

Alex Sobel MP

Chair, Joint Committee on Human
Rights

By email only

From: Mary-Ann Stephenson, Chair

Our ref: 20260923Sobel

Wednesday 23 September 2026

Dear Alex Sobel MP,

It is my pleasure to offer my warm congratulations on your new position as Chair of the Joint Committee for Human Rights.

We value the oversight and scrutiny provided by your committee and I look forward to engaging on areas of mutual concern.

Advice to the UK Parliament on matters relating to equality, diversity and human rights plays a key part in our strategy. We recently submitted evidence to your committee in contribution to its scrutiny of the Immigration and Asylum Bill and its inquiry on security, safety and protest, and we look forward to the committee's reports. We are currently preparing advice for the joint committee that will be providing pre-legislative scrutiny on the Draft Conversion Practices Bill. We further plan to issue advice to Parliament concerning proposals for a new legislative framework governing the use of facial recognition technology in the anticipated Police Reform Bill.

As you know, the Equality and Human Rights Commission is Great Britain's independent equality regulator, and an accredited A-status National Human

Rights Institution (NHRI). Our role is to make Britain a fairer place by upholding and promoting the laws, notably the Equality Act 2010 and Human Rights Act 1998, that safeguard everyone's right to fairness, dignity and respect.

Our [2025-2028 strategic plan](#) explains how we use our statutory powers and levers to achieve the change we want to see. This includes using data and evidence to understand equality and human rights problems, influencing standard setting, ensuring compliance with standards, and enforcing the law.

We organise our work under three pillars: core regulation of equality and human rights law, including supporting organisations to comply with the law, and monitoring compliance by the UK Government with its international human rights obligations; pursuing an agile response to emerging equality and human rights risks and opportunities; and longer-term programmes focused on addressing complex equality and human rights challenges. Our current longer-term programmes focus on tackling race and sex-based harassment in uniformed services, supporting effective responses to balance of rights issues, and improving the accessibility of public transport.

We also have a strong focus in our strategy on improving public understanding and support for the importance of rights protections. This forms part of our statutory human rights promotion role, including our work to monitor and assess compliance by the UK Government with its international treaty obligations. We are currently preparing our report to the UN Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) to inform the list of issues it will focus on during its periodic review of UK Government, which begins next year, and are speaking with stakeholders to inform our submission. We also

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recently published updates to our Human Rights Tracker – an online tool to help stakeholders track how well the UK and Welsh Governments are putting their human rights duties into practice.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss our work and mutual priorities. In the meantime, congratulations again, and I wish you the best in your new role.

Yours sincerely,



Mary-Ann Stephenson

Chair

Equality and Human Rights Commission