



14 March 2022

Commissions meet in the North West to discuss rights after Brexit

Over 70 people, from across a diverse range of sectors, recently attended a joint Commission event considering cross-border equality and human rights after Brexit, with a focus on minority ethnic groups, migrant people and border communities in the North West region.

The event, co-hosted by the Equality Commission (ECNI), the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC) and the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC), was organised as part of the Commissions' work to ensure the UK Government upholds its commitment to protect equality and human rights after Brexit, as outlined in Article 2 of the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol.

During the event, Geraldine McGahey, Chief Commissioner, ECNI, Alyson Kilpatrick, Chief Commissioner, NIHRC and Michael Finucane, Commissioner, IHREC highlighted the Commissions' additional roles and responsibilities and provided updates on their respective work including important policy, research and legal work, as well as ongoing all-island scrutiny work focusing on cross-border rights after Brexit.

Also speaking at the event were Lilian Seeno-Barr, Director of Programmes at the North West Migrants Forum and Kendall Bousquet, Advocacy Officer for the Migrant Centre NI who highlighted the concerns being expressed by local minority ethnic and migrant communities.

Attendees, who were able to participate in person or online, had the opportunity to raise issues and share experiences during a question and answer session and open forum during the event.

A wide range of issues were raised including concerns relating to access to cross-border services such as healthcare, education and work and increased racial profiling in terms of cross-border travel as a result of Brexit.

Speaking after the event, the Commissions' praised the efforts of community representatives for their ongoing work and for raising important issues and concerns associated with their rights after Brexit.

"Our recent joint event demonstrates that local representatives are worried about a wide range of issues impacting on ethnic minority and migrant communities in border communities. These include the uncertainties and concerns associated with Brexit,

for example cross-border travel in the North West.

This event provided us with important feedback which will help inform our ongoing work and we would like to thank all those who attended for contributing to these important conversations.

We encourage anyone who has a concern that their equality or human rights may have been affected as a result of Brexit to contact the Commissions directly for advice as soon as possible.”