



**193<sup>rd</sup> COMMISSION MEETING  
MONDAY 26 JUNE 2017 AT 10:00 am  
IN THE OFFICE OF  
THE NORTHERN IRELAND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION,  
TEMPLE COURT, 39 NORTH STREET, BELFAST, BT1 1NA**

**Present:** Les Allamby, Chief Commissioner  
Christine Collins  
John Corey (agenda items 1-13)  
Milton Kerr (agenda items 1-9)  
Marion Reynolds  
Grainia Long (agenda items 1-12)  
Alan McBride  
Neil Bodger, Audit & Risk Committee Chair  
(agenda item 9)

**Apologies:** Paul Yam

**In Attendance:** David Russell, Chief Executive  
Lorraine Hamill, Finance & Administration Manager  
(agenda items 1-5 and 7-8)  
Rebecca Magee, Personal Assistant (agenda items  
6 and 8-15)  
Colin Caughey, Policy Worker (agenda items 1-5  
and 7-15)  
Claire Martin, Communications Worker (agenda  
items 1-5 and 7-15)  
Sara Donnelly, Legal and Research Assistant  
(agenda item 12)

**1. Apologies and Declarations of Interest**

- 1.1 Commissioner Yam sent his apologies for the meeting.
- 1.2 There were no declarations of interest.

## **2. Minutes and closed minutes (HRC193.1)**

2.1 The draft minutes of the Commission meeting held on 25 May 2017 were agreed subject to minor amendments.

**Action: Minutes of the 192<sup>nd</sup> Commission meeting to be uploaded to the website**

2.2 The draft minutes of the Closed Commission meeting held on 25 May 2017 were agreed subject to minor amendments.

**Action: Minutes of the Closed Commission meeting to be amended as agreed**

## **3. Matters arising**

3.1 It was noted that the Commission had written to the Department of Health on the issue of access to in vitro fertilization (IVF) in certain circumstances. It was agreed that if a response was received before the August Commission meeting that it would be circulated to Commissioners (paragraph 8.2 of the previous minutes refers).

**Action: Department of Health reply and Counsel's opinion to be circulated to Commissioners at August Commission meeting.**

3.2 Commissioners noted that the Court gave permission for the Commission to lodge written submissions from an application by a defendant in criminal proceedings for a discovery of solicitors' communications with survivors of abuse taking civil claims and with survivors and other campaigning organisations, with the hearing due to take place on Wednesday 5 July 2017. A representative from the Commission will attend the hearing (paragraph 10.5 of the previous minutes refers).

3.3 Commissioner Reynolds had submitted comments by email on the Annual Statement Chapters (paragraph 10.5 of the previous minutes refers).

3.4 It was agreed to arrange the next community engagement in mid/late October 2017 for the new Commissioners.

**Action: Community engagement to be arranged in mid/late October 2017.**

#### **4. Chief Commissioner's report (HRC193.2)**

- 4.1 The Chief Commissioner reported on meetings and events he had attended since the last meeting. These included:
- Community Engagement day in Newtownabbey, Senior Citizens Community Forum, Community Relations Forum, PSNI and Dalriada Forum
  - Small Worlds event – in partnership with NICRAS and Belfast Friendship Club with Alan McBride
  - Northern Health and Social Care Trust conference on participative democracy in Ballymena
  - Meeting with Sinn Féin
  - Meeting with the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission
  - Queen's University Belfast/Policing Board – Borders and Terrorism seminar – Europe's challenges in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century
- 4.2 The advice, previously circulated, provided to the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) on the House of Commons Defence Committee's report 'Investigations in fatalities in Northern Ireland involving British military personnel' was discussed. Commissioners Collins and Reynolds recorded their dissent on the content of the submission.
- 4.3 Commissioner Reynolds raised the suggestion that engagement with political parties should be formally minuted. Commissioners discussed this suggestion and decided against actioning it.

#### **5. Commissioners' reports**

- 5.1 Commissioner McBride reported on the Small Worlds event he attended with the Chief Commissioner and suggested that the new board of Commissioners may wish to consider exploring options for refugee work.
- 5.2 Commissioner Corey had attended two Brexit conferences - one hosted by NICVA on 15 June 2017 and one at the Ballymiscanlon Hotel on 23 June 2017.
- 5.3 Commissioner Long advised that in other work she had been looking into housing issues arising following the Grenfell fire in London.

*The open meeting closed at 11.25am to discuss staff restructuring.*

*Claire Martin, Colin Caughey and Lorraine Hamill left the meeting.  
Rebecca Magee joined the meeting.*

## **6. Staff Restructure update**

- 6.1 This item was dealt with under a closed minute.

*The open meeting re-opened at 12.10pm*

*Claire Martin, Colin Caughey and Lorraine Hamill re-joined the meeting*

*Rebecca Magee left the meeting.*

## **7. Finance Report**

- 7.1 The Finance and Administration Manager presented the financial report for May 2017 and explained that as the external audit was not yet fully complete there may be some minor changes to the opening accruals and prepayments.
- 7.2 The Finance and Administration Manager provided details of committed expenditure from the Business Plan for 2017/18 and explanations for the variances against budget.

*Rebecca Magee joined the meeting.*

## **8. Review of Code of Governance and Standing Orders (HRC193.5)**

- 8.1 Commissioners discussed the draft Review of Code of Governance and Standing Orders. A number of amendments were agreed. Commissioners also agreed that the Code of Governance and Standing Orders should reflect the requirements of the NICS policies where applicable to the Chief Commissioner and Commissioners.
- 8.2 It was agreed that the draft would be shared with Capita (the Commission's internal auditors), NIPSA and

the NIO for comment and that the final document would be brought back to August's Commission meeting for final approval.

**Action: A final document to be brought back to August's Commission meeting.**

*Lorraine Hamill left the meeting.*

*Neil Bodger, Independent Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee joined the meeting*

## **9. Annual Review from Independent Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee**

9.1 Commissioners were presented with the annual review from the Independent Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee.

9.2 Commissioners thanked Mr Bodger for his work during his term as Chair, which is completed at the end of July 2017.

*Commissioner Kerr left the meeting.*

*Neil Bodger, Independent Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee left the meeting.*

## **10. Research paper on the adequacy of services for injured victims of the Troubles in light of the right to remedy and reparations**

10.1 The Commission considered an externally commissioned paper on services for injured victims of the troubles. A number of points were raised on the paper and its recommendations. After the discussion, it was agreed to provide feedback to the authors.

**Action: Feedback to be provided on the research document.**

## **11. First Quarterly Report against the Business Plan**

11.1 Commissioners noted the First Quarterly Progress Report against the Business Plan.

*Sara Donnelly joined the meeting.*

## **12. Legal Report**

12.1 Commissioners were updated on the Termination of Pregnancy case. It was agreed that Commissioners would be available to discuss the judgement and further action as soon as possible after judgement has been handed down given potential timescales should any appeal arise.

**Action: meeting/conference call to be arranged.**

*Sara Donnelly left the meeting.*

*Commissioner Long left the meeting.*

## **13. Annual Statement Chapters**

13.1 Commissioners reviewed the Annual Statement chapter on Right to Education.

13.2 Commissioners agreed with the position updates, subject to minor amendments.

**Action: Position statements on Right to Education to be amended as per discussions.**

13.3 Commissioners discussed the Annual Statement chapter on Right to Religion.

13.4 Commissioners agreed with the position statements, subject to minor amendments.

**Action: Position statements on Right to Religion to be amended as per discussions.**

*Commissioner Corey left the meeting at 4:40pm.*

## **14. Communications Report**

14.1 Commissioners were updated on the Communications function. This included an update on social media and upcoming events including the Commission actively becoming involved in Culture Night in September 2017.

**15. Any other Business**

15.1 Nothing to report.

*The meeting closed at 4:50pm.*