

Business Plan 2014/15

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Foreword

From the Chair



Equality and human rights are for everyone. They are based on values of fairness, dignity, respect and challenging intolerance that are basic to who and what we are as a nation. That is why my fellow Commissioners and I at the Equality and Human Rights Commission are passionate about what we do.

At times this passion turns to frustration when we see these values trivialised or distorted, for example by those who think that the job of protecting these rights and values has now been achieved, or that the laws and institutions that safeguard them are no longer needed.

But while we should be proud of the real progress Britain has already made to become a fairer and more inclusive society, we must also recognise and challenge persisting unfairness, intolerance, injustice and indignity. There is evidence that:

- women still lag behind men in the workplace, in promotion and pay at all levels as well as on the boards of companies; failing to make use of women's talents is a risk to Britain's economic success
- older people with limited capacity to assert their own rights are sometimes treated in ways that do not accord them the dignity and respect to which they are entitled
- some people are subject to working conditions that are akin to slavery.

There is much to be done in addition to these examples. This Business Plan sets out our ambitious, but realistic, plans to achieve progress on these and other important issues over the year ahead. We will work with the cleaning industry to address

concerns about some employment practices and working conditions. We will seek to tackle the abuse inflicted on girls and women by female genital mutilation, working with the Government to ensure that it is fulfilling its responsibilities to protect victims and prevent further harm. And we will explore allegations that some jobs are being advertised in ways which exclude some groups of workers. These are just some elements of our work programme for the coming year.

Alongside this, we will fulfil our responsibilities as a national equality body and A-rated National Human Rights Institution by working with international bodies to look at how the UK complies with a range of important international treaties and obligations. We are gathering evidence for a review of the UK's compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and preparing for the UN's review of our accreditation status in 2015/16. We will also be considering how protection of, and institutional support for, equality and human rights can be assured in the event of constitutional changes in the UK.

We are more comfortable in our diversity and a fairer and more tolerant society than we were a generation ago. We must safeguard those gains and continue to challenge intolerance and drive progress towards greater fairness, dignity and respect.

Baroness Onora O'Neill

Chair of the Equality and Human Rights Commission

From the Chief Executive



The plans that we have set out in this document are ambitious, because they need to be. They address issues that really matter to all of us - vital issues that go to the heart of what we as a society consider to be important.

There is a lot to be done, but we know from the past year that we are capable of delivering this. Reflecting on our recent achievements, we have much to be proud of as an organisation.

Over the past year we have worked with police forces to make their use of stop and search powers fairer and more effective, and with local authorities and other public bodies to increase protection against disability-related harassment and to improve the quality of home care. Our guidance on areas such as the Public Sector Equality Duty and religion or belief in the workplace has been well-received and well-used, and we continue to build on our evidence base through high-quality research and analysis.

We supported, or intervened in, successful landmark legal cases on issues affecting some of the most disadvantaged in our society, including the Government's decision to close the Independent Living Fund; sexual orientation discrimination by hotel owners, and breaches of human rights legislation by police forces which had retained information on peaceful protesters and young people convicted of minor criminal offences.

We have delivered increased efficiencies and savings, including through various office moves; agreed a new framework agreement setting out our relationship with the Government, and the National Audit Office has recognised our continued improvements in the financial management of the organisation.

We are now recognised by Parliament, other organisations and in the media as an expert source of advice, guidance and evidence on equality and human rights. As a result, the Government naturally turns to us to provide evidence on such challenging issues as the use by police of stop and search powers, or the levels of pregnancy-related discrimination, or the extent to which caste discrimination is an issue in Britain and how to address it. It is also why the media turn to us for a definitive view on issues such as gender segregation at university events.

What gives us the credibility to continue to make a difference is our reputation for focusing on the evidence, being a voice of reason, and being an authoritative guardian of equality and human rights law. We will do everything we can in this coming year to build on that hard-won reputation.

Mark Hammond

Chief Executive of the Equality and Human Rights Commission

About the Commission

Our strategic vision

“We live in a country with a long history of upholding people's rights, valuing diversity and challenging intolerance. The Commission seeks to maintain and strengthen this heritage while identifying and tackling areas where there is still unfair discrimination or where human rights are not being respected.”

Our role

The Commission was established by Parliament under the Equality Act 2006 to help make Britain a fairer place for everyone. We do this by helping to ensure that everyone is protected against unfair treatment and has fair opportunities; by promoting and safeguarding the human rights we all enjoy; and by encouraging mutual respect between people of all backgrounds.

If everyone, regardless of background, has an equal opportunity to fulfil their full potential in their work and in their day to day life, and to contribute what they can to our society and economy, Britain will be more successful and more prosperous.

The Commission is an independent non-partisan body that uses its powers to support and promote laws and practices that help make our society fair for everyone. Our aim is to be a trustworthy and authoritative organisation, which is recognised increasingly as a centre of excellence for data, evidence and legal expertise and an essential point of contact for policymakers needing advice on equality and human rights.

As guardian of the laws that protect fairness, dignity and respect, we use our strategic enforcement powers to ensure the law is working as intended. We undertake a range of interventions to ensure that everyone receives fair treatment, holding organisations to account for meeting equality and human rights standards. As a UN-accredited national

human rights institution and national equality body, we work with similar bodies in Scotland and Northern Ireland, across Europe and internationally to promote equality and human rights around the world.

Strategic priorities & progress

Our strategic priorities

Our 2012/15 Strategic Plan was formulated against the background of the economic challenges facing Britain, major public sector reforms and significant changes to the Commission's structure and budget. We set out our ambition to focus our resources on the areas where we can add most value in tackling the most significant challenges, through influencing others to deliver improvement, working in partnership with others and joining up with other scrutiny bodies to expand our reach.

We identified three strategic priorities for 2012 to 2015. These are to:

- 1. promote fairness and equality of opportunity in Britain's future economy**
- 2. promote fair access to public services, and autonomy and dignity in service delivery**
- 3. promote dignity and respect, and safeguard people's safety.**

Delivery highlights in 2013/14

Over the past year we have seen the reputation and confidence of our organisation grow as we delivered high-quality work that has had a positive impact peoples' lives, and influenced public debate on equality and human rights. We will report on our delivery against our strategic priorities in our Annual Report and Accounts, to be published later this year. Here we highlight just some of our successes.

To promote fairness and equality of opportunity in Britain's future economy, we:

- conducted research into Modern Apprenticeships (Scotland's major training and skills development programme) which highlighted low rates of access of disabled

people and ethnic minorities and a lack of progress in reducing gender-based occupational segregation; we are working with the Scottish Government to ensure better access for people with different protected characteristics

- concluded a dialogue to inform our strategy to improve employer and employee understanding of religion or belief rights
- concluded follow-up work from our inquiry into the meat processing sector, and completed research and a call for evidence into recruitment and employment conditions in the cleaning sector.

To promote fair access to public services, and autonomy and dignity in service delivery, we:

- published, in partnership with VisitEngland, VisitScotland and VisitWales, a guide to help small businesses in the tourism sector welcome customers with assistance dogs, and supported a gay couple in a Supreme Court appeal which resulted in the Court ruling that a bed and breakfast owner's religious beliefs did not entitle them to discriminate because of sexual orientation
- published reports showing the extent to which public authorities in England and Scotland have met their obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty specific duties, and delivered guidance for Scottish public authorities on how to tackle discrimination and promote equality for employees and service users through public procurement; in addition, we intervened in a case brought by several disabled claimants in which the Court of Appeal overturned the Government's decision to close the Independent Living Fund, finding insufficient evidence of compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty
- responded to public and media interest in Universities UK (UUK) guidance on gender segregation in meetings at universities; we set out the clear legal position, which corrected UUK's legal interpretation, and agreed to work with them to clarify guidance on this issue.

To promote dignity and respect, and safeguard people's safety, we:

- followed up our Inquiries into disability harassment and the home care of older people with reports assessing progress against our recommendations

- published a range of reports on the use of stop and search powers by police forces in England and Wales, resulting in a clear set of good practice recommendations which were reflected in a Home Office consultation
- commissioned and published research on caste in Britain, setting out clear proposals for how discrimination based on caste can be tackled through existing laws on race discrimination.

In addition, we:

- agreed a new framework document setting out our relationship with Government and how we operate as an independent Arm's Length Body
- provided evidence-based responses to consultations; briefings and advice to Parliament on legal aid reform proposals, voting rights for prisoners, the Intelligence and Security Committee's inquiry on privacy and security, and the Home Affairs Select Committee's inquiry on female genital mutilation, and proposed amendments to the Care Bill, the Anti-Social Behaviour, the Crime and Policing Bill on use of stop and search powers, the Deregulation Bill, and the draft Modern Slavery Bill
- presented shadow reports to the relevant treaty bodies for the UK's examination against the UN Convention Against Torture and the UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women; the majority of our recommendations and concerns were reflected in both Committees' concluding observations, which will form the basis of future work with Government departments.

Work programme for 2014/15

Below we set out the approach and work we will undertake in 2014/15 in each of our strategic priority areas. Some aspects of this work are subject to approval by the Minister for Women and Equalities of funding from our discretionary programme budget.

Strategic Priority 1: To promote fairness and equality of opportunity in Britain's future economy

For Britain to find its way back to strong and sustainable growth it needs to make best use of the talents of the whole population and remove barriers to economic participation and progress, so that all people have the opportunity to succeed. Economic engagement is an important route to autonomy, choice and financial and emotional well-being. In challenging economic times there is a risk that the most vulnerable can be disproportionately affected and that progress towards reducing existing inequalities can falter. Unemployment remains disproportionately high, and progression disproportionately low, among some groups. In order to fulfil their potential at work, people need access to skills and experience that open up workplace opportunities; fair treatment that allows talented people to find jobs, and progress and succeed in them, regardless of background; and to be treated with dignity so that they can give their best and be happy and productive. Failing to provide opportunities for everyone to contribute to the best of their ability means businesses missing out on talent – this will hold our economy back.

Inequalities in the labour market can stem from unequal opportunities to access employment, including occupational segregation resulting in some groups being over-represented in low-skilled, low-paid jobs; discriminatory treatment in the workplace, and barriers to progression. Promoting fairness and equality of opportunity in the labour market requires tackling all these factors.

Our work programme in support of Strategic Priority 1 therefore focuses on:

- promoting fair access to employment for all
- ensuring fair treatment of workers
- tackling under-representation at senior levels.

In 2014/15, we will take forward work to:

1.1 Promote fair access to employment for all, by:

1.1.1 **Tackling unlawful discriminatory recruitment practices which exclude some groups of workers.** Equality is for everyone, and all workers with a legal right to work in the UK should be able to compete fairly for jobs. However, there is evidence that this is not the case for some jobs – particularly those in low-skill, low-wage sectors with high levels of migrant workers such as food processing, construction, care and hospitality. We will gather evidence to assess the extent of the problem, focussing in particular on discriminatory adverts that target one group or nationality of workers to the exclusion of others. We will identify any specific sectors where this problem is most prevalent and develop proposals for improving compliance with the law in this area, including considering legal enforcement action.

1.1.2 **Ensuring fair access to apprenticeships for people from under-represented groups.** Apprenticeships offer an important route into skilled work. We will work with the Scottish Government and relevant agencies to ensure that apprenticeship programmes in Scotland not only offer equal opportunities to individuals from groups currently under-represented in skilled employment, but also take steps to address long-standing problems such as occupational segregation in some sectors. Part of this work will be to encourage improvements in the monitoring of applications for apprenticeships, and the establishment of equality targets. We will transfer the learning from this work to other parts of Great Britain in future years.

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1.2 Ensure fair treatment of workers, by:

- 1.2.1 **Improving compliance with equality and human rights laws in employment practices in the cleaning sector.** Evidence from employment tribunals and Citizens Advice shows a significant number of cases involving discrimination and non-payment of wages in the cleaning sector. We will take forward work to assess the extent of the problem, focussing on cleaning in the office, retail, transport, healthcare and leisure sectors. We will then identify levers to improve compliance in employment practices, highlighting good practice and cost-effective practical solutions to any issues uncovered, and introducing the concept of human rights in the workplace to workers and businesses in a meaningful way.
- 1.2.2 **Improving women’s awareness of their rights in relation to pregnancy and maternity and improving employers’ compliance with their responsibilities.** The last comprehensive study of discrimination against women because of pregnancy or taking maternity leave was undertaken by one of our predecessor organisations, the Equal Opportunities Commission, in 2005. Recent anecdotal evidence suggests that this problem may be increasing. We will work with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills to undertake research to determine the scale of pregnancy and maternity discrimination and disadvantage in the workplace, and to develop a better understanding of employers’ practices and attitudes. We will then develop targeted resources and activities to help employers manage pregnancy and maternity issues positively, and to improve women’s understanding of their rights regarding pregnancy and maternity at work.
- 1.2.3 **Helping small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) make better use of talent.** Over 40% of all employees work in enterprises that employ one to 249 employees. Employers who ensure all employees have fair access to opportunities for employment and promotion can gain a competitive advantage by utilising talent effectively, and help Britain make best use of its workforce. Improving SMEs’ understanding of the application of equality legislation and human rights to business practices can help achieve this. We will use quantitative and qualitative research to understand SMEs’ views on recruitment and employment practices, such

as managing pregnancy and maternity, reasonable adjustments for disabled people, and flexible working, and to inform the development of resources, case studies and guidance which show SMEs how to get the best out of their workforce without the need for onerous systems and processes.

1.2.4 Supporting businesses to respect human rights. As part of our work to promote awareness, understanding and the protection of human rights, we will take forward work to support businesses to implement the UN Guiding Principles (UNGP) on business and human rights and to support the Government's action plan on business and human rights. The UNGP provide the first global standard for preventing and addressing human rights harms from business activities, and place a specific responsibility on all businesses - regardless of size, sector or location - to respect human rights. Our work will raise business awareness of the responsibility to treat staff and customers with fairness, dignity and respect, and provide practical tools to enable targeted sectors to implement the UNGP.

1.2.5 Supporting employers to understand their responsibilities in relation to religion or belief in the workplace, assessing the effectiveness of current legislation and making recommendations to Government. Recent high-profile legal cases have led to debate about the legal protections for the right to hold and manifest religious or non-religious belief in the workplace. We want to develop a better understanding of the range of views about the effectiveness of equality and human rights law in this area. We plan to produce comprehensive guidance to ensure employers and employees understand the benefits of religious and non-religious diversity in the workplace, and how to manage requests related to religion or belief. We will also consider how effective our legal framework is in protecting religion or belief rights.

1.3 Tackle under-representation at senior levels, by:

1.3.1 Improving recruitment practice in FTSE 350 companies to promote diversity on FTSE boards. The lack of diversity at the most senior levels of business has been highlighted consistently over the past few years in the UK and in Europe. The Government and the business

community are committed to seeing progress, and a number of initiatives are already in train following Lord Davies of Abersoch's review looking at the under-representation of women on the boards of FTSE 100 companies. Our focus this year will be on supporting their work to increase the proportion of women on boards, by working with the larger pool of FTSE 350 companies. Our work will ensure that this important group of employers have a good understanding of equality legislation and how to use it effectively to secure improvements in board representation. We will look at their recruitment practices at board level, including the use of headhunters and open advertising, and identify fair and transparent methods of ensuring that appointments of men and women are made entirely on merit. We will look to extend this approach in future years to tackle the under-representation on boards of other groups.

Strategic Priority 2: To promote fair access to public services, and autonomy and dignity in service delivery

Fair access to key services is a prerequisite to meeting the basic needs which enable people to live safe, productive and fulfilling lives and fully participate in society and the economy. Access to appropriate childcare, education, health and social care, housing and financial services can have a significant effect on people's ability to make choices, exercise control over their own lives and fulfil their potential. The opportunity to participate in social and leisure activities is an important contributor to people's physical and mental well-being, development of skills and level of social inclusion.

There is continued evidence of inequality and poor treatment in the provision of key services. A stark example is the Francis Inquiry into the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust, which identified "a story of terrible and unnecessary suffering of hundreds of people who were failed by a system which ignored the warning signs of poor care and put corporate self-interest and cost control ahead of patients and their safety".

Tackling these issues means ensuring that key services are accessible to all; that people are treated fairly as required by the law; and that fundamental public services focus on meeting specific needs and addressing the experiences of the most disadvantaged, so that everyone can maximise their life chances.

Our work programme in support of Strategic Priority 2 therefore focuses on:

- ensuring services treat everyone fairly
- maximising the potential for key public services to close equality gaps and protect human rights
- providing tools to help public bodies.

In 2014/15, we will take forward work to:

2.1 **Ensure services treat everyone fairly, by:**

2.1.1 Tackling discriminatory practices by letting agents. Following instances of race discrimination against potential tenants highlighted by a BBC Inside Out undercover investigation, we will deliver improvements in letting agents' understanding of their obligations to treat customers fairly, and clarify the roles of the regulatory bodies in this sector.

2.1.2 Improving the tourism sector's understanding of its equality responsibilities. Building on our work with VisitEngland, VisitScotland and VisitWales in 2013/14 which resulted in guidance for the tourism industry about its responsibilities to people using assistance dogs, we will continue this partnership to develop guidance to address questions raised by the tourism industry about age discrimination following the extension of the ban on age discrimination to goods and services in October 2012. This will help ensure that tourism services are aware of their responsibilities and that customers of all ages can have confidence they will be treated with fairness, dignity and respect.

2.1.3 Increasing participation of under-represented groups in sport. Some groups, particularly women and girls, Asians and Muslims and disabled people, have disproportionately low rates of participation in sport - as players, spectators, volunteers, officials and employees. Sport has an important role in health, social interaction and inclusion and can help build skills and self-confidence which can help people succeed in other areas of life. We want to address the barriers which prevent people participating, including by improving the physical and cultural accessibility of sporting venues and tackling discriminatory attitudes and behaviours. We will use UK Sport's Sports Equality Standard framework

to work with a range of sports' governing bodies across Great Britain to deliver and evaluate a range of projects and develop a suite of practical resources to improve practice, with the aim of increasing the number of sports bodies achieving the Intermediate or Advanced Equality Standard over the next two years.

- 2.1.4 Improving access to banking services for disabled people.** Access to mainstream financial services is an important precursor to social and economic inclusion. The banking industry has made many improvements in access for disabled people, but we want to explore whether further progress is required to ensure that retail banking services are accessible to disabled people and meet their needs. We will work with the retail banking sector and groups of and for disabled people to assess the extent to which current services are appropriate and accessible, and to explore whether emerging issues, such as the increase in electronic banking, take account of disabled people's needs and offer opportunities for the industry to improve access for them.

2.2 Maximise the potential for key public services to close equality gaps and protect human rights, by:

- 2.2.1 Supporting schools to increase participation and attainment among disabled pupils and those with special educational needs (SEN).** Evidence shows that disabled people and those with SEN continue to have disproportionately low levels of qualifications, and that there is a lack of resources and support devoted to opening up extra-curricular activities, including sport, to disabled pupils. We will develop training and practical guidance for schools to support them to improve their performance in meeting the needs of pupils with SEN and making the reasonable adjustments which can make all the difference for disabled pupils.
- 2.2.2 Raising levels of compliance with equality and human rights standards in health and social care.** Demographic changes mean that the number of older people requiring health and social care support is increasing and will continue to do so. Recent cases have highlighted a number of instances of the health and care system falling to provide the standard of service, dignity and respect this group has the right to expect, and the prohibition from October 2012 of age discrimination in

services and public functions means that it is timely to review whether practice is changing to better meet the needs of older service users. We will work with the Department of Health and relevant regulators in England to deliver improvements in culture and accountability systems, to ensure that service design and delivery and performance frameworks reflect equality and human rights standards.

- 2.2.3 Promoting equality and fair financial decision-making in the 2015 Spending Reviews.** When making significant decisions about spending priorities, it is important that Government is aware of the potential of those decisions to have a particular impact on people sharing protected characteristics. Building on our earlier formal assessment of equality considerations in the Spending Review 2010, we will work with HM Treasury and key Government departments to ensure the potential of future spending decisions to exacerbate or close equality gaps is given proper consideration through the development of new ways of assessing the cumulative impact of those decisions. We will also continue our successful engagement with the Scottish and Welsh Governments' budget processes through our work with the relevant Budget Advisory Groups.

2.3 Provide tools to help public bodies, by:

- 2.3.1 Following up the recommendations of the independent review of the Public Sector Equality Duty.** We will work with the Information Commissioner for England on better guidance on data collection and ensuring all our guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty for English public authorities is clear, up to date and user-friendly.
- 2.3.2 Collaborating with non-economic regulators and inspectorates to embed equality and human rights in their frameworks** and helping to train their staff, in order to ensure public services comply with equality and human rights standards. This will include specific improvement work with Audit Scotland to test and disseminate models for embedding equality and human rights in inspection work.

Strategic Priority 3: To promote dignity and respect, and safeguard people's safety

The State has an obligation to safeguard the public and to ensure equal access to fundamental rights. While Britain has made much progress towards becoming an inclusive place where diversity is valued, people are still being subjected to abuse, bullying and even violence because of who they are, and there are concerns that more needs to be done to protect the safety of people in the most vulnerable positions in our society.

Our work programme in support of Strategic Priority 3 therefore focuses on:

- tackling prejudice and reducing identity-based violence
- safeguarding those least able to assert their own rights.

In 2014/15, we will take forward work to:

3.1 Tackle prejudice and reduce identity-based violence, by:

3.1.1 Strengthening public understanding of religion and belief and its place in the public sphere. Our aim is to achieve better public understanding of equality and human rights law, a more balanced and tolerant public dialogue on contentious issues and to tackle misunderstandings and prejudiced attitudes. As part of our work developing guidance and reflecting on the protections of our legal framework protecting religion or belief, we will talk to a wide range of people with expertise and an interest in this area and seek to provide a space for open discussion of contentious issues conducted with mutual respect and tolerance.

3.1.2 Improving the reporting of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGB and T) hate crime. LGB and T hate crime statistics reported by the Association of Chief Police Officers are significantly lower than the estimated number of these crimes, and recording rates vary significantly between Forces. We will work with LGB and T organisations, Governments and criminal justice agencies across Great Britain to encourage greater reporting of LGB and T hate crimes, including by establishing new third party reporting channels where none exist; to build

knowledge and understanding of LGB and T hate crime in criminal justice agencies in order to improve recognition, recording, prevention and responsiveness, and to build local links between LGB and T communities and criminal justice agencies to help deliver sustained improvements to prevention, reporting and responsiveness.

- 3.1.3 **Transferring our expertise and learning to reduce the inappropriate use of police stop and search powers.** Building on our work to identify good practice in reducing disproportionate and invasive use of stop and search powers, we will work in partnership with key bodies, including Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and the National College of Policing, to embed this understanding of best practice in the work they do.
- 3.1.4 **Tackling caste discrimination and harassment.** In light of concerns that people are being discriminated against and harassed because of caste, the Government is due to consult on the legislation to prohibit such discrimination. We will work with business to ensure employers understand how to comply with the new legislation without having to introduce complex new systems and processes.
- 3.1.5 **Reducing the incidence of identity-based bullying and harassment in schools.** Alongside the Government's work to tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in schools in England, we will pilot evidence-based approaches to reducing incidents of identity-based bullying and harassment in a sample of Scottish schools and local authorities, and explore the nature and incidence of sexual harassment and bullying in secondary schools across Great Britain, with a view to extending effective approaches to other types of identity-based bullying in other school settings.

3.2 **Safeguard those least able to assert their own rights, by:**

- 3.2.1 **Reducing incidents of disability harassment.** Following up the recommendations from the Commission's 2012 Inquiry, set out in our "Manifesto for Change", we will set up formal and informal agreements with certain public authorities to improve the way they address disability harassment, in preparation for a three-year report on progress in 2015/16.

- 3.2.2 Contributing to action to reduce incidents of female genital mutilation (FGM).** FGM is a crime and a violation of the human rights of women and girls. Building on our evidence to the Home Affairs Select Committee, we will work with Government to support awareness-raising about FGM and its effects in affected communities in order to challenge traditional attitudes and empower girls and women, and to ensure a comprehensive and effective strategy is in place to tackle this issue and assess progress.
- 3.2.3 Recommending action to reduce avoidable deaths of adults with mental health conditions in State detention.** We will undertake an Inquiry, working in conjunction with other relevant bodies, to examine non-natural deaths of adults with mental health conditions while in State detention and the extent to which prison, hospital and police services comply with Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights and have implemented recommendations from previous inquiries and reports into non-natural deaths in detention. Our goal is to increase compliance with the Human Rights Act 1998 and to reduce the risk of further deaths.
- 3.2.4 Improving the life chances of children with mental health conditions at risk of detention.** We will work with the Children's Commissioners in England, Scotland and Wales, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons, the Youth Justice Board and other partners to explore how to reduce the likelihood of children with mental health conditions being detained by the State. This could focus on examining the pathway for children and young people in contact with the health and justice systems up to and including the point of State detention, assessing the level of human rights compliance of the various public authorities which engage with children with mental health conditions prior to their detention, and making recommendations for actions to deliver improvements.
- 3.2.5 Tackling the causes of human trafficking in Scotland and improving the treatment of victims.** We will embed our Inquiry work on human trafficking in Scotland into public policy by continuing to promote our Inquiry recommendations through the 2014 Anti-Trafficking Summit; influencing ongoing proposals for legislative change domestically (the Human Trafficking (Scotland) Bill and the Modern Slavery Bill) and in

Europe, and considering whether there are strategic areas in which the Commission could achieve further improvement.

The work of our Statutory Committees

The Commission has three statutory decision-making Committees: for Disability, Scotland and Wales. As well as informing the development of the Commission's Business Plan overall, these Committees also have their own work programmes.

The Disability Committee

The Disability Committee's role was reviewed in 2012/13 as required by the Equality Act 2006. The Secretary of State concluded that the Committee should continue, with certain improvements, until 2017. The main focus of the Commission's Disability Programme over the next year will be:

- **Informing the UK's forthcoming examination under the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People (UNCRPD)**
We will help to ensure that disabled people and disabled people's organisations are engaged in strategic influencing and participate in the UNCRPD examination.
- **Developing an engagement strategy**
This is designed to ensure the development and maintenance of effective working partnerships with senior disability-related stakeholders in Government departments, public authorities and third sector organisations.
- **Continuing our work on disability-related harassment**
We will continue to gather evidence and work with priority organisations, working towards the production of a three-year progress report in 2015/16.

The Scotland Committee

The Scotland Committee is responsible for ensuring that the overall work of the Commission reflects the needs and priorities of Scotland. In the coming year, the Scotland Committee members will gather evidence and see for themselves the emerging equalities issues in Scotland, hearing first-hand the concerns and hopes of individuals and organisations as they travel around Scotland in a new programme of engagement.

The Commission in Scotland will work across the public, private and third sectors to secure improvements in the promotion and protection of equality and human rights. In addition to core work and its contribution to Britain-wide projects, the Commission in Scotland will:

- **Prepare for the referendum on independence**
We will ensure that proper thought is given to equality and human rights, and effective post-referendum structures are in place during any transfer of powers to full independence or further devolution.
- **Transfer our expertise**
We will deliver training and interactive workshops to advisors, third sector and public sector organisations to improve their knowledge of discrimination and human rights law.
- **Engage directly with businesses in Scotland**
We will promote our Employer Guidance and our work on rights in pregnancy and maternity; and we will transfer the recommendations from the Commission's Inquiry into the meat processing sector to the fisheries industry in Scotland.
- **Improve public sector employment practice and service delivery**
We will strive to improve practice and service delivery across the 259 public bodies subject to the Scottish specific duties, by building on the findings of our 2013/14 Public Sector Equality Duty monitoring to promote improvements in equality impact assessment and workplace equality monitoring and support public authorities in delivering their equality outcomes.
- **Undertake a detailed Census 2011 analysis**
We will produce information on migration, housing and economic participation to inform public policy and service delivery.
- **Work to reduce the incidence of identity-based harassment in Scottish schools**
We will develop resources and new approaches to help tackle bullying based on protected characteristics.

The Wales Committee

The Wales Committee's work programme centres around plans to build on our concordat with the Welsh Government, and our work with the Commission on Devolution, to promote and progress the strong and distinct equality and human rights agenda in Wales.

This will include:

- **advising the Welsh Government, the National Assembly for Wales and Welsh MPs**, including advising the Welsh Government on its legislative programme and providing input to its Budget Advisory Group on Equality, briefing Assembly Committees and Members and supporting scrutiny of the End Violence Against Women, Social Services and Future Generations Bills
- **working with public services in Wales to ensure the Public Sector Equality Duty delivers equality improvements** by guiding, encouraging, monitoring and following up our 2013 evaluation of the Public Sector Equality Duty in Wales
- **increasing access to equality and human rights advice and improving its quality** by organising discrimination law courses and advisor training sessions in North and South Wales
- **improving Welsh workplaces** by sharing effective practice through the Equality Exchange network and encouraging the adoption of workplace policies on mental health and violence against women in the public and private sectors
- **developing and promoting our evidence base** by beginning our work to update "How Fair is Wales?" as part of the Commission's wider periodic review of progress on equality and human rights in Britain, due to be published in 2015
- **sharpening the focus on equality and human rights in Wales** by providing evidence about the links between poverty and the protected characteristics to the National Assembly's inquiry into poverty and participating in the expert group on a socio-economic duty.

Our core work

Our role as a National Human Rights Institution

As an A-rated National Human Rights Institution (NHRI), we will fulfil our responsibilities and protect human rights by:

- chairing the European Working Group of NHRIs on the UNCRPD, and participating in the UK independent mechanism on the UNCRPD
- developing our contributions to the forthcoming examinations of the UK under UN human rights treaties
- contributing to the consideration of the UK's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mid-term report
- following up concluding observations of the UN treaty bodies to help ensure the UK Governments deliver improvements to the protection of human rights
- building the capacity of non-governmental organisations and civil society to contribute to the UPR and UN treaty monitoring processes, including through improvements to our website, development of online resources and delivery of training events
- raising awareness of the UPR and UN treaties in Parliament, including through collaborative working with the Joint Committee on Human Rights.

Research

We will continue to develop our research function to fulfil our obligations under section 12 of the Equality Act 2006, to monitor societal progress in relation to equality and human rights. We will build our reputation as a 'Centre of Excellence' in collating complex data and producing simple, clear analysis, in terms of equality and human rights.

Our measurement framework brings together equality and human rights evidence for internal and external use and enables us to meet our statutory requirement to identify changes in society that have occurred or are expected to occur in relation to equality and human rights. We are required to produce a periodic review of progress on equality and human rights in Britain. This year we will commence our work on the next review, due to be published in 2015, which will inform our future strategic planning process.

Using the law

Our litigation strategy gives priority to cases which advance our strategic objectives, prevent or stop equality and human rights abuses, or raise strategically significant human rights issues. We will continue to take cases or intervene in proceedings which offer the opportunity to clarify the law or deal with significant issues of discrimination or breaches of human rights. We will also continue to provide financial support for discrimination cases of strategic importance.

We will review our litigation strategy during 2014, under the leadership of our new Chief Legal Officer.

Communications and engagement

We have a big and ambitious programme of work. This can only be delivered by working with a range of organisations across the public, private and voluntary sectors. We see too many examples of equality and human rights being misrepresented and misunderstood, and we must challenge this where it occurs. Therefore, we are determined to:

- build effective partnerships and working arrangements with a range of stakeholders in order to further embed fairness, dignity and respect and challenge intolerance across our society
- provide clear information about how to comply with equality and human rights laws and how to use the principles that sit beneath them to develop a more effective workforce and better services
- correct inaccuracies about human rights, and place them firmly where they belong – as a safeguard of the values we all share
- increase our reach and impact through a new website and a greater focus on communicating and engaging through digital and social media.

An important part of our communications and engagement strategy is driven by our commitment to working constructively with business, and taking seriously the principles behind initiatives such as accounting for regulatory impact and the proposed growth duty. In considering regulatory actions, including the production of guidance, we will consult widely with business, and seek to ensure that we support compliance while

reducing unnecessary complexity or bureaucracy. We want to deliver guidance on the law that is reliable, brief and easy for business to understand.

We need to begin by listening to what the private sector says will help it comply more effectively with equality and human rights law. We need to understand what issues the private sector believes are the most significant to help it develop and manage its workforce through economic recovery, and offer goods and services in a non-discriminatory way.

We also want to promote our work more effectively to a business audience, in order to explain and publicise our role and work programme in terms that resonate with the concerns of business leaders. We want to work with business to identify the best channels for dissemination and, where appropriate, partner with the organisations that businesses listen to.

Constitutional change

The forthcoming referendum on Scottish independence, the report of the Silk Commission on Devolution in Wales and discussions about a British Bill of Rights all raise important questions about the future legal and institutional framework for protecting and safeguarding equality and human rights across the UK. We will be considering carefully the implications for our work of possible developments, and providing advice and recommendations to Governments as proposals develop.

Our organisation & resources

Budget and resource allocation

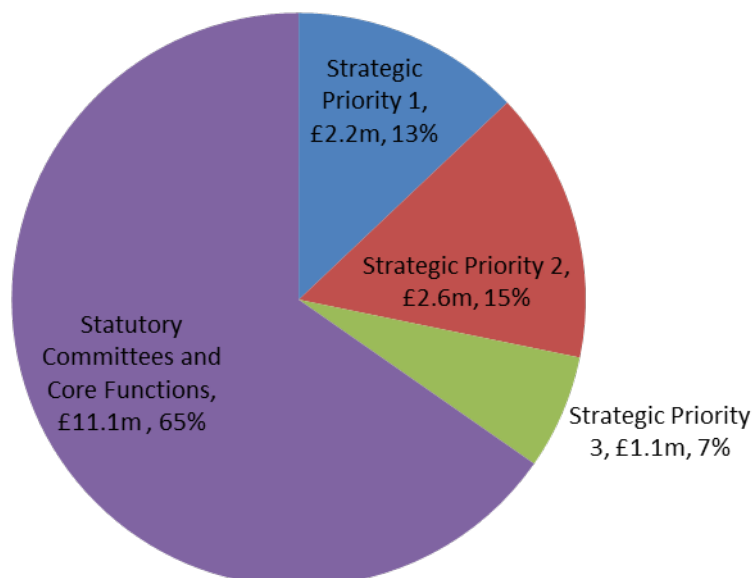
The Commission's total core steady-state funding for 2014/15 is £17.1m, comprising resource funding of £16.93m (£15.03m administration, £1.4m programme and £0.5m depreciation) and capital funding of £0.15m.

There is also a separate 'one-off' transition budget for 2014/15 of £0.65m to deliver efficiency savings to achieve the steady-state budget. There is also provision for access to additional discretionary programme funding of £8.1m for wider equality and human rights priorities, subject to agreement of proposals by the Minister for Women and Equalities.

We will continue the reduction in our costs begun in earlier years, specifically the rationalisation of our estates and a continued reduction in our support costs through the implementation of shared services, while continuing to deliver our programme of work and services. Figure 1 below sets out the Commission's budget allocation and Figure 2 shows the resource allocation across the key areas of work.

Figure 1: 2014/15 Equality and Human Rights Commission budget allocation

	2014/15 Budget			2015/16 Budget
	Core budget £,000	Transition £,000	Total £,000	Total £,000
Administration	15,027	285	15,312	14,727
Programme core	1,400	0	1,400	1,400
Depreciation	500	120	620	620
Resource	16,929	405	17,334	16,747
Capital	150	250	400	387
Total Resource DEL	17,077	655	17,732	17,134
Programme discretionary	8,073		8,073	6,570

Figure 2: 2014/15 Equality and Human Rights Commission resource allocation

Organisational improvement and efficiency savings

Over the coming year we will continue to deliver further efficiency savings from estates rationalisation and moving towards the top quartile benchmarked efficiency in our corporate support functions.

Over the last two financial years we have made significant progress in reducing our accommodation costs by rationalising our regional offices and moving two of our main offices into lower-cost accommodation. This has already delivered a 40% reduction in our expenditure in this area. We have also significantly reduced the costs of ICT with a similar level of savings of around 35%.

In 2014/15 we will finalise the implementation of our estates strategy with the move of our Cardiff office into Government estate and by reducing our office space in Manchester. We will continue to explore the scope for further cost savings on accommodation.

During 2013/14 we reviewed opportunities to implement shared services across our corporate support functions to test the value for money of doing so. We have joined with

other independent regulators to look at out-sourcing internal audit services and aim to award a new contract in Spring 2014. We have also continued discussions with the Cabinet Office on their shared service offerings for Finance and Human Resources services and will test the value for money of joining a shared services offering with an aim of making a decision in Autumn 2014. We will also continue to look at opportunities for sharing our services with appropriate public sector bodies where this meets value-for-money benefits.

Developing our people

We recognise that our people are our most valuable resource and we want them to be able to excel. Ensuring high-quality delivery depends on the alignment of our work, people, structure and culture. During 2014/15 our focus will be on establishing an organisational culture, values and behaviours which will support the delivery of our business objectives. We want to create a culture that is more collaborative and mutually supportive, with an emphasis on promoting strong and inclusive leadership. We are also determined to make further improvements in the way we communicate with and engage our staff.

During this year we will be working to implement a number of improvements, including continuing to invest in the training and development of our staff, with the aim of delivering the following outcomes.

Outcomes for individuals

- Improved role clarity and a clear line of sight between delivery of goals and performance management
- Increased pride in the Commission, driven by a greater understanding of how their performance contributes to the Commission's impact
- Increased sense of being valued and respected by line managers and the organisation
- Greater autonomy leading to innovation and the space to actively pursue knowledge

Continued...

Outcomes for teams

- An improved sense of common purpose and alignment to our Strategic Plan
- Greater understanding of how work undertaken delivers the Strategic Plan
- Greater collaboration within and across teams

Outcomes for the Commission

- Enhanced performance leading to greater staff engagement and pride
- Enhanced external reputation so that:
 - the Commission is seen as a trusted source of information for all stakeholders, and by society as responsive and relevant
 - our recommendations are routinely welcomed and implemented and there is greater recognition of the Commission's relevance among private sector stakeholders.

Governance and risk management

The Commission's Governance Framework sets out the roles and responsibilities of the Board, Committees and the Senior Management Team and our approach to good governance. The Governance Framework is reviewed annually.

The Commission's strategy and work is overseen and directed by the Board, comprising the Chair, Deputy Chair and Commissioners. The Board is responsible for approving the Strategic Plan and the Business Plan, monitoring our performance against plans and ensuring that the Commission has appropriate systems of governance, accountability and control.

The Commission has three statutory decision-making committees (Disability, Scotland and Wales). The Board is also supported by two advisory committees - the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and the Human Resources and Remuneration Committee.

The Senior Management Team, led by the Chief Executive, is responsible for developing and delivering the Business Plan in support of the Commission's statutory duties and strategic priorities. The Senior Management Team provides leadership, sets

work priorities, monitors performance and manages risk, thereby enabling the Board to discharge its responsibilities.

Our risk management framework, policy and associated guidance provide a robust system of risk management which is embedded across all our working practices. Our strategic risk register is underpinned by operational risk registers covering key areas of work, which are reviewed monthly by the Senior Management Team and reported to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

Equality objectives

Like other public bodies, the Commission must meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty. We have therefore identified and set equality objectives around all the work we do, our employment practices and our ways of working.

Each year we collate and analyse a range of equality information which helps us to identify and understand potential key equality issues across our functions. This is the basis on which we set our equality objectives.

The Commission is unique among public bodies subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty in that tackling discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and promoting good relations between groups is our core work. The objectives for our work programme for 2014/15 therefore represent our equality objectives for our work and how we work with others.

We have also identified equality objectives for our role as an employer, how we deliver services and how we procure goods and services.

Our equality priorities in 2014/15 are:

- ensuring our business improvements and any operational changes are implemented fairly
- fostering an accessible and inclusive working environment for all our staff
- ensuring that our services are accessible and users' experiences and outcomes are positive
- promoting equality within our supply chain, supporting our suppliers to embed equality and diversity practices within their own organisations and working practices.

Our equality objectives for each of these priority areas are published separately in "Our equality objectives 2014/15".

Measuring success

Performance management and reporting is central to the successful delivery of our Business Plan and ensuring that our work represents value for money. The measures against which we will judge our progress and success are set out in the separate [Success Measures Annex](#) published alongside this Business Plan.

Appendix 1:

Our Commissioners

The Chair of the Commission is Baroness Onora O'Neill. On 14 January 2013 the new Board for the Commission was announced by the Minister for Women and Equalities. The Board members are:

- Baroness Onora O'Neill (Chair)
- Caroline Waters OBE (Deputy Chair)
- Ann Beynon OBE (Wales Commissioner)
- Lord Chris Holmes MBE (Disability Commissioner)
- Kaliani Lyle (Scotland Commissioner)
- Sarah Anderson CBE
- Evelyn Asante-Mensah OBE
- Laura Carstensen
- Professor Swaran Singh
- Sarah Veale CBE.

Mark Hammond is the Chief Executive. Baroness O'Neill and Mark are supported by a senior management team who lead and manage delivery of our work.

Appendix 2:

Our duties & powers

The Commission has a set of unique duties and powers under the Equality Act 2006 to help us fulfil our mandate. We have specific responsibilities and requirements under the UN Paris Principles and the European Union Equality Directives to ensure we maintain our status as a National Human Rights Institution and European national equality body.

General duty

Under the Equality Act 2006, the Commission's general duty is to exercise its functions with a view to encouraging and supporting the development of a society in which: people's ability to achieve their potential is not limited by prejudice or discrimination; there is respect for and protection of each individual's human rights; there is respect for the dignity and worth of each individual; each individual has an equal opportunity to participate in society, and there is mutual respect between groups based on understanding and valuing of diversity and on shared respect for equality and human rights.

Equality and diversity

The Commission is also under a duty to: promote understanding of the importance of equality and diversity; encourage good practice in relation to equality and diversity; promote equality of opportunity; promote awareness and understanding of rights under the Equality Act 2010; enforce the Equality Act 2010, and work towards the elimination of unlawful discrimination and harassment.

Continued...

Human rights

As a National Human Rights Institution we must promote understanding of the importance of human rights through teaching, research and public awareness and educational programmes; promote awareness, understanding and protection of human rights and efforts to combat discrimination, especially through use of media channels; make recommendations to Government, Parliament and other competent bodies on existing and proposed laws and processes that will impact on human rights; promote the harmonisation of national law, policy and practice with international human rights law and standards; encourage public bodies to comply fully with the Human Rights Act 1998, which incorporates the European Convention on Human Rights into national law, and cooperate with the UN and other bodies dedicated to promoting and protecting human rights, including by monitoring and reporting on Great Britain's compliance with the core conventions.

Appendix 3: Summary of 2014/15 work programme

Strategic Vision: We live in a country with a long history of upholding people's rights, valuing diversity and challenging intolerance. The Commission seeks to maintain and strengthen this heritage while identifying and tackling areas where there is still unfair discrimination or where human rights are not being respected.		
Strategic Priority 1: To promote fairness and equality of opportunity in Britain's future economy	Strategic Priority 2: To promote fair access to public services, and autonomy and dignity in service delivery	Strategic Priority 3: To promote dignity and respect, and safeguard people's safety
<p>1.1: Promote fair access to employment for all, by:</p> <p>1.1.1: Tackling unlawful discriminatory recruitment practices which exclude some groups of workers.</p> <p>1.1.2: Ensuring fair access to apprenticeships for people from under-represented groups.</p> <p>1.2: Ensure fair treatment of workers, by:</p> <p>1.2.1: Improving compliance with equality and human rights laws in employment practices in the cleaning sector.</p> <p>1.2.2: Improving women's awareness of their rights in relation to pregnancy and maternity and improving employers' compliance with their responsibilities.</p> <p>1.2.3: Helping small and medium-sized enterprises make better use of talent.</p> <p>1.2.4: Supporting businesses to respect human rights.</p> <p>1.2.5: Supporting employers to understand their responsibilities in relation to religion or belief in the workplace, assessing the effectiveness of current legislation and making recommendations to Government.</p> <p>1.3: Tackle under-representation at senior levels, by:</p> <p>1.3.1: Improving recruitment practice in FTSE 350 companies to promote diversity on FTSE boards.</p>	<p>2.1: Ensure services treat everyone fairly, by:</p> <p>2.1.1: Tackling discriminatory practices by letting agents.</p> <p>2.1.2: Improving the tourism sector's understanding of its equality responsibilities.</p> <p>2.1.3: Increasing participation of under-represented groups in sport.</p> <p>2.1.4: Improving access to banking services for disabled people.</p> <p>2.2: Maximise the potential for key public services to close equality gaps and protect human rights, by:</p> <p>2.2.1: Supporting schools to increase participation and attainment among disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.</p> <p>2.2.2: Raising levels of compliance with equality and human rights standards in health and social care.</p> <p>2.2.3: Promoting equality and fair financial decision-making in the 2015 Spending Reviews.</p> <p>2.3: Provide tools to help public bodies, by:</p> <p>2.3.1: Following up the recommendations of the independent review of the Public Sector Equality Duty.</p> <p>2.3.2: Collaborating with non-economic regulators and inspectorates to embed equality and human rights in their frameworks.</p>	<p>3.1: Tackle prejudice and reduce identity-based violence, by:</p> <p>3.1.1: Strengthening public understanding of religion and belief and its place in the public sphere.</p> <p>3.1.2: Improving the reporting of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender hate crime.</p> <p>3.1.3: Transferring our expertise and learning to reduce the inappropriate use of police stop and search powers.</p> <p>3.1.4: Tackling caste discrimination and harassment.</p> <p>3.1.5: Reducing the incidence of identity-based bullying and harassment in schools.</p> <p>3.2: Safeguard those least able to assert their own rights, by:</p> <p>3.2.1: Reducing incidents of disability harassment.</p> <p>3.2.2: Contributing to action to reduce incidents of female genital mutilation.</p> <p>3.2.3: Recommending action to reduce avoidable deaths of adults with mental health conditions in State detention.</p> <p>3.2.4: Improving the life chances of children with mental health conditions at risk of detention.</p> <p>3.2.5: Tackling the causes of human trafficking in Scotland and improving the treatment of victims.</p>
Statutory Committees	Our core work	
Disability work programme	Human Rights: Human rights promotion, education and influencing, Universal Periodic Review and treaty monitoring	Communications and engagement: Explaining equality and human rights, rebutting myths, building partnerships, launching a new website, engaging staff
Scotland work programme	Research: Providing robust evidence on the state of equality and human rights in Britain	Constitutional change: Considering the implications for equality and human rights of possible developments
Wales work programme	Legal work: Providing support to victims of discrimination, strategic litigation and enforcement action and monitoring the effectiveness of the law	Business support and organisational improvement: Providing corporate support services, delivering efficiency savings and developing a high-performing organisation

