



**Liberty's Evidence to the Joint
Committee on Human Rights on the work
of the Equality and Human Rights
Commission**

November 2009

About Liberty

Liberty (The National Council for Civil Liberties) is one of the UK's leading civil liberties and human rights organisations. Liberty works to promote human rights and protect civil liberties through a combination of test case litigation, lobbying, campaigning and research.

Liberty Policy

Liberty provides policy responses to Government consultations on all issues which have implications for human rights and civil liberties. We also submit evidence to Select Committees, Inquiries and other policy fora, and undertake independent, funded research.

Liberty's policy papers are available at

<http://www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk/publications/1-policy-papers/index.shtml>

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1. In the context of recent and imminent oral evidence from former and continuing members of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) respectively, the Joint Committee on Human Rights Commission (JCHR) has invited short written contributions about the work of this body.

2. Regrettably, on this occasion, a short contribution will more than suffice. As this country's domestic campaign for fundamental rights and freedoms, Liberty looked forward to the establishment of a Human Rights Commission for many years. We have therefore watched the turbulent infancy of the EHRC with some disappointment.

3. We hope that previous submissions to the JCHR and other public interventions will have demonstrated Liberty's commitment to defending human rights in Britain. Such defence is extremely difficult unless those precious values are better understood by the people they ought to protect. The EHRC has a vital statutory duty in this regard and notwithstanding considerable staffing and other resources,¹ this is a duty which it is yet to fulfil.

¹ Liberty is currently in receipt of 45,821 pounds per annum (until Spring 2011) from the EHRC's substantial grant funding programme. This grant goes towards our public advice and litigation functions and makes up approximately 3.1 percent of our annual turnover.