



**201st COMMISSION MEETING
TUESDAY 1 MAY 2018 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
Helen Ferguson
Helena Macormac
Paul Mageean
John McCallister
Eddie Rooney
Graham Shields

In Attendance: David Russell, Chief Executive
Colin Caughey, Director (Legal, Research and
Investigations, and Advice to Government)
Rebecca Magee (Personal Assistant)
Lorraine Hamill, Director (Finance, Personnel and
Corporate Affairs) (agenda item 5)
Rhyannon Blythe, Senior Legal and Research
Officer (agenda items 7 + 8)
Sara Donnelly, Legal and Research Officer
(agenda items 7, 8 + 9)
Hannah Russell, Policy and Research Officer
(agenda item 10)
Zara Porter, Communications and Public Affairs
Officer (agenda item 11)
Professor Gráinne McKeever, Ulster University
School of Law (agenda item 9)
Dr Lucy Royal-Dawson, Ulster University School of
Law (agenda item 9)

1. Apologies and Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 There were no apologies.
- 1.2 Commissioner Paul Mageean suggested he may have a conflict of interest in relation to the Same Sex Marriage paper, this was discussed and Commissioners agreed that there was no conflict and that Commissioner Mageean could remain for that agenda item.

2. Minutes and Matters arising

- 2.1 The minutes of the Commission meeting held on 26 March were agreed as an accurate record.
- 2.2 The minutes of the Special Commission meeting held on 19 April were agreed as an accurate record.
- 2.3 The Chief Executive confirmed that funding had been approved for the Joint Committee post from the NIO for a period of two years and that recruitment will take place in June (paragraph 2.3 of the previous minutes refers).
- 2.4 Commissioners agreed to a new date being arranged for a half-day reflection and a half-day to discuss Investigation/Inquiry topics and progress in light of the date being moved to accommodate a meeting with Michel Barnier on Brexit (paragraph 11.2 of the previous minutes refers).

3. Chief Commissioners report

- 3.1 The Chief Commissioner reported on meetings and events he had attended since the last meeting. These included:
 - Sir Johnathan Stephens and Rosemary Crawford NIO
 - Irish government celebration of Good Friday Agreement – a journey to the shore
 - CAJ
 - Speech to NIC-ICTU biennial conference – Good Friday Agreement: Human Rights and Equality 20 years on
 - NI Children and Young Peoples Commissioner
 - Carál Ní Chuilín MLA, Sinn Féin

- NICRE annual conference on Human rights protection in post Brexit: the case for a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland
 - Presentation to National Preventative Mechanism bi-annual meeting
 - Irish Government Civic Dialogue event
 - Michel Barnier, European Chief Negotiator on Brexit (with Joint Committee)
 - Meetings re: Travellers Accommodation with: Belfast City, Derry and Strabane, Newry, Mourne and Down and Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon councils, Clanmil Housing Association and Apex Housing Associations and the Fire and Rescue Service
- 3.2 The Chief Commissioner also reported on chairing and handover of Commonwealth Forum of NHRIs Chair and attendance at the Commonwealth Women’s Forum in London from 16-18 April 2018.
- 3.3 The Chief Commissioner reported on the Joint Committee meeting of the NIHRC and the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission including meeting with Lord Duncan, Under-Secretary of State at the Northern Ireland Office which took place in Stormont House on 27 April 2018.

Action: Date for the next Joint Committee meeting to be arranged for Nov/Dec in Dublin.

4. Commissioners’ Reports

- 4.1 Commissioner John McCallister reported on an event he attended in a personal capacity hosted by the European Parliament on the Anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement.
- 4.2 Commissioner McCallister also gave an update on the Commonwealth Forum events he attended with the Chief Commissioner, Chief Executive and Staff.

5. Finance Report and Risk Register

Lorraine Hamill joined the meeting

- 5.1 The Director (Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs) presented the financial report for March 2018 and provided details of committed expenditure and

explanations for the variances against budget.

- 5.2 The Director (Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs) provided an update on the presentation of the Accounts for 2017-2018. It is hoped that the final accounts will be signed off on 6 July 2018 and laid in Parliament before the July recess.
- 5.3 The Chief Executive reported on the Commission's Risk Register and Commissioners noted the changes in the risk trend report.
- 5.4 The Chief Executive reported on the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) that comes into effect from 25 May 2018. The Chief Executive presented the work being undertaken to comply with that deadline.

Lorraine Hamill left the meeting.

6. Strategic Planning

- 6.1 Commissioners were updated on the previous Strategic Planning process and agreed that the process would include staff and Commissioners meeting.
- 6.2 Commissioner agreed that staff were to begin work on the stakeholder meetings and that where possible strategic planning should be linked to upcoming Community Engagements.

Action: Paper on the process with timeline to be presented at the May Commission meeting.

Action: Staff to begin work on the first roundtable event with Stakeholders to take place end of June/start of July.

7. Legal Update

Rhyannon Blythe and Sara Donnelly joined the meeting.

- 7.1 Commissioners were updated on the JT case, namely a decision to destroy DNA and reiterated that the Commission's position to explore the basis for a settlement grounded in the original application was agreed. Commissioners also agreed that if any proposals required a special Commission meeting then one would be arranged.

7.2 Commissioners were updated on the Termination of Pregnancy case and on the JR76 intervention. It was noted that no date had been given for judgement.

7.3 Commissioners were updated on same sex couple access to IVF. It was agreed that a letter was to be sent to the Health and Social Care Board on the NICE Guidelines detailing the end of May as a cutoff for the information sought.

Action: Letter to be send to Health and Social Care Board.

8. Same Sex Marriage Briefing Paper

8.1 Commissioners were updated on the background to the Same Sex Marriage briefing paper.

8.2 Commissioners discussed the paper and agreed that the Commissions current position should be amended to reflect the discussion.

Action: Policy Position to be amended and signed off by Commissioners.

Rhyannon Blythe left the meeting

9. Litigants in Person research paper

Professor Gráinne McKeever and Dr Lucy Royal-Dawson joined the meeting.

9.1 Commissioners welcomed Professor Gráinne McKeever and Dr Lucy Royal-Dawson to the meeting where they presented the Litigants in Person in NI research paper.

9.2 Commissioners discussed the paper and agreed that comments on the paper should be sent to staff before 10 May 2018 and that final approval of the amended paper would take place at the May Commission meeting.

Action: Comments on the paper to be sent to staff before 10 May 2018.

Action: Final approval of the research paper to take place at May Commission meeting.

Professor Gráinne McKeever and Dr Lucy Royal-Dawson left the meeting.

Sara Donnelly left the meeting.

10. Annual Statement Chapter

Hannah Russell joined the meeting.

- 10.1 Commissioners reviewed the Annual Statement Chapter on Equality and Non Discrimination.
- 10.2 Commissioners agreed to the current progress of monthly chapter reviews with the complete Annual Statement for approval at the October Commission meeting.

Hannah Russell left the meeting.

11. Communications Report

Zara Porter joined the meeting.

- 11.1 Commissioners were briefed on the Communications report which included an update on the Commonwealth Forum of NHRI Chair handover and the Annual Human Rights Lecture.
- 11.2 Commissioners were updated on the launch of the NIHRC App, which is now available for iPhone and Android users.
- 11.3 Commissioners discussed the Annual Statement Launch in December and are to forward any suggestions for a speaker to the Chief Commissioner.

Action: Speaker suggestions for the Annual Statement launch to be forwarded to the Chief Commissioner.

Zara Porter left the meeting.

12. Information Paper – Template for Quarterly Report against the Business Plan

- 12.1 Commissioners noted the template for the Quarterly Report against the Business Plan.

13. Any other Business

- 13.1 nothing to report.

The meeting closed at 14:45.