



Spotlight on Business and Human Rights in Scotland Transparency, Accountability and Scrutiny Online Event Tuesday 15th June 2021 10am - 12.30pm

Purpose

To mark the 10th anniversary of the UN's 31 Guiding Principles on Business & Human Rights, this online meeting spotlights Scotland's connection to and performance on, the global framework of 'Respect, Protect and Remedy'. The UN agreed in 2011 that business compliance with international human rights law matters domestically and internationally whether it is on worker's rights, the environment or health and safety.

The FM's 'Taskforce on Human Rights Leadership' report, of March 2021, recommended that there should be a new human rights law in Scotland which includes incorporating the UN Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Giving economic and social rights domestic enforcement can be a gamechanger because it also requires compliance with duties. As we move forward to planning the new law in detail, it is essential to ensure that transparency and accountability inform the process of delivering as well as evaluating outcomes.

Issues

In June 2011, the UN approved 31 'Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights' which promoted the States duty to protect human rights and the corporate responsibility to respect human rights¹. This event is an opportunity to explore Scotland's roadmap to deliver this global agenda following its hosting of an international conference in October 2010 at the Scottish Parliament.

Public money can be used to require domestic and global compliance with international human rights law. For example, the total value of all contracts awarded by the Scottish Government during the 2016-2021 parliamentary session was £3,209,786,818². Remedies must also be available to prevent and address human rights abuses by state and non-state actors. Managing the COVID response has heightened public awareness of the use of public money to buy from private sector enterprises whether its services such as from private care homes or products such as PPE.

¹ At [GuidingPrinciplesBusinessHR_EN.pdf \(ohchr.org\)](#)

² FOI Release 15th April 2021 at [Contracts during 2016-2021 parliamentary sessions: FOI release - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

The Public, private and Third Sectors will have the opportunity to hear about progress and initiatives to secure domestic delivery within the Framework and the interconnecting initiatives and policies.

Given interest so far, it is anticipated that this will be the beginning of a process and CFoIS plans to establish a Network on 'Business, Human Rights, Transparency and Accountability'. The focus is on making information available to the public to enable scrutiny and accountability and influence current and future practice.

Registration is free via [Eventbrite](#) and the online platform is Microsoft Teams.

Event Details

Chaired by Peter Hunter, Head of Organising, UNISON Scotland. Confirmed speakers include:

- **Transparency, Accountability and Scrutiny - Setting the Scene in Scotland** Carole Ewart, Convener of the Campaign for Freedom of Information in Scotland
- **United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and an update on first-ever UN General Assembly Special Session against Corruption** Mathias Huter Director of the global civil society network for the implementation and monitoring of the UN Convention against Corruption
- **Unsafe for Scrutiny** Susan Coughtrie, Project Director at the Foreign Policy Centre
- **Failure to Prevent Law** Gemma Freedman, International Officer from UNISON.

There will be opportunities for questions and discussion and the event will agree 'Next Steps'. For more information contact info@cfois.scot



This work is enabled due to a grant from UNISON Scotland

UNISON's support for this event reflects our commitment to a strong human rights culture within which a rights based approach underpins the fair, equal and transparent delivery of all public services. We hope you enjoy the speakers' diverse and expert contributions.

About CFoIS

CFoIS was established in 1984 campaigns for robust, accessible and enforceable access to information rights. CFoIS believes that policy and practice on transparency and accountability should keep pace with the needs of a modern democracy. CFoIS offers comment and scrutiny on law and policy, as well as encouraging people to be 'rights aware'. CFoIS organises meetings of the Scottish Public Information Forum to increase engagement with rights holders and duty bearers. Follow us @CFoIScot or visit the [CFoIS website](#)