



NORTHERN
IRELAND
HUMAN
RIGHTS
COMMISSION

24 November 2025

**282nd COMMISSION MEETING
Held in the Commission's Offices,
Alfred House, 19-21 Alfred Street, Belfast, BT2 8ED**

Present: Alyson Kilpatrick
Jonathan Kearney
Justin Kouame (Online)
David Lavery (Online)
Stephen White (Online)

In attendance: David Russell, Chief Executive
Rhyannon Blythe, Director (Legal Services)
Colin Caughey, Director (Advice to Government,
Research, Investigations, and International Treaties)
(Online)
Lorraine Hamill, Director (Finance, Personnel, and
Corporate Affairs)
Eilis Haughey, Director (Human Rights after EU
withdrawal) (online)
Claire Martin, Director (Engagement and
Communications)
Jhoanna Sto Domingo (Personal Secretary to the Chief
Commissioner) (Online)
Darren Veighey (Administrative Officer)
Laura Dawson Solicitor (Legal & Research Officer)
(Agenda Item 7) (Online)

Apologies: Helen Henderson
Mairead Holder

1. Apologies and Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Commissioners Helen Henderson and Mairead Holder.
- 1.2 There were no declarations of interest.

2. Draft minutes of the 281st Commission meeting and matters arising

2.1 The minutes of the 281st Commission meeting were agreed.
Action: Minutes of the 281st Commission meeting to be uploaded to the website when finalised.

3. Chief Commissioner's Report

3.1 The Chief Commissioner's Report was noted.

4. Commissioners' Reports

4.1 Nothing to report.

5. Report from Chief Executive Officer

5.1 The Chief Executive updated Commissioners on the staff pay policy and confirmed that discussions had taken place with the Northern Ireland Office (NIO).

5.2 As agreed with the NIO, the newly appointed internal auditors have been tasked with completing a benchmarking /mapping exercise.

5.3 As part of the pay policy process, negotiations will take place with NIPSA and separate discussions will be held with all staff.

5.4 It was envisaged that a report would be shared with Commissioners in January/February 2026 before seeking final approval from the Secretary of State by the end of the financial year.

5.5 It was noted that the final version of the Business Case for the period 2025-29 had been shared with the NIO and that feedback was expected in early December 2025.

5.6 The Chief Executive confirmed that he would be attending the Ministry of Justice Stakeholder Forum on Tuesday 25 November 2025.

5.7 It was noted that Senior and Junior Counsel had been appointed for the case against the Commission brought on

behalf of Mr Murray. Case proceedings are to take place on 3 December 2025.

6. Finance Report August 2025

- 6.1 The Director (Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs) presented the Finance Report for the period to 31 October 2025 for Core and the Dedicated Mechanism. The paper reflected actual spend for the period April-October 2025 and the budget going forward to the end of the financial year.
- 6.2 It was noted that the budget would be subject to amendment following confirmation of the acceptance of the Commission's business case for the additional approved in-year funding.

7. Application for Assistance (JR)

- 7.1 Commissioners were asked to intervene in a Judicial Review challenge on the provision of suitable housing for Travellers.
- 7.2 Commissioners considered the criteria for assistance in line with the Commission's legal processes, and agreed the following:
 - To support an application for leave to intervene;
 - Seek written and oral submissions; and
 - Authorised the instruction of Junior Counsel.

8. Policy Key Performance Update

- 8.1 The Director (Advice to Government, Research, Investigations, and International Treaties) gave an overview of Key Performance Indicators from 1 April-31 October 2025.
- 8.2 The Commission staff continue to be attend the NI Executive Treaty Working Group which includes membership from all government departments.
- 8.3 The Commission staff continue to meet with the UK government, along with other NHRIs and devolved administrations on a bi-annual basis.
- 8.4 At NI Assembly level the Commission have engaged with the secretary to the Committee for Justice and have prioritised building relationships with Committee secretaries.

8.5 Advice is also being provided to MLAs on a regular basis regarding private member bills.

9. Any other Business and Date of next meeting.

9.1 Commissioner Lavery asked if the Commission is engaged on the NI Troubles Bill. The Chief Commissioner stated that initial evidence had been provided to the NI Affairs Committee. In addition, a formal response is being drafted to a Joint Committee on Human Rights (JCHR) inquiry into the NI Troubles Bill which will be shared with Commissioners for approval in due course.

Action: draft advice to the JCHR Inquiry into the NI Troubles Bill to be provided for Commissioners comment and approval.

9.2 Commissioner Kouame asked if consideration has been given to the Home Secretary's recent publication of 'A fairer pathway to settlement'. The Director (Advice to Government, Research, Investigations, and International Treaties) agreed to study the narrative and report back to Commissioners on any possible actions.

Action: Director (Advice to Government, Research, Investigations, and International Treaties) to consider and report to the Commission.

9.3 There being no further business the meeting closed at 10.55am.

9.4 Date of next meeting was arranged for Monday 15 December at 10.00am.

End of meeting 10:55am