

18 December 2023

Joint Statement - Budget Cuts in Northern Ireland

Joint statement issued today by the Chief Commissioner of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People and the Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland regarding the impact of budget cuts on equality in Northern Ireland.

“The pressure is mounting to restore a working Executive, to navigate us through this precarious financial period. It is more important than ever, to have a stable and effective government in place to work through the challenges ahead.

“Our views about the impact of the most recent round of budget cuts are already on record. The cuts have been and are, devastating for our most vulnerable people, their families and their communities. Older people, children and young people, people with disabilities, and women, face multiple adverse impacts; the picture is unacceptably bleak for many.

“There is encouraging talk about objective needs-based budgeting which should help prevent worsening existing inequalities or creating new ones. We would also welcome a more joined-up approach to budgeting when setting priorities and allocating funding. A collaborative approach across and within government departments will help identify and mitigate against the combined impact of cuts from different departments on vulnerable people, children and families.

“A functioning Executive with Ministers in place to make major policy decisions has the power to change the lives of people directly impacted by current cuts for the better. It is of paramount importance that any deal involved in restoring our political institutions includes an adequate budget to meet needs now, over coming years and supports transformation of public services.

“The restoration of a working Executive provides a chance for progress, positive change, and addressing the issues that have been neglected during the political stalemate and so this opportunity must be seized.

“The next round of budgeting is already in the planning and politicians should use their power to protect our most vulnerable from facing further cuts, hardships and inequalities.”