

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



Human
Rights
Commission
Bermuda



VISION

A Bermuda that honours human rights for all.

MISSION

To protect and promote human rights through education, collaboration, advocacy, and enforcement.

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“Whereas, recognition of the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the World.”

PREAMBLE TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS ACT, 1981



Executive Officer

Message

In 2025, the work of protecting and promoting human rights unfolded in a world marked by profound contrast. Globally, commitments to dignity and equality existed alongside conflict, displacement, and widening inequality. Locally, Bermuda continued to navigate complex social, economic, and demographic pressures that shape how rights are experienced in everyday life. These realities reinforced a fundamental truth: **human rights are not abstract ideals, but lived experiences shaped by systems, decisions, and collective responsibility.**

Against this backdrop, the Human Rights Commission focused on strengthening its direction, expanding capacity, and reinforcing its role within Bermuda's human rights framework. Together, these developments marked 2025 as a year in which the Commission moved from strengthening its foundation toward strategic momentum—bringing greater clarity to its work and making its processes and impact more visible and accessible.

Clear direction is essential for an institution entrusted with safeguarding rights and freedoms. Throughout the year, the Commission remained guided by its statutory mandate under the Human Rights Act, 1981, and by the international standards that define National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs). Our work was anchored in listening—listening to individuals who approached the Commission for assistance, to communities describing persistent barriers, and to institutions seeking guidance on their obligations. This emphasis on listening informed our priorities, brought lived experiences into clearer view, and shaped how the Act was applied in practice. It also strengthened the Commission's ability to act earlier—supporting compliance and preventing harm before it escalates.

It reinforced our role not only as a complaints handling body, but as a public resource committed to prevention, early resolution, and education.

A defining moment of the year was the publication of Disability Inclusion in Bermuda: Findings & Recommendations from a National Consultation. Centering lived experience and guided by the principle of “Nothing About Us, Without Us,” the consultation made visible experiences that are often overlooked and provided an evidence-based foundation for action. The resulting recommendations now offer a clear framework to guide future efforts across government, the private sector, and civil society, particularly following the extension of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to Bermuda in September 2024.

Institutional growth is not measured solely by the volume of activity, but by the strength, capability, and coherence of systems and people. During 2025, the Commission deliberately invested in building internal capacity, strengthening governance, and supporting professional development. These efforts contribute to greater consistency,

clarity, and accountability in how decisions are made and communicated.

Growth was also reflected in the Commission's expanding engagement footprint. Education, outreach, and advocacy activities reached employers, service providers, schools, unions, and community organisations across the island. The formal integration of social media into the Commission's communications strategy marked an important step in improving accessibility, transparency, and reach, particularly for individuals and communities less likely to engage through traditional channels.

Regionally, the Commission deepened relationships with Caribbean counterparts through participation in regional forums and ongoing dialogue. These engagements strengthened knowledge-sharing, reinforced Bermuda's standing as a respected National Human Rights Institution, and supported collective learning aligned with the Paris Principles.

The Commission's work is defined by its impact—both immediate and long-term. Throughout the year, the Commission continued to address individual complaints of discrimination, provide guidance on compliance, and support resolution through mediation and adjudication. At the same time, the Commission increasingly engaged with systemic issues that shape patterns of discrimination—working to bring greater visibility to underlying barriers and inequities.

This dual focus—responding to individual experiences while addressing structural challenges—reflects a maturing institution committed to meaningful change. Throughout this work, the Commission remained guided by the principles of independence, fairness, and accountability, which are essential to maintaining public trust. Independence is demonstrated through principled decision-making, transparency, and a commitment to openness, even in complex or challenging circumstances.

Looking ahead, the Commission will develop a new Strategic Plan for 2026–2028. This plan will focus on strengthening internal systems and governance, supporting staff development, and increasing visibility and accessibility through targeted education and outreach. This reflects the Commission's continued focus on ensuring that stronger systems translate into consistent, practical outcomes in delivery. A central priority will be advancing implementation of the Disability Inclusion Report, including convening stakeholders and contributing recommendations aimed at closing gaps in Bermuda's disability framework. The Commission will also continue its work on age discrimination, informed by public consultation and community engagement, to support the evolution of Bermuda's human rights protections in line with lived realities.

**“Listening informed
how the Act was
applied in practice.”**

Human rights are realised through everyday actions—through how systems are designed, how organisations meet their obligations, and how individuals are treated when it matters most. I wish to acknowledge the dedication of the Commission's Officers, Commissioners, and partners, whose professionalism and commitment underpin the work reflected in this report. The Commission remains committed to providing principled leadership, fostering understanding, and supporting accountability—so that human rights are not only upheld, but clearly seen, understood, and experienced in practice for all.

Lisa Reed

Executive Officer



Mandate and Functions

of the Human Rights Commission

Bermuda's National Human Rights Institution, the Human Rights Commission, provides independent leadership in protecting and promoting human rights. The Commission is guided by the Paris Principles, working with a broad purpose and making its decisions independently. It collaborates with all members of Bermuda's diverse community, and is committed to accessibility, accountability, and effectiveness.

Established under the Human Rights Act, 1981, the Commission has a statutory remit to protect and promote human rights. This is achieved by educating the public, promoting equality and non-discrimination principles, investigating human rights allegations, and seeking to resolve and enforce contraventions of the Act.

Under Section 14 of the Human Rights Act, 1981, the Human Rights Commission is entrusted with upholding and administering the Act. In carrying out this role, the Commission:

- Promotes understanding of the Act and the importance of equitable treatment for all.
- Engages the public through education and outreach to build awareness of human rights and available protections.
- Receives, assesses, and investigates complaints of discrimination under the Act.
- Seeks fair and timely resolution, including conciliation where appropriate, and refers matters for formal determination when needed.
- Monitors, reviews, and provides guidance on laws, policies, and practices to ensure they reflect human rights standards.
- Provides guidance and recommendations to promote compliance and good practice across sectors.
- Works collaboratively with public authorities, civil society, and social partners to strengthen human rights protections.
- Shares its activities and outcomes publicly, supporting transparency and accountability in the administration of the Act.

Statutory Authority: Section 14

Under Section 14 of the Human Rights Act, 1981, the Human Rights Commission leads efforts to uphold the Act, promote equality, non-discrimination, and human rights awareness.

Governance and Financial Management

The Executive Officer serves as both the Head of the *Public Authority under the Public Access to Information Act 2010 (PATI)* and the Accounting Officer under the Financial Instructions issued by the Minister of Finance. In this role, the Executive Officer ensures that public funds are managed responsibly and that the Commission's operations run smoothly and efficiently.

The Commission's financial governance is supported by independent oversight bodies:

- **Office of the Accountant General** — Administers the Consolidated Fund, which is audited annually by the Office of the Auditor General. The Commission receives its annual budget allocation from the Legislature through the Consolidated Fund.
- **Non Ministry Comptroller** — Offers advice and support on strategic planning, budget development, financial and management accounting, and internal controls.
- **Office of Project Management and Procurement (OPMP)** — Provides guidance on project management and procurement to ensure that contracts are handled transparently, competitively, and fairly.
- **Department of Internal Audit (Non-Ministry Office)** — Offers independent assurance that public resources are managed effectively, efficiently, economically, ethically, and equitably, following international standards for internal auditing.

\$1.4m
**OPERATIONAL
BUDGET 2025/2026**

For the 2025/26 fiscal year, the Legislature approved an operational budget of \$1.4 million for the Human Rights Commission.



Statement of the Accounting Officer's Responsibilities

For the period April 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026

The Accounting Officer ensures the responsible stewardship of public funds entrusted to the Commission. This includes maintaining strong internal controls that safeguard resources, support the Commission's goals, and prevent misuse, loss, or inefficiency.

The Accounting Officer keeps complete and accurate financial records, ensuring all expenditure is lawful, appropriately authorised, and consistent with the budgetary allocation approved by the Legislature. Additionally, this role involves establishing and overseeing financial management and internal control systems, which include clear delegations, segregation of duties, risk management, and ongoing monitoring. This assists the Commission in using public resources effectively, efficiently, and accountably. Compliance with the Financial Instructions, procurement guidance, and other relevant legislation and policies is a core part of this responsibility.

As at March 31 of each fiscal year, the Accounting Officer certifies that the Commission's account balances are accurate and provides reconciliations and supporting documentation, as required by the Financial Instructions.

“Together, these developments marked 2025 as year in which the Commission moved from consolidation toward strategic momentum.”

Transparency and responsible financial management are key to maintaining public trust in the Commission's work. To support this, the Commission publishes quarterly performance reports detailing its activities and use of resources. These reports are always available to the public upon request to the Executive Officer.

Strategic Direction and Governance Priorities

Looking Ahead (2026–2028)

Building on the progress achieved during the 2023–2025 strategic cycle, the Human Rights Commission enters the next phase of its development with a clear focus on strengthening institutional foundations while applying them with a clear focus on strengthening institutional foundations and further embedding them in practice.

The 2026–2028 Strategic Plan establishes a structured and outcome-focused framework to guide the Commission's work. This approach combines continued capacity-building with active implementation, ensuring that improvements to governance, systems, and processes translate into stronger day-to-day delivery, greater alignment, and consistency in how work is carried out across the organisation, and more effective public engagement.

The Commission's strategic direction is organised around five integrated priorities:

Legal Protections and Accountability:

Advancing legislative reform and strengthening enforcement mechanisms so that rights and obligations are clearer and more effectively applied in practice.

Internal Systems, Growth, and Capacity:

Embedding clear roles, standards, and processes across the organisation, supporting consistent, accountable, and effective delivery.

Public Education: Expanding education and guidance to support practical compliance, enabling duty-holders and rights-holders to prevent discrimination and resolve issues earlier.

Strategic Collaboration and Advocacy:

Strengthening targeted, evidence-based partnerships and advocacy to address systemic issues and drive preventative, long-term change.

International Standing and Accreditation:

Progressing toward international accreditation and alignment with the Paris Principles to reinforce independence, credibility, and institutional effectiveness.

Across all priorities, the Commission will place increasing emphasis on using insights from complaints, investigations, education, and engagement to inform its work. This reflects a commitment to continuous learning, adaptation, and improvement.

Together, these priorities position the Commission to move beyond strengthening its internal foundations alone, toward demonstrating their impact through consistent practice, clearer guidance, and measurable outcomes for the public.

Officers of the Human Rights Commission



The Officers of the Commission recognise the privilege of serving the public and are committed to stewarding the Human Rights Act, 1981. Together, they foster a workplace culture that reflects and reinforces the principles at the heart of the Commission's mandate.



Lisa Reed
Executive Officer



Arion Mapp
Legal Counsel



Sara Clifford
Education Officer



Darnell Harvey
Investigation Officer



Treadwell Tucker
Investigation Officer



Erlene Postlethwaite
Intake Officer



Khianda Pearman-Watson
Manager, Finance
and Administration

Learning and Professional Development

As representatives of Bermuda's National Human Rights Institution, Officers are committed to continuous learning and professional growth, strengthening service delivery and deepening engagement with the community. Throughout the reporting period, the team expanded its understanding of both local and international human rights issues while developing practical skills to support a safe, responsive, and effective workplace.

Human Rights Act Review

Officers participated in quarterly study sessions focused on the Human Rights Act, 1981, reinforcing a shared understanding of its provisions and ensuring consistent application across the Commission's work. Led by the Commission's Legal Counsel, these sessions included reviews of relevant local and comparative case law, supporting informed, rights-based analysis and decision-making.

Health, Safety, and Wellbeing

To support their work with the public and internal wellbeing, Officers completed a range of health and safety certifications, including Bermuda Red Cross First Aid and CPR training. Three Officers also obtained Fire Marshal certification, strengthening the Commission's health and safety capacity.

Additional wellbeing-focused training included:

- Unlocking our Potential and Building Stronger Together (Employee Assistance Program)
- BMHF Mental Health Conference (Bermuda Mental Health Foundation)

Cross-Agency Learning and Thought Leadership

The Commission hosted an in-house lecture by renowned economist Craig Simmons, titled *The Economy and the Intersection with Equity*. Colleagues from the Information Commissioner's Office and the Ombudsman's Office were invited to participate, fostering cross-agency dialogue on economic policy, equity, and human rights.



Other professional development activities included:

- Integrity Offices: Strategic Planning
- Regional Launch of the Public Services International (PSI) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Disability Inclusion Guide
- Participation in the Caribbean Disability Network Conference, supporting regional knowledge exchange on inclusive education, accessibility, and disability rights.

Professional Development

Officers also participated in a wide range of online and in-person learning opportunities aligned with the Commission's priorities. These included training in governance and policy, leadership development, and engagement in regional and international conferences. Collectively, these activities enabled Officers to meet—and in many cases exceed—their annual professional development targets.



Visit with His Excellency Governor Andrew Murdoch and Deputy Dave Morgan

By continuing to invest in staff development, the Commission strengthens its institutional effectiveness, fosters professional excellence, and enhances its ability to serve the public with integrity and impact.

External Recognition and Highlights

During the reporting year, Executive Officer Lisa Reed was recognised nationally in her personal capacity for her longstanding advocacy in the areas of disability inclusion and human rights. In March 2025, she was named Bermuda's Woman of the Year at the International Women's Day celebration hosted by the International Women's Day Committee in partnership with the Women's Resource Centre.

In 2025, our colleague Khianda Pearman Watson also represented Bermuda as a member of the women's national volleyball team at the Eastern Caribbean Volleyball Association (ECVA) Women's Final Four tournament in Antigua and Barbuda. The team delivered an outstanding performance, finishing with a silver medal after following an undefeated run in the pool stage and advancing to the final. This marked a notable achievement in regional women's volleyball.

Khianda also competed nationally in netball during 2025 as a defensive player for Lindo's Tigers in the Bermuda Netball Association Winter League. The team completed an unbeaten championship season, and Khianda earned multiple Most Valuable Player and Best Defender awards in recognition of her strong performance and contribution throughout the season.





Education, Outreach & Advocacy

Fostering a Culture of Rights in Bermuda

Through education, outreach, and advocacy, the Commission works to build a culture of dignity, equality, and shared responsibility across Bermuda. The Commission does this by helping people understand their rights, encouraging compliance with human rights standards, and creating space for informed dialogue on human rights issues.

Promoting Understanding of Rights and Responsibilities

The Human Rights Commission was established under the Human Rights Act, 1981. The Commission's role is to promote understanding of human rights, provide guidance on the Act, engage with the public, and advance compliance with human rights protections. Human rights are most meaningful when they are actively understood, protected, and practiced in everyday interactions.

Education activities during the reporting period included:

- Tailored presentations and workshops
- *Know Your Rights* sessions
- Guidance on rights and obligations under the Act

These initiatives support individuals, employers, service providers, and institutions in understanding both their rights and their responsibilities under the law.

Know Your Rights Sessions

The Commission hosted *Know Your Rights* sessions to help make the Human Rights Act easier to understand and clarify the services the Commission provides. These interactive sessions allowed participants to explore real life scenarios, ask questions, and share lived experiences.

By presenting the law in practical, accessible terms, the Commission helped the general public better understand their rights and responsibilities and ensured that individuals know where to turn when they believe their rights have been violated.

Education, Outreach & Advocacy

Engaging the Public and Building Awareness

Human rights issues are always evolving, and effective outreach needs to adapt to and reflect people's lived experiences and community priorities. The Commission engaged directly with individuals and organisations across the island through a range of outreach activities aimed at listening, informing, and building understanding.

Outreach efforts included:

- Community collaborations and public events
- Roundtable discussions and facilitated conversations
- Public dialogue through broadcast and digital media

These efforts enabled the Commission to engage directly with the public, identify emerging concerns, and share timely guidance on human rights issues.

Community Partnerships

The Commission strengthened its outreach by working closely with a diverse group of stakeholders, including community organisations, public bodies, schools, unions, and advocacy groups. These partnerships helped enhance the Commission's relevance and impact, ensuring that engagement reflected lived experience across sectors and communities.

Stakeholders included:

- Mid Atlantic Wellness Institute
- Bermuda College
- Walk Together Bermuda
- Bermuda National Library
- Department of Community and Cultural Affairs
- Summerhaven
- Beyond Inclusion
- Department of Labour
- Citizens Uprooting Racism in Bermuda
- Imagine Bermuda
- PRIDE Bermuda
- Vision Bermuda



Education, Outreach & Advocacy

- Hamilton Rotary
- Department of Corrections
- Bermuda Police Service
- Bermuda Is Love
- Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)
- Peace Collective
- Ageing and Disability Services
- Mount Saint Agnes Academy
- Bermuda Public Service Union
- the Human Rights Education Network (HuRen)
- Tomorrow's Voices.



Visit with Attorney General Wilkerson

Speaking Engagements and Public Dialogue

Public speaking engagements formed an important part of the Commission's outreach efforts, helping to spark conversations and raise awareness about human rights issues.

These included:

- A tribute honoring the life and legacy of Dr. Eva Naomi Hodgson
- A facilitated session on "Human Rights: Ethical Decision-making and Leadership" at the BPSU Women's Annual Conversation and Brunch
- A featured address at MJM Limited's International Women's Day event
- The keynote address for Mount Saint Agnes Academy's Human Rights Day observance, held under the 2025 theme *Everyday Essentials*.

These engagements provided opportunities to connect human rights principles to leadership, ethics, and everyday decision-making.



Education, Outreach & Advocacy

Raising Voices and Advancing Accountability

Advocacy is a core function of National Human Rights Institutions, especially when systemic issues affect people's everyday lives. Beyond education and outreach, the Commission actively promotes public advocacy by taking principled positions, working with others, and encouraging informed public discourse on human rights issues.

During the reporting period, the Commission led 71 education, outreach, and advocacy activities, demonstrating the wide scope of work and continued commitment to public awareness and accountability.



Education, Outreach & Advocacy — By the Numbers

26

FORMAL
PRESENTATIONS
DELIVERED

71

EDUCATION,
OUTREACH, AND
ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES



Human Rights Day & International Day of Persons with Disabilities Film Screening

To mark the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (December 3) and Human Rights Day (December 10), the Human Rights Commission partnered with Ageing and Disability Services to host a free, accessible community screening of *Crip Camp: A Disability Revolution* at Bermuda College.

More than 50 community members attended the screening and engaged in a post-film discussion in recognition of both international observances.

The award-winning documentary uses humour, heart, and powerful archival footage to tell the story of a 1970s summer camp that helped ignite the disability rights movement in the United States. Its themes remain deeply relevant to ongoing efforts to advance disability inclusion in Bermuda.

One of the film's most memorable moments came from disability rights advocate Judith Heumann, who asked, "If I have to feel thankful about an accessible bathroom, when am I ever gonna be equal in the community?" Her words emphasised a central message echoed throughout the discussion: anything less than inclusion is exclusion.



Education, Outreach & Advocacy

Many audience members reflected that exclusion has too often been normalised in Bermuda. Accessibility is not a courtesy—it's a baseline and basic right.

Full consideration, equitable access, and intentional design must be the standard. As spotlighted during the discussion, when we design for the margins, everyone benefits.

This message aligns with a broader truth captured by disability advocate Denise Sherer Jacobson:

"The American Disabilities Act was a wonderful achievement. But it was only the tip of the iceberg. You can pass a law, but until you can change society's attitudes, that law won't mean much."

Creating accessible experiences remains a priority for the Commission.

All public events are hosted in accessible venues, and the Butterfield and Vallis Room at Bermuda College provided a comfortable setting with accessible facilities. During a preliminary site visit, the Commission identified that a restroom marked as accessible did not meet accessibility standards. Bermuda College responded promptly, showing a strong commitment to improvement. Being open to feedback and learning from people with disabilities is essential to true inclusion.

Special thanks are extended to Reaia Ball and the Ageing and Disability Services team, and to Cheyenne Trott of Bermuda College for their collaboration and support.





FEATURE 1:

Disability Inclusion Report

“NOTHING ABOUT US, WITHOUT US”

Why This Matters

In 2024, the Bermuda Human Rights Commission undertook a national consultation to better understand the lived experiences of persons with disabilities and the barriers that continue to limit their full participation in Bermudian society. The findings, informed by community voices, research, and human rights principles, were published in the July 2025 report: **Disability Inclusion in Bermuda: Findings & Recommendations from a National Consultation.**

This report is especially significant in light of Bermuda’s international human rights obligations. On September 17, 2024, the United Kingdom formally extended the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) to Bermuda. This means that Bermuda is now bound by existing domestic and international standards to take meaningful action to promote accessibility, equality, inclusion, and accountability.

The consultation findings highlight areas where progress is being made, and where urgent action is still needed to ensure that persons with disabilities can fully enjoy their rights on an equal basis with others.

What we heard from the community:

- **Barriers and discrimination are common.**
Nearly 1 in 2 respondents with a disability reported discrimination or harassment. Overall, 25% of all respondents shared similar experiences.
- **Accessibility needs improvement.**
Accessibility across Bermuda was rated 4.13 out of 10 overall, and 3.83 out of 10 among respondents with a disability—both below what would be considered “fair.”
- **Change must be systemic.**
Participants emphasised the need for stronger laws, better enforcement, increased public awareness, and meaningful representation — captured in the principle “Nothing About Us, Without Us.”

FEATURE 1: Disability Inclusion Report

Why the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) matters for Bermuda

As a signatory to the CRPD, Bermuda has an international obligation to promote accessibility, equality, participation, and accountability for persons with disabilities.

The CRPD reframes disability not as an individual problem but as a societal responsibility — recognising that disability arises from the interaction between people and the barriers around them. For Bermuda, this means a duty to design systems, spaces, and services that work for everyone.

The Disability Inclusion report provides an evidence-based roadmap to help turn these CRPD commitments into action. Grounded in lived experiences and community input, the recommendations are designed to support coordinated efforts across government, the private sector, and civil society.

Why Inclusion Is Not Yet the Lived Reality

Barriers to inclusion for people with disabilities often arise when existing anti-discrimination protections, such as those under the Human Rights Act, 1981, and other local laws, are not fully followed or applied.

Disability

Disability refers to physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments that, **when interacting with various environmental and societal barriers**, may limit a person's ability to fully participate on an equal basis with others. A disability may be short-term, episodic, long-term, or lifelong.

Disability Inclusion

Disability Inclusion refers to a demonstrated commitment to understanding the relationship between the way people function and how they participate in society and ensures that barriers are removed (or never created in the first place) so that everybody has equitable opportunities to participate in every aspect of life to the best of their abilities and desires.



Enforcement Matters

Across all sectors, weak enforcement continues to slow progress on disability inclusion. While laws and policies do exist, they are not always properly implemented, monitored, or enforced. As a result, many persons with disabilities still face barriers in accessing their rights, which undermines efforts to build a more inclusive society.

In keeping with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, governments and other duty bearers must move beyond commitments on paper and take concrete action.

This includes:

- Strengthening enforcement mechanisms
- Improving monitoring and accountability
- Applying consequences when obligations are not met

Effective enforcement is essential to protecting rights, removing barriers, and ensuring that persons with disabilities can participate fully and equally in all aspects of life.

How the Community Shaped the Report

- Public online survey (hardcopies were also provided for those who had a preference or are without digital access. Officers were available to assist survey completion when requested by participants)
- Focus groups with persons with disabilities and service providers
- Stakeholder consultations across the disability and mental health sectors
- Community Conversation (open forum to generate collective action items)
- Literature review (historical analysis of relevant materials from 20th–21st century initiatives)

FEATURE 1: Disability Inclusion Report

The Ten Recommendations: A Framework for Action

The Ten Recommendations were developed directly from the voices of the community and are intended to function as a practical roadmap for coordinated, long-term change in Bermuda.

Each recommendation in the Disability Inclusion Report is connected and essential for advancing disability inclusion in a meaningful and sustainable way. While all ten should be pursued together, Recommendations 5 and 10 are foundational and require focused attention.

1. Representation

“Nothing About Us, Without Us.”

Persons with disabilities must be actively involved in all disability-related decision-making, policy development, and service design. Representation must move beyond consultation to shared power and accountability.



2. Compliance, Accountability, and Enforcement

Existing legal obligations must be treated as baseline requirements. Enforcement must be proactive, not reliant solely on individual complaints, and with institutions held responsible for compliance.

3. Financial and Resource Support

Disability-related assistance programs must uphold dignity, promote independence, and reflect real-world costs. Current systems require review to ensure that individuals are not penalised for seeking employment or autonomy.

4. Government Leadership and Systemic Change

Strong, visible leadership is required to embed disability inclusion across all ministries and public services, supported by cross government coordination and mandatory training.



FEATURE 1: Disability Inclusion Report

5. Disability Advocacy and Representation — Building Collective Power (Priority Recommendation)

A well-resourced, coordinated community advocacy structure is critical to guide, monitor, and hold systems accountable for progress. Advocacy must be led by people with disabilities, supported by families, service providers, and allies, to strengthen or restructure existing mechanisms, sustain momentum, amplify voices, and inspire change that is not just symbolic.

6. Data Collection and Measuring Progress

Reliable national data is essential to identify gaps, measure outcomes, and guide resource allocation. Transparent public reporting is necessary to track progress and prevent the illusion of inclusion.

7. Accessibility

Physical, digital, and social environments must be proactively designed or retrofitted to remove barriers. Accessibility must be a standard practice, not an exception or afterthought.

8. Legislation, Policy, and Practice

Legal frameworks must be reviewed, strengthened, and enforced to align with international standards and current lived realities, including planning and building code enforcement.

9. Education, Awareness, and Community Engagement

Public understanding of disability must be improved through sustained education, storytelling, and engagement across schools, workplaces, public services, and the media.

10. Establishment of a Strategic Roadmap — A National Disability Strategy (Priority Recommendation)

A coordinated, government-led National Disability Strategy is urgently needed as a roadmap for disability inclusion.

This strategy should:

- Define clear goals, responsibilities, and timelines.
- Include measurable indicators and enforcement mechanisms.
- Align with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- Be informed by lived experience.

Recommendation 10 is critical as, without this strategic roadmap, efforts risk remaining fragmented, reactive, and unsustainable.

Sustained change requires organised advocacy led by people with disabilities, with support from families, service providers, and institutions.

A National Disability Strategy connects policy, enforcement, funding, and accountability into a single, transparent roadmap.

FEATURE 1: Disability Inclusion Report

Supporting Implementation: From Recommendation to Action

The Disability Inclusion Report was submitted to the Government of Bermuda and released as a public resource to support national progress on disability inclusion. Every entity is responsible for determining the actions it takes to make disability inclusion a reality within its own operations and sphere of influence. The Commission can work with organisations to make the Disability Inclusion Report's recommendations actionable by:

- Identifying **immediate and longer-term actions** for inclusion.
- Supporting understanding of the duty to accommodate.
- Emphasising the Recommendations as drivers for **industry coordination, accountability, and sustained progress**.

Looking Ahead

The Disability Inclusion Report serves as a **living framework** for action, advocacy, and accountability that is grounded in research, international standards, and legislative obligations. Focus areas include:

- Ongoing engagement, particularly around collective advocacy structures (Recommendation 5)
- Development of a National Disability Strategy (Recommendation 10)

Through ongoing dialogue, tailored guidance, and monitoring, the Commission seeks to move from intention to practical implementation, supporting a Bermuda where disability inclusion is embedded, measurable, and sustained.

Disability Inclusion — By the Numbers

NEARLY

1 in 2

RESPONDENTS WITH
DISABILITIES REPORTED
DISCRIMINATION

300+

RESIDENTS ENGAGED THROUGH
SURVEY, FOCUS GROUPS, AND
COMMUNITY DIALOGUE



FEATURE 2:

Caribbean Disability Conference



Positioning Bermuda within a growing regional dialogue on accessibility, inclusive education, and the rights of persons with disabilities.

In October, the Executive Officer represented Bermuda at the Caribbean Disability Network Conference in Barbados, joining regional partners to exchange ideas, share Bermuda's experiences, and strengthen collaboration on advancing disability inclusion across the Caribbean.

In October 2025, the Executive Officer attended the Caribbean Disability Network Conference in Bridgetown, Barbados, held from October 18–22, under the theme ***Breaking Barriers: Advancing Inclusive Education for All Abilities***.

The conference brought together governments, civil society organisations, educators, researchers, and disability advocates from across the Caribbean to explore inclusive education, share effective practices across jurisdictions, and identify ways to reduce structural and attitudinal barriers faced by persons with disabilities. Senator the Hon. Crystal Caesar, JP, Minister of Education, attended the conference alongside Permanent Secretary, Lisa Smith, at the invitation of the Executive Officer.

The Conference themes aligned closely with priorities identified in the Commission's Disability Inclusion Report, particularly the need for improved accessibility, strengthened collaboration, and coordinated regional action.

During the conference, the Executive Officer presented key findings from Bermuda's Disability Inclusion Report and provided an overview of the Bermuda Human Rights Commission's structure, mandate, and operations. The presentation offered regional partners insight into Bermuda's national human rights framework, governance, and oversight mechanisms. Several regional counterparts expressed interest in adopting similar institutional structures and sought guidance on legislative frameworks and programmatic operations.

FEATURE 2: Caribbean Disability Conference

The conference also underscored an important gap within Bermuda's disability landscape: **the absence of an organised disability advocacy network**. Regional examples demonstrated how organised advocacy strengthens policy dialogue, raises awareness, and supports the meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in national decision-making.

Attendance at the conference strengthened relationships with regional partners and expanded opportunities for collaboration between the Department of Ageing and Disability Services, local disability organisations, and similar entities across the Caribbean. Notably, representatives involved in establishing the Barbados Human Rights Commission requested consultation, reflecting Bermuda's recognised leadership in human rights governance and the high regard for its institutional framework across the Caribbean.

The Commission's participation reinforced Bermuda's role in advancing disability inclusion while contributing to a growing regional movement committed to accessibility, equity, and the full participation of persons with disabilities.

Consultation with the Barbados Human Rights Commission

During the reporting period, the Commission engaged in consultation with The Most Honourable Kerryann Ifill, FB, Barbados' first Human Rights Commissioner. The initial connection was established during the Caribbean Disability Network Conference, where discussions focused on disability inclusion, human rights governance, and the development of effective institutional frameworks within the region.

Following her appointment on **Human Rights Day, December 10, 2025, by the Honourable Mia Amor Mottley, SC, MP, Prime Minister of Barbados**, Commissioner Ifill contacted the Executive Officer of the Bermuda Human Rights Commission to seek guidance on establishing and operating a National Human Rights Institution.

The initial consultation included sharing high level insights into the Commission's mandate, governance structure, complaints handling processes, public education functions, and

the key considerations involved in building an independent and effective human rights body.

The consultation is ongoing and is expected to culminate in the Bermuda Human Rights Commission hosting a visiting delegation in Summer 2026, where the Executive Officer will further exchange on governance, operations, and best practices for National Human Rights Institutions.

Conference Theme:

Breaking Barriers: Advancing Inclusive Education for All Abilities

The conference explored strategies to strengthen inclusive education systems across the Caribbean by examining policy frameworks, teacher training, classroom accessibility, and approaches to removing structural and attitudinal barriers.



Regional leaders, disability advocates, educators, and policymakers gathered in Bridgetown, Barbados, for the Caribbean Disability Conference under the theme “Breaking Barriers: Advancing Inclusive Education for All Abilities.”

Plenary Sessions – Key Themes

The plenary sessions focused on inclusive education as a foundation for broader social inclusion across the Caribbean. Key plenary discussions addressed:

Inclusive education policy and reform:

Aligning national education systems with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education).

Lived experiences of persons with disabilities:

Highlighting gaps in access, support services, and educational outcomes across the region.

Teacher preparation and resourcing:

Addressing the need for training in inclusive pedagogy, assistive technologies, and accessible learning environments.

Regional collaboration:

Developing a shared framework and a Regional Declaration on Inclusive Education to guide future policy and institutional practice.

The plenaries underscored that inclusive education goes beyond the classroom, serving as a critical driver of employment, independence, and long-term social and economic participation for persons with disabilities.

FEATURE 2: Caribbean Disability Conference

Breakout Sessions and Workshops – Areas of Focus

The breakout sessions examined practical approaches to implementing inclusive education principles at national, institutional, and community levels across the Caribbean. Key topics included:

- **Best practices in inclusive education:**

Showcasing innovative models and approaches being implemented across Caribbean jurisdictions.

- **Policy and legislative alignment:**

Exploring how national laws, education policies, and disability frameworks can better reflect CRPD obligations.

- **Community-based and cross-sector collaboration:**

Highlighting partnerships among governments, schools, families, civil society, and service providers.

- **Youth, family, and caregiver perspectives:**

Ensuring that education systems respond to real-world needs and lived experiences.

- **Data, research, and monitoring:**

Emphasising the importance of evidence-based decision-making and accountability in measuring inclusion outcomes.

Human Rights Commission's Contribution

At the conference, the Executive Officer presented on Bermuda's experience and approach to advancing disability inclusion. Key highlights included:

Findings from Bermuda's Disability Inclusion Report:

- Accessibility challenges across sectors
- Barriers to participation for persons with disabilities
- Opportunities for policy reform and cross-sector collaboration

Overview of the Commission's Role and Framework:

- The mandate, structure, and functions of the Bermuda Human Rights Commission
- Bermuda's human rights legislative framework
- Oversight mechanisms supporting compliance, governance, and accountability



LEFT: The Executive Officer presented key findings from Bermuda's Disability Inclusion Report and outlined the role of the Bermuda Human Rights Commission in advancing disability inclusion. The Minister of Education delivered closing remarks that reinforced the importance of collective action and sustained leadership in building a more inclusive and accessible Bermuda.



Conference sessions explored inclusive education strategies and approaches to reducing structural and attitudinal barriers faced by persons with disabilities.

Regional Priorities Identified

Conference participants highlighted several priority areas:

- Inclusive education systems
- Accessible infrastructure
- Assistive technologies and learning supports
- Disability advocacy networks
- Regional knowledge-sharing and collaboration

Key Takeaway

The Bermuda Human Rights Commission's participation in the Caribbean Disability Conference strengthened regional partnerships, highlighted key lessons from the Disability Inclusion Report, and reinforced Bermuda's leadership in promoting accessibility and advancing accessibility and disability rights across the Caribbean.

Advancing disability inclusion requires both national action and international collaboration. By sharing knowledge and experiences across jurisdictions, Caribbean countries can accelerate progress toward accessibility, equality, and full participation.

Rights in the Community

Trunk or Treat 2026: Colouring In(clusion): A Crayon Adventure

The Commission was delighted to participate in Beyond Inclusion's 3rd annual Trunk or Treat at the National Stadium. This inclusive event reimagines traditional trick-or-treating, creating a fun and accessible environment for individuals of all ages with support needs, including those with disabilities. A sensory-friendly hour was also offered to participants who benefit from a quieter, calmer atmosphere.

The Commission hosted an arts and crafts table and a specialty photo frame highlighting the theme *Inclusion for All*. Other participating agencies offered a wide range of sensory experiences and treats, showcasing creativity and community spirit. Trunk or Treat remains a strong example of disability-inclusive community engagement.



Bermuda Pride Community Hub



Bermuda Pride, held annually since 2019, provides a vital space for the LGBTQ+ community and allies to come together in pursuit of a Bermuda free from discrimination. The Commission was proud to participate in the Community Hub at Victoria Park, alongside organisations dedicated to providing safe access to resources, information, and advocacy.

In addition to fostering connection, solidarity, and celebration, Pride serves as a key fundraiser for OUTBermuda, supporting year-round initiatives such as free or subsidized counselling, empowerment grants, and education bursaries. Pride continues to be an uplifting and unifying event that reinforces Bermuda's collective commitment to protecting and promoting human rights for all.



YOU ARE RIGHT

Just as you are!

The Human Rights Commission supports the 2SLGBTQIA+ community in Bermuda.



Scan the QR code for more information on your human rights

Join us in promoting dignity, equality, and justice for all.



Walk for Palestine



The Human Rights Commission continued to stand with local advocacy groups and the global human rights community in response to the humanitarian crisis and widespread human rights violations in Gaza and the West Bank. On June 21, 2025, the Commission joined the Walk for Palestine, marching from the Cabinet grounds to City Hall alongside community members and representatives from multiple civil society organisations.

At City Hall, the Commission emphasised Bermuda's responsibilities under the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, urging the Government of Bermuda to recognise its legal obligations, support an immediate ceasefire, and review any local policies or partnerships that may contribute to ongoing violence and injustice. The Commission stressed that this crisis represents not only a legal concern, but a moral emergency.

Following international developments in May and June 2025, the Commission issued a joint statement supporting UN resolutions calling for:

- An immediate and sustained ceasefire
- The exchange of captives
- The removal of the humanitarian blockades to UN-led aid delivery
- The start of a credible, long-term process addressing the root causes of the conflict.

These calls reflect a shared commitment to international law and the protection of civilians, particularly children.

The Commission continues to underscore that human rights violations anywhere threaten justice and dignity everywhere, and that the crisis in Palestine reflects broader global challenges related to the right to life, civilian protection, and freedom from collective punishment.



Human Rights Education Network (HuRen)



The Commission supported the launch of the Human Rights Education Network (HuRen), and its mission to promote long-term human rights awareness with Bermuda's youth. The Commission was honoured to contribute to HuRen's first curriculum and to support the development of a human rights education model that is relevant, engaging, and accessible. This work strengthens rights literacy for the future and fosters a culture of dignity, equality, and respect across generations.



Mental Health Awareness Fair

The Commission took part in a joint initiative hosted by Bermuda Is Love and the Ministry of Health in recognition of Mental Health Anti-Stigma Month. The event highlighted, for both service users and providers, that mental health is a protected ground under the Human Rights Act, including protections from discrimination and harassment and the duty to accommodate in employment.

Community members had the opportunity to connect with local mental health organisations and access a range of wellness resources, from counselling and crisis support to mindfulness, nutrition, and fitness programs. At its heart, the event encouraged open, stigma-free conversations and reinforced the principle that everyone deserves the opportunity to thrive.



#WeAreNotAnIsland

Mental Health Fair

Connect with local mental health organizations, wellness experts, and support networks

Join us for a welcoming, inclusive fair that connects community members with local mental health organizations, service providers, and wellness resources. Explore everything from counseling and crisis support to mindfulness, and tools that support emotional well-being.

Our Goals:

- Promote awareness and acceptance of mental health
- Link individuals to services and support networks
- Share prevention strategies and wellness tools
- Encourage open, stigma-free conversations

Date: Saturday, May 10
Time: 11:00am to 3:00pm
Location: Bermuda College, Butterfield & Vallis Conference Centre

Bermuda Is Love | Registered Charity #1051 | info@bermudaislove.com | 944.117.22-1899

Hamilton Rotary Panel Discussion

The Executive Officer joined a panel discussion on disability inclusion, hosted by the Hamilton Rotary Club at WindReach's accessible training facility. Panelists included government leaders and representatives from disability and community organisations across Bermuda.

The discussion highlighted the breadth of advocacy work underway on the island and underscored the need for a more coordinated, collaborative approach to advancing disability inclusion. While the panel reflected only a portion of the wider community's expertise and lived experience, it illuminated Bermuda's opportunity to achieve meaningful inclusion through strategic, collective action.



Connect With Us

Would you like the Human Rights Commission to present or meet with your organisation? This is a free public service.

Phone: (441) 295 5859
Email: info@humanrights.bm



Spotlight: The Human Library

This year, the Human Rights Commission is proud to spotlight the Human Library, an international movement founded in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 2000. The Human Library challenges stereotypes, breaks down barriers, and fosters empathy by creating opportunities for personal, one-to-one, or small-group conversations. Instead of reading traditional books, participants engage with “living books,” individuals who share their own experiences, perspectives, and stories.

The Human Library: Unjudge Someone

The Bermuda chapter was launched in 2023 by Helen Orchard of Walk Together Bermuda and the Bermuda National Library, in collaboration with the Human Rights Commission, the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, and Citizens Uprooting Racism in Bermuda. Since then, the Human Library has hosted two events each year, with growing public interest and participation. Community members are invited to take part as readers or share their own stories as living books.



"I am a Book in the Human Library because my voice matters and the more people I speak with the greater chance there is to change hearts."



For more information, interested persons may contact helenorchard@icloud.com

"SUCH A TRULY AWESOME EVENT ON SOOO MANY LEVELS! GRATEFUL TO THE "BOOKS" FOR THEIR BRAVERY AND TRANSPARENCY AND THANKFUL TO THE ORGANIZERS FOR COMING TOGETHER TO BRING SUCH A PROFOUND INITIATIVE TO BERMUDA! MY KNOWLEDGE WAS EXPANDED, MY HEART WAS TOUCHED AND MY SOUL NOURISHED!"



"I BECAME A BOOK BECAUSE I BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE CONVERSATIONS WITH PEOPLE I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THEIR BELIEFS AND EXPERIENCES IN ORDER TO EXPAND OR QUESTION MY OWN."



Communications and Social Media

Clear and effective communication is essential to the Commission's work. It helps ensure that information about human rights is accessible, timely, and relevant to the community. During the 2025 calendar year, the Commission strengthened its communications approach by combining traditional media, direct engagement, and digital platforms.

A key milestone during the reporting period was the formal integration of social media into the Commission's communications strategy in March 2025. This marked an important step in making information more accessible and increasing the awareness of the Commission's work.

From March to December 2025, the Commission nurtured a growing presence across Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. These platforms were used to amplify education initiatives, highlight key activities and reports, promote public engagement opportunities, and provide greater transparency around the Commission's work.

Communications — By the Numbers

194,000+

VIEWS

51,600+

PEOPLE REACHED

5,400+

INTERACTIONS

364

NEW FOLLOWERS



During this period, the Commission's social media platforms:

- Generated over 194,000 views
- Reached more than 51,600 individuals
- Recorded over 5,400 content interactions (including likes, comments, shares, and saves)
- Gained 364 new followers across platforms.

Instagram saw the highest engagement, particularly for visual and story-based content. Facebook supported steady reach and community interaction, while LinkedIn continued to grow as a space for professional and institutional engagement.

Engagement peaked in July and December, following the release of the Annual Report 2024, the *Disability Inclusion in Bermuda: Findings & Recommendations* report, along with related public awareness activity.

The Commission also remained active across broadcast and print media, supporting public education and awareness. During the reporting period, the Commission completed five radio interviews and issued press statements addressing key observances, institutional developments, and human rights issues. The Commission also contributed to the Royal Gazette's *Best Health* supplement, highlighting themes of accessibility and mobility.

In total, the Commission recorded 56 communications related education and engagement activities during the reporting period.

Looking ahead, the Commission will continue to strengthen its digital presence in 2026, with a focus on accessible content, visual storytelling, and clear calls to action that support public engagement, education, and compliance with the Human Rights Act, 1981.

Human rights are most effective when people understand them, recognise themselves within them, and know where to turn.

Why Communications Matter

Clear, accessible communication supports prevention and early resolution and empowers the public to take part in protecting the human rights of all.

Welcome to the Information Commissioner

The Human Rights Commission welcomes Jason Outerbridge as Bermuda's Information Commissioner, effective March 1, 2025.

The Information Commissioner builds public trust and keeps people informed and engaged by ensuring access to public information. These actions closely align with protecting, promoting, and accessing human rights.

The Commission looks forward to working together to advance access to vital public information, especially for vulnerable groups, and to support openness and good governance in the public interest.

<https://www.ico.bm/>

Complaint Management Statistics

Members of the public can file complaints of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation with the Commission in accordance with Section 14H of the Human Rights Act, 1981. Anyone seeking guidance is also encouraged to submit queries by contacting our office via phone or email, through our website, or by visiting in person. Individuals may also submit Special Programme applications to the Commission in accordance with Section 6A of the Human Rights Act, 1981.

What is a Special Programme?

A Special Programme is a plan or programme that is set up for one of two purposes:

- a) to support individuals or groups who are disadvantaged, for example, by easing financial hardship or helping them access more equal opportunities; or
- b) to expand job opportunities for individuals from specific backgrounds defined by race, colour, ethnicity, nationality or place of origin.

The Human Rights Act recognises that achieving equity sometimes requires different treatment, not identical treatment. In light of this, Special Programmes allow organisations to:

- Support disadvantaged or underrepresented groups.
- Design fair and equal opportunities.
- Address long-standing or systemic barriers.
- Implement targeted hiring, training, or support initiatives.

When Does Retaliation or Reprisal Occur?

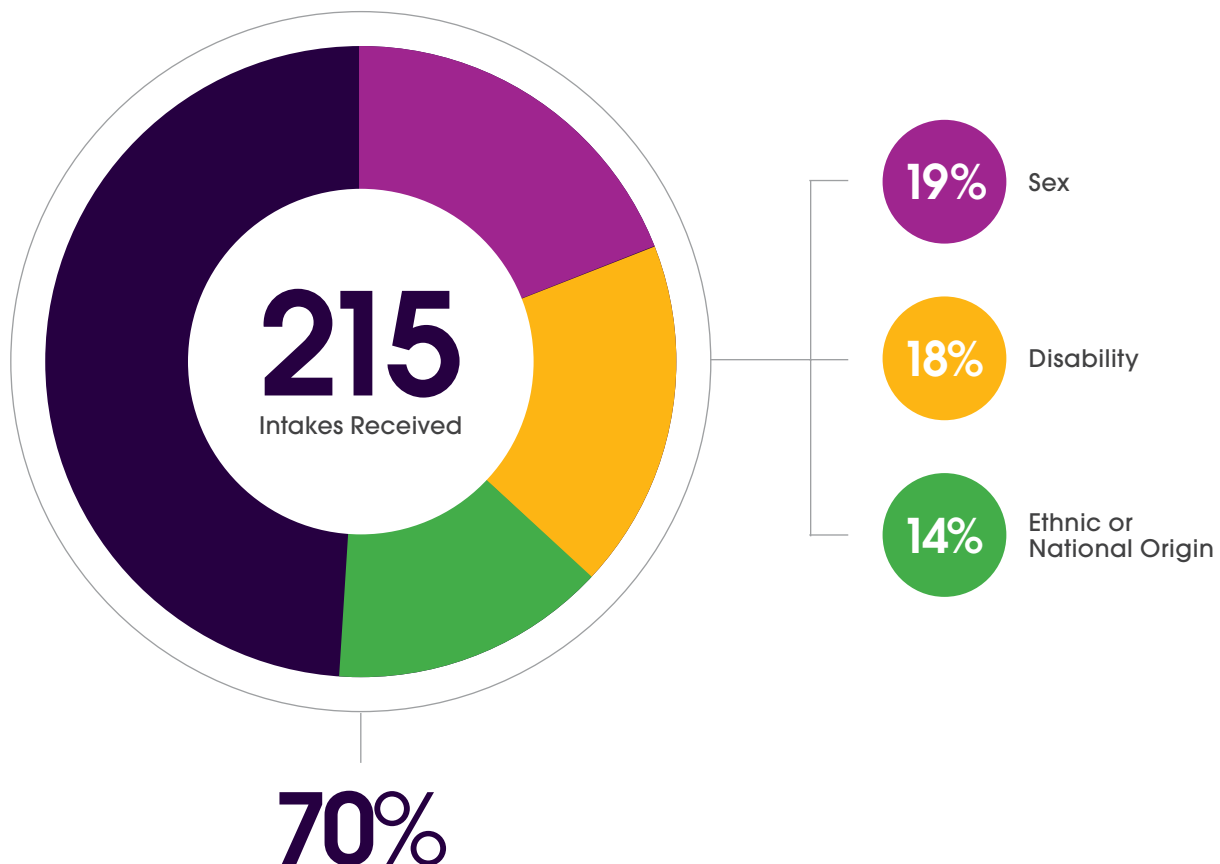
Retaliation or reprisal can occur when someone is treated unfairly or prejudicially because they have raised a human rights complaint or disclosure, or participated in proceedings under the Act. This may include scenarios where a person is:

- fired, or penalised for filing a human rights complaint,
- demoted for testifying in a proceeding under the Act, or
- treated prejudicially within the workplace to prevent them from filing a complaint or making a disclosure or punishing them for doing so.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS - Intakes and Preliminary Inquiries

Intakes Received

In total, the Commission received 215 intakes from members of the public in 2025. The most commonly reported concern was sex-based discrimination, which made up 19% of identified protected grounds. This was closely followed by disability at 18% and ethnic or national origin at 14%.



Of the areas of discrimination identified by the public, 70% related to employment and/or the workplace. This total encompasses a wide range of unlawful discrimination covered under Part II of the Human Rights Act, 1981 such as Section 6(1), Section 6(2), Section 6(3), Section 6(4), Section 6B, Section 8(a), Section 8(b) Section 8(c), Section 9(1) and Section 9(3). This total also included other concerns brought to the Commission that, while not ultimately found to be discriminatory, did involve workplace issues.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS - Intakes and Preliminary Inquiries

Anyone who wishes to contact the Office of the Human Rights Commission to submit a complaint or query can do so in accordance with Section 14H(1) of the Human Rights Act, 1981 (the 'Act'). Applications for Special Programmes can also be made under Section 6A of the Act.

Complaints or queries are classified as intakes and consist of any form of contact made by a member of the public who intends to file a human rights complaint or obtain information, guidance, or assistance from the Office of the Human Rights Commission. Individuals who file complaints are classified as "complainants" and individuals, companies, or organisations referred to in the complaint are classified as "respondents."

When an intake is first received, the Executive Officer is responsible for screening the complaint to determine whether it appears to disclose a prima facie case of discrimination. The Executive Officer is looking to see whether the information provided is sufficient to establish that a complainant has been treated unfavourably due to a protected ground. If the complaint appears to disclose a prima facie case, it is forwarded onward to the respondent(s) with an invitation to reply – the Complaint Received Stage. However, if it does not, a complainant is advised of the Executive Officer's preliminary views and is offered an opportunity to meet before a final decision is made to dismiss the complaint in accordance with Section 15(8) of the Act.

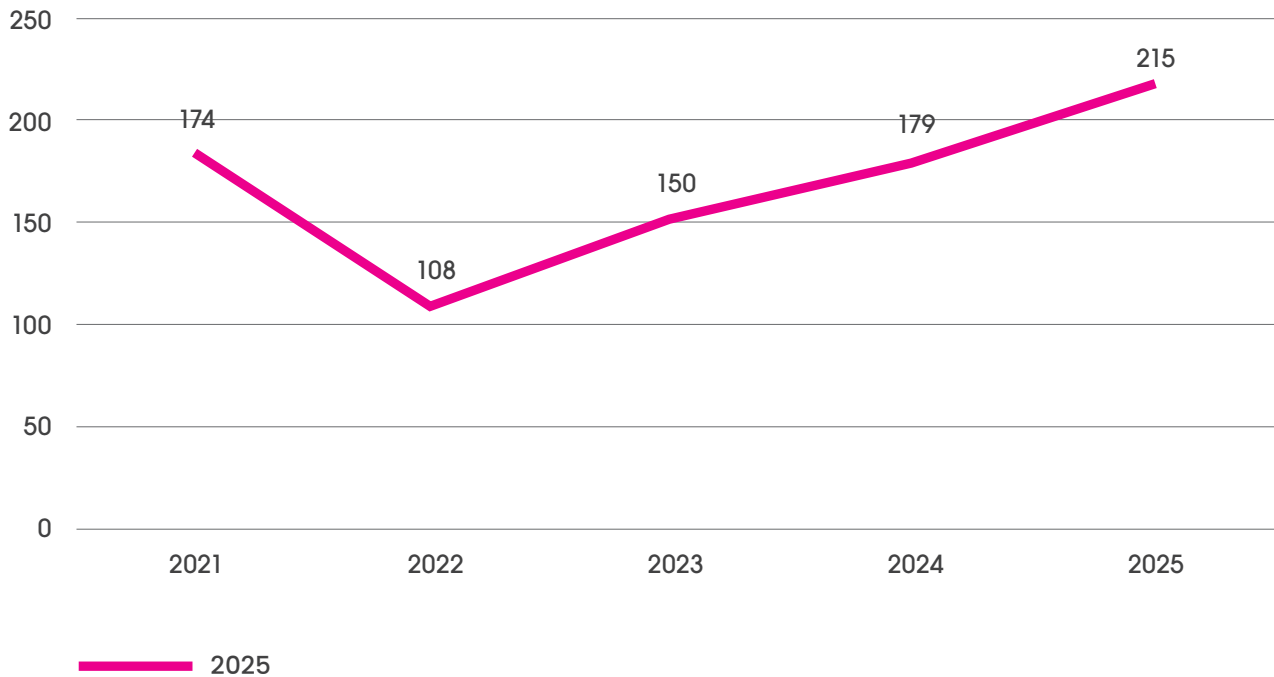
When appropriate, the Executive Officer may conduct a preliminary inquiry, under Section 14I of the Act, to determine whether to undertake an investigation.

In 2025, the Commission continued to see a larger volume of intakes that appeared to involve possible breaches of the Act. More matters advanced to the Complaint Received and Investigation Stages than in previous years. Further, there has also been a notable increase in human rights complaints being referred to the independent Human Rights Tribunal compared to previous years.

- At the Complaint Received Stage, 6 matters moved to this stage in 2022 and 12 in 2023. This number rose significantly to 27 in 2024. In 2025, 21 matters reached this stage. Although lower than 2024, it indicates a rising trend, as it is still higher than the combined total for 2022 and 2023.
- Concerning the Investigation Stage, there were 3 matters that moved to this stage in 2022, 5 in 2023, and 12 in 2024. In 2025, the total increased to 13 matters.
- A total of 6 matters were referred to the Human Rights Tribunal during the 2022 and 2023 reporting periods with a further 6 matters referred in 2024. The increase in referrals to the Human Rights Tribunal continued in 2025 with 9 matters in total being referred during the reporting period.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS - Intakes and Preliminary Inquiries

Figure 1 – Total Intakes for the Period, 2021 – 2025

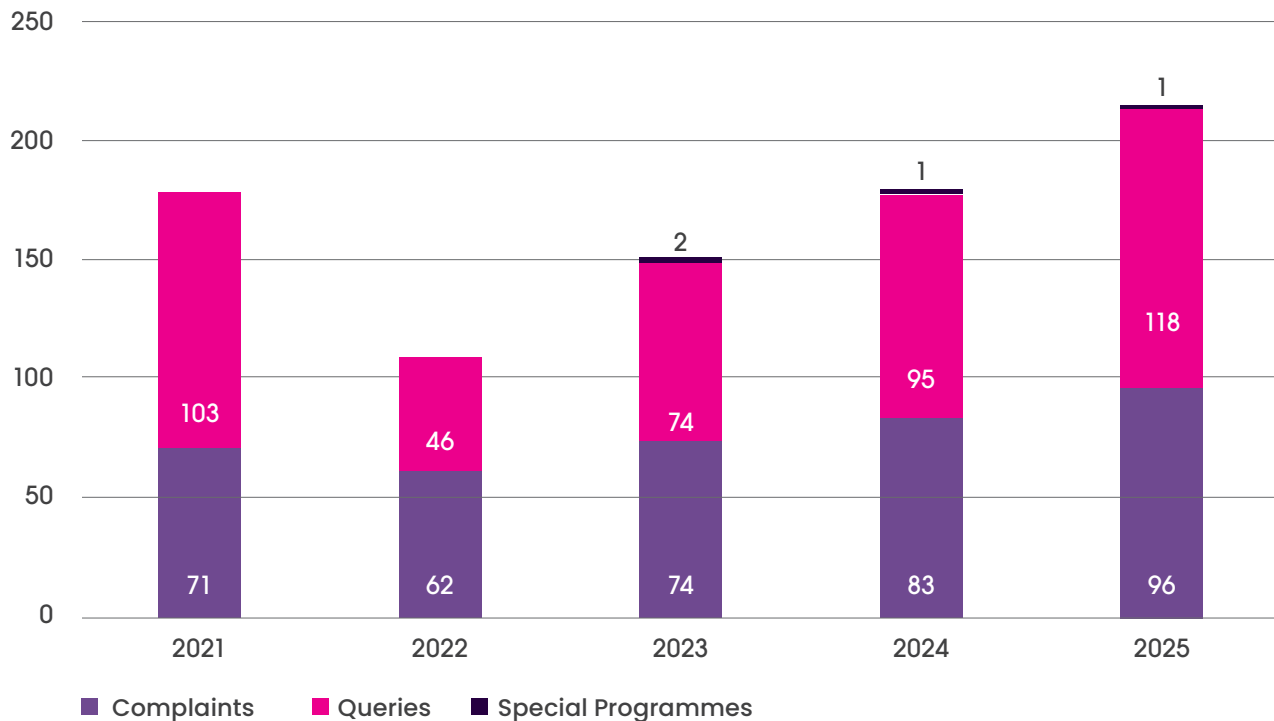


Line graph describing the number of intakes received annually between 2021 and 2025. The X-axis represents the year range of 2021 to 2025. The Y-axis represents the total number with a range of 0 to 250 in intervals of 50. The graph shows a total of 174 in 2021, followed by a decrease in 2022 to 108, followed by an increase to 150 in 2023, and another increase to 179 in 2024. The graph ends with an increase to 215 in 2025.

In 2025, there were **215 intakes** filed with the Office of the Human Rights Commission by members of the public. In contrast to the previous reporting period, this was an increase of **20%** (179 in 2024).

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS - Intakes and Preliminary Inquiries

Figure 2 – Intakes by Type for the Period, 2021 – 2025



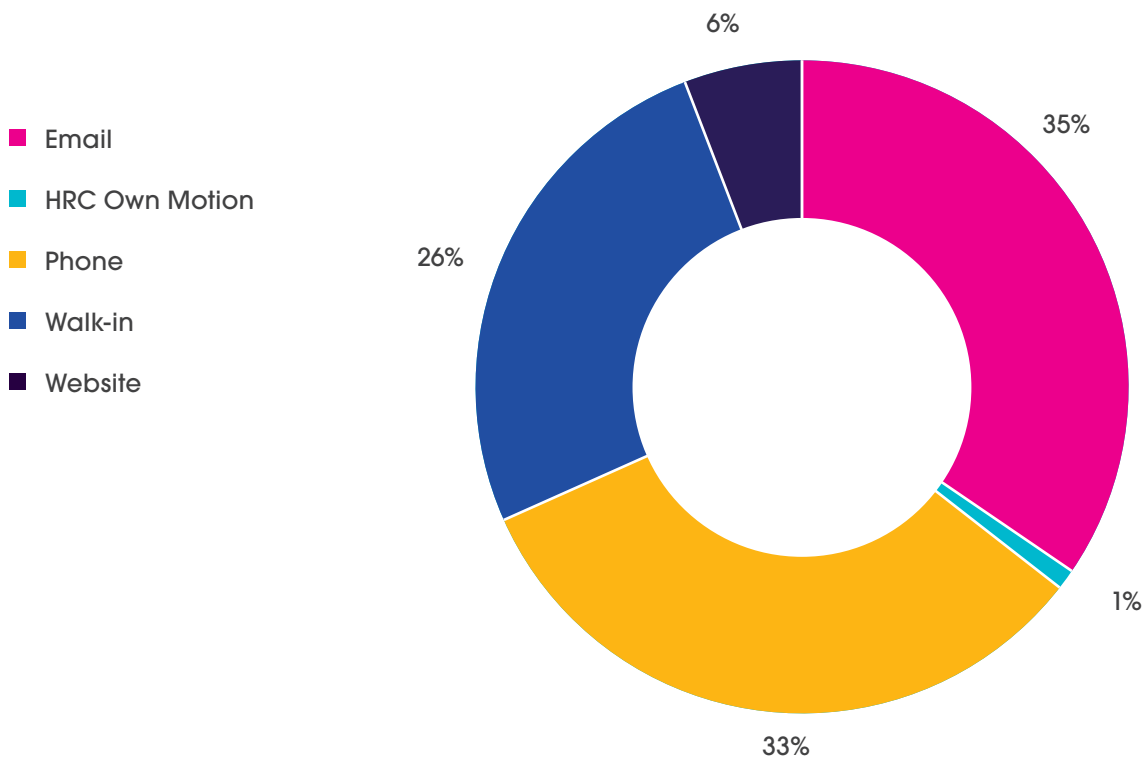
Bar graph setting out the number of annual intakes received between 2021 and 2025 as either complaints, queries, or special programmes. The X-axis represents the year range of 2021 to 2025. The Y-axis represents the total number with a range of 0 to 250 in intervals of 50. The graph shows 71 complaints and 103 queries in 2021, 62 complaints and 46 queries in 2022, 74 complaints, 74 queries, and 2 special programmes in 2023, and 83 complaints, 95 queries, and 1 special programme in 2024. The graph ends showing 96 complaints, 118 queries, and 1 special programme in 2025.

In 2025, more people contacted the Office with queries than with formal complaints (see Fig 2). Figure 2 also shows that more complaints and queries were filed in 2025 than in the previous years referenced. Figure 2 illustrates that of the 215 intakes received in 2025, 118 were queries, 96 were complaints, and 1 was a special programme application. This continues an upward trend in public engagement since 2022.

Compared to the previous reporting period, queries increased by 24%, while complaints rose by 16% in 2025. Since 2023, the Human Rights Commission has implemented a comprehensive communications strategy aimed at increasing awareness of the Commission and educating Bermuda's residents on their human rights. This focus appears to be contributing to increased engagement between the public and the Commission.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS - Intakes and Preliminary Inquiries

Figure 3 – Percentage Distribution of Intakes Received by Method of Contact, 2025



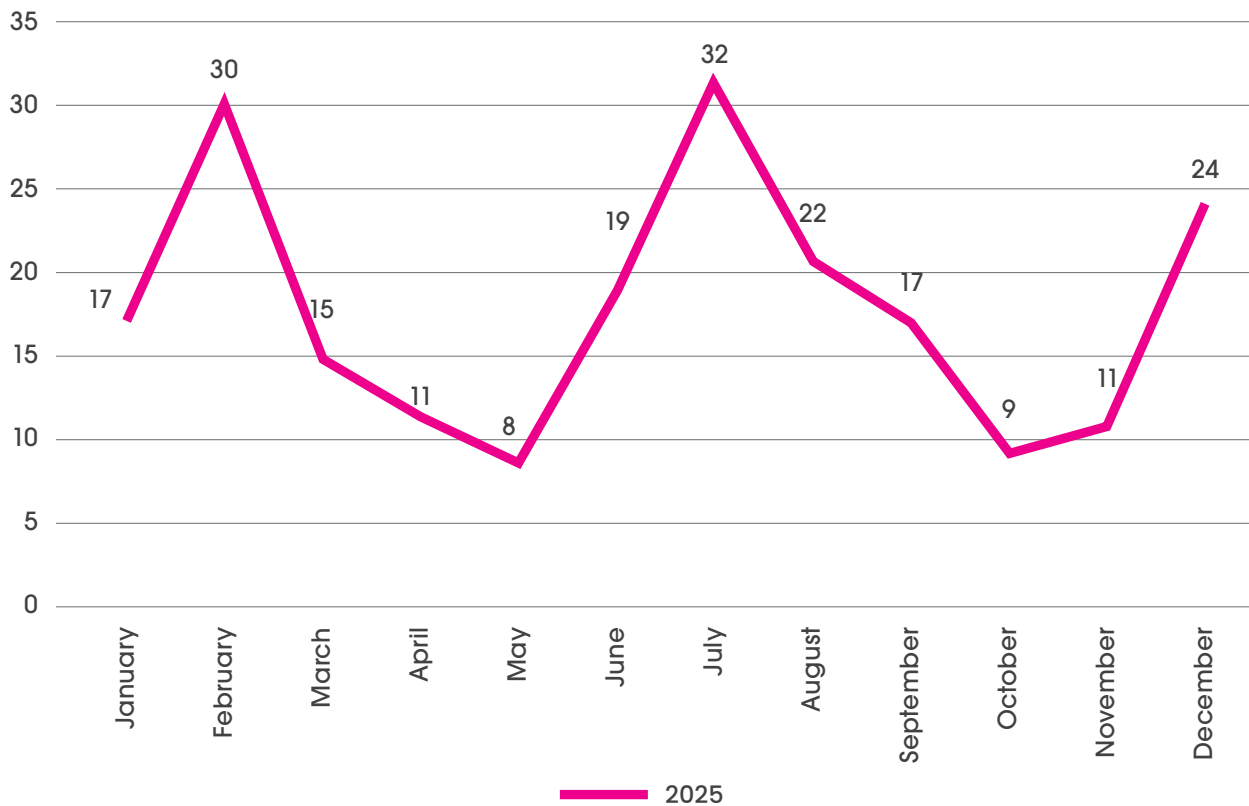
Note 1 – Percentage totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

Pie chart displays the percentage of intakes received in 2025 by email 35%, by HRC Own Motion 1%, by phone 33%, by walk-in 26%, and by website 6%.

Figure 3 shows that most people contacted the Commission by email or phone in 2025. The Commission receives intakes in various forms, through email (intakes@humanrights.bm), the website (www.humanrights.bm), the phone ([441-295-5859](tel:441-295-5859)), or by individuals visiting the office in person. The majority of intakes in 2025 were submitted via email 35% of the time, or by phone at 33%. Others reached out in person 26% of the time, while 6% used the Commission's website. Where the Commission commences an action itself, the action is logged as 'HRC Own Motion.' This accounted for 1% of the intakes logged in 2025.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS - Intakes and Preliminary Inquiries

Figure 4 - Annual Intakes by Month, 2025

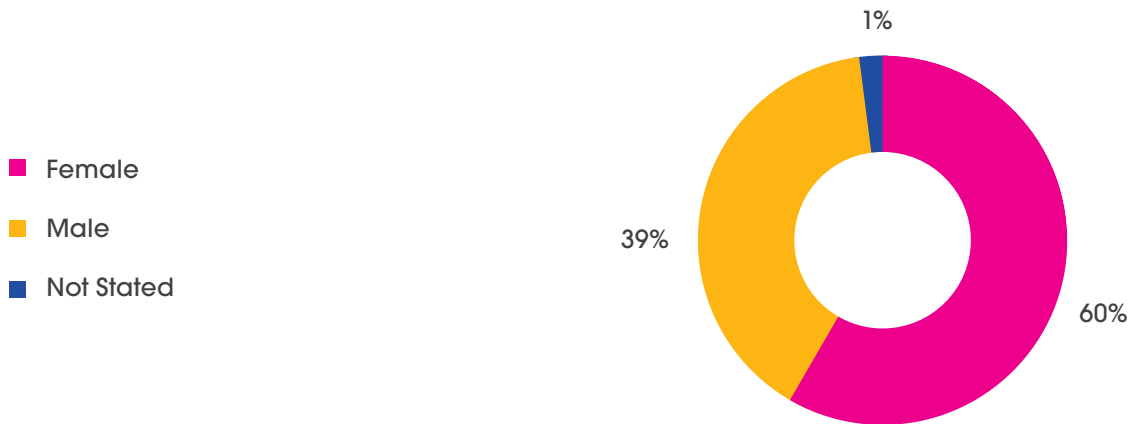


Line graph describing the total number of intakes received in each month in 2025. The X-axis represents the month. The Y-axis represents the total number with a range of 0 to 35 in intervals of 5. The graph shows an increase from 17 intakes in January to 30 intakes in February, a decrease to 15 intakes in March, a decrease to 11 intakes in April, a further decrease to 8 intakes in May, followed by an increase to 19 intakes in June, another increase to 32 intakes in July, a decrease to 22 intakes in August, a further decrease to 17 intakes in September, a decrease to 9 intakes in October, an increase to 11 intakes in November and the graph ends with an increase to 24 intakes in December.

According to Figure 4, the highest number of intakes was recorded in July 2025 (32 intakes, or 15%) and February 2024 (30 intakes, or 14%). The lowest number of intakes was recorded in May 2025, with 8 intakes, representing 4%. On average, the Commission received 17.9 intakes per month. Looking at quarterly trends, the first and third quarters saw the largest volume of intakes with 62 and 71 intakes, respectively. In comparison, a lower volume was received during the second and fourth quarters of the year, with 38 and 44 intakes, respectively.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS - Intakes and Preliminary Inquiries

Figure 5 – Percentage Distribution of Intakes by Sex of the Complainant, 2025



Pie chart displaying the percentage of intakes received in 2025 by sex for categories of female 60%, male 39%, and those which were not stated 1%.

Figure 5 illustrates the percentage distribution of intakes received by the sex of complainants.

The 2025 voluntary demographic data highlights that female complainants represented 60% of all complainants, while male complainants represented 39%. Additionally, 1% of the complainants identified their sex as 'Not Stated.' Compared to 2024, the total number of female complainants decreased by 1%, from 61% to 60%, while the total number of male complainants increased by 2%, from 37% to 39%. Over the years, female complainants have made up the majority of those contacting the Commission, with 64% in 2020, 59% in 2021, 66% in 2022, 53% in 2023, and 61% in 2024. Meanwhile, male complainant numbers have consistently increased since 2023, with 34% in 2023 and 37% in 2024.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS - Intakes and Preliminary Inquiries

A review of the demographic data alongside the more common areas of discrimination and protected grounds revealed some clear patterns.

Female complainants represented 78% of the complainants who raised concerns related to the protected ground of sex, while male complainants represented 17%.

A closer look at the demographic data for these **female complainants** showed that:

- **Immigration Status:** 67% of them were Bermudian and 33% of them were non-Bermudian.
- **Age:** 39% of them were between the ages of 35 – 50, 33% were between the ages of 51 – 65, and 28% were between the ages of 19 – 34.
- **Race:** 50% of them were Black, 33% of them were White, 6% of them were Asian, 6% of them were Black and White and 6% described their race as Other.

The demographic data received demonstrated that **female complainants made up a slight majority of complainants who identified disability as a protected ground, accounting for 54% of these intakes, in contrast to male complainants representing 43%.**

A deeper analysis of the demographic data for these **female complainants** demonstrated that:

Immigration Status: 80% of them were Bermudian, 10% of them were the Spouse of a Bermudian, 5% of them were a Permanent Resident Certificate Holder, and another 5% of them were non-Bermudian.

- **Age:** 50% of them were between the ages of 35 – 50, 35% were between the ages of 51 – 65, 10% were 66+, and 5% were between the ages of 19 – 34.
- **Race:** 60% of them were Black, 25% of them were White, 5% of them were Black and White, 5% of them were Black and Other, and 5% of them described their race as Other.

A closer look at the demographic data of the **male complainants** who contacted the Commission with concerns about disability discrimination demonstrated that:

- **Immigration Status:** 69% of them were Bermudian, and 31% of them were non-Bermudian.
- **Age:** 38% of them were between the age of 35 – 50, 31% of them were 19 – 34, and 31% of them were 51 – 65.
- **Race:** 50% of them were White, and 50% of them were Black.

Female complainants accounted for the vast majority of complainants who identified the protected grounds of ethnic or national origins and place of origin, **representing 71% of those intakes, in contrast to male complainants representing 29%.**

A deeper analysis of the demographic data relating to the **female complainants** referred to above demonstrated that:



STATISTICAL ANALYSIS - Intakes and Preliminary Inquiries

- **Immigration Status:** 65% of them were non-Bermudian, 29% of them were Bermudian, and 6% of them were the Spouse of a Bermudian.

- **Age:** 41% of them were between the ages of 19 – 34, 29% of them were between the ages of 35 – 50, 24% of them were between the ages of 51 – 65, and 6% were 66+.

- **Race:** 53% of them were Black, 24% of them were Black and White, 12% of them were White, 6% of them were Asian, and 6% of them were White and Other.

Among the areas of discrimination outlined in Part II of the Act, the Commission found that intakes related to Sections 6(1) – *Employment*, 5(1) – *Goods, Facilities and Services*, and 6B(1) – *Harassment Within the Workplace* were raised more often than others by members of the public.

Most complainants reporting employment discrimination under Section 6(1) of the Act were female, as female complainants made up **67%** of these intakes, while male complainants accounted for **31%**. The remaining 2% of complainants reported their sex as Not Stated. When compared to the previous two reporting periods, there has been an increase in female complainants identifying Section 6(1) of the Act. This rose from 53% in 2023 to 62.5% in 2024, and higher again in 2025.

A deeper analysis of the demographic data of the **female complainants** referred to above indicated that:

- **Immigration Status:** 75% of them were Bermudian, 21% of them were non-Bermudian, and 4% of them were the Spouse of a Bermudian.

- **Age:** 36% of them were between the ages of 51 – 65, 32% of them were between the ages of 35 – 50, 25% of them were between the ages of 19 – 34, and 7% of them were 66+.

- **Race:** 75% of them were Black, 21% of them were White, and 4% of them identified their race as Other.

For the **male complainants** alleging employment discrimination, the demographic data showed that:

- **Immigration Status:** 69% of them were Bermudian, 23% of them were non-Bermudian, and 8% of them were the Spouse of a Bermudian.

- **Age:** 54% of them were between the ages of 35 – 50, 31% of them were between the ages of 19 – 34, and 15% of them were between the ages of 51 – 65.

- **Race:** 62% of them were White, and 38% of them were Black.

Most complainants who alleged discrimination when obtaining goods, facilities, and services in Bermuda (Section 5(1) of the Act) were female. Specifically, female complainants represented 54% of these complainants, while male complainants accounted for 46%. Compared to the last reporting period, there has been an increase in **male complainants** alleging that they experienced discrimination when obtaining goods, facilities, and services, up from 37% in 2024.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS - Intakes and Preliminary Inquiries

A deeper analysis of the demographic data of the **female complainants** referred to above established that:

- **Immigration Status:** 48% of them were Bermudians, 40% were non-Bermudian, 8% were the Spouse of a Bermudian, and 4% of them were Permanent Resident Certificate Holders.
- **Age:** 43% of them were between the ages of 35 – 50, 29% of them were between the ages of 19 – 34, 14% of them were between the ages of 51 – 65, and 14% of them were 66+.
- **Race:** 44% of them were Black, 28% of them were White, 12% of them identified their race as Black and White, 8% of them identified their race as White and Other, 4% of them were Asian, and a further 4% of them identified their race as Other.

For the **male complainants** identifying discrimination when obtaining goods, facilities, and services, the demographic data showed that:

- **Immigration Status:** 76% of them were Bermudian, and 24% of them were non-Bermudian.
- **Age:** 40% of them were between the ages of 35 – 50, 28% of them were between the ages of 51 – 65, 20% of them were between the ages of 19 – 34, and 12% of them were 66+.
- **Race:** 67% of them were Black, 24% of them were White, 5% of them were Asian, and 5% of them identified their race as Black and White.

Female complainants were among the majority of complainants who alleged that they were harassed within the workplace. They represented 62% of these intakes, while **male complainants** represented 38%. Compared to the last two reporting periods, there has been an increase in male complainants alleging harassment within the workplace, rising from 27% in 2023 to 36% in 2024, and with the upward trend continuing in 2025.

A deeper analysis of the demographic data of the **female complainants** referred to above demonstrated that:

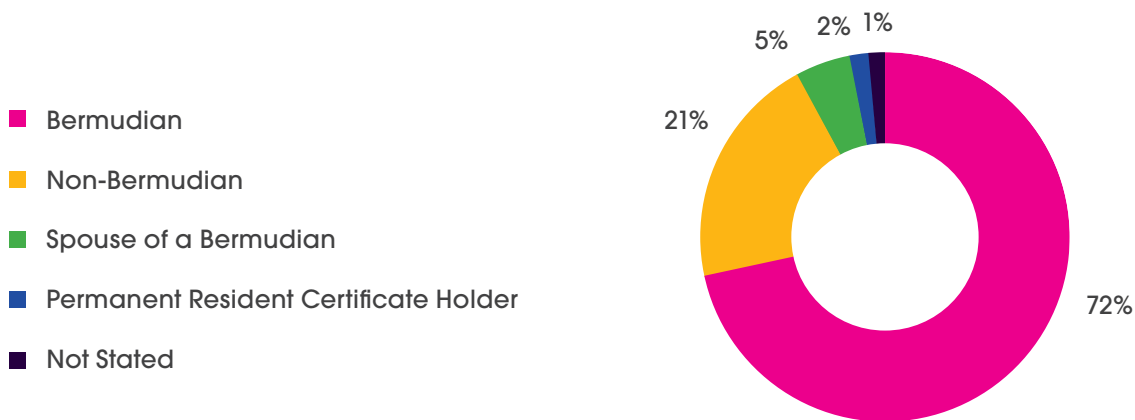
- Immigration Status:** 77% of them were Bermudians, 15% were non-Bermudian, and 8% of them were Permanent Resident Certificate Holders.
- **Age:** 46% of them were between the ages of 35 – 50, 38% were between the ages of 51 – 65, and 15% were between the ages of 19 – 34.
 - **Race:** 77% of them were Black, 15% White, and 8% identified their race as Black and White.

The demographic data of the **male complainants** identifying workplace harassment showed that:

- **Immigration Status:** 62.5% of them were Bermudian, and 37.5% of them were non-Bermudian.
- **Age:** 37.5% of them were between the ages of 19 – 34, 37.5% were between the ages of 35 – 50, and 25% were between the ages of 51 – 65.
- **Race:** 62.5% of them were Black, and 37.5% of them were White.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS - Intakes and Preliminary Inquiries

Figure 6 – Percentage Distribution of Intakes by the Bermuda Immigration Status of the Complainant, 2025



Pie chart displaying the percentage of intakes received in 2025 by Bermuda Immigration Status for categories of Bermudian 72%, non-Bermudian 21%, Spouse of a Bermudian 5%, Permanent Resident Certificate Holder 2% and Not Stated 1%.

Figure 6 illustrates the percentage distribution of intakes received by the Bermuda Immigration Status of complainants.

In 2025, the voluntary demographic data showed that most complainants were Bermudian, making up 72% of all intakes received. Non-Bermudians accounted for 21% of complainants, Spouses of a Bermudian 5%, and Permanent Resident Certificate Holders 2%. A small number of individuals (1%) did not provide their immigration status and are listed as Not Stated. Compared to 2024 figures, there was a notable increase in non-Bermudian complainants from 13% to 21%. At the same time, the total number of Bermudian complainants decreased from 77% to 72%. The trends from the last two years highlight **a steady increase in non-Bermudian complainants** from 11% in 2023 to 13% in 2024 and 21% in 2025.

A review of the demographic data alongside the more common areas of discrimination and protected grounds revealed some clear patterns.

Complainants most frequently identified the following protected grounds: sex, disability, ethnic or national origins, and place of origin.

Most complainants identifying disability as a protected ground when contacting the Commission were Bermudian. Bermudians made up 73% of these intakes, while non-Bermudians accounted for 16%. Spouses of Bermudians represented 5%, and Permanent Resident Certificate Holders represented 3%. The remaining 3% did not provide demographic data and were recorded as Not Stated.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS - Intakes and Preliminary Inquiries

A deeper analysis of the demographic data of the **Bermudian complainants** demonstrated that:

Sex: 59% of them were female, and 41% of them were male.

Age: 44% of them were between the ages of 35 – 50, 37% were between the ages of 51 – 65, 15% were between the ages of 19 – 34, and 4% were 66+.

Race: 70% of them were Black, 22% of them were White, 4% identified their race as Black and White, and a further 4% identified as White and Other.

With respect to the protected ground of sex, **Bermudian complainants** were among the majority, representing 70%, while non-Bermudian complainants represented 30%.

A deeper analysis of the demographic data of these **Bermudian complainants** showed that:

Sex: 75% of them were female, and 25% of them were male.

Age: 44% of them were between the ages of 51 – 65, 31% were between the ages of 19 – 34, and 25% were between the ages of 35 – 50.

Race: 63% of them were Black, 19% of them were White, 6% of them identified their race as Black and White, 6% identified as Black and Other, and a further 6% of them identified as Other.

Most of the complainants citing ethnic or national origins and place of origin as protected grounds were primarily non-Bermudian, representing 58% of these intakes. Bermudians represented 38%, and Spouses of Bermudians accounted for 4% of this total.

A closer look at the demographic data of these **non-Bermudian complainants** indicated that:

Sex: 79% of them were female, and 21% of them were male.

Age: 43% of them were between the ages of 35 – 50, 36% of them were between the ages of 19 – 34, 14% of them were between the ages of 51 – 65, and 7% were 66+.

Race: 36% of them were Black, 29% of them identified their race as Black and White, 14% were Asian, 14% White, and 7% identified their race as White and Other.

Among the areas of discrimination outlined in Part II of the Act, the Commission found that concerns related to Sections 6(1) – *Employment*, 5(1) – *Goods, Facilities and Services*, and 6B(1) – *Harassment Within the Workplace* were raised more often by members of the public.

Bermudian complainants were often the majority of those reporting employment discrimination, citing Section 6(1) of the Act. Bermudians made up 71% of these intakes, non-Bermudian complainants represented 24%, and Spouses of Bermudians accounted for 5%.



STATISTICAL ANALYSIS - Intakes and Preliminary Inquiries

A closer look at the data for **Bermudian complainants** showed that:

Sex: 70% of them were female, and 30% of them were male.

Age: 37% of them were between the ages of 51 – 65, 30% were between the ages of 35 – 50, 27% were between the ages of 19 – 34, and 7% were 66+.

Race: 77% of them were Black, and 23% of them were White.

The majority of complainants citing discrimination when accessing goods, facilities, and services were Bermudian. Bermudians represented 61% of intakes, identifying Section 5(1) of the Act, non-Bermudians 33%, Spouses of Bermudians 4%, and 2% were Permanent Resident Certificate Holders.

Demographic data for the **Bermudian complainants** showed that:

Sex: 57% of them were male, and 43% of them were female.

Age: 39% of them were between the ages of 35 – 50, 25% between the ages of 51 – 65, 18% between the ages of 19 – 34, and 18% were 66+.

Race: 75% of them were Black, 21% of them were White, and 4% identified their race as White and Other.

Bermudian complainants were also among the majority reporting workplace harassment, with Bermudian complainants representing 71% of the total complainants. Non-Bermudian complainants represented 24% and Permanent Resident Certificate Holders 5%.

A deeper analysis of the demographic data of the **Bermudian complainants** demonstrated that:

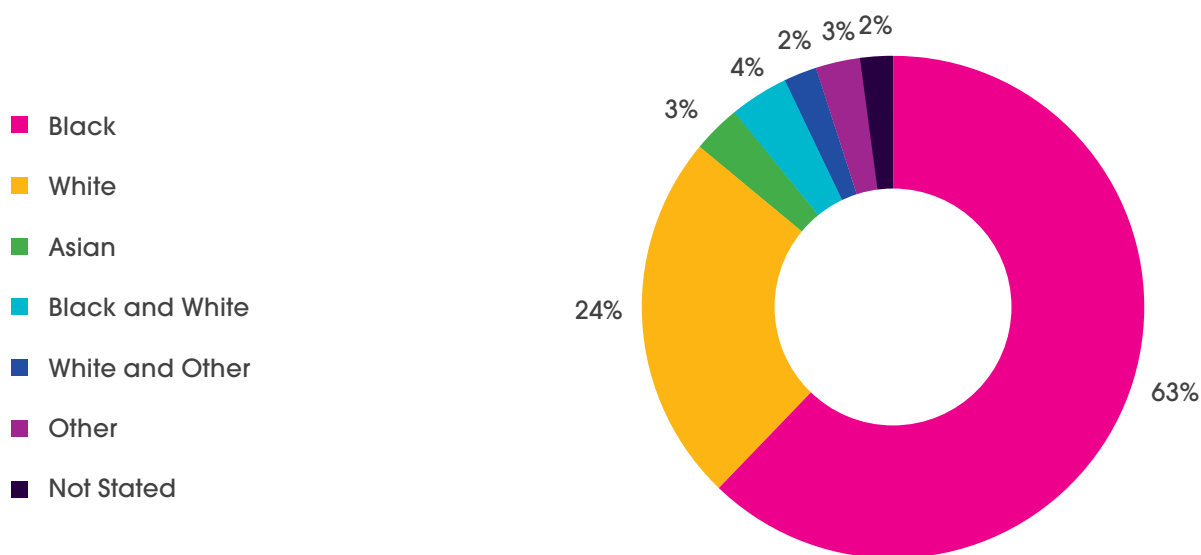
Sex: 67% of them were female, and 33% of them were male.

Age: 47% of them were between the ages of 51 – 65, 40% between the ages of 35 – 50, and 13% of them between the ages of 19 – 34.

Race: 87% of them were Black, 6.5% White, and 6.5% identified their race as Black and White.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS - Intakes and Preliminary Inquiries

Figure 7 – Percentage Distribution of Intakes by the Race of the Complainant, 2025



Note 1 – Black and Other has not been included in the chart as it was only identified in one instance and the percentage total was less than one percent.

Pie chart displaying the percentage of intakes received in 2025 by race for categories of Black 63%, White 24%, Asian 3%, Black and White 4%, White and Other 2%, Other 3%, and Not Stated 2%.

Figure 7 illustrates the percentage distribution of intakes received by the race of complainants.

The 2025 voluntary demographic data demonstrated that 63% of all complainants identified as Black. Complainants identifying as White represented 24%, and those identifying as Asian accounted for 3% of all intakes. Additional categories included Black and White at 4%, White and Other at 2%, and Other at 3%. A small number of complainants (2%) chose not to state their race. Compared to 2024, the total number of complainants identifying as White increased from 13% to 24%, while those identifying as Black decreased from 72% to 63%.

A review of the demographic data alongside the more common areas of discrimination and protected grounds revealed some clear patterns.

Complainants most frequently identified the following protected grounds: sex, disability, ethnic or national origins, and place of origin.

Among complainants who cited sex as a protected ground, those identifying as Black made up the largest group at 52%, while those identifying as White represented 30% of the total. Also captured were those identifying as Asian representing 4.5%, Black and White 4.5%, Black and Other 4.5%, and Other 4.5%.



STATISTICAL ANALYSIS - Intakes and Preliminary Inquiries

A closer look at the demographic data relating to the **complainants who identified their race as Black** demonstrated that:

Sex: 75% of them were female, and 25% of them were male.

Age: 42% of them were between the ages of 35 – 50, 33% between the ages of 51 – 65, and 25% of them between the ages of 19 – 34.

Immigration Status: 83% of them were Bermudian, and 17% of them were non-Bermudian.

Complainants who identified their race as Black were among the majority of complainants who identified disability as a protected ground, representing 54% of the total number of complainants, while those identifying as White represented 35%. Smaller groups included Black and White, Other, and White and Other, each accounting for 3% of the total. A further 3% of complainants were recorded as Not Stated.

A deeper analysis of the demographic data of those **identifying as Black** showed that:

Sex: 60% of them were female, and 40% of them were male.

Age: 50% of them were between the ages of 35 – 50, 30% between the ages of 51 – 65, and 20% between the age of 19 – 34.

Immigration Status: 95% of them were Bermudian, and 5% of them were non-Bermudian.

Among the majority of complainants reporting discrimination based on the protected grounds of ethnic or national origins and place of origin, 42% identified their race as Black and 25% as White. Also captured were those identifying as Black and White at 21%, Asian at 8%, and White and Other at 4%.

A closer look at the demographic data of complainants **identifying as Black** demonstrated that:

Sex: 90% of them were female, and 10% of them were male.

Age: 40% of them were between the ages of 51 – 65, 30% were between the ages of 35 – 50, 20% were between the ages of 19 – 34, and 10% were 66+.

Immigration Status: 50% of them were non-Bermudian, 40% Bermudian, and 10% the Spouse of a Bermudian.

Among the areas of discrimination outlined in Part II of the Act, the Commission found that concerns related to Sections 6(1) – *Employment*, 5(1) – *Goods, Facilities and Services*, and 6B(1) – *Harassment Within the Workplace* were identified more often by members of the public.

Among complainants reporting employment discrimination under Section 6(1) of the Act, 62% identified their race as Black, 36% as White, and 2% as Other. Compared to 2024, there has been a significant increase in complainants who identify as White reporting employment discrimination under Section 6(1), as this has risen from 9% in 2024 to 36% in 2025.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS - Intakes and Preliminary Inquiries

A deeper analysis of the data for complainants **identifying as Black** showed that:

Sex: 81% of them were female, and 19% of them were male.

Age: 38% of them were between the ages of 51 – 65, 31% were between the ages of 35 – 50, 27% between the ages of 19 – 34, and 4% were 66+.

Immigration Status: 88% of them were Bermudian, 8% of them were non-Bermudian, and 4% of them were the Spouse of a Bermudian.

Complainants identifying as Black accounted for 54% of intakes that identified Section 5(1) – Goods, Facilities and Services. Complainants who identified their race as White represented 26%, Black and White 9%, Asian 4%, White and Other 4%, and Other 2%.

An assessment of the demographic data of complainants **identifying as Black** indicated that:

Sex: 56% of them were male, and 44% of them were female.

Age: 48% of them were between the ages of 35 – 50, 20% between the ages of 51 – 65, 20% were 66+, and 12% between the ages of 19 – 34.

Immigration Status: 84% of them were Bermudian, and 16% of them were non-Bermudian.

Among the majority of complainants indicating workplace harassment were those who identified their race as Black, representing 71% of the total. Complainants who identified their race as White represented 24%, and Black and White represented 5%.

A deeper examination of the demographic data of complainants **identifying as Black** demonstrated that:

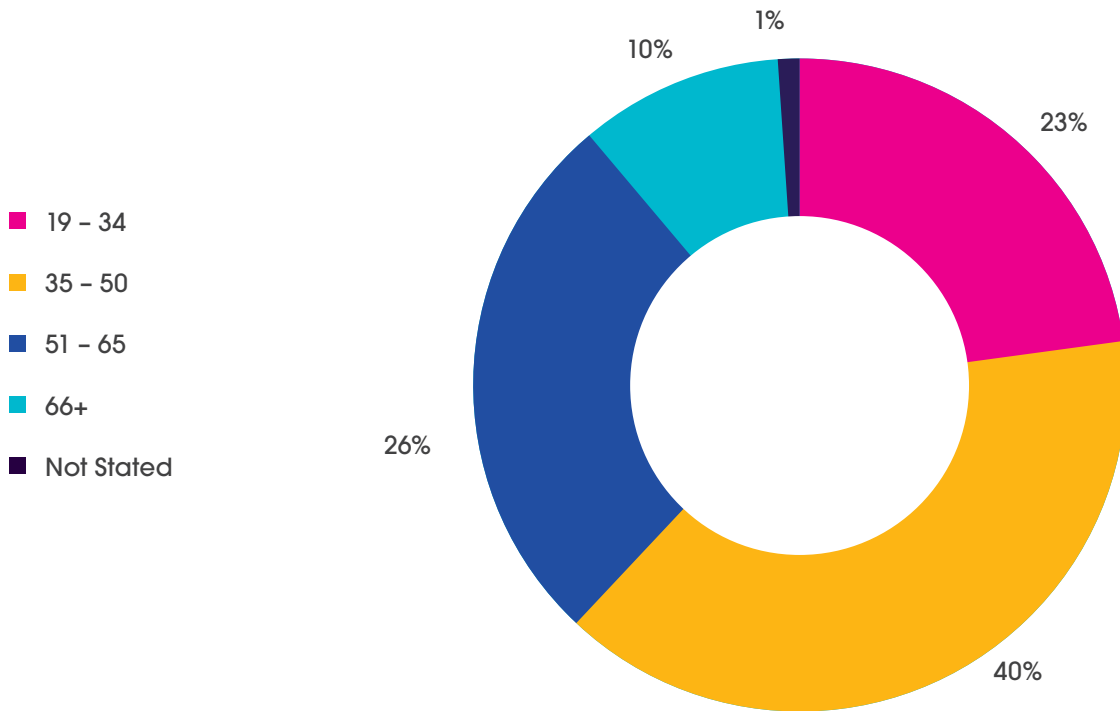
Sex: 67% of them were female, and 33% of them were male.

Age: 40% of them were between the ages of 35 – 50, 40% between the ages of 51 – 65, and 20% between the ages of 19 – 34.

Immigration Status: 87% of them were Bermudian, and 13% non-Bermudian.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS - Intakes and Preliminary Inquiries

Figure 8 – Percentage Distribution of Intakes by the Age of the Complainant, 2025



Pie chart displaying the percentage of intakes received in 2025 by age for categories of 19-34 (23%), 35-50 (40%), 51-65 (26%), 66+ (10%) and Not Stated (1%).

Figure 8 illustrates the percentage distribution of intakes received by the age of complainants.

In 2025, the voluntary demographic data demonstrated that complainants between the age of 35 – 50 represented 40% of all intakes received. Those aged 51 – 65 accounted for 26%, while complainants aged of 19 – 34 represented 23%. Complainants who were 66 and older represented 10%, and 1% did not provide their age (recorded as Not Stated).

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS - Intakes and Preliminary Inquiries

Table 9 - Intakes by Ground of Discrimination Cited - Section 2(2), 2025

Ground	No. of Grounds	%
Race	28	8
Place of Origin	44	12
Colour	4	1
Ethnic or National Ori-gins	52	14
Sex	70	19
Sexual Orientation	3	1
Marital Status	6	2
Domestic Partnership	1	-
Disability	64	18
Family Status	31	9
Religion	5	1
Beliefs	8	2
Political Opinions	6	2
Criminal Record	10	3
*Pregnancy	12	3
**Age	15	4
Total	359	100

Note 1 - * The right to no less favourable treatment because of sex includes the right to no less favourable treatment because a woman is or may become pregnant. These figures have been separated from the protected ground sex to identify that the issue raised related to pregnancy.

Note 2 - ** Protection afforded in Section 4 and Section 5.

Note 3 - Not included within the statistics for intakes are those where the complainant did not state or identify a ground. The numbers provided reflect statistics for grounds as self-identified.

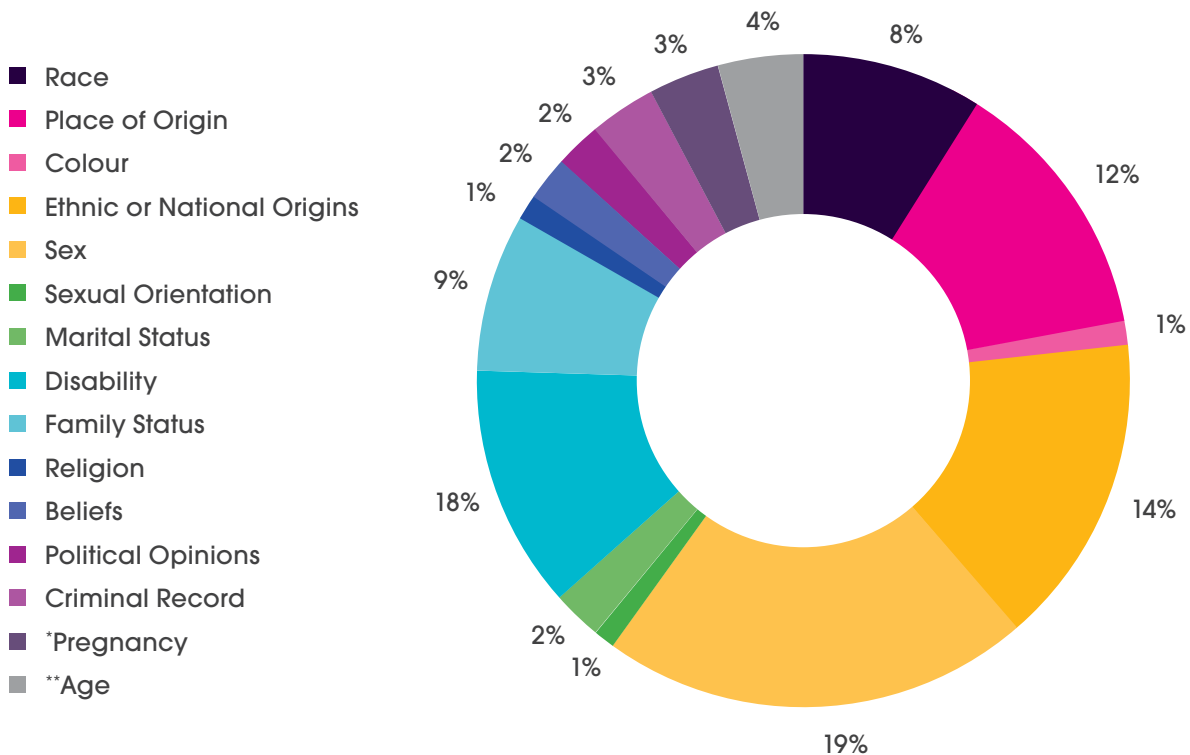
Note 4 - Percentage totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

Note 5 - The “-” signifies a percentage of less than 1 percent.

Note 6 - The statistics for intakes include both instances of direct and indirect discrimination, which were reported to the Commission and identified an applicable protected ground.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS - Intakes and Preliminary Inquiries

**Figure 9 – Percentage Distribution of Intakes by Ground of Discrimination
Cited – Section 2(2), 2025**



Note 1 – * The right to no less favourable treatment because of sex includes the right to no less favourable treatment because a woman is or may become pregnant. These figures have been separated from the protected ground sex to identify that the issue raised related to pregnancy.

Note 2 – ** Protection afforded in Section 4 and Section 5.

Note 3 – Not included within the statistics for intakes are those where the complainant did not state or identify a ground. The numbers provided reflect statistics for grounds as self-identified.

Note 4 – Percentage totals may not equal 100 due to rounding

Note 5 – Domestic Partnership has not been included in the graph as it was only identified in one instance, and the percentage total was less than 1 percent.

Note 6 – The statistics for intakes include both instances of direct and indirect discrimination, which were reported to the Commission and identified an applicable protected ground.

Pie chart displaying the percentage of intakes received by ground of discrimination in 2025 for categories of Race 8%, Place of Origin 12%, Colour 1%, Ethnic or National Origins 14%, Sex 19%, Sexual Orientation 1%, Marital Status 2%, Disability 18%, Family Status 9%, Religion 1%, Beliefs 2%, Political Opinions 2%, Criminal Record 3%, Pregnancy 3%, and Age 4%.

Table 9 and Figure 9 illustrate the percentage distribution of intakes received by ground of discrimination.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS - Intakes and Preliminary Inquiries

In 2025, the most commonly identified protected grounds were:

- Sex (19%)
- Disability (18%)
- Ethnic or national origins (14%)
- Place of origin (12%)

These were followed by:

- Family status (9%)
- Race (8%)

In comparison to previous reporting periods, the following observations have been made:

- Reports involving the protected ground of sex have increased significantly over the past few years. In 2022, sex was identified five times, representing 10% of all intakes identified. This rose to 20 reports, which accounted for 19% of the intakes in 2023. In 2024, that figure more than doubled to 42 instances where sex was identified, representing 15% of all intakes. In 2025, it increased further to 70 intakes, representing 19% of all identified intakes. Overall, this upward trend suggests a growing concern around sex-based discrimination and harassment in Bermuda.
 - The protected ground of sex was primarily associated with allegations of sexual harassment (*Section 9*) and discrimination in employment (*Section 6(1)*) such as recruitment, hiring, dismissal, and pay).
- A similar trend has been observed with the protected ground of **disability**, with a steady increase in intakes over recent years. In 2023, disability was identified in 12 intakes at 11% of all intakes. This increased sharply in 2024 to 47 intakes, representing 17% of all intakes identified. In 2025, the number increased further to 64 intakes, representing 18% of all intakes identified in that year. Overall, this trend points to evolving concerns related to disability discrimination.
 - The protected ground of disability was primarily associated with allegations of discrimination within the provision of goods, facilities, and services (*Section 5*) and discrimination in employment (*Section 6(1)*), such as recruitment, hiring, dismissal, training, promotions, and terms or conditions of employment).
- Reports identifying **ethnic or national origins** have increased for the second year in a row. In 2023, the ground was identified in 5 intakes representing 5% of all intakes, while this rose steeply in 2024 to 38 intakes representing 14% of all intakes identified. In 2025, the number increased again to 52 intakes, representing 14% of all intakes identified. Overall, this trend shows a continued rise in concerns related to ethnic or national origin discrimination.
 - The protected ground of ethnic or national origins was primarily associated with allegations of discrimination within the provision of goods, facilities, and services (*Section 5*).
- For the eighth straight year, complainants have identified sex, disability, and variations of place of origin, and ethnic or national origins on a more frequent basis than others.



STATISTICAL ANALYSIS - Intakes and Preliminary Inquiries

The data within Table 9 and Figure 9 include instances where intakes identified both direct discrimination (*Section 2(2)(a) of the Act*) and indirect discrimination (*Section 2(2)(b) of the Act*). Most cases involving indirect discrimination were linked to disability. However, they also included protected grounds such as *pregnancy, place of origin, sex, ethnic or national origins, family status, beliefs, and religion*.

Table 10 - Intakes by Area of Discrimination Cited, 2025

Area	No. of Areas	%
Section 3 - Discrimination in Notices	3	1
Section 4 - Premises (Real Estate)	15	5
Section 5 - Goods, Facilities & Services	48	17
Section 6 (1) - Employment	86	31
Section 6 (2) - Employment	1	-
Section 6 (3) - Job Advertisements	1	-
Section 6 (4) - Employment Applications	4	1
Section 6B - Harassment	36	13
Section 7 - Organisations	5	2
Section 8 - Reprisal	12	4
Section 8A - Hate Speech	8	3
Section 9 - Sexual Harassment	18	6
Employment Related	40	14
Total	277	100

Note 1 - Some areas of discrimination within the Human Rights Act, 1981 are not included in Table 10 because there was no information collected in 2025 for these areas.

Note 2 - Not included within the statistics for intakes are those where the complainant did not state or identify an area of discrimination. The numbers provided reflect statistics for declared areas of discrimination.

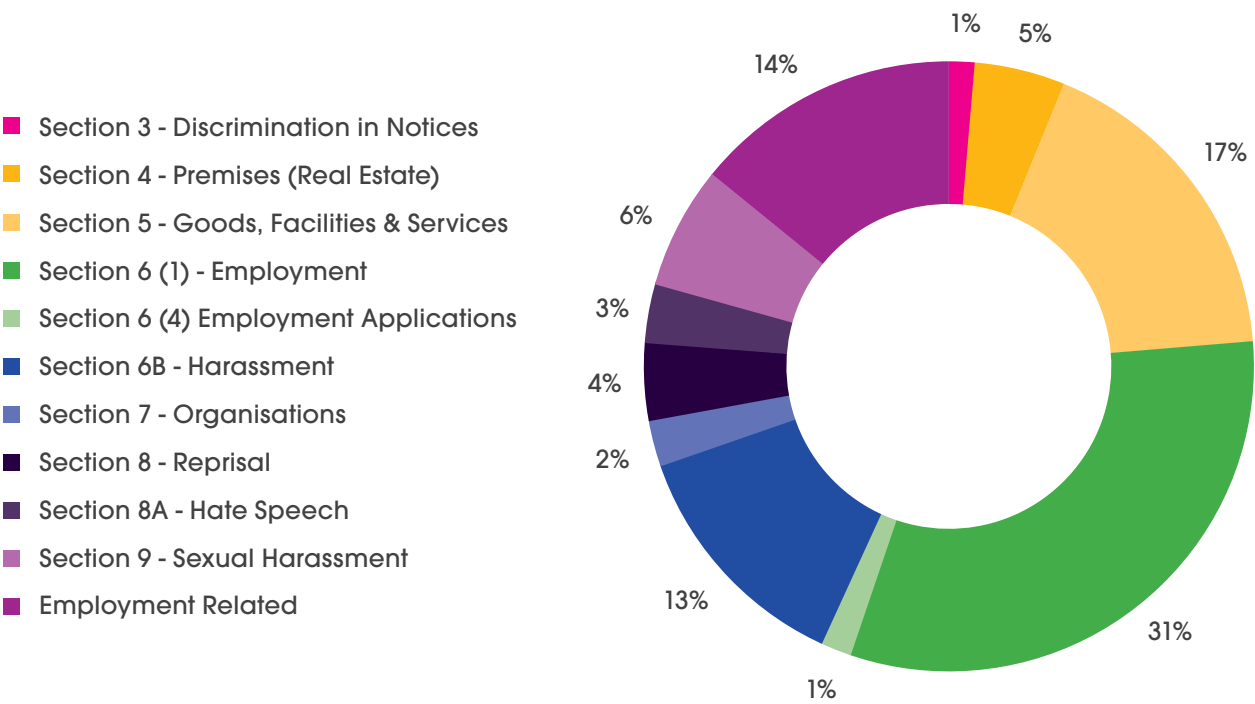
Note 3 - Percentage totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Note 4 - The "-" signifies a percentage of less than 1 percent.

Note 5 - During previous reporting periods, Section 4 was listed as referencing Land.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS - Intakes and Preliminary Inquiries

Figure 10 – Percentage Distribution of Intakes by Area of Discrimination Cited, 2025



- Note 1 – Some areas of discrimination within the Human Rights Act, 1981 are not included in Figure 10 because there was no information collected in 2025 for these areas.
- Note 2 – Not included within the statistics for intakes are those where the complainant did not state or identify an area of discrimination. The numbers provided reflect statistics for declared areas of discrimination.
- Note 3 – Percentage totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.
- Note 4 – Section 6(2) – Employment and Section 6(3) Employment Applications have not been included in the graph as they were identified in one instance each and the percentage totals were less than one percent.
- Note 5 – During previous reporting periods, Section 4 was listed as referencing Land.

Pie chart displaying the percentage of intakes received by area of discrimination in 2025 for categories of Section 3 – Notices 1%, Section 4 – Premises (Real Estate) 5%, Section 5 – Goods, Facilities, and Services 17%, Section 6(1) – Employment 31%, Section 6(4) – Employment Applications 1%, Section 6B(1) – Harassment 13%, Section 7 – Organisations 2%, Section 8 – Reprisal 4%, Section 8A – Hate Speech 3%, Section 9 – Sexual Harassment 6%, and Employment Related 14%.

Table 10 and Figure 10 illustrate the percentage distribution of intakes received by the area of discrimination.



STATISTICAL ANALYSIS - Intakes and Preliminary Inquiries

In 2025, of the areas of discrimination within Part II of the Act that were identified by complainants, Section 6(1) – **Employment** accounted for 31% of the identified areas of discrimination. Discrimination related to *Goods, Facilities and Services*, citing Section 5(1) of the Act, was also frequently reported, making up 17% of cases. Workplace harassment, included in Section 6B(1) of the Act, was another common concern, accounting for 13% of reported cases. Largely, employment-related issues, access to services, and workplace harassment were the most frequently raised concerns by complainants.

The Commission has continued to capture intakes that raised concerns about unfair employment practices, but do not identify an area of discrimination under the Act. Intakes of this nature are logged and categorised as **Employment Related**. In 2025, these intakes represented 14% of all intakes. While this is a 2% decrease from 2024, the total number of matters increased from 34 in 2024 to 40 in 2025. These intakes often identified employment related issues such as *outstanding wages or benefits, unfair employment practices or policies (not alleged to be discriminatory in nature), unfair dismissal (not alleged to be discriminatory in nature)*.

In comparison to previous reporting periods, the following observations have been made:

- **Since 2019, Employment, Section 6(1) of the Act, has consistently been the most commonly reported area of discrimination.** In 2023, there were 38 intakes related to employment, representing 30% of all intakes identified in that year. This total grew to 56 in 2024, representing 27% of the intakes identified in that year. In 2025, the total number rose significantly to 86 intakes, representing 31% of all reported cases that year.
 - The protected grounds of *disability, race and sex* were primarily associated with allegations of discrimination in employment (*such as recruitment, hiring, dismissal, pay, training, and terms or conditions of employment*).
- **Since 2021, the total number of complainants identifying Section 5(1) of the Act – Goods, Facilities and Services, has steadily increased each year.** The number of cases rose from 7 in 2021 to 10 in 2022, 20 in 2023, 31 in 2024, and finally up to 48 in 2025. Further, since 2023, this area of discrimination has consistently been one of the top three areas of discrimination identified by complainants.
 - The protected grounds of *disability* and *ethnic or national origins* were primarily associated with allegations of discrimination within the provision of goods, facilities, and services.
 - Through ongoing education and outreach, it has become clear that discriminatory experiences within the provision of goods, facilities, and services in Bermuda are underreported. This is largely because individuals are unaware that what they are experiencing is discrimination. Others may also fail to appreciate that service providers have a responsibility to ensure services are provided in a non-discriminatory manner. *This would include service providers ensuring that their services are provided in an accessible manner for people with disabilities. The duty to accommodate process is a relevant consideration, which ought to be observed by service providers. The Human Rights Commission is available as a resource for issues such as these.*

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS - Intakes and Preliminary Inquiries

- **Section 6B(1) of the Act – Harassment Within the Workplace** has been one of the top three areas of discrimination identified by complainants since 2021.

- The protected grounds of *place of origin and disability* were primarily associated with allegations of workplace harassment.

- The Commission has also observed various instances where employers do not have a policy statement against bullying as required by Section 10B of the Employment Act 2000. In those instances, complainants were referred to discuss this further with the Labour Relations Office due to their employer or former employer's failure with respect to this statutory requirement.

- **In 2025, reports of sexual harassment under Section 9 of the Act increased significantly.** The number of cases doubled from 9 in 2024, representing 4% of all identified areas of discrimination, to 18 in 2025, representing 6%.

- **There was a noticeable increase in complaints related to hate speech, under Section 8A of the Act, in 2025.** This rose from one case in 2024, which accounted for 1% of all identified areas of discrimination, to eight cases in 2025, representing 3% of all identified areas of discrimination.

- With respect to complaints alleging indirect discrimination, these were mainly reported as being associated with **Section 5(1) – Goods, Facilities, and Services** and **Section 6(1) – Employment.**



Investigations

In 2025, the Office of the Commission conducted **24 investigations, up from 22 in 2024**. Of these 24 matters, 13 were newly approved and referred for investigation in 2025, while 11 were ongoing cases approved in previous years. Twelve of the 24 investigation matters closed in 2025, with 9 referred to a Tribunal and 3 resolved via the Commission's Voluntary Mediation Programme.

Table 11 - Active Investigations by Ground of Discrimination - Section 2 (2) 2025

Ground	No. of Grounds	%
(i) Race	1	3
(i) Place of Origin	3	11
(i) Colour	2	7
(i) Ethnic or National Origins	2	7
(ii) Sex	7	25
(iii) Marital Status	1	3
(iiiA) Disability	5	18
(iv) Family Status	3	10
(vi) Religion	3	10
(vi) Political Opinion	1	3
(vii) Criminal Record	1	3
Total	29	100

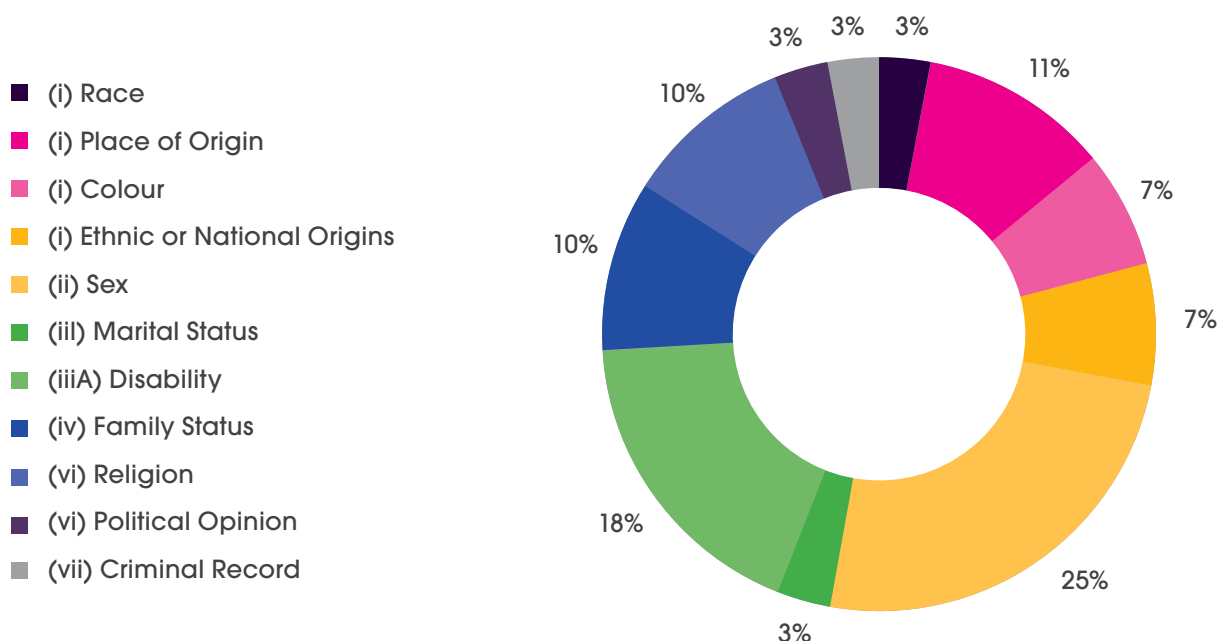
Note 1 - Complainants may identify multiple areas of discrimination (and within each area cite multiple allegations of discrimination) and thus, the total may be greater than the total number of investigations.

Note 2 - Percentage totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Note 3 - There were six complaints of indirect discrimination identified by Complainants. Complaints of indirect discrimination are provided in Section 2(2)(b). For these matters, the Complainants identified indirect discrimination based on the protected grounds of religion (2 instances), disability (3 instances), and family status (1 instance). These instances have been incorporated into the data table.

Investigations

Figure 11 – Percentage Distribution of Active Investigations by Ground of Discrimination - Section 2 (2), 2025



Note 1 – Complainants may identify multiple areas of discrimination (and within each area cite multiple allegations of discrimination) and thus, the total may be greater than the total number of investigations.

Note 2 – Percentage totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Note 3 – There were six complaints of indirect discrimination identified by Complainants. Complaints of indirect discrimination are provided in Section 2(2)(b). For these matters, the Complainants identified indirect discrimination based on the protected grounds of religion (2 instances), disability (3 instances), and family status (1 instance). These instances have been incorporated into the data table.

Pie chart displaying the percentage of Active Investigations by Ground of Discrimination in 2025: Race, 3%; Place of Origin, 11%; Colour, 7%; Ethnic or National Origins, 7%; Sex, 25%; Marital Status, 3%; Disability, 18%; Family Status, 10%; Religion, 10%; Political Opinion, 3%; Criminal Record, 3%.

Table 11 and Figure 11 illustrate that the protected ground of sex was the most frequently identified and made up 25% of the matters under investigation in 2025. Disability accounted for 18% of matters, and place of origin 11%. Family status and religion each represented 10% of the investigations. Colour and ethnic or national origins comprised 7% of investigations respectively, while the remaining grounds accounted for 12% of the investigations at 3% each. There were six complaints of indirect discrimination provided in Section 2(2)(b), which were based on the protected grounds of religion (two instances), disability (three instances), and family status (one instance). These instances have been incorporated into the data table.

Investigations

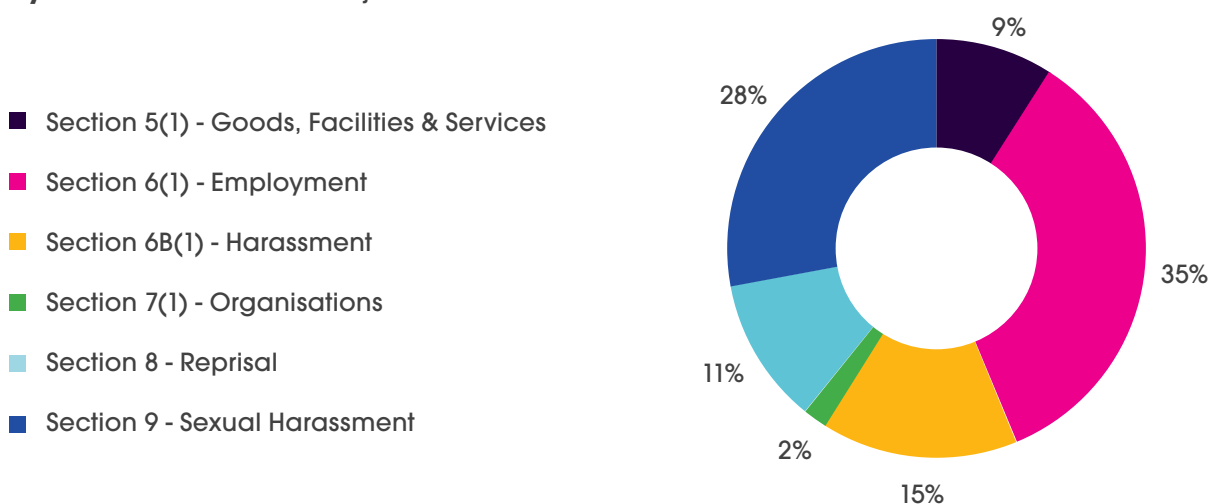
Table 12 – Active Investigations by Area of Discrimination, 2025

Area	No. of Areas	%
Section 5(1) – Goods, Facilities & Services	4	9
Section 6(1) – Employment	16	35
Section 6B(1) – Harassment	7	15
Section 7(1) – Organisations	1	2
Section 8 – Reprisal	5	11
Section 9 – Sexual Harassment	13	28
Total	46	100

Note 1 – Complainants may identify multiple areas of discrimination and thus, the total may be greater than the total number of investigations.

Note 2 – Percentage totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Figure 12 – Percentage Distribution of Active Investigations by Area of Discrimination, 2025



Note 1 – Complainants may identify multiple areas of discrimination and, as such, the total may be greater than the total number of investigations.

Note 2 – Percentage totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Pie chart displaying the percentage of Active Investigations by Area of Discrimination in 2025: Section 5(1) – Goods, Facilities, and Services, 9%; Section 6(1) – Employment, 35%; Section 6B(1) – Harassment, 15%; Section 7(1) – Organisations, 2%; Section 8 – Reprisal, 11%; Section 9 – Sexual Harassment, 28%.

Investigations

Table 12 and Figure 12 illustrate that most 2025 investigations involved discrimination in employment, which accounted for 35% of cases.

Investigations in the area of sexual harassment represented 28% of the investigations. The complaints concerning discrimination in employment included issues such as: refusal to refer or recruit; dismissal, demotion, or refusal to employ or continue to employ; denial of training, promotion, or transfer; paying an employee substantially less than another for the same work; and imposing special terms or conditions of employment. Harassment in the workplace accounted for 15% of investigations in 2025. The remaining areas included complaints of reprisal, representing 11%, discrimination in the provision of goods, facilities, and services, accounting for 9%, and 2% in the area of organisations.

Section 15(1) – Investigation

When a complaint is determined to have grounds for a possible case of discrimination (prima facie case), the respondent(s) are notified of the complaint and invited to respond to the allegations. Once a response is received, the Executive Officer reviews all the information collected throughout the Complaint Received Stage to determine whether to investigate or dismiss the complaint.

Under Section 15(1) of the Act, the Executive Officer has the power to investigate a complaint if it appears that unlawful discrimination may have occurred or if there appear to be reasonable grounds to believe that the Act has been contravened.

If a complaint is approved for investigation, the Executive Officer notifies all parties and sets the terms of reference for the investigation. The Executive Officer delegates investigative functions to an Investigations Officer, who conducts the investigation and collects information from the appropriate parties and witnesses. During the investigation, all parties to the complaint are afforded the opportunity to provide documents, witnesses, and their own perspectives. In some cases, the Executive Officer utilises the powers available under Section 16 of the Act to collect, inspect, and examine records, while respecting any valid claims of privilege. At the conclusion of the investigation, the Investigator reports all findings to the Executive Officer.

Before an investigation begins, parties are invited to resolve the dispute through the Commission's Voluntary Mediation Programme. Throughout the complaint process, Officers continuously evaluate whether they have any conflicts of interest in handling the complaint. Further, Officers understand that it is imperative for the Commission to maintain neutrality, ensuring fairness throughout the entire investigative process.



Referral Process

The Commission provides a robust triage and referral service to help members of the public find the most appropriate support to resolve their matter, whether it is a complaint or query. Where another organisation may be better able to assist, the Commission helps connect individuals to their services.

In 2025, the Commission mainly referred members of the public to seek independent legal advice from a Private Attorney. The Commission also referred individuals to the Labour Relations Office and Bermuda Is Love (Registered Charity #1051) for additional support.

Other entities that formed part of the Referral Process in 2025 appear below:

- Bermuda Bar Association
- Bermuda Health Council
- Bermuda Police Service
- Bermuda Public Services Union
- Beyond Inclusion (Registered Charity #1052)
- Coalition for the Protection of Children (Registered Charity #334)
- Community Centre on Angle Street
- Criminal Injuries Compensation Board
- Department of Child and Family Services
- Department of Consumer Affairs
- Department of Corrections
- Department of Financial Assistance
- Department of Health
- Department of Immigration
- Department of Legal Aid Office
- Department of Pension Commission
- Employee Assistance Program
- Government House
- HOME (Registered Charity #1022)
- Information Commissioner's Office
- MASC Bermuda
- Ministry of Justice
- Ministry of National Security
- National Youth Policy Working Group
- Office of the Ombudsman for Bermuda
- Office of the Privacy Commissioner
- Office of Project Management and Procurement
- Police Complaints Authority
- Private Attorney
- Project Action (Registered Charity #561)
- Salvation Army (Registered Charity #93)
- Treatment of Offenders Board
- Women's Resource Centre (Registered Charity #267)

Voluntary Mediation Programme

A core function of the Human Rights Commission is to help people resolve disputes in alternative and constructive ways, including through mediation. Where it is appropriate, parties are offered mediation under Section 14J of the Human Rights Act, 1981.

Mediation is a practical process that brings parties seeking to resolve complaints together with a neutral mediator to help them move from a conflict situation to a mutually acceptable resolution through open dialogue. Where parties express an interest in participating in the Commission's Voluntary Mediation Programme, a conflict check is conducted with potential mediators to ensure neutrality. Parties are given the choice to select a mediator, or the Commission assigns a non-conflicted mediator to

facilitate the mediation process. The process is confidential, free of charge, and always voluntary.

In 2025, mediation was offered in 20 cases. Of these, 11 were either rejected or the Commission did not receive a response to the offer. Four matters were successfully resolved through mediation, three did not reach a resolution, and two remain ongoing in the next reporting period of the Voluntary Mediation Programme.

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SUCCESSFULLY MATTERS THROUGH MEDIATION

Four matters successfully resolved, three did not reach a resolution, and two remain ongoing in the next reporting period of the Voluntary Mediation Programme.



Complaint Summaries

Anonymised Examples of Complaints Received by the Commission

1. Discrimination based on Age: Employment

An individual contacted the Commission with concerns about possible discrimination under the Human Rights Act, 1981 (Act). Specifically, they alleged that they were at risk of losing their job at a local care facility due to their age, as they were over 65. They also felt they were experiencing less favourable treatment than others because of it. While age is a protected ground under the Act, its application is limited to certain sections. So, although they identified a relevant area of discrimination [see Section 6(1)(b)] and a protected ground within the Act, their matter was ultimately dismissed. For the purposes of the Act, the protected ground of age is applicable only to Sections 4 and 5 of the Act. Efforts are underway to provide the Government with recommendations to expand the protection of age-related discrimination to additional areas within the Act. In the meantime, the individual was working with the Labour Relations Office about their impending termination and was encouraged to continue seeking support through that process.

2. Discrimination based on Criminal Record: Real Estate (Premises)

An individual contacted the Commission after experiencing an issue while viewing a rental property, where the prospective landlord raised concerns about past driving offences that they found online. When asked, the individual confirmed the convictions and questioned why they were relevant. The prospective landlord then informed them that

they were not willing to rent to them because of their criminal background. The individual raised concerns with the landlord's decision, indicating that they would seek guidance from the Commission. The individual stated that they did not wish to file a complaint; however, they were seeking guidance with respect to the Human Rights Act, 1981 (Act), to raise the issue further with the prospective landlord.

The Commission discussed Section 2(2)(a)(vii) of the Act – *criminal record*, and section 4(1)(a) of the Act, which prohibits discrimination based on criminal record against any person who is seeking to acquire any accommodation, premises or other land by refusing or deliberately omitting to dispose of it to them, or failing to dispose of it to them. The Commission also shared that the protected ground of criminal record is protected, except where there are valid reasons relevant to the nature of the particular offence for which they were convicted that would justify the difference in treatment.

The individual was notified about the time limits for filing a human rights complaint and provided with resources to assist with filing one, if they wished to do so in the future.

3. Discrimination based on Age: Workplace Harassment

An individual contacted the Commission about what they believed to be workplace harassment prohibited by the Human Rights Act, 1981. They shared that they submitted several internal complaints about their supervisor's behaviour, but no corrective

Complaint Summaries

action had been taken. They alleged that they were subjected to a campaign of bullying and harassment within the workplace and asserted that they were experiencing unlawful harassment in the form of persistent and vexatious comments and conduct that was unwelcome. The complainant indicated that most of their colleagues were twice or three times their age and they attributed the treatment to being the youngest employee on the team. They described various instances of harassment, examples of ageism and cross-generational issues that existed within the workplace. The protected ground of *age* is only applicable to section 4 and section 5 of the Act. Efforts are underway to provide the Government with recommendations to expand the protection of age-related discrimination to additional areas within the Act.

4. Discrimination based on Disability: Goods, Facilities and Services

An individual contacted the Commission in relation to what they described as discrimination within the provision of goods, facilities, and services with respect to their child and a local educational facility in Bermuda. The individual reported that they were informed by the educational facility that their child was unable to continue within the school due to support needs associated with the child's disability. The individual sought assistance from the Commission with respect to resolving this issue.

The Commission shared resources concerning discrimination based on disability set out within Section 2(2) of the Human Rights Act, 1981 (Act), and protections from discrimination within the provision of goods, facilities, and services set out within Section 5(1) of the Act. The Commission shared that the nature of what was described, i.e., *the exclusion of the child from school due to their disability*, may amount to a contravention of the Act. The Commission also provided

resources pertaining to inclusive design, the duty to accommodate, and potential avenues to assist with finding a resolution.

These resources underscored the need for services, including educational facilities, to be designed to include everyone and adapted to meet different needs in a way that promotes integration and full participation. The Commission shared that education providers have a legal duty to support students with disabilities by removing barriers that could limit their access to equal opportunities, access, and benefits in the learning environment. The principles of accommodation include:

- (a) the respect for dignity
- (b) individualisation; and
- (c) integration and full participation.

The duty to accommodate has both a substantive and procedural component.

The procedure to assess an accommodation (*the process*) is as important as the substantive content of the accommodation (*the accommodation provided*). A failure to give any thought or consideration to the issue of accommodation, including what, if any, steps could be taken, may be deemed to constitute a failure to satisfy the 'procedural' duty to accommodate, and a failure in the procedural duty to accommodate can lead to a finding of a breach of the Act. Further, the failure to perform either component of the duty is a failure to carry out the duty to accommodate.

Procedurally, a school is under an obligation, once a disability is identified, to determine what kind of modifications or accommodations might be required to allow a student to fully participate in school. The substantive duty requires the school to make the modifications or provide accommodation necessary to allow a student to fully participate, such as academic modifications, accommodation, and behavioural strategies,



Complaint Summaries

if required, up to the point of unreasonable hardship. To fulfil the procedural component of the duty to accommodate, there needs to be meaningful interaction between the parties that focuses on the student's needs and consideration of whether the education provider can accommodate those needs.

The United Nations' Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has expressed its support of Universal Design for Learning. It has encouraged States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to adopt the universal design for learning approach, which consists of a set of principles providing teachers and other staff with a structure for creating adaptable learning environments and developing instruction to meet the diverse needs of all learners.

The Commission later learned that the individual was able to reach a resolution and resolved the issues identified.

5. Sexual Harassment: Employment

An individual contacted the Commission to report various instances of sexual harassment by their manager in the workplace. The individual indicated that their employer did not have a sexual harassment policy and that there was no one more senior that they could turn to within the organisation about their concerns. The behaviour they described involved repeated sexual comments and conduct, which satisfied the definition of sexual harassment set out in Section 9(4) of the Act – *"For the purposes of this section, a person harasses another sexually if he engages in sexual comment or sexual conduct towards that other which is vexatious and which he knows, or ought reasonably to know, is unwelcome."*

The Executive Officer determined that the complaint appeared to disclose a prima facie case of sexual harassment. The matter proceeded to the Complaint Received Stage.

However, shortly after, both parties reached a resolution.

6. Discrimination based on Sex: Employment / Goods, Facilities, and Services

An individual contacted the Commission to better understand their rights after experiencing what they believed to be discrimination, within the provision of goods, facilities, and services, while trying to access services at a restaurant. They shared that the service-provider treated them less favourably than other patrons because they are transgender. The Commission explained the Human Rights Act, 1981, shared resources with respect to avenues available to them, including protections within the Human Rights Act, 1981, and details on how to make a complaint.

An employer also contacted the Commission with questions about a transgender employee. They were concerned about workplace safety as other employees had learned that the individual is transgender and asked whether they would be in violation of the Act if they terminated the individual. While the Commission does not provide legal advice to members of the public, the Commission is able to share guidance on compliance with the Act. The Commission identified the relevant prohibitions within the Act, namely Section 2(2) and section 6(1)(b), and indicated that the organisation may be found to have contravened the Act if they were to terminate the individual because they were transgender. The Commission also shared resources around how the organisation could better support employees, protect them from discrimination or harassment, and steps that could be taken to foster an inclusive environment within the workplace.

Complaint Summaries

7. Discrimination based on Sex (Pregnancy) / Family Status: Recruitment

An individual contacted the Commission about concerns they experienced during the recruitment phase for a role they applied for. The complainant, a Bermudian woman living in Bermuda, felt that aspects of the application and interview process were discriminatory. She also shared additional information regarding the experiences of others who applied for roles with the same organisation. Specifically, the application form asked whether candidates had children, and during the interview, she was asked if she was currently pregnant. Through discussions with the complainant, Section 6(4) of the Human Rights Act, 1981 (Act) was identified as read with the protected grounds within Section 2(2) of the Act – sex and family status.

Section 6(4) of the Act, also prohibits the following – *“no person shall use or circulate any form of application for employment or make any written or oral inquiry that expresses either directly or indirectly any discriminatory limitation, specification, or preference or that requires an applicant for employment to furnish any information concerning any of the matters set out in Section 2.”* As the complaint was filed outside of the six-month period to do so, the Executive Officer has asked the complainant to explain the delay in filing their complaint and whether they believe anyone would be prejudiced by the delay. This matter is still ongoing.

8. Discrimination based on Place of Origin: Real Estate (Premises)

An individual contacted the Commission about a housing matter after being told by a prospective landlord that they would not be rented a condominium because they were not Bermudian. The prospective landlord

indicated that they were prioritising renting to Bermudians and asserted that they were able to do so. The Commission shared that this may amount to discrimination and offered resources, such as Sections 2(2) and 4(1)(a) of the Human Rights Act, 1981. The individual chose not to pursue a formal complaint.

9. Discrimination based on Political Opinions: Employment

An individual contacted the Commission after being dismissed from their job, which they believed was due to their political opinions. The individual shared that they had been openly advocating for change on various local issues and were vocal with respect to their political opinions on various topics. The individual shared that they were subsequently penalised by their employer, who raised concerns about their political opinions, and they were eventually terminated. Following an examination of the material provided, the Executive Officer determined that the matter appeared to disclose a prima facie case of discrimination. The matter advanced to the Complaint Received Stage for further review to determine whether an investigation should take place. The Commission identified Section 2(2)(a)(vi) of the Human Rights Act, 1981, and Section 6(1)(b) as relevant.



Human Rights Consultations and Guidance

The Commission functions both as a complaints-handling authority and a public resource, promoting understanding of human rights obligations and supporting compliance with the Human Rights Act, 1981. Individuals, community groups, and organisations regularly seek consultation and guidance on matters relating to the Act and the responsibilities it establishes.

During the reporting period, the Commission participated in approximately twenty policy reviews and consultations. Issues addressed included international obligations, hiring practices, legislative amendments, transgender rights in Bermuda, age discrimination, and disability rights.

Examples from the reporting year are below.

Constitutional Reform Process

In 2025, the Human Rights Commission participated in the Government's constitutional reform consultation process, following an invitation to provide input on the draft reform framework. The Commission welcomed the opportunity to contribute to a review that sought to strengthen the policy foundations and procedural approach, underpinning constitutional reform. The Commission looks forward to participation in the substantive consultation in 2026.

HIV Criminalisation and International Human Rights Obligations International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

During the reporting period, the Commission engaged in consultations with members of the Department of Health regarding the Criminalisation of HIV in Bermuda, with specific reference to Section 324 of the Criminal Code 1907.

These discussions were informed by recommendations from the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO), which advises that Section 324 should be reviewed, revised, or repealed, noting that it is inconsistent with Bermuda's obligations under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

International standards recommend that criminal law only be applied in cases of intentional HIV transmission where the individual knows their status, intends to transmit HIV, and transmission occurs. The Commission emphasised the importance of aligning Bermuda's laws with these human rights obligations and supported international recommendations, advanced by UNAIDS, UNCESCR, and other global bodies, for review, revision, or repeal of Section 324.

Human Rights Consultations and Guidance

For further information, please visit:



HIV Criminalisation

Human rights fact sheet series 2024.

<https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/documents/2024/01-hiv-human-rights-factsheet-criminalization>

Pay Transparency and Equal Pay

In 2025, the Commission engaged with the Ministry of Economy and Labour and the Ministry of Youth, Social Development, and Seniors on pay transparency and equal pay issues in Bermuda.

Discussions focused on how pay secrecy can perpetuate unfair and discriminatory pay practices. The Commission contributed to dialogue on transparency measures designed to increase openness and accountability in salaries and wages.

Key measures considered included:

- Prohibiting employers from seeking an applicant's pay history.
- Requiring employers to include expected pay or a salary range in publicly advertised job postings.

- Protecting employees from retaliation when they:
 - Ask about their own pay.
 - Request information about pay policies.
 - Disclose their pay to other employees.
 - Report an employer's compliance or non-compliance with pay transparency requirements.
- Request that an employer comply with pay transparency requirements.

The Commission noted that statutory pay transparency requirements can help break down deep-rooted cultures of pay secrecy and recommended incorporating these provisions into the Employment Act 2000, consistent with approaches adopted in other jurisdictions with similar human rights protections.

“It is certain, in any case, that ignorance, allied with power, is the most ferocious enemy justice can have.”

James Baldwin, Writer and Civil Rights Activist





Human Rights Consultations and Guidance

Age Discrimination in Bermuda

In 2025, the Commission continued to hear from individuals experiencing age-related challenges in the workplace, particularly in employment settings. Concerns included situations where individuals felt they were:

- Not hired because they were perceived as being “too young” or “too old” for a position;
- Terminated from employment on the basis of age, including through mandatory retirement practices;
- Subjected to harassment for being among the youngest or oldest employees; and
- Treated unfairly through discriminatory terms or conditions of employment linked to age.

As part of its mandate, the Commission is committed to strengthening and expanding protections under the Human Rights Act, 1981, to support a more inclusive Bermuda.

To inform this work, the Commission began preparing for a public consultation on age discrimination in Bermuda, which launched in 2026. Throughout 2025, the Commission engaged community stakeholders to design the consultation, aiming to better understand the lived experiences of the public, gather perspectives, and develop recommendations to the Government on expanding age discrimination protections.

In preparation for the public survey, discussions with stakeholders focused on key concepts, including:

- **Age discrimination:** Less favourable or differential treatment based on their age.
- **Ageism:** Stereotypes, assumptions, or prejudices about people based on age, which can affect individuals of all ages and lead to discriminatory behaviour.
- **Intergenerational equity:** Ensuring fairness between generations so policies and practices do not disproportionately disadvantage any age group.

The Commission will continue engaging the community and relevant stakeholders to ensure that Bermuda’s human rights framework evolves in a way that supports dignity, fairness, and inclusion for people of all ages.

Disability and the Workplace

During the reporting period, the Commission received several inquiries relating to disability and employment. In one case, an individual with a disability sought guidance on finding work and was supported through engagement with the Department of Workforce Development.

The Commission, along with the Department of Workforce Development, confirmed that an integrated employment placement process is in place. This process supports individuals with a wide range of abilities who are seeking employment by identifying their interests and skills, completing an assessment, and exploring suitable job opportunities. Referrals to the Department of Workforce Development and other relevant stakeholders that offer employment-related support were also provided.

In addition, the Commission shared guidance with the individual on the duty to accommodate, emphasising that it is a shared and cooperative process. All parties are expected to act in good faith, share relevant information, and work together to find reasonable accommodation options.

However, individuals seeking accommodation are not expected to design accommodation solutions themselves or disclose more disability-related information than necessary for the process. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the accommodation provider to implement appropriate solutions, with the cooperation of the individual, up to the point of undue hardship. Once appropriate supports are in place, the individual is expected to fulfil the essential duties and requirements of the role.

Human Rights Consultations and Guidance

Roles and Responsibilities in the Accommodation Process

Individuals seeking accommodation are expected to:

- Communicate their accommodation needs as clearly as possible.
- Provide relevant information about functional limitations, including input from healthcare professionals where appropriate.
- Participate in discussions about possible solutions and accommodation options.
- Work cooperatively with experts involved in the accommodation process.
- Meet agreed-upon performance expectations once accommodations are in place.
- Stay engaged to ensure recommendations remain effective.

Employers and accommodation providers are expected to:

- Be alert to potential accommodation needs, even if no formal request has been made.
- Consider accommodation requests in good faith, unless there are legitimate reasons not to do so.
- Seek expert advice where necessary.
- Actively explore reasonable solutions and alternatives.
- Keep appropriate records of accommodation requests and communicate clearly throughout the process.
- Respect confidentiality and only request information necessary to respond to the accommodation request.
- Implement accommodation measures in a timely manner, up to the point of undue hardship.

The Commission will continue to engage with individuals, employers, and partners to promote practical, rights-based approaches to accommodation and inclusive workplaces.

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POLICY REVIEWS AND CONSULTATIONS

During the reporting period, the Commission participated in approximately twenty policy reviews and consultations. Issues addressed included international obligations, hiring practices, legislative amendments, transgender rights in Bermuda, age discrimination, and disability rights.



S&A Selection & Appointment Committee

The Selection and Appointment Committee (SAC) is responsible for independently recruiting, selecting, and appointing Human Rights Commissioners and members of the Human Rights Tribunal.

In undertaking this work, the Committee adheres to internationally recognised standards for National Human Rights Institutions, as outlined in the United Nations Paris Principles. Its recruitment process is designed to be open and transparent, with public advertisements that invite qualified members of the community to apply and be fairly considered for appointment.

The Head of the SAC is Seth Darrell and includes committee members Cherie Dill, Chiara Nannini, Dennis Pimentel, and MP Robin Tucker.

Reflecting on the 2025 recruitment process, the Head of the Selection and Appointment Committee highlighted the Committee's commitment to transparency, broad outreach, and independence.

"In 2025, the Selection and Appointment Committee undertook its most extensive recruitment campaign to date, using a wide range of outreach methods, including radio, print media, engagement with community

organisations, and social media, to ensure that our call for applicants reached across Bermuda's community.

Our objective was to identify individuals with the judgment, integrity, and independence necessary to serve in a quasi-judicial role and uphold the standards expected of the Human Rights Tribunal.

The response reaffirmed our confidence that Bermuda has a strong pool of capable and committed individuals willing to serve when provided with clear information and an open opportunity to do so. The appointments made in 2025 reflect that commitment to independence, fairness, and public service.

I am grateful to my fellow Committee members, Cherie Dill, MP Robin Tucker, Chiara Nannini, and Dennis Pimentel, for their diligence throughout the process, and to all applicants who came forward. The willingness to serve is itself a reflection of the values the Tribunal exists to protect."



The Human Rights Tribunal is an independent body that hears and resolves complaints of alleged discrimination in a fair, impartial, and timely manner. The Tribunal carefully considers the evidence presented and makes findings of fact to determine whether unlawful discrimination has occurred.

Where the Tribunal finds that discrimination has taken place, it may order any party to take steps necessary to ensure full compliance with the *Human Rights Act* and to address any harm caused. This may include financial compensation or other corrective measures. Orders of the Tribunal are enforceable and are registered with the Supreme Court. Parties who wish to challenge a Tribunal decision may appeal to the Supreme Court in accordance with the *Human Rights (Appeals) Rules 2018*.

During the reporting period, nine matters were referred to the Human Rights Tribunal for adjudication.

Tribunal Panel Appointments

Tribunal Panel Members are appointed by an independent Selection and Appointment Committee for fixed terms.

• February 2025

Five Panel Members were appointed for a term of two years:

Amy Murray, Sarita Ebbin, Kate Fenwick, Kelly Hunt, and Samira Saya.

• September 2025

Ten Panel Members were appointed as follows:

One-year terms:

Christina Herrero (Chair), Steven White (Deputy Chair), and Claire van Overdijk

Two-year terms:

Christopher Cunningham, Sita Ingram, Casey Schuler, Changez Khan, and Ryan Robinson

Three-year terms:

Melvin Douglas and Dean Parris

• December 2025

One Panel Member was appointed for a three-year term:

Azuree Williams



Summary of Human Rights Tribunal Decisions

Overview

During the reporting period, the Human Rights Tribunal issued a decision in one matter. This decision will be available on the Human Rights Commission's website in the Resources section at www.humanrights.bm.

The summary below highlights this decision and is followed by an overview of the types of matters considered by the Tribunal in 2025.

Holly Dietz v. Fabian Minors (trading as Bermuda Pet Sitters)

(Preliminary Issue Decision)

Decision Date: August 22, 2025

Tribunal Panel: Fiona Bada (Chair), Steven White, and Chris Cunningham

Facts

The Complainant, Holly Dietz, was employed by the Respondent, Fabian Minors' business, Bermuda Pet Sitters. The Complainant made a complaint to the Human Rights Commission on February 11, 2016, and made complaints against their employer on March 9, 2016, and September 16, 2016, under the Employment Act 2000.

A decision of the Employment Tribunal was made on January 12, 2018 (Employment Tribunal Decision), and an appeal against the Employment Tribunal Decision was filed by the Complainant in the Supreme Court of Bermuda on January 30, 2018 (Appeal), which

was adjourned to a date to be fixed by order of the court dated September 27, 2018.

A directions hearing was held before the Human Rights Tribunal, but was adjourned pending the outcome of a hearing to determine the preliminary issue of *res judicata*, which was raised as a defence by the Respondent.

Preliminary Issue

The Tribunal was asked to determine whether, on the facts of the present case by virtue of the Employment Tribunal Decision, the doctrine of *res judicata* properly applies to prevent the Complainant from raising a discrimination complaint against the Respondent under the Human Rights Act, 1981. The Tribunal restated that the doctrine of *res judicata* holds that judicial decisions are final, which is based on the fundamental principle that it is unjust for a man to be vexed twice with litigation on the same subject matter coupled with the public interest in seeing an end to litigation.

This matter focused on issue estoppel, and the Tribunal firstly turned to whether they had the authority to make a determination of issue estoppel. The Tribunal set out that the doctrine of *res judicata* has been extended by analogy to the decisions of tribunals, which have jurisdiction under the law, and found that the defense could be raised before the Tribunal.

Summary of Human Rights Tribunal Decisions

The Tribunal went on to set out that issue estoppel requires the establishment of one of two essential elements:

1. a common issue which was both raised in subsequent proceedings and had been decided in the earlier proceedings; or
2. a common issue which has been raised in subsequent proceedings, and which was not (*but ought to have been*) raised in the earlier proceedings.

Further, the Tribunal set out the three criteria, which must be established to bring the doctrine of *res judicata* by way of issue estoppel into operation:

1. the party relying on the doctrine must establish that the prior decision was final;
2. it must establish that the parties were the same; and
3. it must establish that the decision dealt with the same question or questions that were then decided.

Judgment

The Tribunal found that the Employment Tribunal did not include the discrimination issue when it considered whether the Complainant had been unfairly dismissed. The Tribunal reached the conclusion that the employment and human rights claims can be distinguished, as there is a distinct discrimination allegation that can be severed from the issue of an employee's termination. The Tribunal was also of the opinion that the Employment Tribunal did not decide whether the Respondent's actions were discriminatory, but focused on procedural issues relating to the Complainant's *pregnancy and missing wage payments, whether her lack of a response equaled termination or resignation, and whether the Respondent changed the terms of the Complainant's employment due to her pregnancy or economic factors*.

The Tribunal indicated that while it was factually difficult to sever the human rights limb of the Complainant's case from the

employment aspects, the Tribunal did not believe this was a case where the prior proceedings considered and rejected the discrimination issues on their individual merits, nor is it a case where the Complainant ought to have raised the discrimination issue but failed to do so. The Tribunal stated that the mischief that the doctrine of *res judicata* seeks to mitigate is duplicative proceedings, which are inherently abusive and, as a result, inherently unjust. The Tribunal found that the doctrine of *res judicata* does not bar the present proceedings, and the matter remains open for consideration and is set to proceed.

Overview of Human Rights Tribunal Matters in 2025

In 2025, the Human Rights Tribunal considered a range of complaints referred by the Human Rights Commission. Some matters were resolved through voluntary mediation, while others remain ongoing and have not yet resulted in formal decisions.

The examples below highlight the types of issues the Tribunal is addressing.

Sexual Harassment

Three of the nine matters referred to the Human Rights Tribunal involved allegations of sexual harassment in the workplace. The Complainants described experiencing sexually inappropriate comments and conduct by colleagues, as well as failures by employers to take the reasonable steps necessary to prevent or address sexual harassment. These matters alleged contraventions of Sections 9(1) and 9(3) of the Human Rights Act, 1981.

Workplace Harassment Based on Race

One matter involved allegations of workplace harassment based on race. This matter alleged contraventions of Section 6B(1) of the Human Rights Act, 1981, as read with the protected ground within Section 2(2)(a)(i) – race.



Summary of Human Rights Tribunal Decisions

Workplace Harassment Based on Family and Marital Status

Another matter involved alleged harassment in the workplace based on family and marital status. This matter concerns Section 6B(1) of the Human Rights Act, 1981, as read with the protected grounds within Sections 2(2)(a)(iii) – marital status and 2(2)(a)(iv) – family status.

Discrimination based on Disability | Employment

Two matters involved allegations of discrimination related to disability. In one case, the complainant stated that they were dismissed because of their disability. In the other, the complainant alleged that they were not hired for the same reason. These matters concerned Section 6(1)(a) and Section 6(1)(b) as read with the protected ground of disability within Section 2(2) of the Act.

Discrimination Based on Race, Colour, Place of Origin, and/ or National or Ethnic Origins | Dismissal and Retaliation

Another matter involved allegations that the complainant was dismissed due to their race, colour, place of origin, and/or ethnic or national origins. Further, the complainant also reported experiencing retaliatory treatment. This matter alleged contraventions of Section 6(1)(b) of the Human Rights Act, 1981, read together with the protected grounds within Section 2(2)(a)(i) – *race, colour, place of origin, ethnic or national origins* and Sections 8(a), (b) and (c) of the Act.

Discrimination Based on Family Status | Employment

Another matter concerned a complainant who alleged that they were terminated because of their family status. The complainant alleged a contravention of Section 6(1)(b) of the Human Rights Act, 1981, as read with the protected ground of family status within Section 2(2) of the Act.

Closing Note

The Human Rights Tribunal plays a vital role in ensuring that discrimination complaints are heard fairly and independently. These cases reflect the range of issues that people continue to face, and underscore the importance of promoting equality, dignity, and respect for all.

More information about Tribunal decisions and human rights protections in Bermuda is available at www.humanrights.bm under Resources.

In Remembrance



Pauleter Stevens

The Commission acknowledges with deep respect the passing of the late Pauleter Stevens. Her work in public health and disability policy helped shape national conversations on health, inclusion, and accessibility in Bermuda.

Ms. Stevens served as a Health Promotion Officer with the Department of Health, where she supported public education and community outreach focused on preventing chronic disease. She also contributed to Bermuda's National Policy on Disabilities as a member of the Committee.

Her work reflected a strong and lasting commitment to equity, health promotion, and community wellbeing.

"Pauleter brought both professional insight and lived experience to the committee's work, helping to ground our discussions in the realities faced by persons with disabilities." Lisa Reed, former Chair, National Policy on Disabilities Committee.

Pauleter is widely valued for her decades of dedicated service as a volunteer and board member of Vision Bermuda (formerly the Bermuda Society for the Blind). Of particular note are her contributions, alongside two fellow members of the Society, to the development of a tactile audio voting device. This innovation enabled people who are blind or have low vision to vote independently and privately for the first time in Bermuda during the 2021 General Election. Through this achievement, Bermuda has emerged as a leader in accessible voting in jurisdictions that continue to use paper ballots.

Ms. Stevens passed away during this reporting period, in which the Commission released its Disability Inclusion Report. In light of her contributions to disability policy development and her advocacy for persons with disabilities, it is especially fitting to recognise her role in advancing the national dialogue on disability inclusion.

The Commission honours Ms. Stevens' dedication to public service and her lasting impact on Bermuda's community.



Annexes

Annex I: Letter of Transmittal

The Office of the Human Rights Commission is established pursuant to the *Human Rights Act, 1981*, with its statutory powers and responsibilities set out in the Act, as well as in the *Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1935*.

The Commission operates independently from traditional Ministry structures. It receives its budgetary allocation from the Legislature and manages its financial processes in line with the standards prescribed by the *Public Treasury (Administration and Payments) Act, 1969*.

This Annual Report covers the period January 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025, and outlines the Commission's activities and performance in carrying out its statutory mandate.

Annex II: A Note on Language

Language has power. The words we use can either include or exclude, affirm dignity, or cause harm. In line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the Commission recognises that language plays an important role in promoting respect, autonomy, and equality.

The Commission uses the term “disability” to align with the Human Rights Act, 1981, and to reflect the wide range of physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities. At the same time, language is personal and constantly evolving. Some people may identify as having a disability, while others may prefer terms such as differently abled, having diverse support needs, or exceptionalities.

Consistent with the CRPD's principles of dignity, individual autonomy, and respect for difference, the Commission respects each person's right to choose the language that best reflects their experience (self-identity). Language matters, especially in shaping how people are seen, treated, and valued.

Annexes

Definitions

Disability refers to physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments that, when combined with environmental or social barriers, can limit a person's full and equal participation in society.

Disability Inclusion recognises how people live, work, and participate in society, and seeks to ensure that everyone has equal opportunities to engage in all aspects of life, to the best of their abilities and choices.

Accessibility is the practice of designing information, services, activities, and environments so that as many people as possible can use and understand them. It helps ensure that no one is excluded and that people can accomplish what they need to with similar time and effort, whether they have a disability or not.

Discrimination occurs when individuals or groups are treated less favourably because of personal characteristics such as race, disability, sex, age, religion, sexual orientation, or other attributes.

Harassment is unwelcome behaviour or comments that a person knows, or should reasonably know, are offensive or distressing.

Reasonable Accommodation means making changes to a job, workplace, hiring process, or environment so that a qualified person with a disability has an equal opportunity to obtain employment and perform their job just as effectively as someone without a disability.

Follow Us on Social Media

Through these various channels, we share updates on key initiatives, public education campaigns, events, and resources designed to promote understanding of the Human Rights Act, 1981 and to support a culture of dignity and inclusion across Bermuda.

Members of the public are encouraged to connect and stay informed by following the Commission's official pages:

Facebook: @HRCBermuda
Instagram: @bdahrc
LinkedIn: @human-rights-commission-bermuda
YouTube: @HRCBermuda

How to Contact the Human Rights Commission

If you have a query or believe you experienced discrimination or discriminatory harassment, please contact the Office of the Human Rights Commission.

Officers will assist by listening to help you understand whether the Human Rights Act, 1981 applies. Officers also provide guidance to respondents, organisations, and members about their rights and obligations under the Act.

You can contact the Commission by phone, email, or by visiting in-person. The team is a resource for all.

Walk-In:	Human Rights Commission Milner Place Ground Floor, 32 Victoria Street, Hamilton HM12
Mail:	32 Victoria Street Hamilton HM CX
Phone:	(441) 295-5859
Email:	info@humanrights.bm
Web:	www.humanrights.bm

Accommodations and Support

The Human Rights Commission is committed to ensuring that its services are accessible and supportive for everyone. Access accommodations can be provided, such as interpreters, wheelchair access, or information in plain language or large print. Individuals are encouraged to indicate their needs so that the Commission can make the process as safe and accessible as possible.

With permission, individuals may also have someone speak to the Commission on their behalf.

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