



NORTHERN  
IRELAND  
HUMAN  
RIGHTS  
COMMISSION

**175<sup>th</sup> COMMISSION MEETING ON MONDAY 26 OCTOBER  
2015 AT 10:00 IN THE OFFICE OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND  
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION, TEMPLE COURT, 39 NORTH  
STREET, BELFAST, BT1 1NA**

**In attendance:** Les Allamby, Chief Commissioner  
Marion Reynolds  
Grainia Long  
Paul Yam  
Christine Collins  
John Corey  
Milton Kerr  
Alan McBride

**Present:** Virginia McVea, Director  
David Russell, Deputy Director

**Present for part  
of meeting:** Rebecca Magee, Personal Assistant  
Lorraine Hamill, Finance and Administration  
Manager  
Claire Martin, Communications Worker  
Daniel Morris, Researcher

**Apologies:** None

**1. Minutes of the 173<sup>rd</sup> and 174<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting**

- 1.1 The minutes of the 173<sup>rd</sup> Commission meeting were agreed.

- 1.2 The minutes of the 174<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting were agreed following minor amendments.

## **2. Matters arising**

- 2.1 Commissioners were updated on an event during the Human Rights Festival on Business and Human Rights that the Commission is holding on 11 December (item 2.3 of the previous minutes refers).

**Action: Details of the event to be sent to Commissioners.**

- 2.2 Commissioner Corey reported on his ongoing engagement with the political parties in relation to a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland. Meetings are ongoing (item 2.2 of the previous minutes refers).

## **3. Chief Commissioner Report**

- 3.1 The Chief Commissioner reported on his recent meetings/events. These included:
- Criminal Justice Inspectorate
  - Orange Lodge of NI
  - Norman Hamilton, Chair of the Presbyterian Church Board of Social Responsibility
  - UK NHRIs and High Commissioner for Human Rights, Prince Zeid al-bin Ra'ad
  - Northern Ireland Office
  - Civil and Family Justice Review reference group
  - Roundtable on the NIHRC report on Alternative Care and Children's Rights
  - QUB seminar on Psychological, evidential and legal challenges – memory recall
  - Speaker at Equality Coalition seminar on Austerity and Inequality – a threat to peace?
  - Speaker at UK Access to Justice event on Perspective on Access to Justice
  - Speaker and Panel member on the role of NHRIs in conflict and post conflict situations hosted by the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights
- 3.2 The Chief Commissioner reported on training provided to the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust on a Human Rights Based Approach to Emergency Health Care which

followed up the recent health care inquiry report. The Belfast HSCT is now working on developing human rights based pilots covering ED and community care services.

#### **4. Commissioner Report**

- 4.1 Commissioner Reynolds reported on the Alternative Care and Children roundtable on 29 September which looked at the recommendations of the Alternative Care and Children report published in September.

**Action: A meeting with DHSSPS official to be arranged following the roundtable.**

- 4.2 Commissioner Reynolds report on a seminar she attended called 'Historical Inquiries and the Impact of Memory Issues'. The seminar provided a detailed overview of issues relating to memory in historical inquiry situations.

**Action: Papers of the event to be shared with Commissioners and Staff.**

- 4.3 Commissioner Corey reported on the Belfast Food Network Food Poverty Working Group event highlighting the human rights dimension of food poverty and hunger.

#### **5. Director's Report**

- 5.1 Commissioners discussed the Director's report.
- 5.2 Commissioners were updated on recent masterclass on A Human Rights Based Approach to Health and Social Care that took place with the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust on 19 October. Professor Paul Hunt, who chaired the Human Rights Inquiry into Emergency Healthcare attended the masterclass. The masterclass was very well received by the Trust.
- 5.3 Commissioners were updated on the volunteer positions. All positions have been filled. Commissioners

were also updated on the placement of Ms Edy Lynn S. Santiago who is the Head, Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi Sub-Regional (BaSulTa), Sub-Regional Office of the Regional Human Rights Commission of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (RHRC, ARMM) who will be joining the commission on an exchange arrangement in October whilst studying through the Chevening system at the Ulster University.

- 5.4 Commissioners discussed the finance report. Commissioners were updated on spend to date and informed that the Commission spend is on target for the year. Commissioners discussed the insurance payment of the Commission.

**Action: Meeting with insurance broker to be arranged.**

- 5.5 Commissioners discussed the Information Service figures noting that there was a decrease in numbers compared to the equivalent period in 2014/15. The likely reason for higher last year was due to the launch of the Human Rights Inquiry into Emergency Healthcare. Commissioners have requested more information to be provided with the breakdown.

**Action: Information Service graphs to include more detail.**

- 5.6 Commissioners discussed the likely budget for 2016-2017 which should be confirmed after the Chancellor's announcement in late November.

- 5.7 Commissioners discussed the Human Resources Management Statistics. Commissioners requested that the wording of the table be changed to make clearer the baseline for staff and number of staff in post.

**Action: Wording in Human Resources Management Statistics to be changed re: baseline and**

**number of staff in post.**

## **6. Belfast Trust Training update**

6.1 This item was dealt with under the Directors report at item 5.2.

## **7. Annual Human Rights Statement (table of contents) and presentation on Annual Statement priorities**

7.1 Commissioners were briefed on the status of the Annual Statement. It was agreed that the statement would be tabled at the November meeting but, that an initial draft would go out shortly for detailed comment allowing a final version to be available for approval at the next meeting.

**Action: A final draft of the Annual Statement to be included on the November meeting agenda.**

7.2 Commissioners discussed the table of contents for the Annual Statement and some amendments were suggested.

7.3 Commissioners were briefed on the traffic light system employed for the statement last year. It was agreed that the traffic lights would be included in the table of contents this year.

## **8. Strategic Planning update**

8.1 Commissioners were updated on the strategic planning progress for 2016-19.

8.2 Commissioners discussed doing a consultation survey for the website and on social media. It was agreed that work could begin on the survey.

8.3 Commissioners agreed that a meeting with staff was to be arranged to discuss strategic priorities for 2016-2019.

**Action: Meeting with staff to be agreed.**

**9. Commonwealth Forum on NHRIs update**

- 9.1 Commissioners considered a paper on the work of the Commonwealth Forum of NHRIs and the process of taking up Chair of the forum. This included the biennial conference and a further three events a year and a total of two products a year, in April and December and that training would be developed on the back of the products. Work will also be undertaken on developing the social media and website of the forum.
- 9.2 Commissioners were also updated on the upcoming event in Malta from 23-25 November 2015 where a handover of Chair from the Malaysian Commission will be undertaken.

**10. ENNHRI update**

- 10.1 Commissioners discussed the information note regarding the Pre-Session Working Group of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in Geneva.

**11. Joint Committee with Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission/meeting with Equality Commission**

- 11.1 Commissioners discussed the Joint Committee with Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission.

**Action: Meeting to be arranged.**

- 11.2 Commissioners were updated on the meeting with the Equality Commission. It was agreed that the Chief Commissioner and Director should meet with the Chief Commissioner and Chief Executive of ECNI.

**Action: Meeting to be arranged.**

**12. Any other Business**

- 12.1 Commissioner Long held a lunch-time session on Using Twitter. This included a presentation on how each Commissioner could use Twitter.
- 12.2 Commissioner Reynolds raised the issue of cross-border fuel laundering. It was agreed that the Director would contact the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission on the issue.

**Action: Director to contact  
IHREC.**