



**30 June 2025**

**278th COMMISSION MEETING**

**Held in the Commission's Offices,  
Alfred House, 19-21 Alfred Street, Belfast, BT2 8ED**

**Present:** David Lavery (acting chair)  
Helen Henderson (online)  
Mairead Holder (online)  
Stephen White (online)  
Jonathan Lavery (online)  
Justin Kouame

**In attendance:** David Russell, Chief Executive  
Lorraine Hamill, Director (Finance, Personnel and Corporate Services)  
Eilis Haughey (Director, Human Rights after EU withdrawal) (online)  
Claire Martin, Director (Engagement and Communications)  
Jhoanna Sto Domingo (Personal secretary to the Chief Commissioner)  
Darren Veighey (Administrative Officer)  
Htaik Win, Solicitor (Legal and Research Officer) (Agenda Item 9)  
Hannah Russell (Senior Policy and Research Officer) (Agenda Item 10)  
Emma Osborne (Policy and Research Officer) (Agenda Item 11)

**Apologies:** Alyson Kilpatrick, Chief Commissioner

## 1. Apologies and Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 Apology from the Chief Commissioner Alyson Kilpatrick.
- 1.2 There were no declarations of interest.

## 2. Draft minutes of the 277<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting and matters arising.

- 2.1 The minutes of the 277<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting were agreed subject to a minor amendment.  
**Action: Minutes of the 277<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting to be uploaded to the website when finalised.**

## 3. Chief Commissioner's Report

- 3.1 The Chief Commissioner's report which detailed events, meetings and conferences attended since the last meeting was noted.

## 4. Commissioners' Reports

- 4.1 Commissioner Lavery provided an update from the Audit and Risk Management meeting held on 16 June 2025.

## 5. Chief Executive's Report

- 5.1 The Chief Executive confirmed that the comprehensive spending review had concluded, and Commissioners noted, that during the meeting an email had been received from the Northern Ireland Office confirming the Commission's budget for 2025-26. A delegation letter from the Permanent Secretary would follow in due course.
- 5.2 Commissioners noted the outcome in light of the two independent reviews.
- 5.3 It was agreed that the Chief Commissioner would write to the Secretary of State in due course noting the outcome of the Spending Review and ongoing work in response to the Independent Reviews.  
**Action: Chief Commissioner to write to the Secretary of State.**

## 6. Business Plan 2025/26

- 6.1 Following confirmation of the Commission's budget for 2025-26, Commissioners approved the Business Plan subject to the inclusion of the final budget figures. It was agreed that a revised Business Plan would be shared with Commissioners by close of play on Friday 4 July 2025.

**Action: Updated Business Plan 2025-26 including budget figures to be shared with Commissioners by 4 July 2025, published and shared with the NIO.**

## 7. Finance Report May 2025

- 7.1 Commissioners noted the finance report for May 2025. It was confirmed that as the Commission had now received confirmation of its budget for 2025-26 that an accurate finance report would be available going forward.

## 8. Draft Annual Report and Accounts 2024-25

- 8.1 Commissioners noted that the Draft Annual Report and Accounts 2024-25 had been approved by the Audit and Risk Management Committee subject to minor amendments.

- 8.2 Commissioners approved the Draft Annual Report and Accounts 2024-25, subject to the inclusion of the minor amendments.

**Action: Draft Annual Report and Accounts 2024-25 to be updated and finalised.**

- 8.3 The Director (Finance, Personnel, and Corporate Services) commended the work of the Senior, Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs Officer in meeting the required deadlines.

- 8.4 It was noted that the Annual Report and Accounts 2024-25 will be laid in Parliament on 10 July 2025.

## 9. Application for Assistance-Own Motion Challenge to the Data Use and Access Act 2025

- 9.1 Commissioners were asked to support an own motion challenge to the Data (Use and Access) Bill which will receive Royal Assent imminently by way of a judicial review of Article 2 of the Windsor Framework. Commissioners considered the

matter in full and agreed to initiate pre-action correspondence.

**Action: Pre-action letter to be issued, with further discussion required on receipt of letter from the respondent.**

## **10. Annual statement**

10.1 The Senior Policy and Research Officer provided an update on new and revised issues for the Annual Statement 2025 which required Commissioner approval.

10.2 It was proposed that two new issues be added to the 2025 Annual Statement:

- Child Criminal exploitation
- Lowering the age of voting

**Action: Annual Statement 2025 to be updated to include Child Criminal Exploitation and Lowering the Age of Voting.**

10.3 Commissioners considered revision of the section on 'access to reproductive healthcare' to include:

- Access to fertility treatment
- Pregnancy screening
- Use of vaginal mesh

The proposed revisions were agreed.

**Action: The Annual Statement 2025 section on Access to Reproductive Healthcare to be revised**

10.4 An issue for removal was also proposed.

In 2024, 'Compensation for Miscarriage of Justice' changed to 'green'. As there has been no regression in this area, it was advised that this issue be removed from annual statement.

This was subsequently agreed by Commissioners.

**Action: The Annual Statement 2025 section on Compensation for Miscarriage of Justice to be removed.**

- 10.5 Commissioners approved the inclusion of Online Misinformation and Disinformation within the existing issues in the Annual Statement, such as 'Hate Crime' and 'Rule of Law: Non-state actors'.

**Action: Online Misinformation and Disinformation to be included within the existing issues in the Annual Statement.**

## **11. Joint Committee Work Programme**

- 11.1 An overview of the draft joint work programme between the Commission and the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (the Joint Committee) was provided. This had been reviewed following agreement at the Joint Committee meeting held on 29 May 2025.

**Action: The work programme with the Joint Committee is to be shared for ratification.**

## **12. Any other business**

- 12.1 The Chief Executive advised Commissioners that the contract for the Independent Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Management Committee had been extended for a further two years. This was noted and welcomed by the Commissioners.

## **13. Date of next meeting**

- 13.1 The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 26 August 2025 at 10am.

**The meeting ended at 12:15pm.**