to engage with RIOs in order to deliver our priorities under Strategic Aim 1.

Fulfilling our role as a National Human Rights Institution

As a National Human Rights Institution, we monitor 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 rights performance.

We work in partnership and cooperate with other National Human Rights Institutions, 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.

In 2018/19, we want to see human rights protections in Britain improved through governments and state bodies meeting international human standards. We also want governments to be held accountable by parliaments for progress on international human rights.

To achieve this, we will:

- Develop a web-based tool to track progress on the implementation of UN recommendations, with the goal of increasing government action to comply with international treaties and to develop a framework for action.

- Seek to influence the UK Government's follow-up to the Universal Periodic Review, to ensure that it is held accountable for making progress in addressing the findings of the Review.
- Develop and deliver training to UK parliamentary staff on the international human rights framework, with the aim of increasing parliamentary scrutiny of the UK's human rights record.

“

As a National Human Rights Institution, we monitor the UK's compliance with the international UN human rights treaties it has ratified.

”

- Build knowledge and expertise among civil society organisations through funding civil society projects in Great Britain for the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and in England and Wales for the Convention against Torture (CAT), and holding workshops on how to use UN recommendations in advocacy and campaign work.
- Submit reports on CEDAW, CAT and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as part of our ongoing monitoring and reporting to the UN on the UK's human rights record.

- Take on the role of Chair of the Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions, which reflects the high regard in which the Commission is held nationally. We will work to foster effective communication between its members and facilitate sharing of best practice.
- Continue to be active members of the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI) and Equinet (the European Network of Equality Bodies) and their working groups.

Our relationship with Government and Parliament

It is vital that we maintain our independence from Government if we are to effectively challenge discrimination and human rights abuses in Britain. In 2018/19, we will seek to maintain and enhance our effectiveness as a National Equality Body and National Human Rights Institution, including retaining our 'A' status as a National Human Rights Institution under the Paris Principles.

We will:

- Advocate for legislative and administrative changes to enhance the guarantees of our independence.
- Work with our sponsor department throughout the 'tailored review' of the Commission to ensure it includes detailed consideration of our independence and the sufficiency of our powers and functions.
- Make the case and advocate for regaining control of the Equality Advisory and Support Service helpline, in order to improve our effectiveness and secure better means of redress for individuals.

Strategic Aim 4: Improved capability

“

We will implement new policies and processes and implement measures to ensure privacy by design and default.

”

Investing in our people

Our people are at the heart of what we do. We will continue to invest in their skills and knowledge and our infrastructure so that we give them the capability and confidence to be experts in their fields, and the tools to do their jobs to their full potential.

In 2018/19, as part of a three-year ambitious People and Infrastructure Programme, building on last year's improvements we will:

- Further invest in our physical environment, modernising our offices to support agile working.
- Continue our investment in ICT to support remote, flexible and agile working.
- Review our HR policies and processes, invest in the development of our managers and leaders, and focus on the health and wellbeing of our staff.

Improving our governance and ensuring regulatory compliance

Our Governance Manual sets out how our Board, statutory and advisory committees and executive team will make decisions about, and be accountable for, the work we do and our operational and financial performance.

This year, we will welcome new Commissioners and committee members.

We will take this opportunity to review the effectiveness of the relationship between the Board and the executive team to ensure it supports effective and efficient decision-making and good governance.

In addition, we will implement new policies and process to ensure we are compliant with the new Data Protection Bill and General Data Protection Regulations coming into force on 25 May 2018.



Improving our evaluation of impact and horizon-scanning

We will continue to improve our assessment and evaluation of the impact and value of our work. We will also continue to work to build understanding about the interventions that are effective in preventing prejudiced attitudes and discriminatory behaviour.

We will also develop our horizon-scanning, making sure we have effective processes for capturing emerging themes, issues and trends to inform our longer-term strategy.

In 2018/19, we will ensure that robust evidence of our impact informs decisions on how to best deploy our resources to address equality and human rights issues.

We will:

- Continue to build better understanding within the Commission of how to plan, monitor and report on the impact of our work.
- Improve our understanding of the most effective ways to use our unique levers to reduced inequality and promote human rights in Britain, through undertaking a series of strategic evaluations of existing work.

“
We will continue to improve our assessment and evaluation of the impact and value of our work.
”

- Build on our previous work to understand the relationship between prejudiced attitudes and unlawful discrimination, identity-based harassment and violence. The next phase will improve evidence on ‘what works’ to tackle prejudiced attitudes and discriminatory behaviour. We will also work towards establishing a national barometer on prejudice and discrimination through testing and promoting a survey tool that captures attitudes and experiences of prejudice for all the groups in our mandate.
- Build the Commission’s capability as a centre of good practice and a thought leader on ‘what works’ for improving equality and human rights outcomes.

Investing in our communications and engagement

In 2018/19, we will continue to implement our communications strategy to ensure that our work has maximum impact.

Our aims are to inform the public, employers and service providers about their rights and obligations under equality and human rights laws, engage in and shape the national debate on equality and human rights, and strengthen the Commission's influence as a relevant and authoritative expert.

Over the next 12 months we will also seek to improve our visibility and relationships with a broad range of stakeholders, including employers, public bodies and the third sector, in order to inform and extend the reach of our work through:

- Increasing our engagement with national and regional stakeholders across Britain, building a new approach to English regional engagement and capitalising on any opportunities from increasing devolution.
- Working with our Disability Advisory Committee to ensure that our work is informed by the expertise of a diverse group of disability experts, and considering how to improve strategic engagement with other protected characteristic groups.

- Continuing to improve all our communications channels, including digital channels. In particular, we will be conducting an accessibility audit of our website to achieve level AA conformance to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, in preparation for the introduction of the EU directive on the accessibility of the websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies.

- Building our media contacts and driving engagement through more interaction with our audiences on social media and developing our relationships with journalists, generating more proactive stories, and increasing two-way engagement on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn.
- Continuing to fulfil our obligations as an National Human Rights Institution by promoting awareness and understanding of the importance of human rights in the general public.

“
Over the next 12 months we will also seek to improve our visibility and relationships with a broad range of stakeholders, including employers, public bodies and the third sector.
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Developing our strategic direction

In 2018/19, the Commission will consult on and publish its next three-year Strategic Plan, as required by statute.

We will use the key equality challenges in Britain, identified in 'Is Britain Fairer? 2018', as the basis of a consultation with key stakeholders and the public on our strategies to address them.

We will:

- Review our current Strategic Plan to measure our progress against our key commitments.
- Develop the Commission's Strategic Plan 2019-22 and undertake full public consultation on our strategic priorities for the next three years.
- Develop a clear strategic narrative for the Commission, providing us with a clear purpose and vision that will guide our work in the next three years and set out the kind of organisation we want to be.



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 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, by advising the Board of Commissioners on matters affecting people in Scotland, and through advice 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.
- Continue to influence the Scottish Government, and a broad spectrum of stakeholders in Scotland, to encourage their use of the findings and recommendations from 'Is Britain Fairer? 2018' and 'Is Scotland Fairer?' to inform their own priorities and decision-making.
- Promote best practice in advancing equality of opportunity through the public investment in the seven City Deal partnerships, by running training with local authorities on embedding measures that advance equality in procurement tenders.
- Complete research into the effectiveness of the Scottish public sector equality duty specific duties at the end of their four-year cycle, and make recommendations to the Scottish Government for their Autumn 2018 review of the specific duties in order to drive practical advances in equality.

The Wales Committee

The Wales 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 Wales.

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 Wales, by advising the Board of Commissioners on matters affecting people in Wales, and through advice to the Wales Directorate.

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

- Challenge, inform and influence legislation, policy and decision-making in order to advance the protection and promotion of equality and human rights in Wales.
- Promote and disseminate 'Is Wales Fairer? 2018' and the Wales annual review, in order to highlight inequalities in Wales and drive actions to address them.
- Draw on the evaluation of the 'Identifying and tackling discrimination in the workplace' course to inform the future approach to access to justice work in Wales that will deliver the most impact.

- Work to increase compliance with the public sector equality duty including: using 'Is Wales Fairer? 2018' to promote priorities for action, following up our analysis of equality objectives; continuing to monitor compliance, challenging non-compliance and using enforcement action where appropriate; and building capacity and knowledge in third sector bodies to enable them to use the duty to challenge policy and practice in Welsh public bodies.

Our organisation and resources



Budget and resource allocation

The Commission's total budget for 2018/19 is £19.47m, comprising resource funding of £18.95m (£13.03m administration, £5.32m programme and £0.60m depreciation) and capital funding of £0.52m.

Over the current Spending Review period, we will continue to deliver required savings while delivering an impactful programme of work.

Figure 1 sets out the Commission's 2017/18 forecast outturn and the 2018/19 budget allocation, and Figure 2 shows the 2018/19 budget allocation across strategic aims.



£19.47m

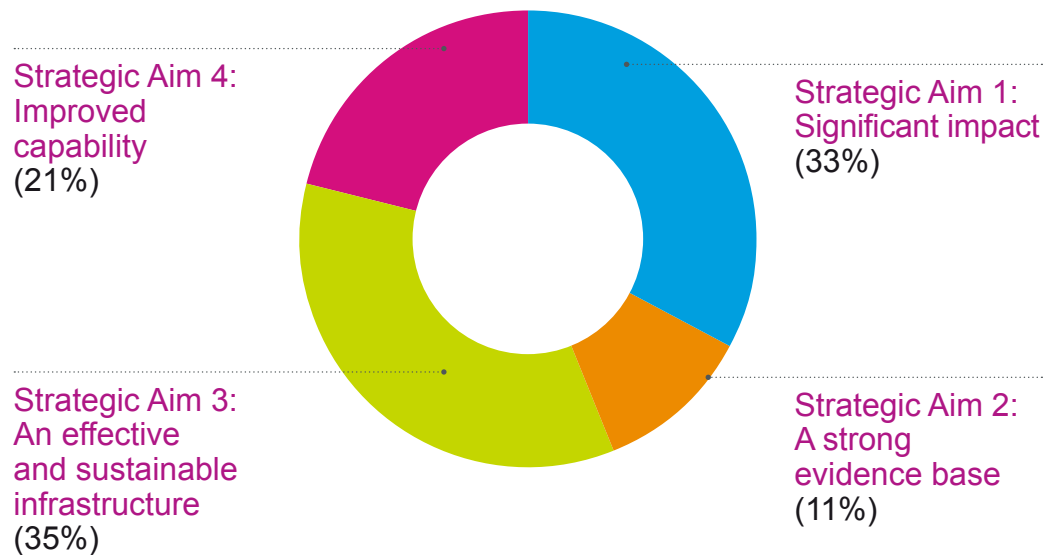
The Commission's total budget for 2018/19 is £19.47m

Figure 1: 2018/19 Equality and Human Rights Commission budget allocation

	2017/18 forecast outturn total (£,000)	2018/19 budget total (£,000)
Administration	13,679	13,028
Programme	5,119	5,321
Depreciation	600	600
Resource	19,398	18,949
Capital	520	520
Total resource DEL	19,918	19,469

Note: DEL = Departmental Expenditure Limit

Figure 2: Total 2018/19 budget by Strategic Aim



*Excludes depreciation and capital

* Strategic Aim 1 includes additional funding from Government to support our gender pay gap enforcement work for 2018/19

Figure 2 shows allocation of our 2018/19 budget across our four strategic aims (including in Scotland and Wales). This includes both staff resource and external expenditure to achieve our strategic aims.

- 1. Significant impact:** represents our work to secure advances in equality and humans rights in priority areas.
- 2. A strong evidence base:** covers our work to provide authoritative analysis and insight.

- 3. Sustainable infrastructure:** ensures an effective and sustainable infrastructure for the protection of equality and human rights in practice and includes our legal budget, which also supports some activities in Strategic Aim 1.
- 4. Improved capability:** reflects our work to be an expert, independent and authoritative national body. This includes our core communications and engagement costs which support work across the four strategic aims.

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 2017-20 has been reduced as part of the UK Government's Spending Review carried out in Autumn 2015 (see Figure 3).

In 2018/19, we will continue to ensure we are delivering work with real impact and to manage our organisation effectively using available resources.

We have already rationalised our estates, leaving us with core offices in London, Manchester, Cardiff and Glasgow.

In 2016/17, we reduced our estate in Manchester which resulted in efficiencies through the desk sharing model; we look to further improve our office space in 2018/19 through the reconfiguration of Fleetbank House in London and we are investing in our ICT estate to further our agile working policy across the Commission.

Figure 3: Equality and Human Rights Commission funding allocation for 2017-20 Spending Review period

Budget	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Programme	£5,610,000	£5,321,000	£5,055,000
Admin	£13,735,000	£13,028,000	£12,376,000
Total	£19,345,000	£18,349,000	£17,431,000
Capital	£520,000	£520,000	£520,000
Admin (depreciation)	£600,000	£600,000	£600,000

Equality objectives

Like other public bodies, the Commission must meet the requirements of the public sector equality duty.

Tackling unlawful discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations are part of our core statutory functions.

Therefore, in setting our strategic plan and our work programme each year, we consider carefully the key equality challenges facing people sharing different protected characteristics in all areas of their lives, using a range of evidence including from our Measurement Framework, and how we can best use our unique powers to address them.

The aims and changes we are working to achieve, together with the success measures set out in the Success Measures Annex, comprise our Equality Objectives for our core work this year.

We have also identified three priority areas under which we will seek to make equality improvements.

Our objectives for these areas are:

- To ensure we serve our diverse customers well and engage effectively with our stakeholders and the general public.
- To improve the way we consider equality and diversity in how we plan and carry out our work, including how we advance equality through our supply chain.
- To support and promote equality and diversity in our policies and practices as an employer.

This year we have committed to conduct a review of our current performance in these areas and to identify actions we need to take to deliver improvements. This review will inform the setting of our Equality Objectives for our next Strategic Plan period.

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 Success Measures Annex to this Business Plan, which will be published separately.



Contacts

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

Alternative formats

This report is available as a PDF file and as a Microsoft Word file from the Commission's website.

For information on accessing a Commission publication in an alternative format, please contact: correspondence@equalityhumanrights.com

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

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.

Telephone 0808 800 0082

Textphone 0808 800 0084

Hours 09:00 to 19:00
(Monday to Friday)
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