

**THE TWO HUNDRED AND TWENTIETH FIRST MEETING OF  
THE EQUALITY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND**

**Wednesday 30 April 2025 at 1.30pm**

**EQUALITY HOUSE**

**PRESENT:**

|                   |                           |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Geraldine McGahey | Chief Commissioner        |
| Neil Anderson     | Deputy Chief Commissioner |
| Maureen Brunt     | (R)                       |
| Siobhan Cullen    |                           |
| Ellen Finlay      |                           |
| Colin Kennedy     |                           |
| Nazia Latif       |                           |
| Stephen Mathews   |                           |
| Jim McCooe        |                           |
| Sheena McKinney   | (R)                       |
| John McCallister  |                           |
| Preeti Yellamaty  |                           |
| Lisa Caldwell     |                           |

**APOLOGIES:**

Duane Farrell  
Monica Fitzpatrick

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Louise Conlon, Chief Executive  
Keith Brown, Head of Corporate Services  
Frances Fleming Temporary Director of Communications  
Alden Henderson Director, Advice and Compliance  
Lisa King, Director, Research and Investigations  
Kelly McGinley, Communications Manager  
Darren McKinstry Director, Policy and Strategic Engagement  
Leanne Brown, Temporary Equality Development Manager (part of)  
Simon Hookham, Senior Research Officer (part of)  
Craig Gartley, Director of Finance (part of)

## 1. Introduction

The Chief Commissioner welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked all for attending the earlier strategic discussion.

On behalf of the Commission, the Chief Commissioner thanked Darren McKinstry, Director of Public Policy and Strategic Engagement for his commitment and dedication to the Commission over the past 21 years and wished him well in his new post and for the future.

Darren thanked the board for their good wishes and wished the Commission well for the future.

## 2. Minutes of the two hundred and twentieth meeting held EC/24/04/01 on Wednesday 26 March 2025

Minutes of the two hundred and twentieth meeting held on Wednesday 26 March 2025 were signed as a true and accurate record.

## 3. Actions from previous meeting

Commissioners **noted** the actions outlined from the previous meeting. It was agreed that actions would be removed from the list once completed.

## 4. Conflict of Interest

There were no conflicts declared.

## 5. Policy Issues

- Fair Employment Monitoring Report (2023) EC/25/04/02

Leanne Brown, Equality Development Manager updated Commissioners on the key findings from the Fair Employment Monitoring Report (2023) No. 34, a profile of the Northern Ireland monitored workforce.

The importance of fair employment monitoring, how returns can now be made electronically, actions against those who fail to submit returns and its continued impact on Northern Ireland's society was discussed. There was a discussion in relation to the increase in those categorised as non-determined and it was noted that further analyses would be considered in this area.

It was agreed that the summary report will be published in due course.

Commissioners **noted** the Monitoring Report No.34 and its findings, as well as the planned dissemination of the report.

## 6. Business Reporting

- Board Effectiveness Review Action Plan EC/25/04/03

Keith Brown updated Commissioners on the Board Effectiveness draft Delivery Plan. This followed consideration of the review findings at the March Commission, and receipt of the final report.

A discussion including how to support new Commissioners to their role, and clarification around estimated completion dates followed.

It was also noted that an assessment of progress will form a key part of the Commission's review of Board effectiveness in 2025/26. Progress will be monitored by the full Commission, at least twice each year, including at an 'away-day' meeting, and reviewed at each Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meeting. Progress will also be monitored by the Chief Commissioner and Chief Executive.

Commissioners **approved** the plan.

- Finance Report 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025 EC/25/04/04

Craig Gartley, Director of Finance, provided Commissioners with an update following the conclusion of the 2024/25 financial year and the Commission's provisional outturn.

It was reported that the Commission was successful in managing its revised resource budget throughout the 2024/25 and delivered within its target of 1.5%. The Commission continues to review this outturn whilst preparing its draft Financial Statements due before the Commission's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee on 7 May 2025.

Current year budgets, financial pressures, monitoring rounds and potential impact of staff pay awards were discussed. Commissioners were advised planning is in place to deliver on projects should additional funding be secured during future monitoring rounds.

Commissioners **noted** the financial position at the year end.

- Progress Report: 1 April 2024 - 31 March 2025 EC/25/04/05

The Chief Executive presented the year end Business Plan Progress Report, outlining progress against 29 objectives over six priority areas. By the year-end, satisfactory progress has been made 86% of objectives for the year, including significant progress against 41%. There were no areas where progress was not achieved.

The design of the report and the effort to provide a more streamlined overview of progress made was discussed. Commissioners also acknowledged that despite best efforts some work, or projects had to be paused due to external factors or unforeseen circumstances. Cross-divisional working and how this may aid progress reporting was also discussed.

It was agreed that the template would be revisited and some additional content added to further assist Commissioners to assess progress.

Commissioners **noted** the year-end Progress Report.

- Communications Report: 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025 EC/25/04/06

Frances Fleming, Director of Communications, presented the report of the communications work undertaken for the period 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025. This included publicity of cases, general press releases, blogs, social media, website, partnerships and events.

There was a brief discussion on the social media platforms used by the Commission. The relevance and importance of reporting on proactive and reactive media coverage was also discussed.

Commissioners **noted** the update for the period.

## 7. Chief Commissioners Business

The Chief Commissioner thanked Sheena McKinney for her service as a Commissioner, as she finishes her term with the Commission.

Commissioners were reminded that the next board meeting will be held in the Guildhall and that a strategic board away-day is being planned for end of August.

The Chief Commissioner provided an update on engagements she had had over the past month, including the celebration of 15 years of the Equality Act in the House of Lords.

The Chief Commissioner provided a brief update on progress on guidance being developed in relation to gender reassignment.

Commissioners were advised that from next month the chairs of the various working groups/committees involving Commissioners would provide updates of any meetings held during the month.

Commissioners **noted** the update.

## 8. Chief Executive Report

EC/25/03/05

The Chief Executive provided presented her previously circulated report and updated on a number of business issues including CLC Judicial Review. She advised that TEO had provided the draft TOR for the periodic review of the Commission.

The Chief Executive also advised there had been a number of media requests for comment following the Supreme Court ruling. Press statements were issued. Commissioners advised that staff are working towards a publication date of June for the guidance. Commissioners were advised that a stakeholder engagement plan will be developed and rolled out with the guidance.

Commissioners **noted** the update.

## 9. Matters for Information

- PMB: Conversion Practices Prohibition Bill

EC/25/04/08

Commissioners **noted** the matters outlined above for information.

## 10. Minutes of Committee Meetings

- Minutes of the Statutory Duty Investigations Committee held on 5 February 2025. EC/25/04/09

- Minutes of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee held on 30 October 2024.

Commissioners **noted** the Minutes of the meetings of the Statutory Duty Investigations Committee and the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

**11. Any Other Business**

- 12. Date of next meeting:** Two hundred and Twenty Second Commission Meeting on **Tuesday 27 May 2025**, in the Harbour House, Guildhall, Derry City and Strabane District Council. 12.30 start TBC.

Meeting concluded at 3.35pm

**Signed:**



**Signed:** 27 May 2025