

**First Minister’s Advisory Group on Human Rights Leadership,
Reference Group Inaugural Meeting**
Monday 26 March 2018
NASUWT offices, Edinburgh, 12:15 – 16:30.

1.	Welcome and introductions.	ACTIONS
2.	<p>Plenary discussion on the role of the Reference Group.</p> <p>1. How the process had come to be developed to date.</p> <p>The Chair outlined how the process to be led by the FM’s Advisory Group had come about. Following the Brexit referendum the FM had established a Standing Council on Europe to advise her on the impact of Brexit on Scotland and how the Scottish Government could shape its response in the forthcoming negotiations.</p> <p>The Chair and Graham Smith, General Secretary of the STUC, were appointed to the Standing Council on Europe and developed three proposed guiding principles for the Scottish Government from the perspective of human rights and social protections.</p> <p>These were as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1, Non-regression from current level of existing protections 2. Not being left behind progressive developments in Europe 3. Taking a lead in the promotion and protection of human rights and social protections <p>Four roundtables were then held during the autumn of 2016 and spring of 2017 in Glasgow and Brussels to test the validity of and put flesh on the bones of these three principles. These roundtables involved legal academics and practitioners, civil society organisations, European Commission officials and Scottish Government Ministers.</p> <p>A report was provided to the First Minister who subsequently invited the Chair to chair an Advisory Group on Human Rights Leadership to lead a participatory process to make recommendations by Human Rights Day, December 10, 2018 on how Scotland could continue to lead by example in all human rights, including economic, social, cultural and environmental rights. The full report of the Advisory Group would be made available by the end of 2018. This process was</p>	

included in the current Programme for Government.

2. The First Minister's Advisory Group on Human Rights Leadership

The Advisory Group was appointed and first met in January 2018. The Minute of that meeting had been circulated in advance to all of today's participants. The Minute included the Terms of Reference (which had also been circulated in advance to all of today's participants), a methodology of approach, a work plan and share of responsibilities.

3. The Reference Group.

The Terms of Reference included the establishment of a Reference Group to help ground the work of the Advisory Group.

It is envisaged that there should be at least three meetings of the Reference Group, each taking place at critical stages of the process. These included today's meeting to establish and introduce the Reference Group to the process and seek its early input, a second meeting around June to assess the direction of travel of the Advisory Group and a third around October to assess the possible recommendations.

It was also hoped that there would be an ongoing dialogue between the Advisory Group and members of the Reference Group and this could take various forms.

4. Scotland's National Action Plan for Human Rights (SNAP).

The Chair then made specific reference to Scotland's National Action Plan for Human Rights (SNAP) given the natural interest of the participants as to how this Advisory Group process related to the SNAP process. He referred to the Minute of the first meeting of the Advisory Group which included a presentation from the Scottish Human Rights Commission on the contribution of SNAP to the evidence base which was available to the Advisory Group. The Chair also commented that SNAP was clearly one potential vehicle for possibly taking forward recommendations of the Advisory Group although that of course depended upon the nature of the recommendations and the assessment made of them by those who would be shaping the future direction of SNAP.

5. Further steps

The Chair emphasised that he wished the process to be as participatory and transparent as possible. To this end a number of steps were being taken.

These included adding a participation and communication resource to the work of the Advisory Group Secretariat, engaging with a wide variety of actors, including those with direct lived experience, the Parliament and political parties, the judiciary and legal profession as

	<p>well as the public and private sectors among others.</p> <p>A web site and email account were being created to facilitate any contributions and questions regarding the process.</p>	
3.	<p>Practical planning & group work</p> <p>After informal group discussions on what areas/work streams the Reference Group would like to see created, Mhairi Snowden, Human Rights Consortium Scotland, led the group activities on narrowing down the main work stream headings which could provide early inputs to the process.</p> <p>Six key areas were identified and colleagues were asked to identify which groups they would wish to sit within. The groups then considered if they felt there were any key players missing and what recommendations in their areas might look like. They also considered the best ways for them to prepare recommendations and how the work of the Reference Group would best feed into the work of the Advisory Group.</p> <p>Groups were asked to work together to consider how to best protect and promote all human rights within Scotland post- Brexit. An initial example provided by Mhairi Snowden of a topical concern was the Social Security (Scotland) Bill being introduced and how recommendations around this will help the Advisory Group's thinking when producing its final recommendations.</p> <p>The six areas of discussion identified were as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Incorporation of UN treaties and consideration of treaty body recommendations 2. Access to Justice 3. Accountability of duty holders 4. Participation in and Scrutiny of policy making 5. Awareness of Rights (Knowing your Rights) 6. Gender and Equalities <p>Following in-depth conversations, each group was asked to identify a lead to take forward the work and to report back the groups' findings within six weeks to allow for these suggestions to be discussed at the next Advisory Group meeting in May 2018.</p> <p>The Chair closed the meeting by thanking all of the participants for their engagement and looked forward to continuing close cooperation between the Reference Group and the Advisory Group.</p>	<p>ALL.</p> <p>To engage with group members from within your cluster and develop initial recommendations for the Advisory Group. Recommendations to be fed back by 4 May 2018</p> <p>If you wish to join one of the cluster group please get in touch with the proposed group lead.</p>