



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Our report about the Disability Commissioner (Scotland) Bill at Stage 1



Easy read booklet

Who we are



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

We are the **Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee**.



A **committee** is a small group of people who are **Members of the Scottish Parliament**, also called **MSPs**.



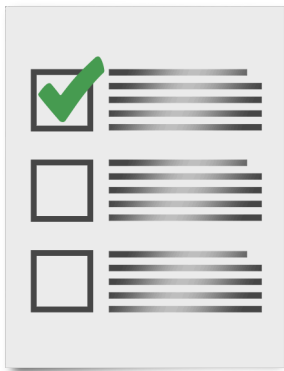
The Scottish people decide who is an **MSP** by voting for them in elections.



The **Scottish Parliament** makes **laws** in Scotland.



Laws are rules that tell people what they can or cannot do.

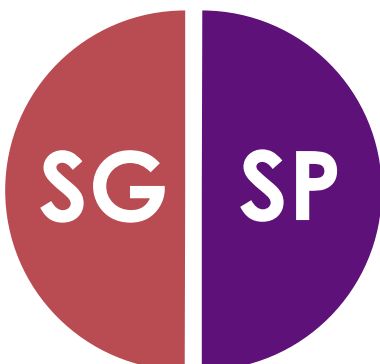


The Scottish Parliament also checks what the **Scottish Government** is doing.



© The Scottish Government

The **Scottish Government** decides how to run the country.



The Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament are separate organisations.

About the Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee



Our committee meets to talk about **equalities**, **human rights** and **civil justice issues** in Scotland.



Equalities are when everyone is treated fairly and has the same chance to enjoy a great life.



Human rights are basic rights and freedoms every person in the world should have for their whole life.



Civil means anything to do with ordinary people.

Justice means people are treated fairly by the law.

Civil justice issues are problems between people and organisations about things like money, housing or family.

What this booklet is about



We have been looking at a **Bill** called the **Disability Commissioner (Scotland) Bill**.



A **Bill** is a document that could become a law.



Before a Bill becomes a law, it normally goes through 3 steps in the Scottish Parliament. Each step is called a **stage**.



The Disability Commissioner (Scotland) Bill is at **stage 1**.



We have written a report about the Bill at stage 1. This booklet tells you about our report.



It tells you

- about the Bill
- what we wanted to find out
- what we did to find out what people thought
- what we found out
- what we think should happen next.

About the Disability Commissioner (Scotland) Bill



The Bill says there should be a **Disability Commissioner for Scotland**.



A **commissioner** is a person who is officially chosen to do a special piece of work.



The Disability Commissioner for Scotland will speak up for disabled people and do work to protect their **rights**.



Rights are freedoms people should have that are protected by laws.



In this booklet we call the Disability Commissioner for Scotland the **Commissioner** for short.



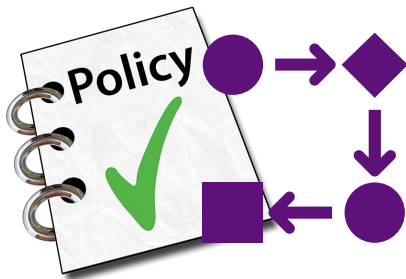
The Bill says the Commissioner will

- **review** laws, **policies** and **practice** about the rights of disabled people

Review means look at something to see how good or bad it is.

Policies are guidelines about the best way to do something.

Practice means how something is done.



- support **service providers** for disabled people to follow **best practice**

Service providers are people or organisations paid to give services, like health or care services.

Best practice means the best way to do something.



- do **research** and **investigations** about the rights of disabled people

Research is work done to find out new information about a subject.

Investigations are when something is looked at closely to find out facts about it.





The Bill says the Commissioner should

- use **inclusive communication**

Communication means how information is passed from one place, person or group to another.

Inclusive communication means making sure as many people as possible can contact the Commissioner and get information.



The idea for the Disability Commissioner (Scotland) Bill came from an MSP called **Jeremy Balfour**. It did not come from the Scottish Government.



The Bill will become part of the law in Scotland if the MSPs agree with it.

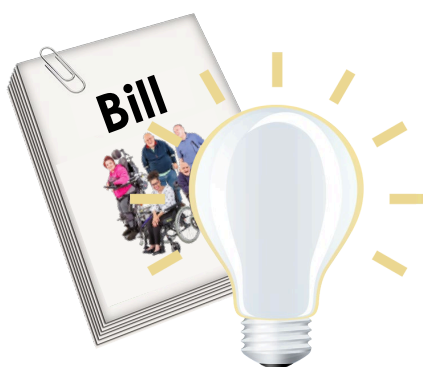
What we wanted to find out



We wanted to find out

- what people thought about the ideas in the Bill
- if there are other commissioners that speak up for disabled people and do work to protect their rights.


What we did to find out what people thought

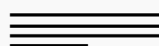


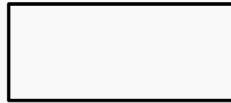
Call for views

We did a **call for views** about the ideas in the Bill.

Questions



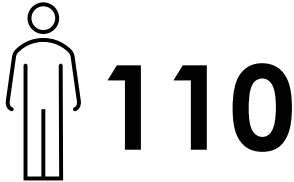
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A **call for views** is a survey where we ask people to answer questions to find out what they think about something.



People could get our call for views in formats called **Easy Read** and **British Sign Language (BSL)**. This was so more people could be included.



110 people answered our call for views.



Meetings

We had meetings to find out what people thought about the Bill.



- We talked to people at **formal** committee meetings.

Formal means official meetings with rules to follow.



- We met with disabled people at **informal** meetings.

Informal means friendly and relaxed meetings.



Thank you to everyone who told us what they thought about the Bill.

What we found out



We found out disabled people are upset about **barriers** that stop them

- knowing about their rights
- being able to use their rights to make their lives better.



Barriers are things that get in the way and make it harder to do things in life.



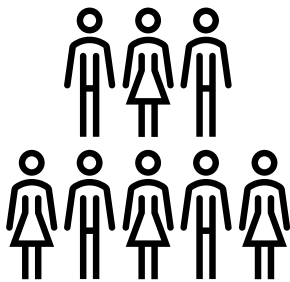
We found out disabled people feel like they

- do not get the support they should get
- have to fight to get what they need in life.



We found out disabled people think it is important for them to be involved in the work the Commissioner does.

The Commissioner must use inclusive communication to make it easy for disabled people to be involved.



We found out some people are worried

- there will not be enough money for the Commissioner to do a good job
- the Commissioner will do work other commissioners already do.

There are lots of other commissioners.

A different Scottish Parliament committee, called **the Finance and Public Administration Committee**, wants the Scottish Parliament to set up a new committee to review what other commissioners do.

The Finance and Public Administration Committee has said that, until the review is done,

- there should not be any new commissioners
- commissioners should not be given more work to do as part of jobs they already have.



About other Bills

Our Committee found out the Scottish Government will not bring the **Human Rights Bill** they are working on to the Scottish Parliament before the next election in 2026.



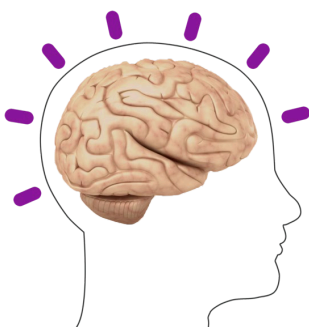
The Bill is important because it says some human rights will be protected by law in Scotland for the first time.



This means it will be a long time before there is a law that protects all human rights in Scotland.



Our Committee found out the Scottish Government is waiting to decide if it will bring a Bill about learning disabilities, autism and **neurodivergence** to the Scottish Parliament.



Neurodivergence means your brain works in a different way to other people and this affects your everyday life.

What we think should happen next



We agree there are barriers that stop disabled people knowing about and using their rights.

We think work needs to be done to change this.



We understand some people are worried

- there will not be enough money for the Commissioner to do a good job
- the Commissioner might do work other commissioners already do.

A committee will be set up to review what other commissioners do.

We think the new committee should

- start work soon
- look at why disabled people have to fight to get what they need in life.





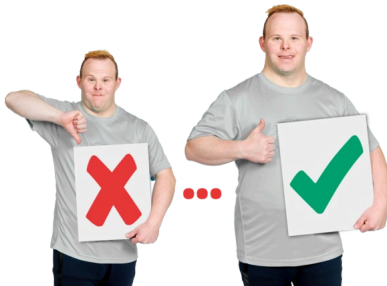
We think all the MSPs should read our report.

After they read our report, they should talk about the idea of a Disability Commissioner for Scotland.



We think the Scottish Government must work with disabled people to

- make good change happen
- remove barriers
- **rebuild trust.**



Rebuild trust means making something better than it was before so people believe in it again.



We want the Scottish Government to update us in September 2025 about what it has done to help disabled people.

Contact us



If you have any questions about this booklet,

- send an email to this address info@parliament.scot
- or call this telephone number **0800 092 7500**.



If you want information in other languages or in British Sign Language (BSL), please ask us.