

16 January 2026

Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government
Shona Robison MSP
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

CC: Cab Sec for Social Justice, Shirley Ann Somerville MSP
Minister for Equalities, Kaukab Stewart MSP

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

We write on behalf of signatory organisations funded through the Equality and Human Rights Fund (EHRF) to seek your support for an inflation linked uplift to the Fund in the 2026/27 Scottish Budget.

We fully recognise the significant financial pressures facing the Scottish Government and the difficult decisions required within a constrained fiscal environment. We also acknowledge the sustained efforts made to protect public services during a period of exceptional challenge. At the same time, the equality and human rights third sector is facing unprecedented and compounding pressures, with rising demand for services in an increasingly volatile social, economic, and political context.

The Equality and Human Rights Fund is a cornerstone of Scotland's equality and human rights infrastructure. However, it has remained cash flat at £8 million since 2021. Over the same period, cumulative inflation of around 25%¹ has reduced the fund's real terms value to the equivalent of approximately £6.2 million. This erosion has occurred while funded organisations have been expected to absorb increased costs while delivering more and informing critical

¹ <https://www.inflationtool.com/british-pound/2021-to-present-value>

lived experience advocacy to advance shared policy ambitions. The sector often acts as a preventative buffer for statutory services.

Equality and human rights organisations went above and beyond during the COVID-19 lockdowns, supporting communities through crisis response, recovery, and longer-term impacts including isolation, poverty, and trauma. We continue to respond to cost of living pressures, deepening racial inequality, increased hate incidents, and significant community cohesion challenges, while facing relentless pressure on staffing, infrastructure, and service sustainability.

In this context, we ask for partnership and shared stewardship of Scotland's equality and human rights infrastructure. Specifically, we seek an uplift of the Equality and Human Rights Fund from £8 million to £10.3 million per annum from 2026/27, restoring its original real terms value, alongside a commitment to future index-linking to inflation.

Additional funds would be distributed equitably across all 47 organisations funded via the Equality and Human Rights fund reflective of their % share of the existing fund allocation.

This represents an inflationary adjustment rather than an expansion, enabling organisations to maintain existing service levels and workforce capacity.



The Fund directly supports delivery of Scotland's National Performance Framework underpinned by 7 core Scottish Government policy strategies.

Particularly the outcomes on Communities, Race Equality and Anti-Racism, Human Rights, Children and Young People, Disability, LGBT, Age, Fair Work and Poverty Reduction. Maintaining its real terms value supports preventative approaches, strengthens community resilience, and reduces longer term public expenditure.

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Empowering Scotland's Ethnic and Cultural Minority Communities

It is also essential to Scotland's compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty, international human rights treaties including ICERD, CEDAW, CRC and the ECHR, and the Scottish Government's commitments to human rights incorporation. Allowing inflation to erode the fund risks a de facto regression in rights protection capacity.

We offer this proposal in a spirit of collaboration and shared responsibility, recognising the pressures faced across Government and the Equalities and Human Rights third sector alike. Protecting the real terms value of the Equality and Human Rights Fund is the minimum necessary to sustain Scotland's equality and human rights infrastructure.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further and signatory organisations have outlined their willingness to meet at a time of your and officials' convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Danny Boyle
Executive Director, BEMIS Scotland

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EHRC-funded organisation endorsements:

- AMINA – The Muslim Women's Resource Centre
- BEMIS
- Boots and Beards
- CEMVO
- Central Scotland Regional Equality Council
- CRER
- Disability Equality Scotland
- Disability Information Scotland
- Environmental Rights Centre for Scotland
- Equate Scotland
- FENIKS
- Friend of Romano Lav
- Generations Working Together
- Glasgow Disability Alliance
- Inclusion Scotland
- Intercultural Youth Scotland
- JustRight Scotland
- Kairos Women's Group
- Legal Services Agency
- LGBT Health and Wellbeing
- LGBT Youth Scotland
- Multi-Cultural Family Base
- Scottish Women's Budget Group
- The Equality Network
- The Poverty Alliance
- West of Scotland Regional Equality Council



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