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# About

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## About the Commission

The Scottish Human Rights Commission is an independent public body, accountable to the people of Scotland through the Scottish Parliament.

## "A Status" National Human Rights Institution

The Commission is accredited as an "A Status" [National Human Rights Institution](#) (NHRI) within the United Nations (UN) system.

10/9/23, 11:05 AM

About | Scottish Human Rights Commission

The Commission has a general duty to promote awareness, understanding and respect for all human rights – economic, social, cultural, civil and political – to everyone, everywhere in Scotland, and to encourage best practice in relation to human rights.

The Commission has powers to recommend changes to law, policy and practice; promote human rights through education, training and publishing research; and to conduct inquiries into the policies and practices of Scottish public authorities.

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Our full duties and powers are set out in the [Scottish Commission for Human Rights Act 2006](#).

([http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2006/16/pdfs/asp\\_20060016\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2006/16/pdfs/asp_20060016_en.pdf))

The short animation below introduces our aims and approach. You can also read the [animation script](#). ([/media/1316/animation-transcript\\_final-1 .pdf](/media/1316/animation-transcript_final-1.pdf))

This means we can report directly to the UN on human rights issues. We are the only Scottish organisation that can make direct contributions to the UN Human Rights Council.

In 2021, the Commission was awarded "A Status" accreditation - the highest grade of international accreditation - for a third time.

The decision was made by a Committee of National Human Rights Institutions from around the world, following an extensive review of the Commission and its work in Scotland. This review took place against a set of detailed standards endorsed by the United Nations in 1993, known as the Paris Principles.

You can find out more about the accreditation process in our [Question and Answer Briefing](#) (</media/2217/accreditation-qa-briefing-vfinaldocx.pdf>) and in the short video below.

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**Meeting notes**

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## The Commission has powers to

### Recommend

Recommend changes to law, policy and practice.

### Promote

Raise awareness of rights through education, training and publishing research.

### Protect

Conduct inquiries into the policies and practices of Scottish public authorities.

## We promote a human rights based approach, following the PANEL principles

### Participation

We aim to enable a wide range of people and organisations to take part in our work, including those with personal, lived experience of human rights issues.

### Accountability

We work to improve the accountability of those with duties to protect rights. This requires effective laws, regulation and monitoring, as well as transparent decision-making.

### Non-discrimination

We promote the principle that all forms of discrimination must be prohibited, prevented and eliminated when it comes to realising people's rights.

## Empowerment

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We aim to help people to know their rights, take part in decisions that affect their rights, and claim their rights when needed.

## Legality

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We promote the need for public authorities to fulfil their obligations under the Human Rights Act and international and regional human rights standards.

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## The Paris Principles

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Our work complies with a set of guidelines called the [Paris Principles \(/media/1656/paris-principles-eng.docx\)](/media/1656/paris-principles-eng.docx).

These were adopted by the UN General Assembly and set out specific requirements that an “A Status” National Human Rights Institution must fulfil.

The [Paris Principles \(/media/1656/paris-principles-eng.docx\)](/media/1656/paris-principles-eng.docx) require the Commission and other NHRIs to:

- have a foundation in national law
- be independent from government
- have a mandate to cover a broad range of international human rights standards
- demonstrate pluralism and independence in the selection and appointment of members
- have a responsibility to work with both civil society and the state.

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