



NORTHERN  
IRELAND  
HUMAN  
RIGHTS  
COMMISSION

**178<sup>th</sup> COMMISSION MEETING ON MONDAY 25<sup>th</sup> JANUARY  
2016 AT 10:00am IN THE OFFICE OF THE NORTHERN  
IRELAND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION, TEMPLE COURT, 39  
NORTH STREET, BELFAST, BT1 1NA**

**In attendance:** Les Allamby, Chief Commissioner  
Paul Yam  
Christine Collins  
John Corey  
Milton Kerr  
Alan McBride  
Marion Reynolds  
Grainia Long

**Present:** Virginia McVea, Director  
David Russell, Deputy Director  
Rebecca Magee, Personal Assistant  
Rhyannon Blythe, Assistant Caseworker  
Daniel Morris, Research Assistant

**1. Minutes of the 177<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting**

1.1 The minutes of the 177<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting were agreed.

**2. Matters arising**

2.1 The meeting between the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission took place on 20<sup>th</sup> January. The meeting with the Equality Commission Chief Commissioner and Chief Executive with counterparts in the NIHRC will take place on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2016 (item 2.1 of the previous minutes refers).

### **3. Chief Commissioner Report**

- 3.1 The Chief Commissioner reported on meetings and events he has attended since the last meeting. These included:
- Meeting Kevin Kingston, Assistant Chief Executive for Danske Bank (former President of NI Chamber of Commerce)
  - Meeting Eilis McDaniel and colleagues at DHSSPS following up on looked after Children research (attended with Commissioner Reynolds)
  - Attended Focus Identity awards ceremony at Belfast City Hall for contributions to transgender community
  - Meeting with Department of Education officials Christine Graham and Andrew Bell re: Shared Education
  - Meeting with Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission
  - Speaker at Department of Foreign Affairs Business and Human Rights event in Dublin
  - Meeting UU School of Law re: litigants in person research

### **4. Commissioner Report**

- 4.1 Commissioner Corey updated the board on the actions and process on contact with political parties in relation to a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland.
- 4.2 Commissioner Collins reported on an event she attended in a personal capacity for Brittle Bone Society.

### **5. Strategic Plan**

- 5.1 Commissioners discussed a draft copy of the Strategic plan and worked through the three Pillars namely delivering human rights through excellent services to the public, human rights and building the future and social and economic rights in a time of change.
- 5.2 Commissioners discussed the format and lay out of the plan.
- 5.3 Commissioners agreed a number of minor amendments that would be made by the Chief Commissioner and the

plan would then be shared with stakeholders for consultation.

**Action: Strategic Plan to be amended and shared with stakeholders.**

## **6. Continuous Improvement**

- 6.1 Commissioners were updated on a workshop exercise that staff were involved in on Continuous Improvement.
- 6.2 Commissioners were briefed on the new system of recording that the staff are going to be using following the workshop which will be a database system that stores information from all functions of the Commission.

## **7. Statutory Functions Report**

- 7.1 Commissioners considered the Statutory Functions Report.
- 7.2 Commissioners were updated on the Legal Functions which included and update on the Termination of Pregnancy case where an appeal has been lodged by the Attorney General for NI and an outcome was awaited as to whether the Department would appeal.
- 7.3 Commissioners discussed the Commissions position in relation to the Termination of Pregnancy appeal and the cost relating to the case. Commissioners agreed that a cross appeal would be lodged and that an approach be made to other parties to see if all parties would bear their own legal costs regardless of the outcome.
- 7.4 Commissioners were updated on the legislation and policy functions report with updates given on ongoing advice to government.
- 7.5 Commissioners were briefed on how the statutory functions report will be referenced within the new reporting system.

## **8. Finance Report**

- 8.1 Commissioners discussed the finance report and were updated on the recent NICS pay increase that will be processed in the January pay.
- 8.2 Commissioners were updated on the budget and current spend.
- 8.3 Commissioners were updated on the upcoming recruitment process for three posts that will be advertised in February.

## **9. Stillbirths**

- 9.1 Commissioners were updated on the issue of Stillbirths.
- 9.2 Commissioners were advised that ongoing fact gathering was taking place and a meeting was being sought with the coroner's office. A further update would be shared with Commissioners once there were any developments.

## **10. Human Rights Inquiry follow-up projects**

- 10.1 Commissioners were updated on the current projects with the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust on developing a pilot human rights based approach within an emergency department and the Northern Health and Social Care Trust on a human rights based participatory approach to consultation.

## **11. Commonwealth Forum**

- 11. Commissioners were updated on the Commonwealth Forum and ongoing work to build engagement within the Forum including the development of a strategic priorities and preparation for a meeting of the forum during the ICC meeting in Geneva in March.

## **12. Update on FGM**

12.1 This item has been moved to the February Commission meeting.

**Action: Item on the  
February  
Commission  
agenda.**

## **13. Any other Business**

13.1 Commissioners were briefed on planned training for Commissioners and senior staff in relation to grievance processes in line with the NICS policies.