

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSIONS AND COMMISSIONERS ETC. ACT 2010

EXPLANATORY NOTES

BACKGROUND TO THE ACT AND SUMMARY

Crerar and Sinclair Reports

14. In June 2006, Scottish Ministers commissioned Professor Lorne Crerar to evaluate the current systems of regulation, audit and inspection and complaints handling of public services in Scotland. His report, *The Crerar Report*, was published in September 2007.¹ The report was debated in Parliament on 3 October 2007 and, apart from the establishment of a single national scrutiny body, the recommendations were broadly welcomed.
15. The Crerar review considered complaints handling as a strand of external scrutiny. It made proposals for improvements to the complaints handling system to give the public better access to redress and scrutiny. It recommended a system of complaints handling for all public services with the SPSO taking responsibility for its implementation and oversight.
16. To take forward the work arising from the *Crerar Report* the Government established a series of action groups to consider and report on discrete aspects. The five short-life working groups looked at the following specific areas—
 - Accountability and Governance;
 - Policy and Approach;
 - Fit for Purpose Complaint System;
 - User Focus; and
 - Reducing Burdens.
17. The Fit For Purpose Complaint System Action Group considered complaints handling. The Action Group, chaired by Douglas Sinclair, considered how to improve the complaints handling system in Scotland, taking account of the recommendations made in the *Crerar Report*. The Action Group's report (*the Sinclair Report*), was published in July 2008,² it provided Ministers with proposals for simplifying public service complaints handling processes and streamlining the complaints handling landscape, including amalgamation of some complaints handling bodies.

¹ *The Crerar Review*. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/09/25120506/0>

² The Fit For Purpose Complaint System Action Group (FCSAG)
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/PublicServiceReform/IndependentReviewofReg/ActionGroups/ReporttoMinisters>