



**192nd COMMISSION MEETING
THURSDAY 25 MAY 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
Milton Kerr
Marion Reynolds (*until 11.30am*)
Paul Yam

Apologies: Grainia Long
Alan McBride

In Attendance: David Russell, Chief Executive
Rebecca Magee, Personal Assistant (Agenda Items 1-4)
Lorraine Hamill, Finance & Administration Manager (Agenda items 5-13)
Colin Caughey, Policy Worker
Claire Martin, Communications Worker
Rhyannon Blythe, Assistant Caseworker (Agenda Items 8 and 9)
Sara Donnelly, Legal and Research Assistant (Agenda Items 8 and 9)
Zara Porter, Digital Communications Assistant (Agenda Item 11)

1. Apologies and Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 Commissioners Long and McBride sent their apologies for the meeting.

1.2 There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes and closed minutes (HRC192.1)

2.1 The draft minutes of the meeting held on 24 April 2017 were approved.

Action: Minutes of the 191st Commission meeting to be uploaded onto the website.

2.2 The closed minutes of the 24 April 2017 were approved subject to minor amendments.

Action: Minutes of the closed meeting held on 24 April 2017 to be amended as agreed.

3. Matters arising

3.1 The Annual Report and Accounts has been sent to the NIO for approval (paragraph 7.1 of the previous minutes refers).

3.2 An update on the Termination of Pregnancy case was given with judgment expected on 12 June 2017 (paragraph 11.1 of the previous minutes refers).

4. Chief Commissioner Report (HRC192.2)

4.1 The Chief Commissioner reported on meetings and events he had attended since the last meeting. These included:

- meeting Ken Bishop IPSOS Mori
- Launch of Community Action in a contested Space by Avila Kilmurray – hosted by the British Irish Intergovernmental secretariat
- meeting Catriona Denvir, Legal Innovation Centre, Ulster University
- meeting David Seymour, Independent Reviewer of Justice and Security Act
- speaker NIPSA conference: Austerity through the lens of equality
- meeting John O’Doherty, Rainbow
- judges roundtable event – launch of Northern/Irish Feminist Judgements: judges’ troubles and the gendered politics of identity – schools of law at UU and QUB
- Speaker at Modern Slavery breakfast seminar – Business in the Community

- Policing Plan for Northern Ireland Seminar – Policing Board for Northern Ireland

The Commission meeting paused for a minutes silence in remembrance for the victims of the Manchester attack.

5. Commissioners' Reports

- 5.1 Commissioner Kerr reported that he had attended the opening of a new Child and Young Person Unit, POD15 that is run by Foyle Women's Aid.

6. Chief Executive Report (HRC192.3)

- 6.1 The Chief Executive updated the Commission on the following:

- Commonwealth Sport Policy Expert Roundtable
- International Arab Banking Summit "IABS 2017"
- Meeting with the Head of the Government Legal Service for Northern Ireland
- Meeting with Both Lives Matter
- Meeting with Department of Finance

- 6.2 It was noted that interviews for the new Chair of the Commission's Audit and Risk Management Committee would take place on Friday 26 May and Tuesday 30 May 2017.

- 6.3 Commissioners noted the Accounting Officers reports required in line with the Framework Document had been completed and submitted to date.

- 6.4 The Chief Executive confirmed that the draft annual report and accounts had been completed and would be submitted to the National Audit Office (NAO) following the external audit. It was agreed that the draft version would be circulated to Commissioners for information. The draft annual report and accounts would be presented to the next Audit and Risk Management Committee for sign off, in preparation for laying in Parliament.

Action: Draft annual report and accounts to be circulated to Commissioners for information.

7. Finance Report and Risk Register (HRC192.4)

- 7.1 The Finance and Administration Manager presented the finance report for April 2017 and explained that the opening accruals and prepayments could be subject to change depending on the outcome of the external audit.
- 7.2 The Finance and Administration Manager went through the finance report and provided further information on variances.
- 7.3 The Chief Executive updated Commissioners on the Risk Register and advised that the risk owners had been revised in line with the new interim structure.

The open meeting closed at 12.15pm to discuss staff restructuring.

Colin Caughey, Lorraine Hamill and Claire Martin left the meeting.

The open meeting reopened at 1.30pm.

Colin Caughey, Lorraine Hamill and Claire Martin rejoined the meeting.

Rhyannon Blythe, Assistant Caseworker and Sara Donnelly, Legal and Research Assistant joined the meeting

8. Legal Report – Update on IVF (HRC192.5)

- 8.1 The Assistant Caseworker updated Commissioners on access to in vitro fertilization (IVF). It was noted that the NICE guidance on this issue, which is effective in England and Wales, is not implemented in Northern Ireland.
- 8.2 Commissioners were advised that Counsel had advised writing to the Department of Health on the issue. Once a response was received from the Department of Health this would be circulated alongside Counsel's final opinion.

Action: Counsel's opinion to be provided once a response was received from the Department of Health.

9. Legal Applications for Assistance (HRC192.6)

9.1 Commissioners considered three applications for assistance.

9.2 Commissioners discussed the legal application for assistance on a social care issue (HRC192.6 (1)) and agreed that assistance would not be granted based on there being no human rights argument in the application based on the information supplied.

Action: Assistant Caseworker to write to client confirming the Commission's decision.

9.3 Commissioners discussed the legal applications for assistance from solicitors firms on legal professional privilege and human rights issues (HRC192.6 (2) and HRC192.6 (3)) It was agreed that the Commission would write to the Court to seek permission to lodge written submissions. If this was not granted in the alternative, it was agreed that the Assistant Caseworker and Legal and Research Assistant were authorised to grant the application for assistance up to the value of £1,500 + VAT.

Action: The Commission to seek permission from the Court to lodge written submissions and if not granted application for assistance approved up to an agreed sum.

The Assistant Caseworker and the Legal and Research Assistant left the meeting.

10. Annual Statement chapters (HRC192.7)

10.1 Commissioners reviewed the Annual Statement chapter on Freedom from Torture.

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

Action: Position statements on Freedom from Torture to be amended as per discussions.

10.3 Commissioners discussed the Annual Statement chapter on Right to Private Life.

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

Action: Position statements on Right to Private Life to

be amended as per discussions.

10.5 It was also agreed that as requested Commissioner Reynolds would submit comments by email to the Chief Commissioner and if they were substantive, they would be circulated to Commissioners.

Action: Any substantive comments from Commissioner Reynolds to be circulated to Commissioners.

Zara Porter, Digital Communications Assistant joined the meeting

11. Communications Report (HRC192.8)

11.1 The Communications Worker presented the communications and education report and provided updates on recent meetings held with the Amnesty UK Education team and CCEA. She also confirmed that the education section on the website had been developed in terms of infographics and this would continue to be monitored.

11.2 The Commission had hosted a breakfast meeting during which the UPR session was live streamed. It was hoped to replicate this event through a UNCRPD session.

11.3 The Communications Worker confirmed that the Commission would be partnering with NICRAS to host a joint event in Refugee Week.

11.4 The Digital Communications Assistant provided updates on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram and it was noted that the Commission's Twitter account had received verification meaning that the account is recognised as being authentic and of public interest. As a result the profile should be easier to find, therefore increasing engagement and followers.

11.5 It was noted that the NIHRC blog was launched in April 2017 and would continue on a monthly basis.

12. Information Papers (HRC192.9)

12.1 Commissioners noted the information papers, which included the Draft Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review and correspondence from the Northern Ireland Office confirming the 2017-18 budget allocation.

13. Any Other Business

13.1 Commissioners noted that the programme for the forthcoming community engagement in Newtownabbey would be circulated to Commissioners when finalised.

Action: Programme for Community Engagement to be circulated to Commissioners.

The meeting closed at 3.55pm.