

Lord Alton of Liverpool
Chair, Human Rights (Joint Committee)
ichr@parliament.uk

19 December 2025

Dear David,

I wanted to let you know that we will shortly be announcing two interim direct appointments to the Equality and Human Rights Commission board. Ali Harris and Professor Shazia Choudhry will join as Commissioners from 1 January 2026 for an interim period of one year, by exception and without competition. These direct appointments have been agreed by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

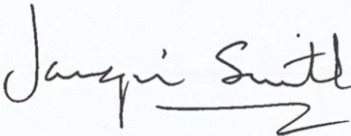
Ali Harris is Chief Executive of Equally Ours, and Shazia Choudhry is Professor of Law at the University of Oxford and the Jeffrey Hackney Tutorial Fellow in Law at Wadham College.

The reason for directly appointing is that the statutory minimum for EHRC Commissioners is 10 and a minimum of 5 Commissioners are required for quoracy. As of 1 December 2025, the EHRC has 5 Commissioners. This measure would therefore mitigate against the risk of EHRC being below quoracy, while a full and open recruitment for substantive commissioners is conducted to bring the board back to statutory minimum.

The recruitment campaign for EHRC Commissioners closed for applications on 1 December and sifting is currently in progress. We next intend to launch a full, open recruitment campaign for a Wales and Scotland Commissioner, and we are undertaking the required consultation with Devolved Governments. We will continue to monitor the progress of campaigns and quoracy of the EHRC board.

This measure will also provide continuity for the EHRC and its important work, and provide valuable support to Dr Mary-Ann Stephenson, as she settles into her new role as Chair.

Kind regards,



Rt Hon Baroness Smith of Malvern
Minister of State for Women and Equalities