

Annual Report and Accounts 2006-2007



NORTHERN
IRELAND
HUMAN
RIGHTS
COMMISSION





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COMMISSION

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2006–07

Annual report presented to Parliament
by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
in pursuance of paragraph 5(2) of Schedule 7
of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Accounts
presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State
on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General
in pursuance of paragraph 7(3)(b) of Schedule 7
to the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

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11 December 2007

Rt Hon Shaun Woodward MP
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
Block B, Castle Buildings
Stormont
Belfast BT4 3SG

Dear Secretary of State

I have pleasure in submitting to you, as required by paragraph 5(1) of Schedule 7 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the eighth Annual Report of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission. It shows how the Commission has performed its functions during the period 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007.

The Annual Report includes the Commission's financial statements for the year ending 31 March 2007, which have been prepared in accordance with Paragraph 7 of Schedule 7 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, and which were approved and certified by the Comptroller and Auditor General on 15 October 2007.

Yours sincerely

Professor Monica McWilliams
Chief Commissioner



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This document will be made available in an alternative format (such as in large print, in Braille, on audio cassette, easy read or on computer disk) and/or language upon request.

It is also available on the Commission’s website www.nihrc.org.



Chief Commissioner's Foreword

During the past year, the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission has continued its work on human rights at both the local and international level. The Commission attained its full accreditation as a UN recognised national human rights institution in November. We have also been assisting a number of countries striving to establish human rights commissions and have been supported by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in this work. In June 2006, 25 national human rights




institutions from countries in conflict around the world came to Belfast to work with the Commission on human rights and conflict resolution. We were delighted that the UN commended us for hosting this meeting and recognised the particular experience of the NIHRC in this field. The report also reflected the need to find, in each of our own ways, processes that would deal with the past. It argued that as national human rights institutions, we cannot give up on this quest.

At local and international levels, the Commission also continued to work on issues connected with the right to an effective investigation of death, which is an aspect of the human right to life. Alongside the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights and other human rights bodies, we have raised concerns about the adequacy of death investigations in Northern Ireland. The role of law enforcement bodies in these investigations remains an unresolved issue. The Commission had opposed the introduction in 2005 of the Inquiries Act, which replaced a variety of earlier legislation and now provides the only model for public inquiries into deaths or other matters. It was our view that the Act would not lead to the full truth on, for example, allegations of collusion. We intervened in a judicial review of the investigation into the killing of Billy Wright, to test the compatibility of the Act with the European Convention on Human Rights. The ruling in December 2006 (that the conversion of the inquiry was unlawful) questioned whether any Inquiries Act process "would or could be perceived to be truly independent".

In the past year, the Commission also pursued the issue of full disclosure of information resulting from investigations of unsolved deaths or unheard inquests with the Historical Enquiries Team of the PSNI, the Police Ombudsman's Office, the Information Commissioner and other relevant bodies. We noted that in response to concerns raised by the families of the Disappeared, the two governments have retained the services of a forensic expert to assist in the possible recovery of bodies. Dealing with the legacy of the past is now the shared responsibility of a number of bodies

In brief

Alongside the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights and other human rights bodies, we have raised concerns about the adequacy of death investigations in Northern Ireland.



and the Commission will work hard to ensure that the Government prioritises its responsibilities in this area.

In brief

The Commission attained full accreditation as a UN recognised national human rights institution in November 2006.

The Commission also received much public attention in the past year for its work on access to drug treatments for breast cancer, rheumatoid arthritis and rare conditions requiring special intervention. We were pleased with our level of success in this field, particularly with health trusts that had initially refused to allocate these drugs. A further area of social and economic rights which we pursued in the past year was through our work on patient safety and deaths in hospital. The right to housing has also featured in our work. Human rights issues in relation to public housing have been brought to our attention by residents' groups concerned with sanitation standards and, in particular, the regular occurrences of infestation in a high rise block of flats in the New Lodge area of Belfast. The Planning Service and Housing Executive have also been asked to address the establishment of emergency sites to accommodate the families of Travellers living without mains electricity and clean water.

These are some examples of the Commission's intervention in cases where policies exist but still need to be enforced by public bodies to ensure their compliance with the Human Rights Act. The work on education and training on human rights has also been expanded and we will continue to monitor the impact of this work in the coming year.

In the past year, we challenged the compatibility of the Mental Health (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 with the Human Rights Act, and in particular the appropriate mental health treatment of prisoners with personality disorders. The Bamford Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability completed its work this year. Through Commissioner Christine Eames's work as Chairperson of the Human Rights Working Group, the Commission has taken an active interest in the Review's recommendations and, in particular, has noted the urgency for new mental health legislation. The Commission looks forward to offering its advice on the legislation, drawing on the international standards on human rights in the mental health field.

The Commission has also been active in visiting places of detention. We opposed the use of prison for immigration detention in Northern Ireland but remain concerned at the Home Office's alternative, which has involved the rapid transfer of Northern Ireland detainees to the Dungavel Removal Centre in Scotland or to similar centres in England. Commissioners visited Dungavel to assess the human rights concerns of those from Northern Ireland who were being detained there. We also visited the Immigration Removal Centre in Yarl's Wood, where we noted that 61 children were being detained, many of whose parents were lone mothers, and some of whom were being held for a considerable time prior to their removal from the UK. The Commission has begun an investigation in the field of human rights and immigration in Northern Ireland and will publish this report in the coming year.

The rights of children and adults in custody remain a priority for us. In this work and on our regular visits to prisons, Commissioners ask whether prisoners are held in safety; if they are treated with respect and dignity as human beings; if they are able to engage in purposeful activity and if they are prepared for resettlement. The Prison Service has acknowledged the need for a discrete women's custody unit but has not announced how it plans to achieve this. We hope that our ongoing work with the Prison Service will contribute to ensuring that a new women's custody unit will be taken forward as matter of urgency. In the past year, we also engaged with the Eastern Health and Social Services Board as it moved to take responsibility



for prisoners' health care from April 2007. It is our intention to continue this relationship since we take the view that in our work with public bodies a culture of rights needs to be built from the start.

In Northern Ireland, there are serious and legitimate debates to be made about the definition of rights, their interpretation and the proper balance between different rights. In the past year, we have had to challenge some of the government's assumptions that human rights concerns were secondary to the public safety issues around counter-terrorism measures. The Commission has commented at both national and international levels on this subject. At a Council of Europe meeting involving national human rights institutions, we were asked to draw on the Northern Ireland experience on emergency legislation. We also made similar submissions to the International Committee of Jurists and to the Joint Committee on Human Rights at Westminster. What is of particular concern is that the application of detention powers and control orders solely to members of the Muslim community threatens confidence in the impartiality of the justice system.

Covert surveillance and the interception of communications are other issues with which Northern Ireland has had long experience. These have now become part of the wider human rights debate on dealing with international terrorism and the accountability mechanisms for intelligence gathering, alongside the devolution of policing and justice, will remain a priority in the coming year.

We presented evidence at Westminster, met on a regular basis with the Irish Human Rights Commission and had meetings with the Secretary of State, the Taoiseach and Ministers in both jurisdictions. Minister David Hanson is acknowledged here for fulfilling the St Andrew's obligation to establish a Bill of Rights Forum and we welcome Chris Sidoti as the independent Chair of this Forum, recognising that he brings his international expertise on human rights to this important post. We also wish the Forum well as its delegates enter their deliberations and the Commission looks forward to receiving their report at the end of their process.

There were some other positive developments in the last year such as the implementation of Civil Partnerships; reforms to the law on sexual offences; a Commission for Equality and Human Rights in Great Britain; a Human Rights Commission for Scotland; the introduction of a smoking ban in public places; proposals for an Irish Language Act for Northern Ireland and the further development of the office of the Prisoner Ombudsman for Northern Ireland, which opened in 2005.

Countless organisations have helped the Commission and I want to pay tribute to them in this Annual Report. We will continue to work in partnership with them to strengthen human rights in Northern Ireland and we look forward to the coming year when the Commission expects to get new powers, which we hope will make it an even stronger and more effective body. We are also looking forward to the new Assembly since it also falls to it to 'secure to everyone ... their rights and freedoms'. It is in this spirit that the Commission looks forward to the interesting times that lie ahead for Northern Ireland, particularly in the field of human rights.

In brief

There are serious and legitimate debates to be made about the definition of rights, their interpretation and the proper balance between rights.

Commissioners



Professor Monica McWilliams
appointed from 1 September 2005



Mr Alan Henry
appointed from 1 September 2005



Lady Christine Eames OBE
appointed from 1 December 2001



Mr Jonathan Bell
appointed from 1 September 2005



Mr Tom Duncan
appointed from 1 September 2005



Ms Ann Hope
appointed from 1 September 2005



Professor Colin Harvey
appointed from 1 September 2005



Mr Eamonn O'Neill
appointed from 1 September 2005



Ms Geraldine Rice
appointed from 1 September 2005



Mr Kevin McLaughlin
appointed from 1 December 2001

Photography: Lesley Doyle



Chief Executive's Review


The year has been one of development and progress for the Commission. With the new cohort of Commissioners now well settled into post along with colleagues Kevin McLaughlin and Christine Eames, the Commission has, in implementing its new Strategic Plan, decided on an ambitious yet focused programme of work.

High profile issues during the year have included the introduction of new powers for the Commission, the receipt of full 'A' status accreditation at the United Nations, the creation of three new posts, a revised pay structure and important and influential work on prison and detention. The establishment of the Bill of Rights Forum was also welcomed by the Commission.

In addition, we have continued to respond to legislation and policy consultation documents on human rights matters, given evidence on anti-terrorism measures to a Panel of Eminent Jurists, chaired by Arthur Chaskalson, former President of the South African Constitutional Court, and hosted the Joint Committee on Human Rights from Westminster to take evidence on a range of human rights issues. Of particular note was a workshop hosted, in June 2006, jointly with the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights on the role of national human rights institutions in situations of conflict. Some 25 institutions came to Belfast from all over the world to share their experiences and learn from each other. The main message emerging was that the past cannot be ignored and that national institutions can play a constructive and forward looking role in acknowledging and exposing what happened.

In that respect, the introduction of the Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Bill was a disappointment. This Bill carried into legislation the Government's response to the Commission's long standing submission for additional powers of investigation and access to places of detention. Although the Bill does provide welcome powers for the Commission to take a case in its own name under the Human Rights Act, without recourse to the 'victim requirement', and does allow the compulsion of documents and witnesses in an approved investigation, these powers are circumscribed by extensive national security restrictions and apply only to events occurring after August 2007. This effectively eliminates any role for the Commission in dealing with issues relating to the legacy of the conflict and it remains to be seen how the Commission will be able to challenge this direction within the two year statutory review period.

Important investigations into places of detention and, in particular, a further review of the situation of women and girls in prison, were undertaken by the Commission during the year. Commissioners visited a range of places of detention and the Chief Commissioner was in regular contact with the Prison Service and the Prisoner



Ombudsman to improve conditions. While detailed elsewhere in the report, this work has been an important feature of the year.

Internationally, the Commission was represented at the UN International Co-ordinating Committee meetings in Geneva and Bolivia and at meetings of the European Group of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) in Athens and Geneva. We have taken responsibility to be the focal point for two working groups of NHRIs on the outworking of the Santa Cruz declaration on migration and on the relationship of NHRIs to the new UN Human Rights Council. Commissioners also visited the institutions of the Council of Europe, meeting with the Commissioner on Human Rights, Thomas Hammarberg, and officials from various Committees and treaty bodies, including the European Court of Human Rights. We have kept in close contact with the transition team of the newly established Commission on Equality and Human Rights (CEHR), and aim to work in close co-operation with that organisation and the Scottish Human Rights Commission when established.

In brief

Important investigations into places of detention and, in particular, a further review of the situation of women and girls were undertaken during the year.

As well as hosting various visiting international delegations, including representatives of the South African and New Zealand Commissions, the Commission, at the request of the UN, was able, during the year, to assist the development of NHRIs in Iraq, Pakistan and Uruguay. We also attended a conference and subsequent planning meeting of NHRIs in the Commonwealth, with a view to establishing a relatively informal network of Commonwealth institutions, taking forward the previous work done in this area by the British Council and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. We met during the year with the then Secretary of State, Peter Hain, and the Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, and regularly with their officials. The Joint Committee of the Irish Human Rights Commission and our own Commission continues to progress and a programme of work has been

identified with discrete funding sought from both governments to support its work. Staff in the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) continue to work with us constructively to ensure both independence and accountability, and we are in the process of reviewing the Management Statement and Financial Memorandum which direct our relationship, in a forthcoming review.

Internally, the establishment of an Audit and Risk Management Committee with an independent Chair, Dr Bill Smith, has helped ensure good governance. A great deal of work has gone into the establishment of a revised pay structure and the creation of three new posts. The organisation is well placed to expand and will review its resource needs in light of the impact of the new powers. The profile of the Commission has developed positively and the Chief Commissioner, in particular, has worked to ensure that the Commission's aim of promoting a culture of rights is taken forward at every opportunity. This was the theme of the annual conference held during the week coinciding with Human Rights Day and reflects a core aim of the Commission's Strategic Plan. A successful staff residential and regular reviews by Commissioners have helped to keep the Commission's work focused on the agreed aims and objectives of its Plan, and with the new injection of staff resources a further productive period is envisaged.



Farewell

At the time of writing, I am about to leave the Commission after almost eight years in post, since not long after it was established. It is a good time for change and the Commission is well placed to move forward very positively as the political environment stabilises and new relationships are forged with the Assembly, the Bill of Rights Forum and our sister human rights and equality bodies in Britain and Ireland. Much progress has been made since 1999 and I wish Commissioners and staff all good luck in moving the human rights agenda further forward.

Paddy Sloan
Chief Executive



Management Commentary

Nature of the Commission's business and its aims, objectives and activities

The Commission is a body which was provided for in the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement of 1998 and which was formally established under the Northern Ireland Act 1998 on 1 March 1999. The Commission is a non-departmental public body, funded by the Northern Ireland Office (NIO), but otherwise independent from Government. It is accountable, through the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, to Parliament at Westminster and is subject to oversight by the UK Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration.

Under section 69 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, 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 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 a Bill is compatible with human rights;
- 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 on the scope for defining, in Westminster legislation, rights supplementary to those in the European Convention on Human Rights;
- To make to the Secretary of State within two years such recommendations as it thinks fit for improving the Commission's effectiveness;
- To do all that it can to ensure the establishment of a Joint Committee with the Human Rights Commission in the Republic of Ireland.

In addition, under the same section, 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;
- To publish its advice and the outcome of its research and investigations.



It is anticipated that the Commission's powers will be changed through enactment of the Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Bill. From these statutory duties and powers, the Commission has distilled the following:

Vision

Our vision is to help bring about a society in Northern Ireland where everyone is aware of their internationally 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

The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission will work vigorously and independently to ensure that the human rights of everyone in Northern Ireland are fully and firmly protected in law, policy and practice. To that end, the Commission will measure the law, policy and practice in Northern Ireland against internationally accepted rules and principles for the protection of human rights and will exercise to the full the functions conferred upon it to ensure that those rules and principles are promoted, adopted and applied throughout Northern Ireland.

Our values

- Independence • Fairness • Openness • Accessibility
- Accountability • Participation

Values

The Commission is committed to working in accordance with the following key values:

Independence

The Commission is completely independent from any outside influence. We arrive at our conclusions after all the evidence has been fully considered.

Fairness

We provide a proper hearing to any person or group wanting to meet with us. We are objective when assessing evidence, and use internationally accepted rules and principles on human rights as our baseline at all times.

Openness

We welcome visitors to the Commission's offices and undertake to meet individuals and groups at other premises if this is more convenient or suitable. The minutes of Commission meetings and all key documents are published on our website.



Accessibility

The Commission works closely with members of the public. We ensure that all our public events are accessible and our publications are as easy to understand as possible and made available in other formats.

Accountability

We produce an annual report after the end of each financial year. We are answerable to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration (the UK Ombudsman) and we will co-operate fully with any investigation that might arise. We maintain a Register of Commissioners' Interests which is available to anyone who wishes to review it.

Participation

We work to ensure that individuals and groups feel that the Commission is their Commission. We strive to ensure that this happens particularly in our work on a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland and in our education work, but more generally we want to avail of people's expertise in all areas of our work.

Strategic aims

- Building a human rights culture in Northern Ireland
- Challenging and preventing human rights abuse
- Building support for a Bill of Rights and working in partnership with others for its implementation, and
- Ensuring a strong and effective Human Rights Commission.

The Commission's aims and objectives are set out in its Strategic Plan for 2006-09. Further details of the Commission's work during 2006-07 are set out in the Meeting Aims section of this Annual Report on pages 25 to 52.

Funding and financial accountability

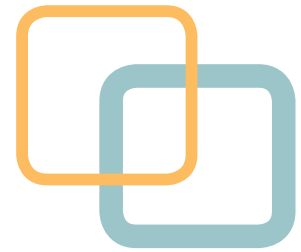
The Permanent Secretary who is the Principal Accounting Officer of the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) designates the Chief Executive as the Accounting Officer for the Commission. Don Leeson, Head of Corporate Services, has been designated as Interim Accounting Officer, pending the appointment of a new Chief Executive, and has therefore signed the Commission's accounts contained within this Annual Report.

The Commission operates under a Management Statement and Financial Memorandum agreed with the Northern Ireland Office and financed by grant-in-aid, the allocation of which comes from the NIO Request for Resources 1.

Casework testimonial

"The Commission gave me support and a vital legal opinion at a crucial time. They provided me with a strategy with which to proceed towards my goal (which was to obtain funding for a vital drug for my health). I found the Commission to be helpful in the extreme and if I can repay them I would do so. I am particularly thankful to [staff member] for her help in obtaining my treatment."

Dermot Grant, Cushendall



The Commission's accounts for 2006-07 are included with this Annual Report at pages 67 to 80. These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of paragraph 7(2)(a) of Schedule 7 to the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and in a form directed by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland with the approval of the Treasury. The financial statements demonstrate the resources that have been used to deliver the Commission's objectives. These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the guidance set out in the Government Financial Reporting Manual for 2006-07 (available at www.financial-reporting.gov.uk).

The Commission had grant-in-aid of £1.675 million available to it during 2006-07, which included £200,000 carried forward from 2005-06 using end-year flexibility arrangements to meet ongoing commitments. Of this, £1.475 million was drawn down to meet expenditure requirements – the remainder will be used to meet longer term commitments made by the Commission in respect of ongoing legal cases.

A change in financial reporting requirements means that this grant-in-aid is treated as a financing flow rather than income. This technical change means that the Operating Cost Statement may appear distorted to the lay reader, when in fact the Commission has total assets less current liabilities of over £250,000. The operating costs and cash flows are reconciled in Notes 14 and 15 to the accounts and show funding coming into the organisation exceeding costs.

Details of the movement of fixed assets are set out in Note 6 to the accounts.

The Commission's expenditure in 2006-07 demonstrates continued controlled and sustainable growth of the organisation within its agreed resource allocation. This includes significant capital investment in leasehold improvements to the Commission's offices to further improve accessibility and upgrade the fire safety management system, upgrading its information technology, and a new exhibition resource to help better promote awareness of human rights in local communities. For accounting purposes, this investment, amounting to £229,668, is treated as a growth in tangible assets rather than expenditure.

Other aspects of the Commission's expenditure during 2006-07, detailed in Notes 3 and 4 to the accounts, are as follows:

- An increase in total staff costs brought about largely by the current cohort of Commissioners being in office for a full year (the Chief Commissioner and seven Commissioners were not appointed until September 2006);
- An increase in travel and subsistence costs, reflecting the return of a full complement of Commissioners, as well as the significant international dimension of the Commission's work;
- An increase in the rates following the extension of the Commission's lease on its offices to acquire use of the whole building;
- An increase in conference expenditure to reflect expenditure on an International Roundtable of national human rights institutions in June 2006, funded by the United Nations with a grant of \$90,000;
- Further investment in staff development and an increase in recruitment costs from a recruitment exercise conducted in March 2007 to fill three new posts as part of an expansion of the Commission's staff cadre for 2007-08;



- Implementation of the Commission's Public Affairs Strategy and consequential increase in related expenditure;
- A reduction in rent-related expenditure compared to the previous year when a one-off premium payment was made on the signing of the new lease for the Commission's offices;
- Approval of revised pay arrangements for Commission staff resulting in a reduced requirement for consultancy advice;
- Delays to two investigation projects;
- Reduced costs in respect of casework for which funding was approved by the Commission's Legal Committee during the year;
- Reduced expenditure on the Bill of Rights compared to the previous year when the Commission held a conference devoted to the issue;
- Efficiency savings resulting from changing the Commission's provider of professional indemnity insurance and a reduced reliance on accountancy and internal audit support.

In the course of the forthcoming financial year, the Commission aims to:

- Carry out investigations and support individual cases that highlight human rights concerns;
- Advise government in Northern Ireland and at Westminster on the human rights implications of legislation and policy;
- Through research, education, publications and seminars promote widely a culture and understanding of human rights across Northern Ireland; and
- Monitor progress of the Bill of Rights Forum of political parties and representatives of civil society, which is seeking to achieve consensus on a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland – the Commission will, in light of developments with the Bill of Rights Forum, provide advice to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on the scope for a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland.

Further details of these activities are given in the Strategic Plan for 2006-09 and Business Plan for 2007-08, which are available on the Commission's website, www.nihrc.org.

Post-balance sheet events

There have been no significant events since the end of the financial year which would affect the results for the year or the assets and liabilities at the year-end.



Commissioners and Chief Executive

The Commission is governed by its Commissioners. The following served as Commissioners during 2006-07:

- Professor Monica McWilliams (Chief Commissioner)
- Mr Jonathan Bell
- Mr Thomas Duncan
- Lady Christine Eames OBE
- Professor Colin Harvey
- Mr Alan Henry
- Ms Ann Hope
- Mr Kevin McLaughlin
- Mr Eamonn O’Neill
- Ms Geraldine Rice MBE

Details of attendance by Commissioners at Commission meetings and their participation in committees and working groups are set out at Appendices 1 and 2.

The Commission’s Chief Executive during 2006-07 was Ms Paddy Sloan.

Details of remuneration can be found in the Remuneration Report, which is included with this Annual Report at pages 55 to 80.

A register of interests of the Commissioners and senior staff can be found on the Commission’s website (www.nihrc.org).

Casework testimonial

“When an illegal landfill adjacent to my property began to cause severe flood damage to my home I contacted various government departments for their help. For two years no-one would take responsibility for my dilemma and I was advised to contact the Commission. Unlike the public, the Commission cannot be ignored; their intervention made me feel that I wasn’t on my own, and with their help I began to feel that there was light at the end of the tunnel. I have recently been contacted by the appropriate government department, who acknowledge that the problem will be resolved. I am extremely grateful to [staff member] for visiting my home and contacting these government departments on my behalf.”

Suzanne Younger, Donaghadee



Corporate governance and risk management

The Commission is committed to ensuring a high standard of corporate governance. The Commission has responsibility for defining strategy and determining resource allocations to ensure the delivery of the Commission's objectives. There is a corporate structure of committees that have clear terms of reference to support the Commission.

All Commissioners have received training in the role and responsibilities of board members of non-departmental public bodies, and induction into the work of the Commission.

The Commission has a risk management framework in place to identify risks and manage down as far as possible the likelihood of identified risks occurring and their impact.

Audit and Risk Management Committee

The Commission's Audit and Risk Management Committee held its inaugural meeting on 3 April 2006 and met five times during 2006-07. The Audit and Risk Management Committee is chaired by an external chairperson to ensure independence and access to a full range of financial and governance expertise.

The Audit and Risk Management Committee comprises:

- Dr Bill Smith (Chairperson)
- Lady Christine Eames OBE
- Mr Alan Henry
- Mr Kevin McLaughlin
- Mr Eamonn O'Neill
- Ms Geraldine Rice MBE

The Chief Executive and the Head of Corporate Services attend Audit and Risk Management Committee meetings. The National Audit Office and Internal Auditors attend by invitation. The chair of the Committee attends at least one Board meeting each year to report and receive feedback on the work of the Committee.

The Audit and Risk Management Committee support the Accounting Officer, and the Commission, by monitoring and reviewing the risk, control and governance systems, and the associated assurance processes. This is achieved by providing an independent perspective and through a process of constructive challenge. The Chairperson attends at least one Commission meeting each year to present a report on the activities of the Audit and Risk Management Committee.

Equal opportunities policy (including that for the employment of disabled people)

Equality commitment

The Commission is fundamentally committed to equality of opportunity in accordance with its Equality Scheme, prepared under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The Commission therefore strives to promote equality of



opportunity within the organisation as well as in the activities it conducts. The Commission strives to comply fully with its statutory obligations and liaises closely with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland to ensure that the two institutions work effectively together.

The Commission's Equality Committee meets on a regular basis to oversee the implementation of the Equality Scheme and support other work to ensure that the Commission meets its equality commitment.

Disabled people

The Commission aims to be an exemplar in the implementation and continuing development of procedures to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and aims to ensure that disability is not a bar to recruitment or advancement.

Learning and development

During the year the Commission continued to give high priority to training and developing all its staff to enhance their professionalism to support the Commission's objectives. A number of staff are currently enrolled on a range of courses including postgraduate LLM courses in human rights law, and others have recently completed distance learning courses provided by the United Nations.

The Commission is working towards achieving the Investors in People Standard. An action plan setting out what further improvements the Commission needs to make in respect of the management and development of its staff will be developed in 2007, with a view to achieving the Standard in 2008.

Employee consultation

The Commission implements its Strategic Plan through its staff. In achieving business objectives the Commission recognises that the involvement of staff in planning and the decision making process is essential. Staff involvement is maximised through the combined use of, for example, regular team meetings, staff briefings, an annual staff residential and joint staff / union consultative meetings. NIPSA is the Commission's recognised trade union.

Health and safety

The Commission recognises and accepts its legal responsibilities in relation to the health, safety and welfare of its employees and for all people using its premises. The Commission complies with the Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 and all other appropriate legislation. Three members of staff have been trained in first aid, with one designated as the Health and Safety Officer.

Research and development

The Commission engages in research and development activities relating to human rights and the support of individual cases. These research reports are listed in Appendix 5 and posted on the Commission's website www.nihrc.org.



Creditor payment, policy and performance

The Commission is committed to the prompt payment of bills for goods and services received in accordance with the principles of the 'Better Payment Practice Code' as stated in paragraph 4.2.1 of the 'Non-Departmental Public Body' guidance. Unless otherwise stated in the contract, payment is due within 30 days of the receipt of the goods or services, or presentation of a valid invoice or similar demand, whichever is later.

During the year 87 per cent of bills were paid within this standard (2005-06 : 80 per cent).

Auditors

The financial statements are audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General. The fees for this year are £10,000 (2005-06 : £10,000).

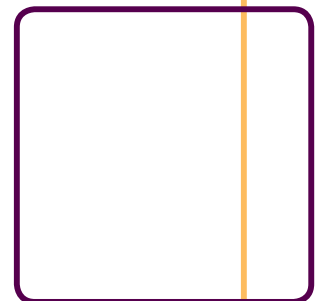
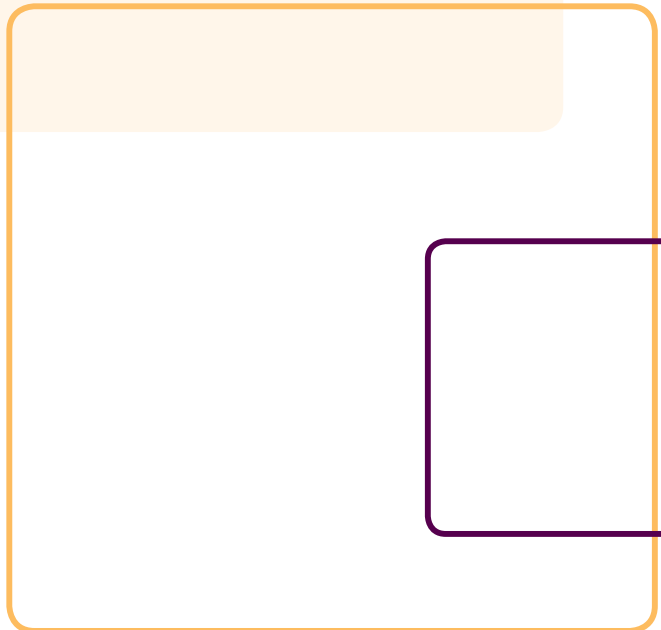
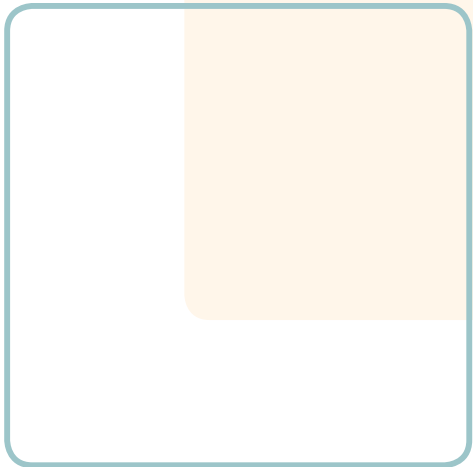
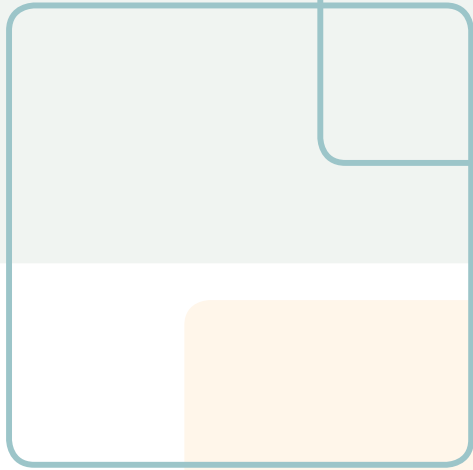
The Commission's Internal Audit is provided independently by ASM Horwath.

As Interim Accounting Officer, with effect from 24 May 2007, I confirm that I have taken all steps to ensure that I am aware of any relevant audit information and to ensure that the Commission's auditors are aware of that information. As far as I am aware, there is no relevant information of which the Commission's auditors are unaware.

Don Leeson
Interim Accounting Officer



Meeting aims





Aim 1: Building a human rights culture in Northern Ireland

Publications

During the year, the Commission produced nine new publications, two issues of its magazine, *NIHRC Review*, and four leaflets and posters (see Appendix 5). More than 80 organisations or individuals requested in excess of 700 publications. The most popular of these were the guide to Article 2 (right to life), *Still in Our Care: Protecting children's rights in custody in Northern Ireland* (2006), *The Hurt Inside: The imprisonment of women and girls in Northern Ireland* (2005) and the Human Rights Act booklet produced by the Commission with the Citizenship Foundation. More than 4,000 publications and promotional materials were made available at 44 events.

Review of human rights training in the Police Service

Since 2000, the Commission has carried out work in monitoring the human rights training of police officers. There are many circumstances in which the police may legitimately interfere with a person's human rights in order, for example, to protect the rights of others. It was therefore important for the Commission to prioritise the monitoring of the training provided for this professional group in advance of others.

In June 2006, the Commission launched its latest report which examines human rights training in the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). The Commission has worked closely with the Police Service to promote compliance with human rights standards through its training programme and has produced a series of four reports documenting human rights monitoring work in this area. This present report was the fifth in the series and focused on Stage Two of the Probationer Training Programme: The Tutor Constables Scheme (TCS). The TCS is a ten-week tutorship period, which constitutes the second stage of the PSNI's Probationer Training Programme. The Commission's report provides a description of the main features of the TCS, and outlines the ways in which a probationer's tutorship experience may vary according to whether she or he is attached to a tutor unit in the PSNI's urban region or a District Command Unit (DCU) in its rural region.

Popular publications

- Guide to the right to life
- Still in Our Care
- The Hurt Inside
- Human Rights Act booklet
- Guides for migrant workers

The Commission was invited by the PSNI to look at the training materials and to observe training sessions taking place with participants at various locations across Northern Ireland. The evaluation of this particular training programme concluded that although there are a number of weaknesses, in general, the training programme for Tutor Constables did successfully incorporate a human rights framework. The Commission is grateful to Mark Kelly, the independent human rights consultant, who carried out the research, and to staff involved in the project.

New Strategic Plan



The Commission published a new Strategic Plan on 7 July 2006 which details its programme of work covering the period 2006-2009. Based on a significant body of work from the past six years, the plan outlines the thinking of the reconstituted Commission. The strategy will govern the work of the Commission through its annual business planning process, to secure key objectives and to link those objectives to budgetary allocations. Progress on meeting the targets set will be reviewed and reported on an annual basis by the Commission. The plan was developed following a wide ranging consultation process and focuses on four key aims:

- Building a human rights culture in Northern Ireland
- Challenging and preventing human rights abuse
- Building support for a Bill of Rights and working in partnership with others for its implementation, and
- Building a strong and effective Human Rights Commission.

The strategy highlights the need for the Commission to make clear its unique and distinct role in an increasingly crowded field of regulatory bodies, and to work in partnership where possible for added impact. With the Review of Public Administration, the shape of the public sector and how it is supported will change significantly. In addition, the creation of a Commission for Equality and Human Rights in Britain and a Scottish Human Rights Commission will also have a bearing on how the Commission conducts its business, particularly at the international level.

The Commission has benefited from the advice of key stakeholders through various consultation processes in the past and from the feedback of several independent reports and three public opinion surveys. The Commission would like to thank all those individuals and organisations who contributed to the consultation process.

Protecting children's rights in custody

On 18 October 2006, the Commission launched a follow-up report examining the care of children in custody. The 130-page report, *Still in our Care: Protecting children's rights in custody in Northern Ireland*, reviewed the outcomes of a previous investigation carried out by the Commission in 2002 and is based on interviews with staff and children at the Juvenile Justice Centre for Northern Ireland, at Rathgael, near Bangor.

International human rights standards require that custody should only be used for children as a last resort where other alternatives are not appropriate. Unfortunately, the research found that too many children are remanded to custody and too many are received into custody from care homes. The Commission continues to have concerns about the appropriateness of custody for young children and about the low age of criminal responsibility which it believes should be raised.



Minister of State, David Hanson MP, launched the advice guides for migrant workers with Les Allamby, Law Centre(NI); Monica McWilliams, Chief Commissioner; and Daniel Holder, ANIMATE at George Best City Airport



Migrant workers

A comprehensive range of guides was launched by the former Northern Ireland Office (NIO) Minister of State, David Hanson MP, on 8 January 2007, to help migrant workers understand their entitlements in a variety of fields including employment, social security, health, housing and civil liberties.

These publications are the most extensive range of advice materials ever produced for migrant workers in Northern Ireland. The project fills a major gap in information provision and the guides will be regularly updated in the years ahead. They were produced by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, ANIMATE and the Law Centre (NI), with funding from the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister. The Commission believes that migrants, like everyone, must have their fundamental rights respected and protected, but many migrant workers are vulnerable because they do not know what their rights and entitlements are. The escalation in racist attacks, in particular, highlights the need to promote and protect the rights of migrants.

There are three guides in the series, all available in English and the following languages:

- A guide for migrant workers coming from the European Economic Area (available in Tetum and Portuguese)
- A guide for migrant workers from the Accession (A8) States, who have been working for less than one year in the UK (available in Polish, Lithuanian, Latvian and Slovak), and
- A guide for migrant workers who are commercial and business work permit employees (available in Russian and Chinese).

In brief

The migrant workers' guides can be ordered from the Commission's office by telephoning (028) 9024 3987, or from the Law Centre (NI) on (028) 9024 4401. They are also available to download from our website www.nihrc.org or from www.lawcentreni.org.

Annual Report

The seventh Annual Report of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (covering the period April 2005 to March 2006) was presented to Parliament on 18 December 2006. The report (also available as a mini-CD) sets out the Commission's activities during the year, describing its work on legal services, legislation, policy development, education, investigations and research as well as progress on a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland.

Information and Promotions

Corporate stationery

A suite of new branded stationery including headed paper and compliment cards was produced. Business cards (including Braille) were developed using the services of the Braille Unit at Maghaberry Prison.

General promotional items

In line with the Commission's new design look, several general promotional materials were produced. These included a CD-size desk calendar with illustrations courtesy of University of Ulster arts student, Matt Evans, who won first prize in the Screensaving our Rights awards scheme in 2006.

Following planning permission and to coincide with International Human Rights Day in December 2006, an outdoor promotional banner was sited on the front of the Commission's premises, facing towards Castle Court shopping centre in the centre of Belfast.

Website

As part of its communications work, a redesigned website was launched by the Commission in July 2006. The site designed by internet company, Net-finity, allows the Commission to more effectively present its work to a range of audiences

and receive feedback on its activities. Visitors are able to rate the content of each page and download screen savers, e-postcards and promotional material as well as the full range of publications and guidance documents produced by the Commission. The Chief Commissioner regularly reports on her work through a blog and a monthly e-newsletter is sent out to an expanding list of subscribers.



www.nihrc.org



Library

A specific strategy for the development of the Commission's library was agreed by Commissioners in March 2007. This strategy was informed by a survey of staff users and a series of meetings with other libraries and information centres with human rights collections. The strategy covers the two-year period 2007-09 and aims to position the library as a key contributor to the promotion of human rights in Northern Ireland. A contract to catalogue the contents of the library was completed by Mary Blair on 26 February when the total number of catalogued items reached 3,250. Mary's contribution to the library's development has been of great benefit to the usefulness and operation of the library.

Training in the use of the Heritage catalogue system was provided to staff and it is hoped that an online version of the catalogue will be available through our website in the near future.

In brief

- Visitor numbers to www.nihrc.org tripled from July 2006 to March 2007.
- 3,250 books and reports were catalogued in the library.

Stakeholder management

New strategies for managing stakeholder relationships and communications were successfully implemented during this reporting period. This has allowed for the integration of stakeholder management with the implementation of a meaningful consultation and public relations strategy. Our work on stakeholder management had three objectives, namely, the need to:

- Identify all stakeholders
- Manage stakeholder relations and, specifically,
- Develop best practice and robust policies for engaging with key stakeholders.

A bespoke contact management system was designed and work is ongoing to refine and update the Commission's stakeholder management process.

Media coverage

During the year, a range of press releases was issued with the Commission's work featured in more than 300 newspaper and magazine articles. Extensive media coverage was elicited particularly in regard to our concerns on the proposed powers of the Commission (especially the lack of scrutiny of MI5) and the launch of the migrant workers guides.

Although public relations is not a precise science, there are elements of this process that can be measured particularly in relation to evaluating the effectiveness of media work. Media publicity is the principal (and cheapest) tool of public relations and the most visible end-product. As we know, the media has enormous power to inform and influence public opinion. However, the media environment is constantly changing with new printed titles and broadcasters emerging. In addition, the explosive growth of the Internet, including blogs, is beginning to replace traditional news and current affairs sources. As a result, the competition to be seen and heard in the print, online and broadcast media is increasing, and in such a climate the need

Interview preparation with Monica McWilliams, Chief Commissioner



In brief

The Commission was referred to in more than 300 newspaper and magazine articles.

for an effective way to measure and evaluate our PR and media work has never been greater.

As part of such an evaluation process, Nuala Harraghy, reviewed the media coverage received by the Commission for the period April 2005 to June 2006. The Commission is grateful to Nuala for her work on this important project.

The evaluation provides a useful analysis of how the Commission has managed its media work and the key message 'pick-up' among journalists and their audiences. The report also provides 'hard measures' of success in PR and a benchmark against which to measure the effectiveness of our media coverage and its

contribution to the achievement of aspects of the Commission's Strategic Plan in the future.

In general, the Commission can be satisfied with the representation of its work and its key messages in the media during this reporting period. The analysis demonstrates that the degree of favourability (or the extent to which audiences felt positive towards the Commission) is quite high, with a positive tone rating of 66 per cent. Given the difficulties sometimes associated with promoting the human rights agenda in Northern Ireland, it is perhaps surprising that only five articles were critical of the Commission during the reporting period. The number of key messages included in this coverage is also encouraging as well as the wider range of human rights issues now figuring in our press work. It is clear that the many of the strategies and practices identified in the Commission's communication strategy, ratified in 2005, are having an impact.



Education

Education strategy

In January 2007, Commissioners agreed a draft education strategy for the organisation to cover the period 2007-2010. The Commission is keen to further develop its education and training provision through the implementation of a specific strategic plan for this important area of its work. The operational plan makes over thirty recommendations for future development and proposes an increase in staffing and other resources to deliver the ambitious programme of activities.

In brief

134 people received training on the Human Rights Act and CEDAW.

Training

A major expansion in our training work was achieved this year. Two extensive training programmes on the Human Rights Act 1998 and the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) were delivered during the year. Both were very well received by the 134 participants involved in the ten events held throughout Northern Ireland.

The purpose of the courses was to increase awareness among community and voluntary sector workers of local and international human rights standards and how they can be used by NGOs.

Other training events were organised for Disability Action, the Coalition on Sexual Orientation (CoSO), Springboard, staff from Lisburn and Omagh Councils, Carers Northern Ireland and students from BIFHE, Minnesota and local LLM university courses.

Training testimonial

“Just a quick email to thank you once again for the workshop today. Your enthusiasm was infectious and helped develop the interest of all present.”


Participant, Human Rights Act training course.

Academic links

Queen’s University Belfast

A new prize recognising exceptional academic work, sponsored by the Commission, was awarded to Queen’s University Belfast student, David McCarthy. David, a student on the LLM Human Rights Law course at the university’s Human Rights Centre, was awarded the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission prize for his dissertation, *Deconstructing the Silence: To what extent do the current divorce procedures in Northern Ireland take account of the voice of the child?*. A prize of £500 was awarded to David and his dissertation has been published on the Commission’s website.

This was the latest example of a programme of co-operation between the two institutions. For the past two years, students on the Queen’s LLM programme



have had the chance to participate on 10-week placements with the Human Rights Commission and have found it a useful experience.

In brief

"I cannot highlight the value of this experience enough – not only did my placement enhance my studies, but was a notable addition to my CV. The staff at the Commission also deserve to be mentioned – they became great friends and colleagues, and made the internship memorable and enjoyable."

Carol Staunton, intern from QUB, 2006

In addition, the Commission organises an annual lecture for LLM students which has been invaluable in offering insights into the practical aspects of human rights law. The Commission also provides students on the programme with access to its reference library which comprises a valuable specialist collection in human rights law.

Outside the programme of co-operation on the LLM, the Human Rights Commission is proud of its many links with Queen's University Belfast. The Director of the Centre, Professor Colin Harvey, is a member of the current Commission and Professor Brice Dickson of the university served as its first Chief Commissioner. Another member of the Human Rights Centre, Professor Tom Hadden, has also served as a Commissioner. Other Centre members have conducted important research for the Commission, such as Professor Phil Scraton's work with staff member, Dr Linda Moore, on prison conditions for women and girls in Northern Ireland.

University of Ulster

The Transitional Justice Institute, at the University of Ulster, and the Commission also announced details during the year of a new partnership to support human rights education in Northern Ireland. Both institutions are keen to further develop research and learning opportunities for students in Northern Ireland and as part of a programme of collaborative activities, a number of new initiatives have been launched. These include:

In brief

"On behalf of the Transitional Justice Institute, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Human Rights Commission for sponsoring this Dissertation Prize. It is a great collaborative initiative and a wonderful addition to our LLM Programme."

Professor Colm Campbell, Director, Transitional Justice Institute

- The sponsorship by the Human Rights Commission of an annual prize of £500 for the best dissertation submitted by students as part of the University of Ulster's LLM programme in Human Rights Law;
- The provision of two internships each academic year for students at the University of Ulster to contribute to the work of the Commission;
- The hosting of an annual lecture on the role and function of the Commission for students on the LLM programme; and
- Access to the Commission's library and its education/training programmes for students at the university.

The first recipient of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission Dissertation Prize was Wendy Isaack, who graduated from the LLM programme with distinction in December 2006. Her dissertation entitled *Deferred and disremembered? Sexual Violence against women in 'post-conflict' South Africa* was highly commended by



the External Examiner's Board of the University. Ms Isaack has returned to work in South Africa as the Legal Manager with the women's group, People Opposing Women Abuse (POWA).

This programme of collaboration is supported by many links with the University. Professor Christine Bell, Chair in Public International Law and Associate Director of the Transitional Justice Institute and Angela Hegarty, Head of the School of Law, are former Commissioners. The Commission also benefited from the research support of Dr Una Convery, Lecturer in Criminology, during the year.

Political affairs

A number of important political developments occurred in the human rights field, most notably in regard to the Justice Bill. Our engagement with government departments deepened in meetings with, for example, Peter Hain, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland; Minister of State, David Hanson MP; Baroness Ashton, Human Rights Minister at the Department of Constitutional Affairs (now Ministry of Justice) and the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dermot Ahern TD. Meetings were also held with representatives of political parties, including MLAs, MPs, peers and local councillors.

In October 2006, meetings took place with representatives from the Northern Ireland Assembly's Preparation for Government Committee on the proposed Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland. In November 2006, the Commission also hosted a visit from the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights.


Following the St Andrews Agreement, the Commission provided comments on the Northern Ireland Office's consultation document on establishing a Bill of Rights Forum. An inaugural meeting was held on 18 December 2006, at which the Commission had observing rights.

Monica McWilliams, Chief Commissioner welcomed Peter Hain MP, the then Secretary of State, to the Commission

Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Bill

The then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Peter Hain MP, was welcomed to the offices of the Commission on 16 January 2007, and briefed on the work of the Commission. The Chief Commissioner, Professor Monica McWilliams took the opportunity to express the concern of the Commission that measures contained in the Justice and Security (Northern





Ireland) Bill could seriously impede the protection of human rights in Northern Ireland.

As part of the Bill, amendments to the Commission's powers were published on 27 November 2006. This was promised in the St Andrews Agreement and had been anticipated since the Commission first reported on its effectiveness in February 2001.

In brief

There were three key issues for the Commission arising from the Bill:

- the imposition of a time limit on the use of new powers to address only events occurring after August 2007;
- fettering of access to places of detention; and
- restrictions on the use of evidential powers, including 'national security' exclusions.

The relevant clauses had been presented by Government as a positive response to some of the recommendations made by the Commission on several occasions since 2001 to improve its powers of investigation. In particular, the Commission had consistently sought the power to compel evidence, and the power to enter places of detention. The Commission believed, however, that the Bill limits these proposed powers, hedging them with exclusions, limitations and procedural obligations.

The Commission argued that the 'national security' exclusions appeared to be expressly designed to steer the Commission away from addressing areas where obvious human rights concerns exist, and the proposed time limits on retrospective investigation could seriously limit the effectiveness of the Commission in dealing with violations committed in the past.

At the meeting, the Secretary of State paid tribute to the Commission and the "high credibility" of its work. He agreed to reflect on the representations made by Commissioners and consider amendments to the Bill as it proceeded through Parliament. However, at the time of writing, despite a high profile lobbying campaign conducted by the Commission, relatively few changes have been accepted by the Government in relation to its powers: however, an amendment bringing forward the time limit on the use of the new powers by six months was achieved. On a more general point, the Commission was pleased that a "sunset clause" was introduced allowing for the non-jury trial provisions of the Bill to expire at the end of two years unless an affirmative order is made.

Council of Europe

A delegation of Commissioners and staff had a fruitful exchange with senior figures at the Council of Europe in March 2007. Useful meetings were held with the Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr Thomas Hammarberg, and Mr Stephen Howarth, Permanent Representative of the UK to the Council.

Other meetings took place with Judge Sir Nicholas Bratza, and the Secretariats of the European Social Charter; the Commission against Racism and Intolerance; the Committee for the Prevention of Torture; the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities; the Execution of the European Courts Judgements Division; the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population; the Venice Commission; the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights and Michael O'Boyle, the Deputy Registrar of the Court.



Conferences and seminars

TASERs

The Commission hosted a seminar on 5 June 2006 on the potential use of TASER electrical stun weapons, which the Police Service is seeking to introduce to Northern Ireland. The Commission, along with other organisations and statutory bodies, has previously expressed its concern about the introduction of the weapon and the inadequacy of the consultation exercise which, it argued, did not properly address many medical, legal and human rights concerns. Speakers included Chief Commissioner, Professor Monica McWilliams; Amnesty International Northern Ireland Programmes Director, Patrick Corrigan; CAJ Director, Maggie Beirne; PSNI Assistant Chief Constable Roy Toner and Neil Corney, Research Associate at the Omega Foundation.

World Refugee Day

The Commission held a seminar on 20 June 2006 to stimulate discussion on the rights of refugees and asylum seekers in Northern Ireland.

Speakers included Professor Monica McWilliams, Chief Commissioner; Professor Colin Harvey, Commissioner and Director of the Human Rights Centre, QUB; Patrick Corrigan, Northern Ireland Programme Director, Amnesty International and Buster Cox, Convenor of the Refugee Action Group and Legal Caseworker, Law Centre (NI). At the event, the Commission announced details of a new investigation it is conducting into how the new Borders and Immigration Agency (previously the Immigration and Nationality Directorate) operates in Northern Ireland.

*UN
conference
participants
in Belfast,
June 2006.*





UN conference on conflict resolution and human rights

A unique conference examining the role of human rights institutions in conflict resolution took place in Belfast from 20 to 22 June, 2006. The event organised by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission involved over forty participants representing 24 different national human rights institutions.

The overall objective of the conference was to provide a forum for national human rights institutions to address their role in situations of conflict and post-conflict. Through the sharing of experiences and best practice, different approaches to conflict and post-conflict situations were assessed in relation to the effective protection of human rights, providing participants with the opportunity to develop practical strategies in the protection and promotion of human rights in conflict situations.

Participants from the following human rights institutions attended: Afghanistan, Bolivia, Colombia, Georgia, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Republic of Ireland, Kenya, Republic of Korea, Macedonia, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, Northern Ireland, Palestine, Philippines, Rwanda, El Salvador, South Africa, Timor Leste, and Uganda.

In brief

- 24 NHRIs discussed conflict resolution at the Belfast conference.
- More than 140 people attended the cross-border conference on human rights education.
- 140 delegates attended the Human Rights Day conference.

Human rights education

A major cross-border conference was held in Belfast on 20 October 2006. The conference, which examined human rights education in primary schools was organised by the Commission, together with Amnesty International, the Ulster Teachers' Union, the Irish National Teachers' Organisation and the Irish Human Rights Commission. The conference was attended by over 140 participants including teachers, policy makers, and other educationalists.

Investigations

A roundtable was organised by the Commission on 26 October 2006 with key stakeholders in the investigation of deaths in the health care setting. Professor Joe Ibrahim from Melbourne University, Australia was the keynote speaker. The event was held in Parliament Buildings, Stormont, in order to facilitate the attendance of MLAs.

Disability rights

An important seminar took place on 4 December 2006 in Belfast, organised jointly by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission. The event considered the new United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which it is hoped will make a significant difference to the lives of disabled people around the world. It is also the first international instrument which has directly engaged national human rights institutions in the drafting process.

Chief Commissioner, Monica McWilliams; Bob Collins, Chief Commissioner of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland; Monica Wilson, Chief Executive of Disability Action and Professor William Binchy, a Commissioner with the Irish Human Rights Commission, contributed to the well attended event.



Art installation project at the Annual Conference

Annual conference

In the run up to International Human Rights Day in December 2006, the Commission profiled the important work going on across Northern Ireland in building a culture of rights. As part of the celebrations, the Commission organised a major two-day conference during 7 and 8 December, in Belfast, where over 42 speakers and facilitators and 140 representatives from equality and human rights organisations, training providers, voluntary groups, political parties, business and religious organisations discussed key human rights issues in Northern Ireland. At the event, participants and speakers considered how to build a human rights culture by focusing on three different levels, all of which interact with one another – values, politics and law.


Keynote speakers included Bob Collins, Chief Commissioner of the Equality Commission and Avila Kilmurray, Director of the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland. Other speakers from Britain, the Republic of Ireland and the United States also contributed to the event. For the first time at such an event, representatives of business and faith groups outlined how human rights impact on their sectors. In addition, representatives of local political parties participated in a panel discussion. A special arts installation recording the feedback of participants was created on the final day of the conference. The papers presented at the event are available on the Commission's website (www.nihrc.org).

Children in prison

The Institute of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Queen's University Belfast in association with the Commission and the Human Rights Centre, Queen's University, organised a public seminar on the issue of imprisoning children on 14 December 2006, which was followed by a reception sponsored by the NIHRC. Speakers included the authors of the Commission's investigation report *In our Care*, Dr Linda Moore, NIHRC and Dr Una Convery, University of Ulster; Professor Phil Scraton, Queen's University Belfast and Professor Barry Goldson, University of Liverpool.

CEDAW

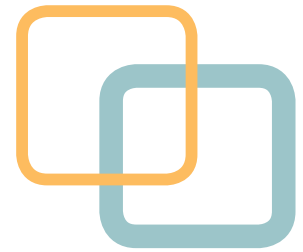
A conference on the theme of discrimination against women took place on 14 March 2007 in Belfast. Jointly organised by the Commission and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), the event examined how CEDAW – the United Nations women's rights convention – can enhance the social and economic rights of women



and girls. Keynote speakers included Monica McWilliams, Chief Commissioner; Patricia McKeown from ICTU; Nóirín Clancy from the National Women's Council of Ireland; Antoinette McKeown, Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and Maria Morgan from the Northern Ireland Women's European Platform.

Meetings

- The Commission addressed a number of international delegations hosted by the British Council on a range of human rights issues.
- A presentation was made to staff from the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety on how to use human rights impact assessment tools in their work on 7 September 2006.
- The Commission was involved in setting up a network for communications staff in European National Human Rights Institutions at a workshop in Berlin, Germany on 26 May 2006.
- The Commission received funding to attend "Diversity 2006", the Sixth International Conference on Diversity in Organisations, Communities and Nations, held in New Orleans, Louisiana, USA during 12 to 16 June 2006.
- The renowned Australian High Court judge, Justice Michael Kirby AC CMG, addressed a seminar organised in the Commission's offices on 30 June 2006. Justice Kirby presented a paper on the extent to which domestic courts should use international jurisprudence in deciding cases. Despite the event being held on the last day of the legal term, there was a good representation from the judiciary and other sections of the legal profession.
- During 9 and 10 August 2006, representatives from the Commission contributed to a training event in Geneva, Switzerland, arranged by the National Institutions Unit of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, for the Human Rights Committee of the Iraq Council of Representatives, which hopes to establish a national human rights commission in Iraq in the near future.
- Availing of the opportunity presented by attendance at the global meeting of national institutions, a member of staff, who had in 2005 advised the Uruguayan Parliament on the creation of a human rights commission, revisited that country to participate in further consultations. It was subsequently announced that Uruguay, almost alone among Latin American nations, had decided to adopt the commission rather than the ombudsman model for its new institution.
- A member of staff contributed to the Summer School of the International Institute for the Sociology of Law, in the Basque Country, and in September the same staff member and Commissioner Ann Hope participated, at the request of the Basque Government, in an international advisory panel on that region's peace process.
- The Chief Executive represented the Commission at a conference organised by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Islamabad, Pakistan from 10 to 15 September 2006 on the establishment of a national human rights commission in Pakistan.
- The Commission hosted a meeting of the Race Relations Committee of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland on 27 September 2006. Issues under



discussion included human rights and the peace process, the role of the Commission and recent research on people trafficking.

- On 28 September 2006, a day-long introduction to human rights was provided for young adults from the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland who were travelling to South Africa with Springboard, an employment training and access programme.
- The Commission received funding to attend the International Roundtable on the Role of National Human Rights Institutions and Treaty Bodies held in Berlin on 23 and 24 November 2006 to discuss the interaction between national human rights institutions and treaty bodies.
- The Commission also hosted a number of briefing events for students studying human rights courses, including one for Queen's University Belfast LLM students on 25 October 2006 and a similar event for Transitional Justice Institute LLM students from the University of Ulster on 14 November 2006.
- The Commission delivered a training workshop on the theme of an introduction to human rights on 30 November 2006 for a group of youth leaders.
- The Human Rights Education Forum, a network of human rights educators hosted and co-ordinated by the Commission, met three times during the year and attracted a high level of participation from both statutory agencies and NGOs involved in human rights education.



Aim 2: Challenging and preventing human rights abuse

Responses to legislation and policy proposals

The Commission's functions include reviewing the adequacy and effectiveness of Northern Ireland law and practice relating to the protection of human rights. During the year, the Commission made some 50 consultation responses or other submissions to government, public authorities and international bodies on the human rights implications of current or proposed legislation, policy and practice, and on compliance in Northern Ireland with the state's international human rights obligations. A list of submissions is provided at Appendix 3 and the majority of the documents are available on the Commission's website.

The Commission directs its legislation and policy work through agreed criteria. In 2006-07, a primary focus of the Commission's work concerned justice and security. It made submissions on issues relating to legal reforms, policing, prisons, juvenile justice, immigration, health and the rights of victims. Briefings were prepared for Parliamentary debates and Committee examinations of the UK Borders Bill and the Justice and Security Bill.

In brief

50 responses or submissions were made on legal reform, policing, prisons, juvenile justice, immigration, health and victims' rights.

Places of detention

As in previous years, the Commission prioritised the protection of the human rights of persons held in various forms of custody. This work was partly conducted through a working group of Commissioners, with staff support, and partly through research focussing on particular establishments.

The Commission's Detention Working Group also served as the forum for Commission meetings with those involved in the exercise of detention powers and with other 'watchdog' bodies. Towards year-end it was decided to reconstitute the working group with a broader remit, and upgrade it to a standing committee of the Commission, as the Detention, Policing and Justice Committee.

Prison visits

Commissioners on the Detention Working Group and staff visited a range of institutions including Maghaberry Prison, Magilligan Prison, Hydebank Wood Prison, Musgrave Street Police Station and the detention facility at Belfast International Airport. On these visits, Commissioners spoke to staff and detainees and raised issues of human rights concern. In order to learn about the imprisonment of women in other jurisdictions and to review its reported good practice, Commissioners also visited the Dóchas Centre in Dublin (the medium security prison for women, adjacent to Mountjoy Prison).



Juvenile Justice Centre

In September 2006, the Commission published the report on its follow-up investigation into the rights of children in custody. *Still in Our Care: Protecting the rights of children in custody in Northern Ireland*, by Dr Una Convery and staff member, Dr Linda Moore, was based on research with children in the Juvenile Justice Centre for Northern Ireland, at Rathgael near Bangor. The report found some improvements in the care of children, but recommendations included raising the age of criminal responsibility (which is currently 10 years); legislating to ensure that children under 18 are no longer held in prison custody; and that a review of custody for girls should be carried out.



Immigration detention

As part of the Commission's work on immigration detention (see below), Commissioners and staff visited Dungavel Immigration Removal Centre near Glasgow and Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre in Bedfordshire, the centres to which people initially detained in Northern Ireland have routinely been transferred following a change in policy in 2005.

Hydebank Wood

The Commission's investigation into the rights of women in HMP Hydebank Wood, a prison facility located inappropriately alongside a male young offenders' centre, was completed during the year. *The Prison Within: The imprisonment of women at Hydebank Wood 2004-06*, by Professor Phil Scraton and Dr Linda Moore, was in production at year-end for publication in spring 2007. The report would reiterate the Commission's call for the creation of a new, discrete women's prison unit for Northern Ireland.



Ash House, Hydebank Wood Prison

Immigration and human rights



Immigration enforcement

In the previous Annual Report it was recorded that the Commission's investigations staff were to conduct an investigation into UK Immigration Services and, specifically, the use of the power to detain some asylum seekers and perceived immigration offenders. That investigation has encountered some difficulties and is still underway. The new Borders and Immigration Agency (previously the Immigration and Nationality Directorate) raised a number of concerns about providing access to case files of individuals against whom enforcement had been taken in Northern Ireland. They ranged from data protection issues to the claim that providing access would involve too much work for its own staff. At the time of writing the Borders and Immigration Agency has agreed to give access to case files and allow observation of its enforcement activities. Provided that this level of co-operation continues from the Agency, it is hoped that this investigation will be completed by autumn 2007.

Rights of migrant workers

As noted in Aim 1, the Commission worked in partnership with the Law Centre (NI) and a

Dungannon-based NGO, ANIMATE, to produce a series of guides to the rights of migrant workers. The project was funded by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.

The Commission continued to advocate ratification by the UK of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. This UN instrument, adopted by the General assembly in 1990, had by year-end secured ratification only by sending countries, as opposed to destination countries such as the UK. The Commission intends in the coming year to explore further the perceived obstacles to ratification by the UK.

The legacy of conflict

Since the publication of its 2003 report on the human rights of victims of violence, the Commission has continued to engage with a number of individuals and groups, exploring our potential role in what is widely termed "dealing with the past". There is clearly a need to take account of human rights considerations, and many other sensitive issues, in addressing the specific needs of victims and survivors of the conflict, and the wider societal questions around, for example, whether something like a truth recovery process is needed in Northern Ireland. This continues to be a matter in which the Commission is committed to assist and inform discussions.

As a result of dialogue with many interested parties, and requests from groups and individuals for assistance, the Commission focused in 2006-07 on the issue of



disclosure of information. A meeting with key decision makers in December 2006 resulted in improved and shared understanding within the PSNI, the Office of the Information Commissioner and Public Records Office on what was legally required to be made available. The Commission also used the opportunity to highlight the work of Healing Through Remembering and other civil society groupings engaged in this important policy area.

Article 2 issues

The Commission's particular attention to the right to life (as expressed in Article 2 of the European Convention) has never been confined to conflict-related issues, and in 2006-07 there was continued work on the investigation of death. This included hosting a visit by the coronial medical adviser from Melbourne, Professor Joseph Ibrahim, in November 2006, leading to significant engagement with those responsible for death investigation in Northern Ireland. The Commission also explored the possibility of investigating the under-reporting of deaths in health care settings in Northern Ireland, which some see as the key obstacle in ensuring Article 2 rights. We intend to continue to foster international exchanges, and to work towards best practice guidelines and better joint working.

Health and human rights

The Commission's work on Article 2, and its contact with Departmental officials, again highlighted that health was an area requiring a human rights framework for decision making. This resulted in the creation of a small working group on health, which oversaw scoping research and stakeholder engagement, intended to lead to an expert seminar in April 2007, on such issues as access to treatment, care in nursing homes, disability and human rights in health, indicators for health and human rights, mental health and social predeterminants for health. By year-end this working group was reconstituted as a standing committee with a broader focus on economic, social and cultural rights.



Care in nursing homes



Legal services

During the year, the Commission's casework function handled 720 enquiries. The Legal Committee met on 10 occasions and held five meetings to consider matters of urgency. A total of 20 applications for assistance were received for consideration, of which three were granted. The Commission made four interventions, which are detailed below.

The Commission's Legal Committee agreed a set of priority areas where the Commission would concentrate its legal work over the life of the current Strategic Plan (2006-09). The Committee agreed these priority areas to be:

- Protection of life and the investigation of death
- Rights of detained patients under the mental health legislation
- Access to legal representation
- Covert activities of public authorities, and use of evidence obtained covertly
- People who are kept in residential care against their wishes
- Use of third party orders affecting property rights, and
- Environmental protection raising substantial human rights issues.

We reported in last year's Annual Report on a proposed legal services strategy which we hoped to have in place in the autumn of 2006, with the intention of enhancing both the quality of provision and equality of access. At year-end, the draft strategy had been approved but not yet implemented, pending the outcome of an equality impact assessment.

In brief

720 legal enquiries were handled from April 2006 to March 2007.

During the course of the year the Commission intervened in two applications for judicial review cases before the High Court in Belfast, and made submissions in two inquests before the Coroner's Court. The first intervention was in a long-standing case mentioned in previous annual reports, concerning prisoners' access to appropriate mental health treatment and compatibility of the Mental Health (NI) Order 1986 with the European Convention. At year-end judgment was pending.

The second intervention was in an application for judicial review of the conversion of an inquiry under the Prison Act (NI) 1953, into the killing of the applicant's son, to one under the Inquiries Act 2005. The Commission made submissions in respect of the compatibility of the 2005 Act with the European Convention. In December 2006, the High Court held that a declaration of incompatibility could not be sought because the death occurred before 2 October 2000, when the Human Rights Act 1998 entered into effect. However, the application was partly successful in that the Court agreed that the Secretary of State had operated a presumption in favour of conversion of the inquiry and that he had not considered the novel and unrestricted power given to him under the Inquiries Act 2005. As at year-end the Secretary of State was appealing this decision to the Court of Appeal.

The Commission gave evidence, in February 2007, at the inquest into the death of Roseanne Irvine at Maghaberry Prison in 2004. The Commission's researchers gave an account of the research they carried out at the prison around the time of Roseanne's death, and in respect of applicable standards relating to treatment of



prisoners and the European Convention standards relating to death investigation procedures.

At year-end the Commission was making submissions on human rights issues relevant to an inquest into the death of a man who died by suicide shortly after seeking emergency hospital admission.

During the year, the Commission granted assistance to the family of a young man, who was killed in 2003, to be represented at the inquest into his death.

In December 2006, the Commission was successful in securing specialised medical treatment for a person with a rare disorder. The health board had refused to fund the treatment on grounds of cost. However, after intervention by the Commission the board reversed its decision.

The number of Caseworkers was increased during the year to the equivalent of two full-time posts.

Casework testimonial

“I found the NIHRC very helpful when encountering a gender discrimination issue with my son’s school regarding his hair length. They quickly provided me with relevant information and also directed me to other very useful contact points (Children’s Law Centre and NICCY). A barrister from the Commission also contacted me very promptly, following my initial query, offering her ongoing assistance. This issue has not yet been resolved, but I am reassured by all three organisations that I have their help, support and guidance in pursuing this matter, for which I would like to offer my thanks. Thanks for your help.”

Angela Ross, Belfast



Aim 3: Building support for a Bill of Rights and working in partnership with others for its implementation

In brief

The Commission continues to be impressed by the dedication and effort of all those who have contributed to the development of a Bill of Rights.

Bill of Rights Forum

The Commission welcomed the establishment of the Bill of Rights Forum in December 2006 (and the subsequent appointment of Chris Sidoti as chair) and looks forward to receiving its conclusions. The Commission has long supported the idea of such a Forum, involving both politicians and NGOs. The Commission continues to be impressed by the dedication and effort of all those who have contributed to the development of a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland.

In regard to this important area of its work, the Commission has stressed the importance of both paying due regard to the work already undertaken as well as taking its own mind on the way forward. The Commission has also made clear that it is not bound by the form or content of positions adopted in its earlier consultation documents. The Commission is an independent body,

and it will undertake a detailed and thorough assessment of the work produced by the Bill of Rights Forum before the Commission submits its final advice to the Secretary of State.

Mandate

The Commission has a statutory duty under the Northern Ireland Act 1998 to 'consult and advise [the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland] on the scope for defining... rights supplementary to those in the European Convention on Human Rights'. The Commission also has a mandate under the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement to discharge this function. The wording in the Agreement is as follows:

The new Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission... will be invited to consult and to advise on the scope for defining, in Westminster legislation, rights supplementary to those in the European Convention on Human Rights, to reflect the particular circumstances of Northern Ireland, drawing as appropriate on international instruments and experience. These additional rights to reflect the principles of mutual respect for the identity and ethos of both communities and parity of esteem, and – taken together with the ECHR – to constitute a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland. Among the issues for consideration by the Commission will be: the formulation of a general obligation on government and public bodies fully to respect, on the basis of equality of treatment, the identity and ethos of both communities in Northern Ireland; and a clear formulation of the rights not to be discriminated against and to equality of opportunity in both the public and private sectors.

The mandate has several elements. There are six which the Commission wishes to particularly highlight:



To advise on the scope for defining

The Commission is under a statutory duty to provide advice to the Secretary of State. There is ongoing debate on the meaning of the phrase 'scope for defining'. The Commission believes that this phrase does not exclude the submission of comprehensive final advice to the Secretary of State on the content of a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland.

Westminster legislation

The mandate provides that the Bill of Rights will take the form of Westminster legislation. The Commission believes that its final advice must give clear guidance on the additional rights which should be enacted. The Commission recognises that the Bill of Rights process does not end when the final advice is submitted. During the year, the Commission continued to work in partnership with others to ensure that its final advice, when finalised, can be accepted and implemented expeditiously and effectively.

Rights supplementary to those in the European Convention on Human Rights

The Commission understands that any additional rights must supplement the European Convention on Human Rights. The Human Rights Act 1998 is in force in Northern Ireland, and throughout the UK. It gives further effect in domestic law to a range of Convention rights. The Commission believes that a sound case must be made for the inclusion of additional rights. It is of the firm view that a strong case can be made. The Commission's extensive consultation process, and all the material and submissions generated thus far, have highlighted deficiencies in existing human rights protections. The Commission believes that there are limitations to the European Convention on Human Rights that should be remedied by the enactment of additional rights tailored specifically to the Northern Ireland context.

BORINI
Bill of Rights in Northern Ireland

In association with the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission

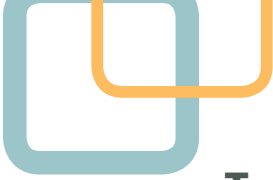
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Home
What's New?
What is a Bill of Rights?
Reports & Submissions

- NIHRC Consultation Documents
- Submissions Database 2001
- Summary of Responses
- Submissions 2004
- Information Guides

WELCOME
Welcome to this site devoted to the Bill of Rights in Northern Ireland (BORINI).



To reflect the particular circumstances of Northern Ireland

This phrase continues to stimulate extensive debate. It is evident from the mandate generally, and the language used here, that the Bill of Rights process was intended to address the particular circumstances of Northern Ireland. The Commission recognises that there are many circumstances which are particular to Northern Ireland, and understands and accepts the importance of a generous interpretation of this phrase. Nevertheless, the phrase must have limits if agreement is to be reached on additional rights which merit inclusion within the terms of the mandate. In approaching this task the Commission recognises that its mandate arises from a peace agreement reached after a period of protracted conflict and a political process which established a set of principles and structures for the future governance of Northern Ireland. The mandate, when read in this general context, provides helpful guidance on the circumstances which are particular to Northern Ireland.

Drawing as appropriate on international instruments and experience

The Commission firmly believes that the Bill of Rights must reflect best international practice and be compatible with international human rights standards. The Commission therefore encourages the Bill of Rights Forum to have due regard to international human rights standards and international best practice in its work.

Principles of mutual respect for the identity and ethos of both communities and parity of esteem

The Commission notes that this is a core element of the Bill of Rights mandate. The Commission therefore believes that respect for the identity and ethos of the two main communities, and recognition of the concept of parity of esteem, must form part of the final advice on a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland.

Consultation

The Bill of Rights consultation process was launched by the Commission on 1 March 2000. Since then, the Commission has engaged in an extensive range of consultations with all sectors including, for example; the establishment of nine Working Groups; a publicity campaign around the Bill of Rights; engagement with political parties, NGOs, and other sectors; education and training work on the Bill; and a parallel consultation with children and young people. In September 2001, the Commission published its consultation document, *Making a Bill of Rights: A Consultation*. There followed a widespread debate on the content of this consultation paper. A *Summary of Submissions* was published in July 2003 and, in April 2004, the Commission published *Progressing a Bill of Rights: An Update*. As the title suggested, it was intended as a progress report only in the light of the comments and criticisms made of the 2001 consultation paper. The document also contained a proposed Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland. The Commission has received a number of responses to its 2004 document and has taken full account of this work. The current Commission is not, however, bound by either the form or content of positions taken in earlier consultation documents.



During the year, Commissioners and staff participated in a number of internal committees – a strategic Bill of Rights Working Group comprising all Commissioners and a Sub-Committee – to consider the process of developing a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland, its human rights content and issues arising from and relating to the various phases of consultation carried out by the Commission as part of its statutory duty. Eight meetings of the Bill of Rights Sub-Committee and six meetings of the Working Group took place during the year. A special residential conference for Commissioners and staff was held in November 2006 to further consider this work.

The Commission engaged closely with politicians this year and held a positive meeting, in October 2006, with senior representatives of the local political parties on the Bill of Rights process. As a result of political progress following the St Andrews Agreement, and after a short consultation by the Northern Ireland Office (to which the Commission submitted evidence), the then Minister of State, David Hansen MP, inaugurated the Bill of Rights Forum (BORF) in December 2006. The establishment of the Forum was publicly welcomed by the Commission and members of our staff and Commissioners have been able to observe its meetings.

The Commission continued to liaise with the Human Rights Consortium, and its member organisations, at bi-monthly meetings. The establishment of the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland's funding programme for community and voluntary groups to help develop a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland was also welcomed by the Commission. A member of staff participates on its awards advisory committee. The Commission believes that this small grants programme will create local awareness and encourage participation and debate in the process of creating a Bill of Rights relevant to the needs of Northern Ireland.

A number of awareness-raising events on the proposed Bill were held with local community and voluntary organisations and the Commission also began work on constructing a specific Bill of Rights website, www.borini.info, which will assist in promoting awareness of this important initiative.

In brief

The Commission firmly believes that that the Bill of Rights must reflect best international practice and be compatible with international human rights standards.

Aim 4: Ensuring a strong and effective Human Rights Commission

International recognition

The Commission was recognised as an 'A' accredited national human rights institution at the 8th International Conference of National Human Rights Institutions and 18th Session of the Annual Meeting of the International Co-ordinating Committee (ICC) of National Human Rights Institutions on 21-30 October 2006 in Bolivia. This status gives the Commission full recognition at, and access to, international human rights decision-making fora, including the UN Human Rights Council.

This achievement was a particular highlight during a year of consolidation, following the transition of 2005-06 with the appointments of a new Chief Commissioner and Commissioners.

Corporate governance

A new structure of committees and working groups was bedded in and its effectiveness evaluated. This review resulted in a number of changes. The work of the Public Affairs Committee was subsumed into the Policy Committee, the Casework Committee was renamed the Legal Committee to reflect work to develop the Commission's broader legal strategy and the wider role the Committee will undertake, the re-establishment of the Equality Committee, and the reconstitution of the Places of Detention and Health Working Groups as formal committees – the Detention, Policing and Justice Committee and the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Committee respectively. The Commission, during the year, organised its meetings and conferences throughout Northern Ireland. As well as holding business meetings in its premises in Belfast, the Commission also met in Ballymena

Irish Foreign Affairs Minister, Dermot Ahern TD was welcomed on a visit to the Commission



Photography: Lesley Doyle



and Enniskillen. Both meetings were kindly hosted by the respective Borough Councils.

The Commission's Audit and Risk Management Committee, under the stewardship of Dr Bill Smith, its independent Chairperson, reviewed its constitution and operation towards the end of its inaugural year. It was assessed against good practice guidelines laid down by the National Audit Office and found to be operating to the highest standards expected.

The anticipated Landscape Review of the Commission by the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) will proceed as a 'light touch' review. The focus will be on developing a revised Management Statement and Financial Memorandum, which governs the Commission's governance and financial relationship with its sponsoring body, and reviewing communication protocols.

The Joint Committee

The Joint Committee with the Irish Human Rights Commission met four times during the year, once in Armagh, once in Belfast and twice in Dublin. The Commissions worked together on a range of issues, most notably in responding jointly to the Omagh Support and Self Help Group's call for support for a cross-border public inquiry into the Omagh bomb on 15 August 1998. Following a review of the papers made available by the Group, the Commissions wrote to their respective governments calling on them to appoint a serving or retired judge of international standing to examine all available material to determine whether it is appropriate to institute an independent, cross-border, public inquiry into the bombing.

In brief

The Commissions jointly called for a review of all the available material to determine whether an independent, cross-border, public inquiry should be held into the events surrounding the Omagh bomb of 1998.

Both Commissions submitted a proposal to the respective governments for discrete funding for staffing and programme costs for the Joint Committee. The proposal was discussed at the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference on 25 July 2006 and referred to officials for further consideration. Further developments are awaited.

Financial matters

The Commission participated in the government's Comprehensive Spending Review and submitted its bid for resources for the three-year period from 2008-11. The government's response is awaited.

An internal audit during the year confirmed that reasonable levels of control are in place to protect the Commission's resources and manage them effectively.

Work to develop revised pay arrangements for Commission staff was concluded and these were approved by the Northern Ireland Office.

Audit of Information, Education and Development

An audit was carried out in October 2006, in relation to the information functions of publications, website, press and media, opinion surveys and library. Auditors were satisfied with the management and delivery of these functions.

Accommodation

The Commission undertook further refurbishment work on its premises during 2006-07, which included a new reception area, improved office accommodation on the first floor, and work to further improve the accessibility and the fire safety management systems of the building.

In brief

"I found the NIHRC very useful indeed; I was dealt with in a manner that I would describe as helpful, prompt and confidential."

Carley Malin, Belfast

Statutory compliance

The Commission re-constituted its Equality Committee to review the Commission's Equality Scheme to deliver its equality and good relations duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The Committee also developed a Disability Action Plan, which is required by an amendment to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, to show how the Commission will meet its duties to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

All monitoring returns made by the Commission to the Equality Commission under the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 were made on time.

A health and safety risk assessment was conducted during the year, which identified no significant risks. However, some opportunities for further improvements have been identified to enable the

Commission to comply with best practice in this area and an action plan to take this work forward is being developed.

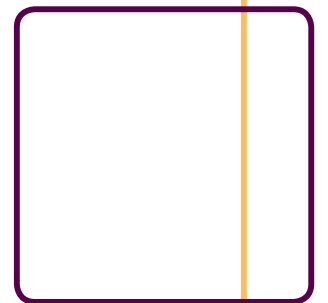
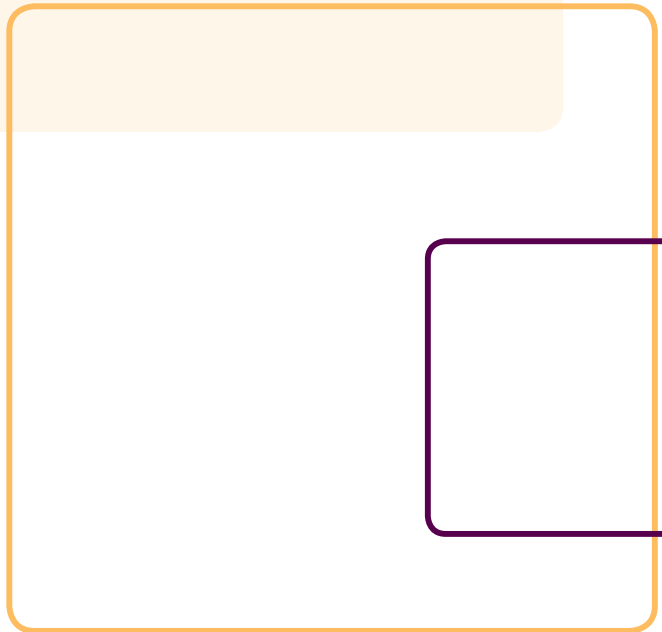
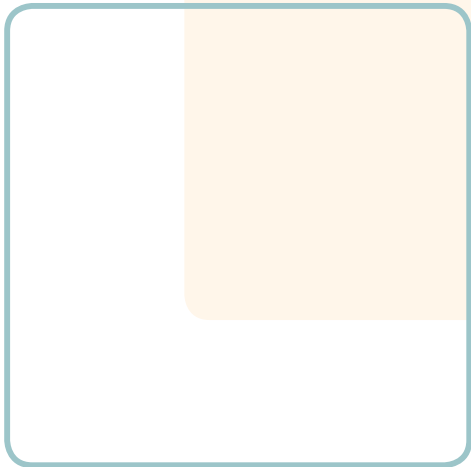
The Commission received seven requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 during the year, and one under the Data Protection Act 1998. All requests were handled within the statutory timescale for responses.

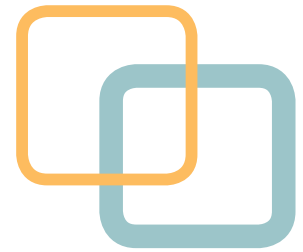
The Commission's offices at North Street, Belfast





Remuneration report





Remuneration report

Remuneration policy

The remuneration of the Chief Commissioner and Commissioners is determined by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

The remuneration of Commission staff is set within Northern Ireland Office (NIO) pay structures and is performance-related. Performance is appraised by line managers of achievement against agreed objectives. The Commission is not involved in NIO pay negotiations.

The Chairperson of the Commission's Audit and Risk Management Committee was appointed through open competition for three years from 1 March 2006. The Chairperson is remunerated at a rate of £300 per meeting and £300 per day for other work undertaken on behalf of, and at the request of, the Commission. The role is not pensionable.

Contracts of employment

The Chief Commissioner and Commissioners are public appointments made by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in line with the requirements of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and guidelines laid down by the Commissioner for Public Appointments (www.ocpa.gov.uk). Appointments cannot be for more than a period of five years at a time in the case of the Chief Commissioner, and for more than three years at a time for Commissioners. There is an option for a second term of appointment, at the Secretary of State's discretion.

Staff appointments are made in accordance with the Commission's recruitment and selection policy, which requires appointments to be made strictly on merit and on the basis of fair and open competition.

Following implementation of the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006, which made discrimination on grounds of age unlawful with effect from 1 October 2006, the Commission removed its retirement age. The Commission's age retirement policy enables members of staff who have reached the age at which they are entitled to draw their Commission pension (which for most staff is their 60th birthday) to choose the age at which they will retire.

Remuneration (audited information)

The following section provides details of the remuneration and pension interests of the Commissioners and the Commission's Chief Executive.

	2007	2006 restated
	£	£
Commissioners:		
Professor Monica McWilliams*	61,461	36,154
Mr Jonathan Bell*	10,000	5,833
Mr Thomas Duncan*	10,000	5,833
Lady Christine Eames OBE	10,000	10,000
Professor Colin Harvey*	10,350	6,039
Mr Alan Henry*	10,000	5,833
Ms Ann Hope*	10,000	5,833
Mr Eamonn O'Neill*	10,000	5,833
Ms Geraldine Rice MBE*	10,000	5,833
Mr Kevin McLaughlin	10,000	10,000
	151,811	97,191
*Appointed with effect from 1 September 2005		
Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Management Committee:		
Dr Bill Smith	2,250	–
Senior staff:		
Ms Paddy Sloan (Chief Executive)	46,620	45,251

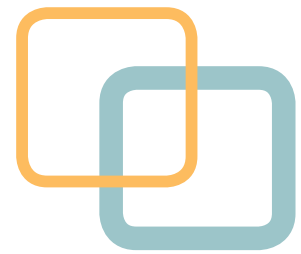
Salary

'Salary' includes gross salary; performance pay or bonuses; overtime; and any other allowance to the extent that it is subject to UK taxation.

This presentation is based on payments made by the Commission and thus recorded in these accounts.

Benefits in kind

The monetary value of benefits in kind covers any benefits provided by the employer and treated by the Inland Revenue as a taxable emolument. No benefits in kind were received during the 2006-07 financial year.



Pension benefits – Commissioners (audited information)

The Commission is liable for pension contributions of £6,856 to the University of Ulster in respect of the year ended 31 March 2007 on behalf of Professor Monica McWilliams (2005-06 : £3,914).


No further pension contributions were made in respect of Commissioners in the year ended 31 March 2006 (2005-06 : £nil).

Pension benefits – senior staff (audited information)

	Accrued pension at age 60 as at 31/3/07 and related lump sum £'000	Real increase in pension and related lump sum at age 60 £'000	CETV at 31/3/07 £'000	CETV at 31/3/06 £'000	Real increase in CETV £'000	Employer contribution to partnership pension account Nearest £100
Paddy Sloan Chief Executive	0 – 5 plus lump sum of 10 – 15	0 – 2.5 plus lump sum of 0 – 2.5	78	68	7	–

Pension benefits are provided through the Civil Service Pension (CSP) arrangements. From 1 October 2002, Commission staff may be in one of three statutory based 'final salary' defined benefit schemes (classic, premium, and classic plus). The Schemes are unfunded with the cost of benefits met by monies voted by Parliament each year. Pensions payable under classic, premium, and classic plus are increased annually in line with changes in the Retail Prices Index. New entrants after 1 October 2002 may choose between membership of premium or joining a good quality 'money purchase' stakeholder arrangement with a significant employer contribution (partnership pension account).

Employee contributions are set at the rate of 1.5 per cent of pensionable earnings for classic and 3.5 per cent for premium and classic plus. Benefits in classic accrue at the rate of 1/80th of pensionable salary for each year of service. In addition, a lump sum equivalent to three years' pension is payable on retirement. For premium, benefits accrue at the rate of 1/60th of final pensionable earnings for each year of service. Unlike classic, there is no automatic lump sum (but members may give up (commute) some of their pension to provide a lump sum). Classic plus is



essentially a variation of premium, but with benefits in respect of service before 1 October 2002 calculated broadly as per classic.

The partnership pension account is a stakeholder pension arrangement. The employer makes a basic contribution of between 3 per cent and 12.5 per cent (depending on the age of the member) into a stakeholder pension product chosen by the employee. The employee does not have to contribute but where they do make contributions, the employer will match these up to a limit of 3 per cent of pensionable salary (in addition to the employer's basic contribution). Employers also contribute a further 0.8 per cent of pensionable salary to cover the cost of centrally-provided risk benefit cover (death in service and ill health retirement).

The accrued pension quoted is the pension the member is entitled to receive when they reach 60, or immediately on ceasing to be an active member of the scheme if they are already 60.

Further details about the CSP arrangements can be found at the website, www.civilservice-pensions.gov.uk.

Cash Equivalent Transfer Values

A Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV) is the actuarially assessed capitalised value of the pension scheme benefits accrued by a member at a particular point in time. The benefits valued are the member's accrued benefits and any contingent spouse's pension payable from the scheme. A CETV is a payment made by a pension scheme or arrangement to secure pension benefits in another pension scheme or arrangement when the member leaves a scheme and chooses to transfer the benefits accrued in their former scheme. The pension figures shown relate to the benefits that the individual has accrued as a consequence of their total membership of the pension scheme, not just their service in a senior capacity to which disclosure applies. The CETV figures, and from 2003-04 the other pension details, include the value of any pension benefit in another scheme or arrangement which the individual has transferred to the CSP arrangements and for which the Cabinet Office's Civil Superannuation Vote has received a transfer payment commensurate to the additional pension liabilities being assumed. They also include any additional pension benefit accrued to the member as a result of their purchasing additional years of pension service in the scheme at their own cost. CETVs are calculated within the guidelines and framework prescribed by the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries.

Real increase in CETV

This reflects the increase in CETV effectively funded by the employer. It does not include the increase in accrued pension due to inflation, contributions paid by the employee (including the value of any benefits transferred from another pension scheme or arrangement) and uses common market valuation factors for the start and end of the period.

Don Leeson
Interim Accounting Officer

Date: 25 September 2007



Statement of the Accounting Officer's responsibilities

Under Section 7(2)(a) of Schedule 7 to the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (with the consent of HM Treasury) has directed the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission to prepare for each financial year a statement of accounts in the form and on the basis set out in the Accounts Direction. The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and of its income and expenditure, and cash flows for the financial year.

In preparing the accounts, the Accounting Officer is required to comply with the requirements of the Government Financial Reporting Manual and in particular to:

- Observe the Accounts Direction issued by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, including the relevant accounting and disclosure requirements, and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis
- Make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis
- State whether applicable accounting standards as set out in the Government Financial Reporting Manual have been followed, and disclose and explain any material departures in the financial statements, and
- Prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.

The Accounting Officer of the Northern Ireland Office has designated the Head of Corporate Services as Interim Accounting Officer of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission with effect from 24 May 2007, pending the appointment of a new Chief Executive. The responsibilities of an Accounting Officer, including responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which the Accounting Officer is answerable, for keeping proper records and for safeguarding the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission's assets, are set out in the Accounting Officers' Memorandum issued by the Non-Departmental Public Bodies Accounting Officer's Memorandum, issued by HM Treasury and published in Government Accounting.

Don Leeson
Interim Accounting Officer

Date: 25 September 2007



Statement on internal control

Scope of responsibility

As Interim Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for maintaining a sound system of internal control that supports the achievement of the Commission's policies, aims and objectives, as set by Commissioners, and approved by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, whilst safeguarding the public funds and the Commission's assets for which I am personally responsible, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to me in 'Government Accounting'.

I am designated as Accounting Officer, pending the appointment of a new Chief Executive. The Chief Executive post became vacant on 1 June 2007.

The Commission is a non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Northern Ireland Office, responsible to Parliament through the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. As such, discussions on financial matters and risk are held with officials, rather than directly with Ministers.

The purpose of the system of internal control

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level, rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives. It can therefore only provide reasonable, and not absolute, assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of Commission policies, aims and objectives; to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised; and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. The system of internal control has been in place in the Commission for the year ended 31 March 2007 and up to the date of approval of the Annual Report and Accounts, and accords with Treasury guidance.

Capacity to handle risk

All Commissioners and staff have been involved in developing and reviewing the Commission's risk register. As part of this development process, the Commission held a workshop for staff in April 2006 to refresh their knowledge of the concepts of risk assessment and management, building on a similar event held some 18 months earlier.

A similar workshop for Commissioners, facilitated by an external expert, was held in March 2007 to update their knowledge and review the risks for the forthcoming year.

Furthermore, the risk management framework set out below involves all Commissioners and staff in reviewing and assessing risk on a regular basis, so that risk is an integral part of the planning and monitoring processes of the Commission.

The Chairperson of the Commission's Audit and Risk Management Committee, who is independent of the Commission, also provides an additional source of expertise for management and Commissioners to consult on specific issues as they arise.



2006-07 was the first full year of operation of the Commission's Audit and Risk Management Committee and, therefore, the Commission invested significantly in the training and development of Committee members, including induction, understanding accounting concepts, understanding the financial relationship with the sponsoring department, and specific training for the Chairperson in respect of corporate governance and networking with Chairs of other audit committees.

The risk and control framework

The Commission has a continuous, proactive and systematic approach to understand, manage and communicate risk across the organisation. The risk management framework is comprehensive and involves Commissioners, managers and staff as follows:

- Overall responsibility for ensuring that risks are identified and an appropriate framework is in place to manage those risks down to an acceptable level rests with the Commission's Accounting Officer.
- Individual members of the Management Team are nominated as 'risk owners', delegated with responsibility from the Chief Executive for monitoring and reporting on specific risks within their area of work.
- The risk register, and the effectiveness of activities to manage identified risks, is reviewed monthly by the Management Team.
- The Audit and Risk Management Committee reviews the entire risk register and reports to the Commission, through the Head of Corporate Services, on the effectiveness of activities to manage identified risks following each meeting (at least four times per year).
- Standing committees of the Commission consider specific identified risks within their remit and the work being undertaken to minimise the occurrence and impact of the risks to ensure that it is effective, and reports on this at each Commission meeting through the appropriate staff report – committee minutes confirm that risk management activities are discussed at each meeting.
- The Commission formally reviews the risk register and the effectiveness of the risk management framework annually.
- The external environment is assessed for any new risks as part of the annual business planning process.



Review of effectiveness

As Interim Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control. My review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by the work of the internal auditors and the executive managers within the Commission who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework, and comments made by the external auditors in their management letter and other reports. I have been advised on the implications of the result of my review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control by the board (the Commission) and the Audit and Risk Management Committee.

The Audit and Risk Management Committee comprises an independent Chairperson, who has extensive financial management experience at a senior level in the public sector, who was appointed following an open recruitment competition, and five Commissioners with a range of experience in corporate governance. Audit and Risk Management Committee minutes are tabled at Commission meetings and the Committee reports annually to the Commission. Furthermore, the Chairperson has direct access to the Chief Executive and Chief Commissioner as appropriate.

The Audit and Risk Management Committee conducted a review of its effectiveness at the end of its first year of operation by assessing its operation and constitution against good practice guidelines issued by the National Audit Office. The results compared favourably with the guidelines. The outcome of this review was included in the Committee's annual report, which was presented to the Commission in March 2007.

The Commission has a Strategic Internal Audit Plan for the three year period, 2005-08, which focuses audit activity on areas of greatest risk, and will provide comprehensive assurance of the effectiveness of our system of internal control. The audit that took place in autumn 2006 covered:

- Arrangements for banking and handling cash
- Payroll, pensions and travel expenses
- Purchasing and procurement
- Management of fixed assets
- Management of income
- Corporate governance arrangements, including risk management
- Controls governing the use of corporate credit cards, and
- The Commission's information, education and development work.

It also followed up on recommendations arising from the previous internal audit that took place in 2005. The audit concluded that the level of control within the Commission was reasonable, and identified areas for further improvement, for which an action plan was agreed by the Commission's Audit and Risk Management Committee.

The Audit and Risk Management Committee reviews the effectiveness of the Commission's internal control mechanisms, including receiving and approving internal audit plans and reports, approving the Commission's Financial Procedures Manual and significant changes to it, overseeing the risk management framework and reporting to the Commission on the effectiveness of activities to manage the




occurrence or impact of identified risks. The Committee also reviews expenses claims submitted by the Chief Commissioner and the Chief Executive.

Lastly, Commissioners receive bi-monthly reports on financial performance and audit activity, and regular updates on the risk register. The content and format of these reports were reviewed by the Audit and Risk Management Committee to ensure that they are fit for purpose.

Don Leeson
Interim Accounting Officer

Date: 25 September 2007



The certificate and report of the Comptroller and Auditor General to the Houses of Parliament

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission for the year ended 31 March 2007 under the Northern Ireland Act 1998. These comprise the Operating Cost Statement, the Balance Sheet, the Cashflow Statement and Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses and the related notes. These financial statements have been prepared under the accounting policies set out within them. I have also audited the information in the Remuneration Report that is described in that report as having being audited.

Respective responsibilities of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, Chief Executive and Auditor

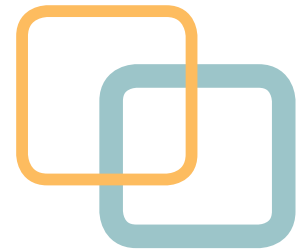
The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and Accounting Officer are responsible for preparing the Annual Report, the Remuneration Report and the financial statements in accordance with the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and directions made thereunder by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and for ensuring the regularity of financial transactions. These responsibilities are set out in the Statement of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and Accounting Officers Responsibilities.

My responsibility is to audit the financial statements and the part of the Remuneration Report to be audited in accordance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements, and with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland).

I report to you my opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view and whether the financial statements and the part of the Remuneration Report to be audited have been properly prepared in accordance with the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and directions made thereunder by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. I report to you whether, in my opinion, certain information given in the Annual Report, which comprises the Chief Commissioner's Foreword, the Chief Executive's Review, the Management Commentary, Meeting Aims, the unaudited part of the Remuneration Report and the Appendices, is consistent with the Financial Statements. I also report whether in all material respects the expenditure and income have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

In addition, I report to you if the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission has not kept proper accounting records, if I have not received all the information and explanations I require for my audit, or if information specified by HM Treasury regarding remuneration and other transactions is not disclosed.

I review whether the Statement on Internal Control reflects the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission's compliance with HM Treasury's guidance, and I report



if it does not. I am not required to consider whether this statement covers all risks and controls, or form an opinion on the effectiveness of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission's corporate governance procedures or its risk and control procedures.

I read the other information contained in the Annual Report and consider whether it is consistent with the audited financial statements. I consider the implications for my report if I become aware of any apparent misstatements or material inconsistencies with the financial statements. My responsibilities do not extend to any other information.

Basis of audit opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) issued by the Auditing Practices Board. My audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts, disclosures and regularity of financial transactions included in the financial statements and the part of the Remuneration Report to be audited. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgments made by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and Accounting Officer in the preparation of the financial statements, and of whether the accounting policies are most appropriate to the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

I planned and performed my audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which I considered necessary in order to provide me with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements and the part of the Remuneration Report to be audited are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error, and that in all material respects the expenditure and income have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them. In forming my opinion I also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the financial statements and the part of the Remuneration Report to be audited.



Audit opinion

In my opinion:

- the financial statements give a true and fair view, in accordance with the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and directions made thereunder by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, of the state of Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission's affairs as at 31 March 2007 and of its net operating cost for the year then ended;
- the financial statements and the part of the Remuneration Report to be audited have been properly prepared in accordance with the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and directions made thereunder by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland; and
- information given within the Annual Report, which comprises the Chief Commissioner's foreword, the Chief Executive's Review, the Management Commentary, Meeting Aims, the unaudited part of the Remuneration Report and the Appendices, is consistent with the Financial Statements.

Audit opinion on regularity

In my opinion, in all material respects the expenditure and income have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

Report

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.

John Bourn

Comptroller and Auditor General

National Audit Office
157-197 Buckingham Palace Road
Victoria
London
SW1W 9SP

Date: 15 October 2007



Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2007

Operating cost statement for the year ended 31 March 2007

	Notes	2007 £	2006 restated £
Income			
Operating income	2	53,480	8,751
Total Income		53,480	8,751
Expenditure			
Staff costs	3	780,747	685,377
Depreciation	6	48,639	47,364
Other operating costs	4	609,756	642,790
Notional cost of capital	5	7,617	4,598
Total Operating Costs		1,446,759	1,380,129
Net Operating Costs before Financing (Deficit) / surplus for the year		(1,393,279)	(1,371,378)
Credit in respect of notional cost of capital	5	7,617	4,598
Amount transferred to Income and Expenditure Reserve	9	(1,385,662)	(1,366,780)

All amounts above relate to continuing activities.

There are no recognised gains or losses other than those included above.

The notes on pages 70-80 form part of the financial statements.

Balance sheet as at 31 March 2007

	Notes	2007		2006 restated	
		£	£	£	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible Assets	6		308,827		127,798
Current assets					
Prepayments and accrued income	7	19,037		15,386	
Cash at bank and in hand		204,388		214,195	
		223,425		229,581	
Current liabilities					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	8	(269,940)		(184,405)	
Net current (liabilities)/assets			(46,515)		45,176
Total assets less current liabilities			262,312		172,974
Financed by:					
Reserves	9		262,312		172,974
			262,312		172,974

The financial statements were approved by the Commission on 17 September 2007 and were signed on its behalf by:

Don Leeson

Interim Accounting Officer

Date: 25 September 2007

The notes on pages 70-80 form part of the financial statements.



Cash flow statement for the year ended 31 March 2007

	Notes	2007 £	2006 restated £
Net cash inflow / (outflow) from operating activities	14	(1,255,139)	(1,167,626)
Capital expenditure and financial investments	15	(229,668)	(58,514)
Grant-in-Aid and Capital financing	9	1,475,000	1,450,000
(Decrease)/increase in cash in the year		<u>(9,807)</u>	<u>223,860</u>

The notes on pages 70-80 form part of the financial statements.



Notes to the financial statement for the year ended 31 March 2007

1. Accounting policies

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FRoM) for 2006-07 issued by HM Treasury. The accounting policies contained in the FRoM follow UK generally accepted accounting policies for companies (UK GAAP) to the extent that it is meaningful and appropriate to the public sector. Where the FRoM permits a choice of accounting policy, the accounting policy that has been judged to be most appropriate to the particular circumstances of the organisation for the purpose of giving a true and fair view has been selected.

1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the historical cost convention, and with the accounts direction issued by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. Without limiting the information given, the financial statements comply with the accounting and disclosure requirements of the Companies Act 1985, the accounting standards issued or adopted by the Accounting Standards Board and accounting and disclosure requirements issued by HM Treasury, insofar as those requirements are appropriate.

1.2 Income

Revenue grant-in-aid represents funding from the Northern Ireland Office to fund the Commission's current expenditure and, in accordance with the FRoM, is credited to the Income and Expenditure (General) Reserve. Grant-in-aid was previously credited to the Operating Cost Statement.

1.3 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided on a straight line basis at rates calculated to write-off the cost less estimated residual value of each asset over its expected useful life. The estimated useful lives for depreciation purposes are:

Leasehold improvements	10 years
Computer equipment	3 years
Fixtures, fittings & equipment	5 years

The Commission capitalises those items costing in excess of £1,000.



1.4 Leasing

Rentals payable under operating leases are charged against income on a straight line basis over the lease term.

1.5 Pensions

Past and present employees are covered by the provisions of the Principal Civil Service Pension Schemes (PCSPS) which are described in Note 3. The defined benefit schemes are unfunded and are non-contributory except in respect of dependants' benefits. The Commission recognises the expected cost of these elements on a systematic and rational basis over the period during which it benefits from employees' services by payment to the PCSPS of amounts calculated on an accruing basis. Liability for payment of future benefits is a charge on the PCSPS. In respect of the defined contribution schemes, the Commission recognises the contributions payable for the year.

Separate arrangements are in place for the Chief Commissioner's pension scheme, which is not part of the PCSPS.

1.6 Capital grants

Grants towards capital expenditure are credited to Reserves.

1.7 Value Added Tax

The Commission is ineligible to reclaim input VAT on expenditure. Therefore, all expenditure is inclusive of VAT.

1.8 Legal casework expenditure

Section 70 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 enables the Commission to support legal cases in relation to the protection of human rights. Some of these cases can span several years.

In some cases costs are recoverable from the respondent if the applicant is successful. Given this, while the Commission decides to support cases, contingent on the outcome, payments are not normally made until judgement is passed, and the judge decides on a cost order (i.e. whether the 'losing' side should pay all costs, or each side should bear their own costs). Given that a criterion for Commission support is whether a case has a 'reasonable chance of success', it does not expect to incur costs in many cases. However, cases can be lost. In these cases, it is possible that the applicant could be asked to pay the respondent's costs. Where this happens the Commission may pay these costs on behalf of the applicant. These potential liabilities are noted in the financial statements as contingent liabilities.

1.9 Prior year adjustment

With effect from the 2006-07 reporting period the FReM requires Non Departmental Public Bodies to account for grants and grants in aid received for revenue purposes as financing because they are regarded as contributions from a controlling party which gives rise to a financial interest in the residual interest of NDPBs. This is a change in accounting policy from earlier periods when such items were recorded as income. The effect of this change on the certified 2005-06 accounts and the impact of the change on the results of the current year is shown below. Note there is no impact on the net liability of the Commission as a result of this change in policy.

	At 31 March 2006 (as previously stated)	Impact of adopting new policy	At 31 March 2006 (restated)
	£	£	£
Net operating costs	67,472	1,438,850	(1,371,378)
General fund	45,176	127,798	172,974
Capital grant reserve	127,798	(127,798)	–

2. Income

Operating income is from a grant from the United Nations to host an International Roundtable on 'The Role of National Human Rights Institutions in Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations'.



3. Staff numbers and related costs

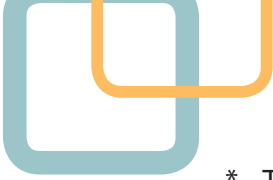
3.1 Staff costs

	2007 £	2006 £
Commissioners		
Wages and salaries	151,811	97,191
Social security costs	12,687	8,092
Other pension costs	6,856	3,914
	171,354	109,197
Amounts payable in respect of directly employed staff		
Wages and salaries	487,878	459,270
Social security costs	36,480	37,863
Other pension costs	78,583	77,918
	602,941	575,051
Amounts payable in respect of other staff (for example, short term contract staff, agency/temporary staff, and inward secondments)		
Agency staff	6,452	1,129
Total staff costs	780,747	685,377

3.2 Staff numbers and related costs

The average number of whole time equivalent persons employed (including senior management, but excluding Commissioners) during the year was as follows:

	2007 Number	2006 Restated* Number
Chief Executive	1.0	1.0
Corporate Services	6.5	7.0
Information, Education and Development	4.0	4.0
Legal Services, Policy and Research	6.5	6.0
	18.0	18.0
Other staff		
Agency staff	0.5	–
Total Staff	18.5	18.0



* The number of staff is shown against team structures, rather than by grade as in the previous year, to better demonstrate the allocation of staff resources. The numbers for 2005-06 have been restated accordingly.

The Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS) is an unfunded multi-employer defined benefit scheme but the Commission is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities. The scheme actuary valued the scheme as at 31 March 2003. Details are contained in the resource accounts of the Cabinet Office: Civil Superannuation (www.civilservice-pensions.gov.uk).

For 2006-07, employers' contributions of £78,583 were payable to the PCSPS (2005-06 : £77,918) at one of four rates in the range 17.1 per cent to 25.5 per cent of pensionable pay, based on salary bands (the rates in 2005-06 were between 16.2 per cent and 24.6 per cent).

The scheme's Actuary reviews employer contributions every four years following a full scheme valuation. From 2007-08, the salary bands will be revised but the rates will remain the same. The contribution rates are set to meet the cost of the benefits accruing during 2006-07 to be paid when the member retires, and not the benefits paid during this period to existing pensioners.

Employees can opt to open a partnership pension account, a stakeholder pension with an employer contribution. Employer contributions are paid to one or more of a panel of three appointed stakeholder pension providers. No employer contributions were made in 2006-07 (2005-06 : £nil). Employer contributions are age-related and range from 3 to 12.5 per cent of pensionable pay. Employers also match employee contributions up to 3 per cent of pensionable pay. In addition, employer contributions of 0.8 per cent of pensionable are payable to the PCSPS to cover the cost of the future provision of lump sum benefits on death in service and ill health retirement of these employees.

Contributions due to the partnership pension providers at the balance sheet date were nil. Contributions prepaid at that date were nil.

No person retired early on ill-health grounds during 2006-07.



4. Other operating costs

	2007	2006
	£	£
Accountancy fees	2,431	9,079
Advertising, publicity and publications	86,939	73,250
Auditors (NAO) remuneration	6,500	10,000
Bill of Rights	1,132	20,417
Building maintenance and expenses	27,901	36,348
Conferences and seminars	53,819	–
Consultancy	5,741	12,438
Education costs	558	4,044
Insurance	7,429	11,950
Internal audit	6,016	8,272
Investigations	1,300	11,094
IT costs	25,814	31,263
Legal casework costs (realised contingencies)	–	43,598
Legal casework costs (non-recoverable)	27,734	46,189
Light and heat	11,911	16,903
Operating leases – rent of property	105,453	112,367
Other expenses	2,946	(210)
Printing, postage and stationery	34,888	40,013
Professional fees	16,919	21,773
Rates	51,383	40,013
Staff training and recruitment costs	54,307	37,209
Telephone	8,651	9,051
Travel, subsistence and hospitality	69,984	47,729
	609,756	642,790

5. Notional costs

Notional cost of capital

The Operating Cost Statement bears a non-cash charge for interest relating to the use of capital by the Commission. The basis of the charge is 3.5 per cent of the average capital employed by the Commission during the year defined as total assets less current liabilities.

6. Tangible fixed assets

	Leasehold Improvements £	Computer equipment £	Fixtures fittings and equipment £	Total £
Cost				
At 1 April 2006	109,348	72,505	129,346	311,199
Additions	175,182	29,143	25,343	229,668
Disposals	–	–	–	–
At 31 March 2007	284,530	101,648	154,689	540,867
Depreciation				
At 1 April 2006	54,675	47,209	81,517	183,401
Charge for the year	10,936	23,610	14,093	48,639
Disposals	–	–	–	–
At 31 March 2007	65,611	70,819	95,610	232,040
Net book value				
At 31 March 2007	218,919	30,829	59,079	308,827
At 31 March 2006	54,673	25,296	47,829	127,798

The fixed assets were not revalued during the year as there were no material differences between historical cost amounts and the revalued amounts.

7. Debtors

	2007 £	2006 £
Trade debtors	585	216
Prepayments and accrued income	18,452	15,170
	19,037	15,386



8. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2007	2006
	£	£
Bank loans and overdrafts	–	–
Trade creditors	46,413	11,117
Taxation and social security	16,937	–
Other creditors	19,591	10,000
Accruals	186,999	163,288
	<u>269,940</u>	<u>184,405</u>

9. Statement of movements in the Capital Grant Reserve and the General Fund

	Capital Grant Reserve	Reserves
	£	£
At 1 April 2006	127,798	45,176
Amount transferred to Reserves	(127,798)	127,798
Restated balance at 1 April 2006	–	172,974
Amount transferred from Operating Cost Statement		(1,385,662)
Funding:		
NIO – Revenue Grant-in-Aid		1,475,000
Reserves at 31 March 2007		<u>262,312</u>

10. Performance against key financial targets

The Secretary of State does not consider it appropriate to set key financial targets for the Commission.

11. Contingent liabilities

Casework

As at 31 March 2007, the Commission was supporting one case where legal costs might be liable depending on the outcome of the cases and whether cost orders are made against the applicants.

This case has been lost and a cost order made against the applicant for their and the respondent's costs, although the extent of the respondent's costs has not yet been revealed. Leave to appeal the judgement to the House of Lords has been granted. The outcome of the appeal, and therefore the extent of the Commission's liabilities – if any – in respect of the case, will not be known until the 2007-08 financial year at earliest.

It is not possible to quantify the potential liabilities in respect of this case.

Job evaluation

The Commission is committed to undertaking a job evaluation exercise on all staff posts. While the Commission expects that a liability could arise, until the job descriptions and evaluations have been agreed, we cannot estimate with any certainty the value of the liability to the Commission. The job evaluation exercise is expected to begin in summer 2007.

12. Financial commitments

Operating lease commitments

At 31 March 2007 the Commission had the following annual commitments under non-cancellable operating leases. The amounts disclosed are inclusive of VAT.

	Land and buildings		Office equipment	
	2007 £	2006 £	2007 £	2006 £
Expiry date:				
Less than one year	–	–	–	–
In over five years	81,310	101,638	–	–
	<u>81,310</u>	<u>101,638</u>	<u>–</u>	<u>–</u>

Capital commitments

The Commission had no capital commitments at 31 March 2007 (2006 : £NIL).

13. Related party transactions

The Commission is a non-departmental public body sponsored by the Northern Ireland Office (NIO). NIO is regarded as a related party. During the year the Commission had various transactions with NIO (receipt of grant-in-aid and payment of monies received in respect of a successful legal case).

None of the Commissioners, senior management or other related parties has undertaken any material transactions with the Commission during the year.



14. Reconciliation of net operating costs to cash outflow from operating activities


	2007	2006 restated
	£	£
Net Operating Costs before Financing	(1,393,279)	(1,371,378)
Depreciation of tangible assets	48,639	47,364
Notional costs	7,617	4,598
(Increase)/decrease in debtors		
Trade Debtors	(369)	1,859
Prepayments and accrued income	(3,284)	250,298
(Decrease) in creditors within one year		
Trade Creditors	35,297	(2,608)
Taxation & Social Security	16,937	(12,230)
Other Creditors	9,591	(30,000)
Accruals	23,712	(55,529)
Net cash outflow from operating activities	(1,255,139)	(1,167,626)

15. Gross cash flows

	2007	2006 restated
	£	£
Capital expenditure and financial investments		
Payments to acquire tangible assets	229,668	58,514
NIO – Grant-in-Aid funding	1,245,332	1,391,486
	1,475,000	1,450,000

16. Financial instruments

FRS 13, Derivatives and Other Financial Instruments, requires disclosure of the role which financial instruments have had during the year in creating or changing the risks an entity faces in undertaking its activities. Due to the non-trading nature of its activities and the way in which executive non-departmental public bodies are financed, the Commission is not exposed to the degree of financial risk faced by business entities. Moreover, financial instruments play a much more limited role in creating or changing risk than would be typical of the listed companies to which FRS 13 mainly applies. The Commission has no powers to borrow or invest surplus funds and has limited year end flexibility. Financial assets and liabilities are generated by day-to-day operational activities and are not held to change the risks facing the Commission in undertaking activities.



As permitted by FRS 13, debtors and creditors which may mature or become payable within 12 months from the balance sheet date have been excluded from this disclosure.

Liquidity risk

The Commission is financed by grant-in-aid from the Northern Ireland Office and is accountable to Parliament through the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and is not therefore exposed to significant liquidity risk.

Interest rate risk

All financial assets and financial liabilities of the Commission carry nil rates of interest and therefore are not exposed to interest rate risk.

Currency risk

The Commission does not trade in foreign currency and therefore has no exposure to foreign currency risk.

Fair values

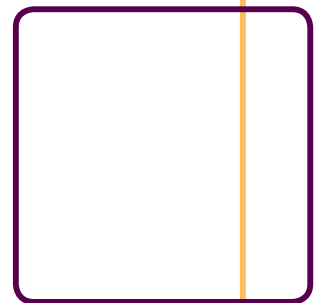
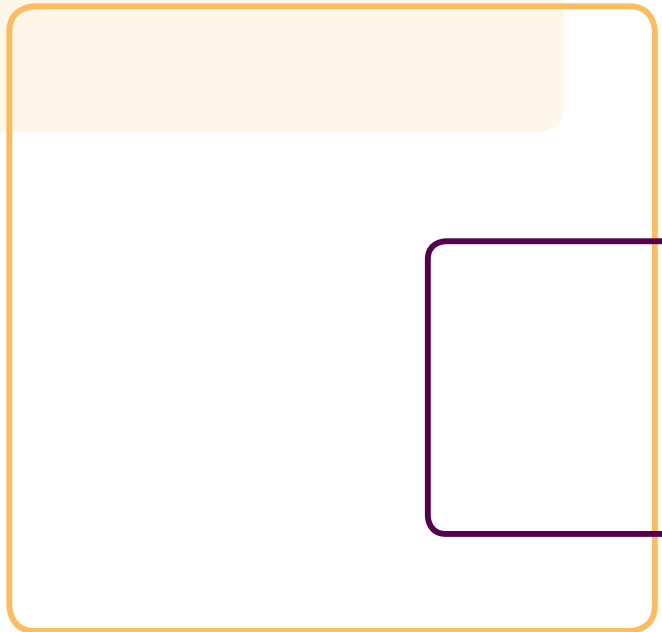
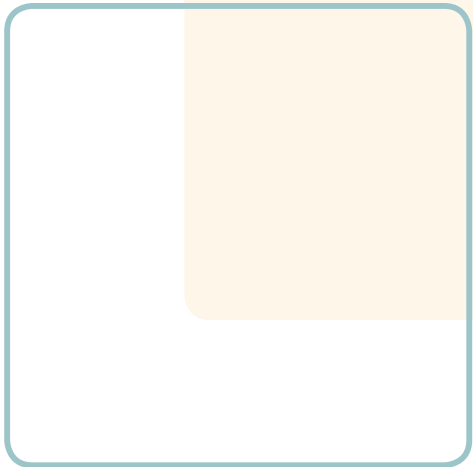
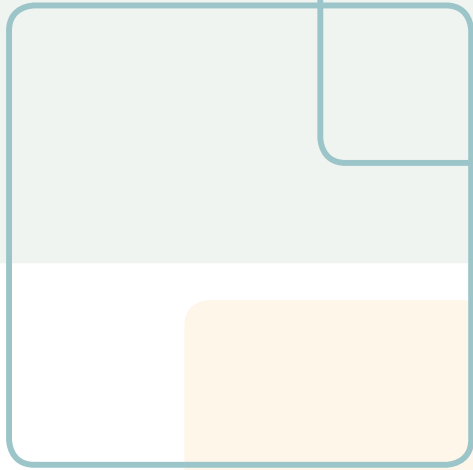
The book value and fair value of the Commission's financial assets and financial liabilities as at 31 March 2007 are set out below:

Primary financial instruments

	Book value	Fair value
	£	£
Financial assets		
Cash at bank	204,388	—
Financial liabilities		
Bank overdraft	—	—



Appendices





Appendix 1: Commissioners' meetings

The Commission met 12 times during the reporting period, constituted either as the Commission to progress matters of corporate governance and other business, or as a Policy Committee.

The following served as Commissioners during 2006-07:

	Meetings attended
Professor Monica McWilliams	12
Mr Jonathan Bell	10
Mr Tom Duncan	12
Lady Christine Eames OBE	12
Professor Colin Harvey	11
Mr Alan Henry	10
Ms Ann Hope	10#
Mr Kevin McLaughlin	7*
Mr Eamonn O'Neill	10
Ms Geraldine Rice MBE	2*

Absences due to Commission business elsewhere

* Attendance restricted by ill-health during the year



Appendix 2: The Commission's Committees

Audit and Risk Management Committee (met five times during 2006–07)

Members: Dr Bill Smith (Independent Chairperson)
Lady Christine Eames OBE
Mr Alan Henry
Mr Kevin McLaughlin
Mr Eamonn O'Neill
Ms Geraldine Rice MBE

Detention, Policing and Justice Committee (formerly the Places of Detention Working Group) (met eight times during 2006–07)

Members: Mr Tom Duncan (Chairperson)
Professor Colin Harvey
Mr Alan Henry
Professor Monica McWilliams
Mr Eamonn O'Neill
Ms Geraldine Rice MBE

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Committee (formerly the Health Working Group) (met six times during 2006–07)

Members: Mr Alan Henry (Chairperson)
Mr Jonathan Bell
Lady Christine Eames OBE

Equality Committee (met once during 2006–07)

Members: Ms Ann Hope (Chairperson)
Professor Colin Harvey
Mr Alan Henry
Professor Monica McWilliams
Ms Geraldine Rice MBE

Legal Committee (formerly the Casework Committee) (met 15 times during 2006–07)

Members: Lady Christine Eames OBE (Chairperson)
Mr Tom Duncan
Professor Colin Harvey
Ms Ann Hope
Mr Kevin McLaughlin
Professor Monica McWilliams



Policy Committee (met six times during 2006–07)

Members: Professor Monica McWilliams (Chairperson)
Mr Jonathan Bell
Mr Tom Duncan
Lady Christine Eames OBE
Professor Colin Harvey
Mr Alan Henry
Ms Ann Hope
Mr Kevin McLaughlin
Mr Eamonn O’Neill
Ms Geraldine Rice MBE

Public Affairs Committee (met twice during 2006–07, then subsumed into Policy Committee from November 2006)

Members: Ms Geraldine Rice (Chairperson)
Mr Jonathan Bell
Lady Christine Eames OBE
Professor Colin Harvey
Professor Monica McWilliams
Mr Eamonn O’Neill

In addition to formal committees, the Commission also establishes working groups to progress specific projects. During 2006-07, the Commission convened working groups on the Bill of Rights, health (now reconstituted as the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Committee), places of detention (now reconstituted as the Detention, Policing and Justice Committee), and staff pay arrangements.

Bill of Rights Working Group (met five times during 2006–07)

Members: Professor Monica McWilliams (Chairperson)
Mr Jonathan Bell
Mr Tom Duncan
Lady Christine Eames OBE
Professor Colin Harvey
Mr Alan Henry
Ms Ann Hope
Mr Kevin McLaughlin
Mr Eamonn O’Neill
Ms Geraldine Rice MBE

Pay Working Group (met twice during 2006–07 – work completed in May 2006)

Members: Professor Monica McWilliams (Chairperson)
Mr Alan Henry
Ms Ann Hope



Appendix 3: The Commission's staff

Paddy Sloan Chief Executive

Corporate Services Team

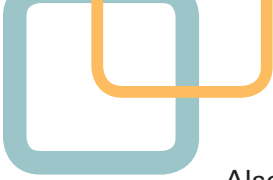
Don Leeson	Head of Corporate Services
Róisín Carlin	Administrative Officer (Personnel) (Maternity Leave from 17 January 2007)
Rebecca Eaton	Administrative Officer (Commissioners)
Louise Furber	Receptionist
Lorraine Hamill	Administrative Officer (Finance)
Brenda Madden	Administrative Officer (Information)
Gillian Neill	Housekeeper (from 1 September 2006)
Bernadette Rooney	Administrative Officer (Legal)
Sandra Rosbotham	Cleaner (until 30 June 2006)

Information Education and Development Team

Peter O'Neill	Head of Information Education and Development
Nadia Downing	Information Worker
Rebecca Dudley	Education Worker
Miriam Titterton	Development Worker

Legal Services, Policy and Research Team

Ciarán Ó Maoláin	Head of Legal Services, Policy and Research
Ann Jemphrey	Investigations Worker
Mairead Hegarty	Caseworker (from 1 November 2006)
Dr Nazia Latif	Research and Investigations Worker
Angela Lloyd-Stevens	Caseworker
Virginia McVea	Caseworker
Agnieszka Martynowicz	Research Worker
Dr Linda Moore	Investigations Worker
Caroline Nolan	Caseworker (until 21 July 2006)
Petra Sheils	Caseworker (until 30 September 2006)



Also:

Denise Magill (on career break)

Edel Teague (on secondment to CCMS)

Interns

The following students interned with the Commission during 2006-07:

Clara Di Dio, University of Ulster

Nuala Harraghy, Queen's University Belfast

Hakeem Yussuf, University of Ulster

Donna Vincent, University of Ulster

Sahla Aroussi, University of Ulster

Matt Haney, Queen's University Belfast



Appendix 4: Consultation responses and other policy advice

During the year the Commission provided human rights-based legislative and policy advice on a wide range of subjects, usually in response to consultation exercises. This listing does not include policy statements made via press releases, speeches or correspondence with NGOs, MLAs, MPs and peers.

April 2006

Terrorism, Counter-terrorism and Human Rights: the experience of emergency powers in Northern Ireland: submission (on civil and political rights) to Eminent Jurists Panel of International Commission of Jurists

Workplace Smoking Ban: submission to Health Promotion Agency

Diplock Courts: response to Lord Carlile

May 2006

Procedures and performance of the Parades Commission

Immigration Control: briefing to Home Affairs Committee Inquiry

Human Rights Act 1998: letter to Prime Minister defending the Act

Role of NHRIs in the UN Human Rights Council: comments to European Group of NHRIs

June 2006

Definition of Terrorism: submission to the inquiry by Lord Carlile

Terrorism, Counter-terrorism and Human Rights: the experience of emergency powers in Northern Ireland: submission (on economic, social and cultural rights) to the Eminent Jurists Panel of the International Commission of Jurists

July 2006

Human Rights and Equality of Opportunity: comments to the Bamford Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability

Granting of Prior Authority for Senior Counsel in litigation in the High Court and litigation in the Family Care Centre: response to Legal Services Commission

September 2006

Draft 6th UK Report under International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: comments to DCA

Adopting the Future: Response to DHSSPS consultation

Progressive Regimes and Earned Privileges Scheme (Preps): response to NI Prison Service consultation

Child Protection: submission to the Oireachtás Inquiry

Victims and Survivors (NI) draft Order 2006: response to NIO



October 2006

Reforming the Law on Sexual Offences in Northern Ireland: response to NIO
Policy for the Management of Mothers and Babies: response to NI Prison Service
Replacement Arrangements for Diplock Court System: response to NIO consultation
Effectiveness of the European Convention: European NHRIs response to Council of Europe CDDH
National Action Plans on Human Rights: European NHRIs response
Implementation of May 2004 Recommendations of the Committee of Ministers: comments to Council of Europe

November 2006

Forum on a Bill of Rights: response to NIO
Proposed introduction of the Taser to the Police Service of Northern Ireland: response to consultation
PSNI Diversity Strategy: comments on draft
Flags and Emblems: briefing to Review of Public Administration

December 2006

Draft Protocol for Community-Based Restorative Justice Schemes: submission to the NIO
ditto, copied to Northern Ireland Affairs Committee
Police (NI) Act 2000: Review of Temporary Provisions (50:50 Recruitment): submission to NIO
Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Bill: preliminary briefing to JCHR
PAVA Hand-held Personal Incapacitant Spray: Response to consultation on NI Prison Service Policy and Guidance for Operational Deployment

January 2007

Policing (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI) Order 2006: submission to NIO
Draft Regional Child Death Review Protocol: response to DHSSPS
Quashing Convictions: response to NIO
Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Bill: submission to JCHR on non-NIHRC aspects
Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Bill: briefing to Public Bill Committee and draft amendments on NIHRC powers
Meaning of Public Authority under the Human Rights Act: evidence to Joint Committee on Human Rights
Definition of disability: submission to OFMDFM
Lifetime Opportunities (consultation on Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Strategy): response to Preparation for Government Committee



Equality, Good Relations and Human Rights in Health and Social Services: response to DHSSPS

February 2007

Relaxing the Ban on Admissibility of Intercept Evidence: evidence to Joint Committee on Human Rights

Establishment of a Regional Statutory Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (child protection): response to DHSSPS

Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Bill: House of Lords briefing

Juvenile Justice Centre (NI) Rules 2007 and Juvenile Justice Centre Order (Supervision) Rules (NI) 2007: response to NIO

2nd UK report on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities: comments to Department of Communities and Local Government

March 2007

Making Sure that Crime Doesn't Pay (proposals to prevent convicted criminals profiting from publications about their crimes): response to NIO

Human Rights Guidance for Northern Ireland Criminal Justice System: comments to Attorney General's office

Notifiable Memberships: response to PSNI

UK Borders Bill: briefing for Joint Committee on Human Rights and Public Bills Committee



Appendix 5: Publications and press releases

April 2006

Human Rights in Police Training: Report Five, Tutor Constables Scheme
Investigating Deaths in Hospital in Northern Ireland (reprint)

May 2006

Business Plan 2006-07
'Visit to Dungavel Removal Centre' (press release)
'Commission criticises government attack on human rights culture' (press release)

June 2006

'Human Rights Commission reviews police training' (press release)
'TASERs in the spotlight' (press release)
'International conference examines role of human rights in conflict resolution' (press release)
'Seminar to celebrate World Refugee Day' (press release)
'Welcome for new international initiative to prevent torture' (press release)

July 2006

Strategic Plan 2006-2009
'Commission launches new strategic plan and website' (press release)

August 2006

NIHRC Review magazine, issue 2, summer
'Welcome for move to replace Diplock courts' (press release)

September 2006

Still in Our Care: Protecting Children's Rights in Custody in Northern Ireland
Human Rights Act introductory course programme
'Concerns over hospital admissions for acute psychiatric patients' (press release)
'Bill of Rights a priority for Human Rights Commission' (press release)

October 2006

'Health policies should protect human rights' (press release)
'Protecting children's rights in custody' (press release)
'Welcome for human rights report on mental health' (press release)



November 2006

CEDAW training course programme

'Major conference to examine human rights' (press release)

December 2006

Annual Report and Financial Accounts 2005-06

Annual Conference programme

Outdoor premises banner

Human Rights Day poster (reprint)

NIHRC Review magazine, issue 3, winter

'Seminar on new rights for disabled people (press release)

'Commission seeks changes to Justice and Security (NI) Bill' (press release)

'A year of progress on human rights – launch of Annual Report' (press release)

January 2007

Your Rights in Northern Ireland: three guides for migrant workers (produced with Law Centre (NI) and ANIMATE)

2007 desk calendar

'Launch of unique guides to protect the rights of migrant workers' (press release)

'Human Rights Commission backs equality law' (press release)

'Amendments sought to Justice Bill' (press release)

'Two Commissions call for review of Omagh bomb' (press release)

'Collusion report demonstrates need for effective scrutiny and accountability of national security' (press release)

'Welcome for trafficking announcement' (press release)

'Welcome for Walsh appeal' (press release)

'Launch of new academic partnership promoting human rights' (press release)

February 2007

Summaries of human rights cases September 2005 to October 2006

'Government prevents Human Rights Commission from undertaking investigations of past abuses' (press release)

'Commission calls for urgent action to address inquest' (press release)

'Welcome for review of prisoners' right to vote' (press release)

March 2007

'International Women's Day – HRC calls for improvements in treatment of women prisoners' (press release)

'Major conference to examine women's rights (press release)



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