



Women and Equalities Committee

3 July 2025

Rt Hon. Bridget Phillipson MP
Secretary of State for Education and
Minister for Women and Equalities

Dear Secretary of State

On 11 June 2025, the Women and Equalities Committee took evidence from the leadership of the EHRC. During the session the vacant post of Wales Commissioner was discussed. I asked Baroness Falkner to provide further details in writing, including whether she had raised the vacancy with Ministers. Baroness Falkner has since told us:

Schedule 1 of the Equality Act 2006 obliges the Secretary of State to ensure that the Commission includes a Commissioner appointed with the consent of the Welsh Ministers who knows about conditions in Wales. This is a statutory requirement. We have been without a statutorily appointed Wales Commissioner since 1 October 2023.

I have raised this matter with yourself on 4 February 2025 and, in the past year, I have also raised it in meetings with the then Minister for Women and Equalities, Anneliese Dodds MP, on 12 July 2024 and 27 September 2024, with the Minister for Women and Equalities and Secretary of State for Education, Bridget Phillipson MP, on 23 October 2024, and most recently I raised it in a meeting with the Minister of State for Women and Equalities, Baroness Smith of Malvern, on 28 January 2025.

The Committee may wish to note that Commissioner appointments are the responsibility of the Minister for Women and Equalities and are run by the Office for Equality and Opportunity in the Cabinet Office.

I note that you told this Committee in February that you were waiting until a new Chair is in place before starting the recruitment for a Wales Commissioner, however it is now 21 months that the post has been vacant and a new chair is not expected to be in post until the end of the year.

The EHRC is facing many pressures. It is essential that it has the resources it needs to be able to carry out its functions effectively. This must include a full complement of commissioners to provide necessary advice, support and challenge to the Chair and



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Chief Executive. The Commission should not have to wait another five months for a Wales Commissioner to be appointed.

I would be grateful if you could ensure that a Wales Commissioner is appointed as soon as possible. The Committee would like to know the steps you will take to fill the vacancy and when we can expect a new Wales Commissioner to take up office.

I am copying this letter to Baroness Falkner.

Kind regards

Sarah Owen MP
Chair, Women and Equalities Committee