

# BUSINESS PLAN 2010–11



NORTHERN  
IRELAND  
HUMAN  
RIGHTS  
COMMISSION

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It is also available on the Commission's website at [www.nihrc.org](http://www.nihrc.org).

## INTRODUCTION

The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission was established as a result of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement 1998 and has been in operation since 1 March 1999, under its governing legislation, the *Northern Ireland Act 1998*, amended by the *Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Act 2007*. It is a non-departmental public body (NDPB) funded by government through the Northern Ireland Office and reporting to Parliament through the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

### Strategic Plan

The Commission's Strategic Plan covering the period 2009–11 provides the framework for this Business Plan. This Business Plan operationalises the second and final year of the Strategic Plan, which is a two-year plan, in order to align the Commission's strategic planning process with government's funding cycle. A new Strategic Plan for the three-year period 2011–14 will be developed and consulted on during this planning year.

### Role

The Commission's role is to promote awareness of the importance of human rights in Northern Ireland, to review existing law and practice and to advise the UK government on what steps need to be taken to fully protect human rights in Northern Ireland.

We base our work on international human rights standards including those of the United Nations (UN) and the Council of Europe. The Commission, in line with the United Nations 'Paris Principles' guidance of 1993, has 'A' status recognition at the UN as a national human rights institution, with special access to the Human Rights Council, treaty bodies and other organs.

### Functions

The primary functions of the Commission are to protect and promote the human rights of everyone in Northern Ireland. It does this by providing:

- Legal assistance and strategic litigation
- Policy and legislative scrutiny

- Investigations and research
- Reports on the UK Government's international human rights treaty obligations
- Education and training
- Consultation and engagement
- Public relations and promotional work
- Information services and awareness-raising, and
- Advice to government and other stakeholders.

## **Powers and duties**

The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission is an independent public body established by the *Northern Ireland Act 1998*. Our powers and duties are derived from sections 69 and 70 of the *Northern Ireland Act 1998* and sections 14-16 of the *Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Act 2007*. Under the 1998 Act as amended, the Commission has the following duties:

- To keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness in Northern Ireland of law and practice relating to the protection of human rights
- To advise the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and the Executive Committee of the Northern Ireland Assembly of legislative and other measures which ought to be taken to protect human rights
- To advise the Northern Ireland Assembly whether proposed legislation is compatible with human rights standards
- To promote understanding and awareness of the importance of human rights in Northern Ireland by, for example, undertaking or commissioning or otherwise assisting research and educational activities
- To provide advice to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on the scope for defining, in Westminster legislation, rights supplementary to those in the European Convention on Human Rights

In addition, under sections 69 and 70 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Commission has the following powers:

- To give assistance to individuals who apply to it for help in relation to proceedings involving law or practice concerning the protection of human rights
- To bring proceedings involving law or practice concerning the protection of human rights
- To conduct such investigations as it considers necessary or expedient for the purpose of exercising its other functions, and
- To publish its advice and the outcome of its research and investigations.

The Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Act 2007 (sections 14-16 of which amended sections 69 and 71 of the 1998 Act) gives the Commission the following powers, with caveats:

- To institute, or intervene in, legal proceedings concerning human rights where it need not be a victim or potential victim of the unlawful act to which the proceedings relate
- To require a person to provide information and documents in their possession, and to give oral evidence, in respect of an investigation, and
- To enter a specified place of detention in Northern Ireland, in respect of an investigation.

The Commission has agreed a Management Statement and Financial Memorandum with its sponsor Department, the Northern Ireland Office, which reinforces its independence in line with the United Nations 'Paris Principles' guidance of 1993 on the status and role of national human rights institutions.

We will continue to meet the requirements of section 75 of the *Northern Ireland Act 1998* and legislation on human rights, disability discrimination, data protection, freedom of information and public records.

## **Resources**

The Commission comprises one full-time Chief Commissioner and seven part-time Commissioners. Brief biographical details of Commissioners are set out at Appendix 1.

The Commission has a current permanent staffing complement of 21.3 full-time equivalent staff. A list of the Commission's staff as at April 2010 is at Appendix 2.

The Commission has a core budget of £1,702,000 for 2010–11, which is funded by grant-in-aid from Parliament through the Northern Ireland Office. A change in accounting practice means that depreciation costs are now funded from the Commission's main budget, which has been adjusted accordingly. The overall budget allocation is lower than that agreed in the Comprehensive Spending Review as a result of broader public expenditure cuts. Furthermore, the Commission has also had to absorb the costs of regrading following the outcome of a job evaluation exercise, which was concluded in 2009–10.

Lastly, the Commission has external funding from The Atlantic Philanthropies to provide additional resources to fund the Commission's work to promote implementation of its advice on a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland. This funding was received in July 2009 and will continue to fund activities in this area during 2010–11.

The Commission commends this Business Plan to its many stakeholders and welcomes views on its work at any time.

**Peter O'Neill**  
**Chief Executive**

**April 2010**

## **VISION**

Our vision is a society in Northern Ireland where everyone is aware of their internationally and domestically recognised human rights and those of others, and can enjoy those rights in a society which respects diversity and in which they can feel safe and valued.

## **MISSION**

Our mission is to promote awareness of the importance of human rights, to review existing law, policy and practice and to advise government on what steps need to be taken to fully protect human rights in Northern Ireland.

## VALUES

We carry out our work in accordance with the following values, which all Commissioners and staff will strive to uphold:

***Independence*** – We are accountable for our public funding but independent from any outside influence.

***Participation*** – We will actively engage with a wide variety of groups and individuals so that everyone in Northern Ireland feels that the Commission is their Commission and to avail of people’s expertise and share good practice in all areas of our work.

***Accessibility*** – We will ensure that our services are accessible to all and take account of the views expressed to us on our work. Our decisions will be clearly communicated and open to public scrutiny. We will strive to ensure that all our public events are accessible and our publications are as easy to understand as possible.

***Fairness*** – We will conduct our work and build relationships with stakeholders in a professional, objective, and fair manner. We will be objective when assessing evidence, and to use internationally accepted rules and principles on human rights as our baseline when doing so.

***Effectiveness*** – We aim to deliver an efficient and effective service to the people of Northern Ireland and to demonstrate value for money.

***Sustainability*** – We are committed to the effective protection of the environment, including the prudent use of natural resources.

## EQUALITY COMMITMENT

We are fundamentally committed to equality of opportunity in accordance with the Commission’s Equality Scheme. We will promote equality of opportunity and good relations within the Commission as well as in the activities we conduct. We will strive to comply fully with our statutory obligations and we will liaise closely with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland to ensure that the two institutions work effectively together.

## **BUSINESS PLAN 2010–11**

This Business Plan describes the work proposed for the incoming year under each of the four strategic aims of the Commission and should be read in conjunction with the Commission's Strategic Plan for 2009–11.

A range of strategic objectives is described under each of the aims. Some re-prioritising may be required during the year and the Commission needs to have some capacity to respond to new events as they occur. In addition, there is a requirement to ensure that appropriate time and resources are dedicated to reflecting on the value of ongoing work and to monitoring the implementation of previous recommendations and commitments.

### **Aim 1: Building and embedding a human rights culture**

We will encourage and enable duty bearing institutions and other stakeholders to mainstream human rights in their work and use our powers to ensure compliance by government and public authorities with human rights legislation. In order to effectively embed a dynamic human rights culture, a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland is required to strengthen protections and the Commission will work alongside stakeholders for its enactment in legislation.

#### **Strategic objectives**

- 1.1 To follow up on our advice to government and seek support for a Bill of Rights in Northern Ireland.

#### **In-year target(s):**

- (a) Continue to promote public awareness of the importance of a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland (ongoing).
- (b) Continue to work with the Human Rights Consortium and other stakeholders in promoting a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland (ongoing).
- (c) Continue, upon request, to explain the Commission's advice (ongoing).
- (d) Work with the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the Scottish Human Rights Commission to seek their support for proposals for a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland.

- 1.2 To work to secure the enactment of legislation reflecting our advice to government on a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland.

**In-year target(s):**

- (a) Meet regularly with government and political parties to update them and seek their views on progressing a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland (ongoing).

- 1.3 To work with the Irish Human Rights Commission on human rights issues of common interest in both jurisdictions.

**In-year target(s):**

- (a) Hold at least four meetings of the Joint Committee with the Irish Human Rights Commission, together with associated sub-committee meetings.
- (b) Develop, by March 2011, proposals to progress work on Charter of Rights for the island of Ireland (timetable to be agreed with the Irish Human Rights Commission).
- (c) Contribute to further work by the Joint Committee with the Irish Human Rights Commission in regard to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (ongoing).

- 1.4 To work with the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the Scottish Human Rights Commission in regard to the UK Green Paper *Rights and Responsibilities: developing our constitutional framework*, and related initiatives.

**In-year target(s):**

- (a) Host, in autumn 2010, an international conference on Bill of Rights (to include the UK and Northern Ireland processes and the future of the Human Rights Act 1998).
- (b) Continue to meet with non-governmental organisations and political parties in the UK to exchange views on UK Bill of Rights and Responsibilities (ongoing).
- (c) Work with the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the Scottish Human Rights Commission to respond to proposals for a UK Bill of Rights and Responsibilities to ensure that there is no diminution of rights (ongoing).

- 1.5 To engage with government and the public sector to ensure compliance with the Human Rights Act 1998 and international human rights standards.

**In-year target(s):**

- (a) Support government departments and other public authorities, on how to ensure compliance with the Human Rights Act 1998 and international human rights standards (ongoing).
- (b) Continue to engage with relevant public authorities to ensure they fulfil commitments to developing a plan of action in Northern Ireland for human rights education, as recommended by the United Nations General Assembly (ongoing).

- 1.6 To develop and deliver training and guidance programmes on human rights compliance issues for government departments, public authorities and service providers.

**In-year target(s):** work on this strategic objective was completed in 2009–10.

- 1.7 To encourage the mainstreaming of human rights in the formal education system.

**In-year target(s):**

- (a) Work with the Department of Education, the Department for Employment and Learning and other agencies to mainstream human rights education activities in schools and colleges (ongoing).
- (b) Promote and participate in the Human Rights Education and Training Network (ongoing).

- 1.8 To develop strategic partnerships with relevant organisations to help promote a human rights culture.

**In-year target(s):**

- (a) Participate as appropriate in existing networks of rights-based agencies and organisations, legal and other professions, and facilitate and promote networking (ongoing).

- (b) Participate in the Good Relations Forum hosted by the Equality Commission and the Community Relations Council (ongoing).
- (c) To scope, with the Community Relations Council, a programme and publication on human rights and conflict transformation, including piloting of a training resource (ongoing).

1.9 To engage with public representatives and communities, with a particular focus on Protestant, Unionist and Loyalist constituencies.

**In-year target(s):**

- (a) Scope, by March 2011, pilot projects arising from the Commission's engagement with Protestant, Unionist and Loyalist communities through the Protestant, Unionist and Loyalist Working Group.
- (b) Engage with relevant leaders (civil society and political) to further enhance the Commission's engagement with Protestant, Unionist and Loyalist communities (ongoing).

1.10 To develop stronger links with representatives of vulnerable groups, particularly those most affected by the recession.

**In-year target(s):**

- (a) Identify and define the groups and carry out a needs assessment, by March 2011, to inform the development of a programme for representing the needs of vulnerable groups, particularly those most affected by the recession.
- (b) Continue to ensure that legislation and policy responses, and investigations, pay particular attention to the needs of vulnerable groups (ongoing).

1.11 To enhance working relationships with government and administrations at Stormont, Westminster, Cardiff, Edinburgh, and Dublin.

**In-year target(s):**

- (a) Submit written evidence, and seek or accept invitations to provide oral evidence to Assembly and Westminster (ongoing).
- (b) Submit written evidence, and seek or accept invitations to provide oral evidence to Oireachtas Committees on matters of cross-jurisdictional competence (ongoing).

- (c) Respond to requests for contributions to the devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales on matters of cross-jurisdictional competence (ongoing).

## **Aim 2: Challenging and seeking to prevent human rights violations**

We recognise that there is a need to challenge and address human rights violations and ensure compliance with the Human Rights Act 1998 and other legal standards. This aim is at the core of the Commission's work in commenting on legislation and policy proposals, carrying out investigations and research, in providing legal services and supporting strategic litigation.

### **Strategic objectives**

- 2.1 To support strategic litigation in order to develop case law and achieve effective outcomes for individual complaints, particularly in regard to European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) Article 2 and 3 issues, health and social care, and the accommodation needs of the Traveller community.

#### **In-year target(s):**

- (a) Identify strategic litigation for the Commission, including the consideration of cases for the Commission to take in its own name (ongoing).
- (b) Complete the implementation of the strategy to ensure the provision of an effective Legal Services function, including the efficient processing of incoming inquiries; signposting and referrals; an information and, where appropriate an advocacy service; assessment; provision of human rights legal advice; informal resolution where appropriate; filtering and closure of cases not presenting human rights issues; referrals to Legal Committee of cases falling within strategic priority areas, preparation of papers, and carriage of cases including litigation (ongoing).

2.2 To secure changes in law, public policy and practice to ensure compliance with the Human Rights Act 1998 and international human rights standards, focusing on two themes – issues related to immigration, asylum, citizenship and access to public services; and detention and justice issues, in particular those relating to women and to mental health.

**In-year target(s):**

- (a) Participate further in the Council of Europe's project for the execution of judgments by the European Court of Human Rights (ongoing).
- (b) Assess against relevant human rights standards existing or proposed legislation, policy and practice and provide comment as appropriate, in line with the priorities identified in the Strategic Plan (ongoing).
- (c) Assess and respond to legislation and policy initiatives with substantive human rights implications emerging from the February 2010 Agreement at Hillsborough Castle (ongoing).
- (d) Outside the context of legislative proposals or formal policy consultations, provide human rights advice to the Northern Ireland Assembly, Northern Ireland Executive, Parliament, UK Government and other public authorities, on the Commission's initiative or in response to requests (ongoing).
- (e) Assess against relevant human rights standards proposed legislation in respect of parading (when published) and, as appropriate, provide advice to Government and other relevant agencies and organisations.
- (f) Follow up on legislation and policy advice to encourage and assess the implementation of any new legislation on parading.
- (g) Periodically update the Commission's briefing paper on the National Identity Register and ID cards, and advise Government and others on human rights compliance issues.
- (h) Following the development of the Commission's position on the recommendations of the Consultative Group on the Past in 2009, continue to monitor progress and provide legislation and policy advice on outstanding legacy issues (ongoing).
- (i) Monitor developments concerning the victims of institutional child abuse, and respond as appropriate (ongoing).

- 2.3 To complete and disseminate the Commission's current investigations in the areas of immigration detention, and no recourse to public funds for certain categories of non-UK nationals.

**In-year target(s):**

- (a) Continue to follow up the findings of the investigation into immigration detention, as contained in 'Our Hidden Borders: The UK Border Agency's Powers of Detention' (ongoing).
- (b) Continue to follow up the findings of the investigation into no recourse to public funds for certain categories of non-UK nationals, as contained in 'No Home from Home: Homelessness for People with No or Limited Access to Public Funds' (ongoing).

- 2.4 To complete and disseminate with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland the current research on the nature and extent of human trafficking in Northern Ireland.

**In-year target(s):**

- (a) Follow up the findings of the research into the nature and extent of human trafficking in Northern Ireland, jointly with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, as contained in 'The Nature and Extent of Human Trafficking in Northern Ireland: A Scoping Study', which was published in January 2010 (ongoing).
- (b) Follow up, with the Irish Human Rights Commission, cross-jurisdictional issues arising from the findings of the research into the nature and extent of human trafficking in Northern Ireland (ongoing).

- 2.5 To undertake an investigation into the rights of older people in nursing care homes.

**In-year target(s):**

- (a) Complete, by September 2010, the Commission's investigation into the protection of the rights of older people in nursing care.

(b) Publish and disseminate the findings and recommendations arising from the Commission's investigation into the protection of the rights of older people in nursing care by December 2010.

(c) Follow up on the findings of the investigation by March 2011.

2.6 To monitor the implementation of recommendations from previous Commission investigation and research reports.

**In-year target(s):**

(a) Continue to follow up with relevant government departments and agencies recommendations made in previous investigations and research reports, particularly women in prison (ongoing).

(b) Publish, by June 2010, a research paper into access to free medical care for non-British / Irish citizens, and follow up with DHSSPS and related bodies on its the recommendations.

2.7 To monitor the case law of the Human Rights Act 1998 and international human rights standards.

**In-year target(s):**

(a) Maintain a regularly updated, searchable database on domestic and European Court cases (ongoing).

(b) Subscribe to, and circulate internally, case updates from the Council of Europe (ongoing).

2.8 To engage with the reporting mechanisms of monitoring bodies on the UK's obligations under international human rights treaties and build the capacity of those most directly affected to respond effectively themselves.

**In-year target(s):**

(a) Engage in forthcoming treaty monitoring processes such as the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Convention against Torture, and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ongoing).

- (b) Follow up with the UK Government and the Northern Ireland devolved administration the relevant recommendations emanating from treaty monitoring bodies in respect of UK compliance with international human rights standards (ongoing).
- (c) Encourage the government to ratify without reservations other international instruments, in particular the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, and to remove reservations and declarations (ongoing).

2.9 To promote, protect and monitor implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities jointly with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, and in association with other key stakeholders.

**In-year target(s):**

- (a) Continue to develop the role of the Commission within the independent mechanism under Article 33 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by October 2010, jointly with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, the national human rights institutions in Great Britain and in association other stakeholders.
- (b) Continue to oppose the application of reservations and an interpretive declaration restricting the scope of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and work for their removal (ongoing).
- (c) Continue to seek specific additional resourcing for the Commission's work as a designated body within the independent mechanism (ongoing).

2.10 To participate in the Council of Europe, United Nations and Commonwealth networks of national human rights institutions (NHRIs), and share good practice in promoting and protecting human rights.

**In-year target(s):**

- (a) Attend meetings of the European Group and International Co-ordinating Committee (ICC) of NHRIs (ongoing).

- (b) Participate in consultations, questionnaires and other information and policy work led by the European Group and ICC (ongoing).
- (c) Participate in the network of National Human Rights Structures (NHRIs and Ombudsmen) co-ordinated by the Council of Europe Commissioner on Human Rights, and in consultations and events of other European institutions.

2.11 To identify and follow up networking opportunities among NHRIs and international non-governmental organisations as they occur.

**In-year target(s):**

- (a) Work with the Equality and Human Rights Commission in Great Britain and the Scottish Human Rights Commission, sharing perspectives on UK-wide policy and legislation, developing joint positions with due respect for the independence of each institution, and liaising on access to international fora (ongoing).
- (b) Host or facilitate visits to Northern Ireland by international non-governmental organisations (ongoing).

2.12 To participate in technical co-operation and training initiatives through the European Group of NHRIs, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Council of Europe, the European Union and other bodies, where opportunities arise.

**In-year target(s):**

- (a) Host visits by individuals or groups from other NHRIs or initiatives to establish NHRIs, particularly when requested to do so by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (ongoing).
- (b) Make staff available, if requested and funded, to participate in expert missions or training activities (ongoing).

- 2.13 To continue to engage with the international human rights systems and their reform processes, including the Council of Europe, the European Court of Human Rights, the European Union's Fundamental Rights Agency, and the United Nations structures and treaty monitoring bodies.

**In-year target(s):**

- (a) In addition to providing parallel treaty reports (2.8 refers) and participating in UN and European liaison activities managed by the European Group and International Co-ordinating Committee of NHRIs, engage independently with consultations, study days, the development of General Comments, and other opportunities for engagement with the UN and Council of Europe systems, and with the EU, in particular the Fundamental Rights Agency (ongoing).

**Aim 3: Communicating and promoting human rights in an accessible way**

This aim is central to the Commission's work through publications, information and promotions; media and public affairs; education and training; and events. We recognise that, as an organisation working with difficult and sometimes controversial issues, we have a duty to engage with the public at all levels and in a more accessible fashion. This includes a responsibility to make sure that people understand that, while our work is effective, success often depends upon the co-operation and support of others and a clearer appreciation of the value of human rights. This work will also require the promotion of a culture of rights and the potential development of a comprehensive human rights education strategy by the Department of Education as recommended by the United Nations.

**Strategic objectives**

- 3.1 To further develop our education and training function to include the delivery of training and the development of resources for human rights training.

**In-year target(s):**

- (a) Deliver, by December 2010, a training programme on an introduction to human rights.
- (b) Deliver, by March 2011, a training programme on the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.
- (c) Produce and disseminate a poster on the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination by May 2010.

3.2 To develop online and creative media to promote human rights in Northern Ireland.

**In-year target(s):**

- (a) Redesign, by March 2011, the Commission's main website ([www.nihrc.org](http://www.nihrc.org)), including the creation of new content.
- (b) Develop and maintain the Commission's current main website and social networking websites to promote human rights and the work of the Commission (ongoing).
- (c) Develop and review the use of new technologies, for example, podcasts, RSS feeds, as effective marketing and educational tools (ongoing).
- (d) Publish and maintain the Heritage library catalogue on the Commission's main website (ongoing).
- (e) Review, by December 2010, the Commission's exhibition resource.
- (f) Review, by December 2010, the Commission's animation project.

3.3 To seek to make our information and events accessible to vulnerable and 'hard to reach' groups.

**In-year target(s):**

- (a) Provide an effective information service responding to enquiries and requests in regard to the Commission's activities and general human rights issues (ongoing),
- (b) Publish and disseminate the *NIHRC Review*.
- (c) Produce and disseminate the Commission's e-newsletter.
- (d) Produce, and make publicly available, Legal Briefings providing human rights information in a range of subject areas (ongoing).
- (e) Reprint and disseminate the Commission's poster on the Human Rights Act and European Convention on Human Rights by September 2010.
- (f) Update, publish and disseminate the Commission's general information leaflet by October 2010.

- (g) Produce, publish and disseminate an introductory booklet on 'Your Rights' by February 2011.
- (h) Maintain the Commission's library of human rights information, which is open to the public by appointment (ongoing).
- (i) Update and prepare for publication, the series of information guides for migrant workers, in association with the Law Centre (NI).

3.4 To develop improved working relationships with politicians.

**In-year target(s):**

- (a) Establish and maintain regular contact with officials and, where appropriate, elected representatives and relevant committees, and relevant networks to promote human rights concerns as they affect people in Northern Ireland (ongoing).

3.5 To provide legal services training to students and briefings to members of the legal professions.

**In-year target(s):**

- (a) On request and subject to capacity, deliver an annual seminar for law students via the Institute of Professional Legal Studies at Queen's University, Belfast.
- (b) Investigate, by March 2011, the potential for developing a human rights seminar for law students at the School of Law at the University of Ulster.

3.6 To seek the views of key stakeholders in relation to our performance.

**In-year target(s):**

- (a) Hold two Commission meetings outside Belfast with opportunities to meet local political representatives and members of civil society by March 2011.
- (b) Assess, in March 2011, the level of stakeholder satisfaction through conducting the fourth annual survey of stakeholders.
- (c) Continue to develop and review the Commission's contacts database and stakeholder management system (ongoing).

## **Aim 4: Ensuring organisational effectiveness and efficiency**

This aim is central to the Commission's external relationships as well as to its effective governance, operations and efficient management of its resources. We anticipate continuing change and are committed to the search for improvement in our work. We are enthusiastic about embracing opportunities for innovation and being an organisation that is fit for purpose. It is our responsibility to evaluate continually what we do and how we do it. A large part of our success in the future will come through building a learning organisation, investing in our staff and nourishing a culture of excellence.

### **Strategic objectives**

4.1 Secure sufficient resources, and manage them effectively, to achieve the Commission's mandate.

#### **In-year target(s):**

- (a) Develop and consult on by December 2010, the Commission's Strategic Plan for the period 2011-14.
- (b) Publish and disseminate, by March 2011, the Commission's Strategic Plan for the period 2011-14.
- (c) Develop and submit the Commission's resource requirements for the period 2011-14, in line with the format and timetable determined by the NIO.
- (d) Explore, by August 2010, opportunities for additional funding.
- (e) Maintain and, where appropriate, update a comprehensive assets register, with a full inventory check in February 2011.
- (f) Ensure that sound financial control systems are in place, as verified through internal and external audit activities (ongoing).
- (g) Maintain and review, at least quarterly, the Commission's corporate risk register (ongoing).
- (h) Ensure that vacant staff posts are filled through effective recruitment exercises (ongoing).
- (i) Induct new Commissioners following an appointment exercise to be conducted by the NIO (timetable to be determined by the NIO).

- (j) Review the Commission's financial management arrangements with its sponsoring department, including its Management Statement and Financial Memorandum, financial reporting arrangements and pay framework, in the light of any machinery of government changes to the NIO following devolution of policing and justice and General Election.

4.2 To demonstrate value for money.

**In-year target(s):**

- (a) Ensure that the financial accounts for 2009-10 are submitted to the Comptroller and Auditor General by June 2010 and, once certified, published with the Annual Report in November 2010.
- (b) Initiate in April 2010 an external review of the management structure and processes of the Commission.
- (c) Undertake, by May 2010, a rent review of the Commission's offices.
- (d) Review, by January 2011, the effectiveness of the Commission's communications, education, public affairs and library strategies and revise as appropriate.
- (e) Review, by March 2011, the Commission's event management systems and procedures, including exploring the development of an online event service to manage event registrations.
- (f) Achieve efficiency savings to ensure that the Commission can deliver its strategic objectives within its reduced budget allocation for 2010–11.

4.3 To operate transparent and effective governance arrangements.

**In-year target(s):**

- (a) Implement, from October 2010, a new Code of Governance (including revised Standing Orders for Commission meetings).
- (b) Ensure that the Commission's committees and working groups are supported effectively (ongoing).

- (c) Review, by December 2010, health and safety risk assessment and associated management arrangements.
- (d) Process information requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Data Protection Act 1998 within the statutory timescales.
- (e) Pay 95 per cent of valid invoices with 10 working days of receipt, and 100 per cent within 30 days.
- (f) Ensure that equality and other statistical returns are made on time.

4.4 To review our powers under the Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Act 2007.

**In-year target(s):**

- (a) Continue to seek powers of unannounced access to places of detention (ongoing).
- (b) Seek statutory protection for the confidentiality of information held by the Commission, in line with UK ombudsman bodies (ongoing).

4.5 To promote a work environment in which innovation and creativity are encouraged, valued and applied, by providing opportunities for continuous learning and development for all Commissioners and staff.

**In-year target(s):**

- (a) Implement an action plan to address the findings of a review of issues affecting of staff morale (ongoing).
- (b) Undertake, by September 2010, the third Staff Survey.
- (c) Achieve recognition as an Investor in People by March 2011.
- (d) Provide places for four interns during 2010-11.
- (e) Develop, for pilot by December 2010, a staff exchange programme with a number of sister organisations.

- 4.6 To demonstrate commitment to equality, diversity and good relations, and the protection of the information we hold.

**In-year target(s):**

- (a) Develop an updated Equality Scheme during 2010–11 (timetable to be advised by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland).
- (b) Submit to the Equality Commission, by July 2010, a progress report on achievement in 2008-09 of the measures set out in the Commission's Disability Action Plan, as required by the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006.

- 4.7 To further develop our work with key statutory organisations such as the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, the Commissioner for Children and Young People, the Irish Human Rights Commission, the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the Scottish Human Rights Commission.

**In-year target(s):**

- (a) Agree, by April 2010, a Memorandum of Understanding between the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, the Scottish Human Rights Commission and the Equality and Human Rights Commission.
- (b) Develop, by March 2011, information sharing arrangements on key litigation priorities and cases with the above organisations and also with local key statutory stakeholders.

## BUDGET 2010–11

### CORE FUNDING

#### EMPLOYMENT COSTS

Staff	£875,000
Commissioners	£195,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,070,000</b>

#### RUNNING COSTS

Rent	£102,000
Rates	£50,000
Electricity/gas	£26,000
Phone/fax/alarm	£13,000
Postage	£10,000
Travel	£30,000
Subsistence and hospitality	£10,000
Insurance	£8,000
Stationery	£13,000
Consultancy	£7,000
Professional fees	£30,000
Interns expenses	£1,000
IT	£30,000
Office furniture/equipment	£5,000
Equipment rental	£6,000
Premises expenses	£34,000
Recruitment costs	£10,000
Training and development	£15,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£400,000</b>

#### PROGRAMME COSTS

Education/training materials	£5,000
Engagement with stakeholders	£5,000
External events	£15,000
Investigations, policy and research	£10,000
Legal services, including casework	£75,000
Media monitoring/PR	£14,000
Publications produced	£30,000
Publications purchased	£5,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£159,000</b>

**Depreciation** **£73,000**

**Total Core Funding** **£1,702,000**

#### OTHER INCOME (The Atlantic Philanthropies)

Bill of Rights **£35,000**

**TOTAL FUNDING** **£1,737,000**

## LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2010-11

This plan sets out the main learning and development activities to be undertaken by Commissioners and staff during 2010-11 to achieve the objectives set out in this Business Plan.

Activity	Participants	Business benefits	Cost
Media appearances / handling	Commissioners, Management Team, and staff likely to be involved in dealing with the media	Ability to present the Commission's perspective on key issues to the media, particularly in respect of the Bill of Rights (Objectives 1.1 and 1.2)	£1,000
Project management	Management Team and relevant staff	Ability to manage projects, such as investigations, within time and budget, as recommended by Internal Audit (Objective 2.5)	£3,000
Plain English	Communications and Education Team members and relevant staff	Clear, easy to understand documents published, in hard copy and on the Commission's new website (Objective 3.2)	£1,000
Freedom of Information Act	Management Team	Understanding of exemptions under the Freedom of Information Act (Objective 4.3)	£nil
Diversity and cultural awareness (follow-up)	All Commissioners and staff	To ensure deeper understanding of diversity issues to further aid compliance with the Equality Scheme (Objective 4.6(a))	£500
Sign language for frontline staff	Frontline staff likely to be required to interact with sign language users	Effective communications and relationships with sign language users (Objective 4.6(a))	£1,500
Investors in People assessment	All staff	Recognition as an Investor in People (Objective 4.5(c))	£1,000
Higher education support	Individual members of staff, according to agreed business cases.	Career development (Objective 4.5(e))	£3,000
Individual development needs	Individual staff and Commissioners	To be identified in personal development plans	£4,000
<b>Total cost</b>			<b>£15,000</b>

### **COMMISSIONERS (as at April 2010)**

#### **Chief Commissioner**

Professor Monica McWilliams was appointed Chief Commissioner for Human Rights in Northern Ireland in September 2005 and appointed for a further four years from September 2008. She is currently on leave from her Professorial post at the University of Ulster where she taught Social Policy and Women's Studies. Previously, she served as a Member of the Northern Ireland Legislative Assembly from 1998 to 2003 and was an elected member of the Multi-Party Peace Negotiations which led to the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement in 1998. She was the co-founder of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition in 1996 and led the party in the peace negotiations, the Forum for Dialogue and Understanding and the first Northern Ireland Assembly.

She has published widely on domestic violence and the role of women in political conflict. She was a recipient of the John F Kennedy Profile in Courage Award with the other party leaders involved in the Good Friday negotiations and a joint recipient of the Frank Cousins Peace Award in 1999. She has received an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Lesley College, Massachusetts and Mount Mary College, Milwaukee and is a graduate of Queen's University Belfast and the University of Michigan.

#### **Commissioners**

There are seven other Commissioners who work part-time for the Commission (approximately one day per week). They are:

#### **Thomas Duncan**

Thomas Duncan was Headmaster of the Royal School Armagh between 1988 and 2002 and Deputy Headmaster of Dalriada School, Ballymoney from 1974 until 1988 where he also acted as Head of Science. His main qualifications include MA (NUU) – Education Administration, DASE (NUU) – Education Administration and BSc (QUB) – Chemistry (Honours).

He has fulfilled a number of public roles which include acting as the Chairman of Armagh Together, Armagh Marketing Initiative 1995, Armagh District Scout Council, the Northern Ireland Boarding Schools Partnership and Armagh Rotary Club. He is also Secretary / Treasurer of the Armagh Diocesan Board of Education, Secretary of the Friends of St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh and was Executive Officer of the 1608 Royal Schools. His interests include travelling, golf, theatre and sport. He was appointed as a Deputy Lieutenant for County Armagh in 2009.

Thomas was appointed as a part-time member of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission in September 2005 and reappointed for a further three years from September 2008.

### **Colin Harvey**

Colin Harvey is Professor of Human Rights Law, Head of the School of Law at Queen's University Belfast. From 2000-2004 he was Professor of Constitutional and Human Rights Law, School of Law, University of Leeds and co-convenor of the Human Rights Research Unit. In 1999, he was a Visiting Professor at the Refugee and Asylum Law Program, Faculty of Law, University of Michigan. He was also a member of the Northern Ireland Higher Education Council from 2002-2006 and a member of the Steering Committee of the UK section of the International Association of Constitutional Law from 2003-2006. In addition, he was Refugee Co-ordinator for Amnesty International (Irish Section) 1998-2000 and a member of the Executive of the Committee on the Administration of Justice 1999-2000.

He is a member of the editorial board of *Human Rights Law Review* and is the Case Editor for the *International Journal of Refugee Law*. He has published extensively in academic and more popular formats, on issues of human rights law and politics. Currently a member of the Advisory Board of the British Institute of Human Rights, he is also the General Editor of *Human Rights Law in Perspective* published by Hart Publishing. His books include: *Seeking Asylum in the UK: Problems and Prospects* (2000, Butterworths), *Human Rights in the Community: Rights as Agents for Change* (ed., 2005, Hart Publishing), *Sanctuary in Ireland: Perspectives on Asylum Law and Policy* (ed., with Ursula Fraser, 2004, Institute of Public Administration), *Human Rights, Equality and Democratic Renewal in Northern Ireland* (ed., 2001, Hart Publishing). His articles include: (with JC Hathaway) 'Framing Refugee Protection in the New World Disorder' (2001) *Cornell International Law Journal* 257, 'The Right to Seek Asylum in the European Union' [2004] *European Human Rights Law Review* 17-36.

Colin was first appointed as a part-time member of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission in September 2005 and reappointed for a further three years from September 2008.

### **Ann Hope**

Ann Hope was Advisory Services Officer with the Irish Congress of Trade Unions for 14 years where she had responsibility for gender equality and for progressing work on Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, Single Equality legislation and the proposed Bill of Rights. She also has a background in adult and community education and, prior to working with Congress, worked as a tutor organiser with the Workers' Educational Association where she taught trade union studies and women's studies.

An active trade unionist all her working life, Ann has held many positions in the trade union movement at Branch, Regional and National levels and was President of Belfast and District Council of Trade Unions.

She has served on a number of public bodies including the Board of Prison Visitors for Maghaberry Prison, the Health and Safety Agency, the Equal Opportunities Commission for Northern Ireland, of which she was Deputy Chair, and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. From 2003 to 2007, she served as the Northern Ireland Commissioner for the Women's National Commission, the Government's official independent advisory body on women. She is active in the women's voluntary sector, being a member of the Women's Policy Group, the End Violence Against Women Working Group and is on the Board of Hanna's House, a feminist All-Ireland peace project. Ann was a founder member of Democratic Dialogue and its chair for five years. She was a member of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition, serving on its Executive Committee. She has been a Governor of the Pensions Policy Institute. She holds a Masters in Education, a BA in History and Politics and a Diploma in Trade Union Studies.

Ann was appointed as a part-time member of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission in September 2005 and reappointed for a further three years from September 2008.

### **Alan Henry OBE**

Alan Henry was Head of Human Resources at the Royal Mail from 1988 to 2003. He is currently a Commissioner for Civil Service Commission and an Independent Assessor for the Office of Public Appointments. Alan is also an assessor for the National Clinical Assessment Service and a lay assessor for the Office of Industrial Tribunals and Fair Employment Tribunal.

Alan was formerly a lay Department of Education Schools Inspector and a Commissioner of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

Alan was originally appointed as a part-time member of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission in September 2005 and reappointed for a further three years from September 2008. He was awarded an OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List 2009 for public service.

### **Colm Larkin**

Colm Larkin is from Magherafelt, Co Derry. He studied at St Patrick's College, Armagh, and read Philosophy, Politics and Economics at Balliol College, Oxford. From 1974-2004, he was an official of the European Commission. He was Deputy Chef de Cabinet to Commissioner Peter Sutherland and Chef de Cabinet to Commissioner Ray McSharry. He was Director of the Commission Representation in Ireland from 1993-1998.

He was a member of the Delors Task Force which established the European Peace and Reconciliation Programme. From 1998-2001, he was Special Adviser to Seamus Mallon, the Deputy First Minister of the Northern Ireland Executive. In 2004, he was awarded an MBA by University College Dublin. Since leaving the European Commission, he does some third level teaching and is a consultant on EU affairs with clients in both the public and private sectors. He is a member of the board of the Economic Research Institute of Northern Ireland.

Colm was appointed as a part-time member of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission from December 2007.

### **Eamonn O'Neill**

Eamonn O'Neill was a school teacher for 30 years in St Malachy's High School, Castlewellan and Vice principal for the last ten of those years. An elected councillor to Down Council from 1977 to the present, he has held all the major positions in the council. Eamonn was a long time member of the Northern Ireland Housing Council and is currently a member of the Board of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. He was also a member and past chairman on two occasions of the East Border Region from May 1977 until May 2005. He was elected to the Northern Ireland Assembly and appointed chairman of the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure 1998 to 2003.

He also served as chairman and vice chairman of the Down District Policing Partnership from 2002 to the present and was Northern Ireland chairman and then national chairman of the Association of Public Services Excellence in 2003. In addition, he founded and chaired the local regeneration group Castlewellan Regeneration from 1991 to the present. Eamonn was appointed as a part-time member of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission from September 2005 and reappointed for a further three years from September 2008.

### **Geraldine Rice MBE**

From 1995 until retirement in 2006, Geraldine Rice was a self-employed trainer and consultant to the hospitality industry, and a trainer in food hygiene for the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Geraldine was awarded an MBE in the 2007 New Year's Honours List for services to Local Government in Northern Ireland. She was elected as an Alliance Party councillor in 1989 and is still serving in that capacity as Alderman and most recently as Deputy Mayor for Castlereagh Borough Council. Having been a board member of Clanmil Housing Association since 1998 and chair from 2004-2009, she has served as chair of the finance committee and a Director of Clanmil Properties and Clanmil Ireland (both of these positions are voluntary). She has also been a member of the Police Authority for Northern Ireland, the Probation Board

for Northern Ireland, the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland and a Non-Executive Director of the Sperrin and Lakeland Trust. Geraldine currently serves as a member of the Castlereagh District Policing Partnership.

Her qualifications include Member of the Institute of Cleaning Science MBICsc, registered trainer with the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, Accredited Trainers Certificate Chartered Trust Environmental Health, ECDL Certificate in Computer Skills, OCR Certificate in Counselling Skills and a University of Ulster Certificate in Counselling. She recently undertook a course on leadership at Harvard University.

Geraldine was appointed as a part-time member of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission from September 2005 and reappointed for a further three years from September 2008.

### **STAFF (as at April 2010)**

#### **Chief Executive's office**

Peter O'Neill	Chief Executive
Rebecca Magee	Executive Assistant

#### **Communications and Education Team**

David Russell	Head of Communications and Education
Charlene Craig	Information and Publications Worker
Nadia Downing	Information Worker
Deirdre McAliskey	Education Worker
Claire Martin	Press and Public Affairs Worker
Miriam Titterton	Development Worker

#### **Corporate Services Team**

Don Leeson	Head of Corporate Services
Róisín Carlin	Administrative Officer (Finance / Personnel)
Louise Furber	Administrative Officer (Reception)
Lorraine Hamill	Finance Supervisor
Gillian Neill	Housekeeper

## **Legal Services, Policy and Research Team**

Ciarán Ó Maoláin	Head of Legal Services, Policy and Research
Roisin Devlin	Investigations Worker
Mairead Hegarty	Caseworker
Daniel Holder	Policy Worker
Ann Jemphrey	Policy Worker
Nazia Latif	Research and Investigations Worker
Angela Lloyd–Stevens	Caseworker
Khara Khan–Glackin	Caseworker
Sorcha McKenna	Investigations Worker
Brenda Madden	Administrative Officer / Acting Policy Assistant
Bernadette Rooney	Acting Legal Assistant

**On career break:** Denise Magill, Research Worker