

The Rt Hon Caroline Nokes

By email only

From: Baroness Kishwer Falkner,
Chairwoman

Our ref: 2121Nokes

Thursday 16 November 2023

Dear Caroline Nokes,

Equality and Human Rights Monitor 2023

I am writing to bring to your attention our landmark report into the state of equality and human rights in Britain in 2023, which we have published and sent to Parliament today (16 November 2023).

The Equality and Human Rights Monitor includes extensive findings in relation to areas of progress, areas for improvement and areas that have stayed the same, in addition to wide-ranging recommendations to improve equality and human rights in Britain. The report is available in full on our website.

In this letter I am bringing to your attention matters of particular interest to the Women and Equalities Committee.

Following on from our last 'Is Britain Fairer?' report in 2018, the Equality and Human Rights Monitor 2023 draws on the comprehensive data outlined in our [Measurement Framework](#) to assess progress on equality and human rights over the last five years across Britain.

Overall, we have found that there have been significant challenges to equality and human rights in this period, including:

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- the profound impact of the COVID-19 pandemic
- the UK's departure from the European Union
- the period of high inflation as well as the economic impact of the war in Ukraine.

These events have exacerbated some persistent, long-term inequalities. For example, the data shows that whilst more young people have been reporting mental health conditions since 2010, the numbers rose further during the pandemic and remain high.

These events have also been a catalyst for new trends. For example, the increase in home working has benefitted parents, older and disabled people, and those with caring responsibilities.

I would particularly like to draw your attention to our findings on equality in the UK where we have seen that:

- Pay gaps between men and women have persisted, and the earnings gap for disabled people has risen in the last five years.
- Black adults have seen their earnings stagnate and unemployment remain relatively high.
- Poverty has risen for women, disabled people, and children aged 5 years and over.
- Justice outcomes exhibit a regressive trend, with women, LGBT individuals and disabled people facing not only higher rates of domestic abuse and sexual violence, but lower likelihood of positive outcomes from reporting.

- Health inequalities have deepened over the last five years, particularly for LGBT and younger people.

Our report also sets out recommendations to address these findings, including:

- Government and local government, in collaboration with disabled people in line with Article 4(3) of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), should take, and report on, action to narrow the earnings and employment gaps between disabled and non-disabled people.
- Central and local government should take, monitor and report on, action to address occupational segregation and narrow the pay gap between men and women.
- Central and local government should take, and report on, action to:
 - narrow the earnings gap for Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi adults compared with White British adults,
 - eliminate the gap in poverty rates between men and women in England, particularly for single parent families, in line with The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) recommendations to improve women's economic equality, and
 - address the higher unemployment rate for Black men.
- Government and police forces should take, and report on, action to:
 - reduce disabled people's greater risk of experiencing crime, with specific focus on where multiple characteristics put people at

greater risk, for example disabled women being at greater risk of sexual assault, and

- reduce the greater risk for lesbian, gay and bisexual people of experiencing domestic abuse, rape or sexual assault.
- Governments and health providers should take, and report on, action to:
 - reduce the incidence of poor mental health, with a particular focus on those aged under 25 and those aged over 55
 - address the poorer physical and mental health and poorer experience of accessing healthcare experienced by trans people
 - address the unacceptable waiting times for trans people to access Gender Identity Clinics, and
 - address the higher rates of poor mental and physical health experienced by lesbian, gay and bisexual adults.

As you will be aware, public authorities are required under the [Public Sector Equality Duty \(PSED\)](#) to publish specific and measurable equality objectives. Our recommendations are designed to support the development of these objectives and help ensure that this legal obligation can be performed in a way that is strategic and focused on the most significant equality challenges identified by the data. Objectives must be revised and published at least every four years, but this can be more frequent.

We hope that our recommendations will help you to target action to where it is needed most to continue to build a fairer society.

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We would be keen to discuss these findings and recommendations in more detail with the Women and Equalities Committee.

Yours sincerely,



Baroness Kishwer Falkner

Chairwoman

Equality and Human Rights Commission

[CC: Women and Equalities Committee Secretariat]