



Equality Commission

FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

improving people's lives

ANNUAL REPORT
AND ACCOUNTS
2013-2014



**EQUALITY COMMISSION FOR
NORTHERN IRELAND**

Annual Report and Accounts

for the year ended
31 March 2014

Laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly
under paragraphs 5(3) & 7(4) of
Schedule 8 to the Northern Ireland Act 1998
by the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

on

11 August 2014



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Our Statement of Commitment

Vision

A society in Northern Ireland where there is:

Fairness and equality for all

Mission

To improve people's lives through the responsible and effective use of our powers.



Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

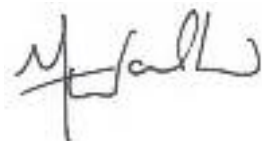
Castle Buildings
Stormont
BELFAST
BT4 3SR

Dear First Minister and Deputy First Minister

I have pleasure in submitting to you the fourteenth annual report of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, covering the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014. The report demonstrates both the breadth and depth of the Commission's responsibilities and the extent to which they have been successfully discharged.

On behalf of the Commission, I would like to express our appreciation of the assistance given to the Commission by officials of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.

Yours sincerely



Michael Wardlow
Chief Commissioner



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Chief Commissioner's Foreword

This year has been one in which, despite increasing financial constraints, the Commission has built on and consolidated its successes. I want to place on record my congratulations to the Chief Executive, Evelyn Collins, and all the staff in delivering another excellent year's work.

It has also been a period in which we have been actively involved in helping to lay the groundwork for the formation of the proposed new Equality and Good Relations Commission.

Here in Northern Ireland, the Commission continues to function within a context in which difference can still be perceived as a threat, and against a backdrop in which sectarianism, racism, homophobia and hatred of all kinds constitute a reality for many, threatening their safety and reinforcing separateness.

The Commission is clear that this situation need not be so and I believe that an imaginative and ambitious policy to make a difference, to make this a safe and secure place for people to live, to recognise difference as a source of richness could be full of possibility and is urgently needed.

Last year, in my first foreword as Chief Commissioner, I wrote about the negative attitudes and prejudices that still permeate our society. This year, sadly, we have seen an increase in reported hate crime and reports of racist, homophobic and disability hate incidents. As a Commission, we have reacted in the short term to these issues, but long term, our work has to be to encourage the mainstreaming of equality and good relations in public policy making and public service delivery.

We need to continue to retain our focus on improving the lives of people in Northern Ireland by encouraging and ensuring the development of public policy that enshrines equality of opportunity, particularly for those who are the most vulnerable in society.

In the past year, we have sustained our rolling review of our policy positions across all equality grounds, consolidating and updating them. This process presents us with the opportunity to share and debate equality concerns and issues with organisations and individuals and, through this engagement, to shape the development of government policy. To have solid, evidence-based policy positions provides us with the foundation upon which we can generate relevant equality and good relations-based responses to government consultations.

We have continued to seek to persuade OFMDFM to bring forward legislation to close the gap between the protections against discrimination available in Northern Ireland relative to that in the rest of the United Kingdom. There is a clear and pressing need to reform the laws on disability, race and fair employment.



This year, one of the key areas of focus has been on encouraging the extension of age discrimination legislation beyond employment for both older and younger people, and we look forward to legislation that will improve access to goods, services and facilities as well as employment for people of every age.

Also during this year, we have sought to help society come to terms with the need to forge a new way of sharing our future in Northern Ireland – a sharing which is not simply between “orange” and “green”.

To this end, we’ve taken every opportunity to push for action on strategies in some of the areas where people are experiencing discrimination and disadvantage – areas such as race and sexual orientation. These are the only ways we can restructure our society to be fairer and more inclusive.

We have also continued our work to provide advice and assistance to those who seek it – through our work with employers and service providers to support and encourage equality practices and through our work to advise people with potential complaints of unlawful discrimination. Ensuring compliance with equality laws and maintaining our focus on strategic enforcement is key to the ongoing effectiveness of the Commission. Our new website, launched at year end, aims to provide a more streamlined, customer oriented approach to communications; our media work and our ongoing programme of engagement with key stakeholders was maintained throughout the year.

In the coming year, we will be continuing our work with OFMDFM and with the Community Relations Council on the transition towards an Equality and Good Relations Commission. We will be looking at how the good relations roles and functions as outlined in the **Together: Building a United Community** strategy could be implemented. We also anticipate responding to the public consultation on a draft Equality and Good Relations Bill, which will be crucial to the effectiveness of the Equality and Good Relations Commission.

Every now and again, a small event takes place which gives a glimpse of how things might be in this place we call home. For me, one such occasion occurred last August, when, just three days after we issued a press release condemning a racist attack on the home of two young black men in Belfast, I represented the Commission at the Belfast Mela. There I saw thousands of people exploring and enjoying the things that make us different, accepting that we have a huge shared existence and celebrating the colour and vibrancy of difference. I believe that the real face of Northern Ireland is that healthy curiosity about, acceptance of and respect for difference.



As we work together to create a united community, we have to build on a solid foundation made up of those values which support the maintenance of the common good - values such as equality, mutual respect, dignity, worth and integrity. We must aspire to uphold the principle of do no harm in all we do and say. Such a principle does not deny the freedom to debate and discuss strongly held opinions, creeds or beliefs, but rather places such debates within a safe place where learning from others with whom we differ can be as much an outcome as making sure we are heard by those others.



Annual Report 2013 - 2014



Management Commentary

■ STATUTORY BACKGROUND

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland is an executive non departmental public body (NDPB) sponsored by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister. The Commission, established on 1 October 1999 under the Northern Ireland Act 1998, assumed, along with the responsibilities for statutory equality duties and new disability matters, the duties and responsibilities of four former organisations:

- The Commission for Racial Equality for Northern Ireland;
- The Equal Opportunities Commission for Northern Ireland;
- The Fair Employment Commission for Northern Ireland; and
- The Northern Ireland Disability Council.

Since October 1999, additional duties and responsibilities with respect to age, disability, sexual orientation and special educational needs have also been assumed. During 2009, jointly with the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, the Equality Commission was designated as the independent mechanism for Northern Ireland of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled People (UNCRPD) with the role of promoting, protecting and monitoring the implementation of the Convention.

Since the Commission's inception, it has aimed to fulfil these duties by working in partnership with key stakeholders to place equality at the heart of civic, economic and political life in Northern Ireland.

The main pieces of legislation from which the Commission derives its duties and powers are:

- Equal Pay Act (NI) 1970, as amended
- Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976, as amended
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended
- Race Relations (NI) Order 1997, as amended
- Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998, as amended
- Northern Ireland Act 1998
- Equality (Disability, etc.) (NI) Order 2000
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (NI) 2003, as amended
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Order 2005, as amended
- Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (NI) 2006, as amended
- Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (NI) 2006, as amended



■ STRATEGIC REPORT

Results for the Year

The results for the Commission for the period are set out in detail in our Financial Statements at page 62. The Accounting Officer authorised these financial statements for issue on 26 June 2014.

The Financial Reporting Manual (FRoM) requires the Commission to treat grant-in-aid as financing rather than income. £6,246,000 (2012/13, £6,200,000) was received from OFMDFM in the year.

Comprehensive expenditure for the year was £6,179,575 (2012/13, £6,339,275).

There has been a decrease in the Taxpayers' Equity deficit of £68,684 from £249,306 at 31 March 2013 to £180,622 at 31 March 2014. The main reason for this was a net increase in fixed assets, a decrease in creditors and a decrease in the provision for potential severance packages in future years.


The Equality Commission operates as a going concern. It is financed by funding from the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister. Funding for 2014/15 has been approved.

The Commission was set the financial target by its Sponsoring Department of remaining within 0.5% of its resource allocation. At the year end this target was met.

In its Business Plan the Commission also set itself the target of generating income of £250,000 from co-location and other services. During 2013/14 £256,707 was generated; a reduction from last year's £358,622. This reduction resulted from a decrease in secondment charges to the Commission for Older People for Northern Ireland (COPNI).

Business Review

The upward pressure of staff costs continues to be the main challenge which the Commission faces and it continues to address this. The reduction in full time equivalent (fte) posts reported in recent years continues. This year saw a further reduction in the fte headcount from 116 to 110 posts. This year expenditure on Staff and Commissioners' costs was £4,491,797, a substantial decrease of £140,292 in net staffing costs, compared with last year. The decrease was a consequence of an overall reduction in staff numbers and changes in the working patterns of some staff.



A business case for facilitating a number of requests for flexible early severance and flexible early retirement was prepared during 2012/13 and approved after the year end. As a result a number of early severance and retirements were facilitated during the year. These were all on the basis of the Civil Service compensation scheme and no special severance payments were involved. Information on the exit packages, as required, is included in the Remuneration Report. Provision of £200,000 has also been made in respect of potential exit packages necessary in future years.

Likely Future Developments

The publication in May 2013, by OFMDFM, of the Together Building a United Community strategy, with additional responsibilities relating to good relations for the Commission will augment the Commission's statutory remit. Although the consultation on the necessary legislative changes is imminent, the timeframe for the changes will not be clearer until later in the year. It is still anticipated that additional resources will be made available to facilitate the extension of our remit.

The scope for significant additional sharing of common and core services is limited by the physical limitations on the ability to further utilise Equality House without expenditure on alterations and refurbishment. There are also constraints due to the impact of the pressures on the Commission's own staff resource and the potential impact of crossing VAT registration thresholds.

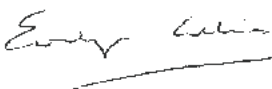
The potential for cost sharing will continue to be explored. However the main focus of consideration in 2014/15 will be planning and preparations for the extension of the Commission's remit.

Important Events Occurring After the Year End

There have been no significant events since the year-end which would affect this report and the accounts.

The Equality Commission's Annual Report and Accounts are prepared in accordance with Schedule 8 of the Northern Act 1998 and in a form directed by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister with the approval of the Department of Finance and Personnel.

Signed by:



Evelyn Collins CBE
Chief Executive and Accounting Office
26 June 2014



■ DIRECTORS' REPORT

The Commission is led by a Chief Commissioner, supported by a Deputy Chief Commissioner. The overall number of Commissioners should be not less than 14 and not more than 20.

Including the Chief Commissioner and Deputy Chief Commissioner there are currently 16 Commissioners.

The Commission's Chief Executive has been designated as the Accounting Officer.

Commission and Chief Commissioner

The following served as members of the Commission during the reporting period. The table also includes information on the number of Commission meetings which took place during the financial year and the number attended by each Commissioner. The table does not include other Committee or ad hoc meetings which Commissioners attended. For further information on Committee membership and attendance see Appendix 3.

Commissioner		No. of meetings	No. attended
Michael Wardlow	Chief Commissioner	10	10
Jane Morrice	Deputy Chief Commissioner	10	6
Stella Burnside		10	7
Fidelma Carolan		10	10
Anna Carragher		10	8
Kit Chivers		10	9
Patricia Feeney		10	7
Milton Kerr		10	8
Charo Lanao-Madden		10	8
Lyn Mc Briar		10	10
Stephen McIlveen		10	7
Liam Maskey		10	5
Dermot Nesbitt		10	8
Peter Sheridan		10	9
Norman Trotter		10	7
Murray Watt		10	7



Management Executive

Evelyn Collins	Chief Executive
Keith Brown	Head of Corporate Services
Eileen Lavery	Head of Legal Services, Investigations, Advice and Compliance

Committees

Schedule 8 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 allows the Commission to make provision about the discharge of its functions by committees and the Commission has operated with a number of different Committee structures since it was established.

At present, there are three Committees of the Commission in addition to an Audit and Risk Committee

- Legal Funding Committee
- Statutory Duties Investigation Committee
- Section 75 Equality Scheme Approvals Committee

Attendance records for these Committees can be found at Appendix Three.

Commissioners' Interests

An up to date register of Commissioners' interests is maintained by the Chief Executive as Accounting Officer and is available for inspection at the Commission's offices in Equality House, 7-9 Shaftesbury Square, Belfast BT2 7DP.

Commissioners and Senior Executives' remuneration is included in the Remuneration Report published in this Annual Report and Accounts.

Research and Development

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland does not engage in any research and development activities as defined by IFRS.

Charitable Donations

The Commission made no charitable donations during the period.

Pension Liabilities

Staff Pension Liabilities are borne by the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (NI) – see notes 1 and 3 to the Accounts, and the Commission's Remuneration Report, which follows later in this Annual Report.



Payment to Suppliers

The Commission is committed to the prompt payment of bills for goods and services received in accordance with the Government's Better Payment Practice Code. Unless otherwise stated in the contract, payment is due within 30 days of receipt of the goods or services, or presentation of a valid invoice or similar demand, whichever is later.

During the period 96.3% of bills were paid within the thirty day standard, 80.5% of the total bills received were paid within 10 days. The comparative figures for 2012/13 were 97.3% and 71.7%.

■ PERFORMANCE AGAINST TARGETS

This was the second year of the Commission's Corporate Plan for 2012 -15, 'Improving People's Lives'. In line with the new Corporate Plan, in this year's Business Plan, progress was again measured in four strategic areas:

- Addressing key inequalities
- Extending equality practices in workplaces and in the provision of goods, facilities and services
- Challenging discrimination
- Delivering effective and efficient services

In this year's Business Plan, across each of these areas a small number of high level objectives were developed. In total 19 objectives were included in the Business Plan 2013/14. Of the 19 objectives set, by the end of the year, 17 (89%), were fully met and two (11%) partly met. The partly met objectives related to delays in the delivery of aspects of our work in relation to research projects and formal investigations. However by the year end action to address these had been taken and the work will be completed in 2014/15.

Further detail of the delivery in each of the Key Output areas is included below, in the section on Progress against Key Performance Indicators.



■ CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT

The Commission continues to promote sustainable development through its operational activities and policy responsibilities. It is committed to the regular review of sustainable development practices and activities.

The Commission has in place a Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability Policy. This policy is championed within the Commission by the Investors in People Working Group with input from the 'Green Team' working group on environmental issues.

The foci of the policy remain the three key areas of:

- Environment
- Community
- Workplace

OFMDFM takes the lead across the bodies for which it is responsible, on strategic policy for sustainable development and the Commission continues to take forward work designed to promote, encourage and support them.

Environment

The Commission continues to seek to identify opportunities to minimise any negative impact and promote a positive influence on the environment. To do so the Commission continues to work closely with its facilities management partner to minimise our impact on the environment.

Key objectives of our sustainability strategy are:

- waste minimisation;
- reduction in energy consumption; and
- promoting awareness of environmental issues among Commission staff.

The organisation monitors progress on delivery of its sustainability targets.

Although this year saw a further reduction in the waste generated by the Commission from 24,027 kilos in 2012/13 to 19,097, the percentage of waste recycled fell from 61.4% to 54%. This represents a reduction in the production of waste of 21% from last year. The reduction in the percentage waste recycled was due primarily to the disposal of metal shelving and other non-recyclable furniture. The Commission's waste and recycling figures for recent years are summarised in the table opposite.



Year	Total Waste (kilos)	Total Recycled (kilos)	%
2013/14	19,097	10,223	54.0
2012/13	24,027	14,747	61.4
2011/12	30,851	22,151	71.8
2010/11	17,922	9,697	54.1
2009/10	24,480	17,806	72.7

The Commission's Energy Certificate, DEC grade C (64) was retained. The Commission has been advised that this level is a very positive rating for a building of this size and nature as the average score for such a building is 100 (with the lower score deemed more efficient). Continued monitoring and regulation of seasonal temperature settings on heating controls and motion sensor lighting in the basement car park and throughout the building have contributed to the retention of this favourable grade.

During 2013/14, in conjunction with its staff led 'Green Team', the Commission undertook a number of initiatives, including a programme of staff awareness about energy consumption and the linkage of 'specialist' recycling programmes to nominated charities. All waste toner and ink cartridges are now recycled by a third party with proceeds going to the Commission's nominated charities, MacMillan Cancer Support and the Northern Ireland Hospice. In addition, obsolete photocopying equipment was donated to GEMS Northern Ireland to aid them in their work with long term unemployed / economically active individuals and those who experience disadvantage in the labour market.

During 2014/15 the Commission will continue to work with its facilities management provider to further review waste disposal, the fall in recycling of waste and energy consumption figures, to identify and bring about improvements.

Social and Community

The Commission continued to provide the use of its facilities to enable staff to engage in voluntary fund raising initiatives. A number of events including the BBC coordinated Salvation Army / St Vincent de Paul Family Appeal in December. In addition, the Cash for Kids appeal in March, various coffee mornings, raffles and individual sponsored efforts, raised over £2,000 for charities such as MacMillan Cancer Support and the Northern Ireland Hospice (our nominated charities), Cash for Kids, Guide Dogs for the Blind, and the Philippines Disaster Fund.



Workplace

The Commission is committed to providing a healthy and safe working environment. The theme of 'Taking Care' was adopted this year resulting in a number of events focused on mental and physical wellbeing and on taking care of the planet, the latter linking with the environment and workplace themes. During this year, the evacuation procedure was tested and additional designated staff received training in the use of evacuation chairs. A number of workstation assessments were also completed. The annual Health and Safety Audit was undertaken and the Health and Safety Policy and associated procedures were, again, reviewed and updated.

The Commission introduced an improved Assessing Performance and Promoting Development programme with a greater focus on identifying and meeting staff development needs and strengthening the links between personal, team and corporate objectives. Improvement to the Learning and Development processes has led to less paperwork, more focused funding and increased ability to analyse feedback and to share learning. During the year 89 staff engaged in 218 training events.

Staff also have access to a wide range of flexible working arrangements in line with NICS policies and procedures.

Equality of Opportunity and Human Rights

The Commission is committed to the provision of equality of opportunity and fair participation to all persons regardless of sex, marital status, religious belief, political affiliation/opinion, age, family status, ethnic or racial background, sexual orientation, disability, nationality or trade union membership.

Our Corporate Plan for the period 2012-15 identifies how the Commission can best contribute to the protection and promotion of equality and good relations in NI. As an employer we recognise that ensuring equality in employment and eliminating workplace discrimination and harassment are essential for developing a diverse workforce, attracting high calibre employees and maximising performance.

In line with this commitment, the Commission has developed an Employment Equality Plan in accordance with the requirements of each of the equality and anti-discrimination laws in Northern Ireland and with the good practice recommendations of the Equality Codes of Practice.

The Commission has continued to comply with its statutory monitoring and review duties as required under the Fair Employment and Treatment Order 1998 (FETO).

Further information on the Commission's workforce composition can be found at Appendix 2.



Employee Involvement

The Commission encourages widespread consultation and exchange of information at all levels within the Commission.

This is implemented through staff briefings and the involvement of staff representatives on a Joint Consultative and Negotiating Committee. Staff are involved in key working groups dealing with business improvement and accreditation projects, equal opportunities, health and safety and corporate responsibility.

Data Protection and Freedom of Information

The Commission is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office and has in place policies, guidelines and arrangements for compliance with the Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation. Reviews are undertaken of ICT and data security and steps taken to guard against data loss. During 2012/13 an Information Security Audit was conducted by the Commission's internal auditors, which resulted in a 'substantial assurance' rating. At the year end the Commission was engaged in completing a security review as part of the wider Security Risk Management Overview process.

There were no incidents of data loss or any information breach during this year.

During the year there were 37 Freedom of Information requests and ten data protection requests all of which were responded to within the statutory time limits. On two occasions an extension of time was agreed with the requestor.

Managing Attendance and Sickness absence

The Commission's arrangements for the payment of Statutory Sick Pay and the monitoring and management of attendance are based on those in operation in the NICS. The Commission has a Managing Attendance Policy and provides training to Managers and other staff on its operation.

The NICS absence target for 2013/14 was 9.5 average days lost per staff year. The Commission's number of average days lost in 2013/14 was 10.4 days, a decrease on last year's 10.8 days. It however remains above the NICS target.

Complaints Procedure

The Commission received three complaints from the public under its Complaints Procedure. Each of these was resolved at an early stage. During the year the Commission was advised of an Ombudsman investigation of a complaint against the Commission. At the year end, this was ongoing.



Statement of Disclosure of Information to Auditors

So far, as the Accounting Officer in office at the date of approval of these financial statements is aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the Commission's auditors are unaware; and
- they have taken all steps that they ought to have taken as Accounting Officer in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Commission's auditors are aware of that information.

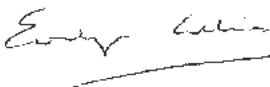
Commission Offices

Equality House
7-9 Shaftesbury Square
Belfast
BT2 7DP

Auditor

Comptroller and Auditor General
Northern Ireland Audit Office
106 University Street
Belfast
BT7 1EU

Signed by:



Evelyn Collins CBE
Chief Executive and Accounting Officer
26 June 2014



■ PROGRESS AGAINST AGREED KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

This is the second year of the Commission's Corporate Plan covering the period 2012-15.

The Plan, entitled 'Improving People's Lives', has a central aim of impacting on the lives of every person in Northern Ireland. The Plan sets out the strategic framework within which we will carry out our powers and duties over the next three years. Four strategic priorities to make a difference were developed:

- i. addressing key inequalities;
- ii. extending equality practices in the workplace and goods, facilities and services;
- iii. challenging discrimination;
- iv. delivering effective and efficient services.

In support of its Corporate Plan the Commission prepares annual business plans.

This year, across the four strategic areas, nineteen objectives were set. By the end of the year, 17 (89%) were fully met and two (11%) partly met. The partly met objectives related to delays in the delivery of aspects of our work in relation to research projects and formal investigations. However by the year end action to address these had been taken and the work will be completed in 2014/15.

Further detail of the delivery in each of the Key Output areas is included below, in the section on Progress against Key Performance Indicators.



1. Addressing Key Inequalities

In line with its Corporate Plan objectives, of which this is the second year, the Commission continued to highlight key inequalities and gaps in legislation, policy and practice and to encourage Government and public authorities to take appropriate action to address inequalities, including through the effective application of their equality and good relations duties. Detailed below is the progress set out against the supporting annual Business Plan objectives during 2013/14.

Developing the research and evidence base

The Commission strives to base its work on identifying and addressing key inequalities and influencing policy making on a strong evidential base. During 2013/14 this work was focused on the key areas of employment, education, housing and communities, participation in public life and economic independence.

Research on 'Inequalities in Employment in Northern Ireland' was commissioned from Employment Research Institute at Edinburgh Napier University with a final report being prepared for publication in 2014/15.

Research on 'Inequalities in Education in Northern Ireland' was undertaken by Queen's University, Belfast and was completing its fieldwork stage at the end of the business year. At the year end, research on 'Inequalities in Housing and Communities in Northern Ireland' is in the field, being undertaken by the Centre for Housing Policy at University of York. Also, a contract to undertake research into 'Inequalities in Participation in Public Life in Northern Ireland' had just been awarded to Ipsos Mori, Northern Ireland. Commission staff are also gathering evidence to inform consideration of 'Social Attitudes and Prejudice in Northern Ireland'. Early in 2014/15 the Commission will be inviting tenders for research into 'Inequalities in Health and Social Care'.

Linked to these projects is the utilisation of data from Census 2011, which is being made available on a rolling basis by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

As each research project completes, work on developing the policy 'Statements on Key Inequalities' for each of the areas is scheduled to commence.

On an annual basis, the Commission also publicises information from the annual monitoring returns made by employers under the fair employment and treatment legislation. The report, 'A Summary of Northern Ireland Monitored Workforce Returns 2012' was launched in December 2013. This was in a revised format, with bespoke web pages now being supported by a short summary report.



Influencing key equality strategies and the Programme for Government (PfG)

In line with the equality commitments outlined in its Programme for Government, the Executive has committed itself to the development and review of key equality strategies and action plans across the range of grounds covered by the equality legislation. To influence and support this work, the Commission is undertaking its own rolling review of policy positions, consolidating and updating where necessary. These are used to facilitate engagement with key sectoral organisations across the grounds and to shape the development of Government policy, including through subsequent equality and good relations focussed responses to Government consultations.


Disability

Following from our response to the consultation by OFMDFM on 'A Strategy to improve the lives of disabled people 2012-2015', the Commission has been represented on a monitoring and evaluation sub-group, contributing to the development of indicators to assess the effectiveness of the Strategy. It also continues to engage to maximise the implementation of the strategy and the obligations placed on Government under the UNCRPD.

The Commission also responded to a range of disability-related policy consultations over the last year including: the Department for Social Development: 'Interdepartmental Review of Housing Adaptations'; the Department for Regional Development: 'Blue Badge Scheme'; the Health and Social Care Board: 'Day Opportunities for People with Learning Disabilities'; the Department for Health, Social Services and Public Safety: 'Modernising Learning Disabilities Nursing'; Department for Employment and Learning/Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment: 'Enabling Success - A New Strategic Framework to tackle Economic Inactivity'. A key theme in our responses was the need for public authorities to respect and realise rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Race

Following extensive engagement with a range of stakeholders, the Commission developed and refined its position paper 'Race Equality Policy: Priorities and Recommendations' which will form the basis for ongoing engagement, including our response to the forthcoming consultation by OFMDFM on its revised Racial Equality Strategy. The paper adopted the following explicit policy areas as a focus for our work in this area: law reform; tackling hate crime, prejudicial attitudes and institutional racism; improving education for Travellers, BME and Newcomer communities; maximising employment opportunities; access to Housing, Healthcare and Benefits.



The Commission also engaged with, and responded to, a pre-consultation by OFMDFM on a draft Racial Equality Strategy. The Commission has continued to participate in the OFMDFM-convened Racial Equality Forum and, through a Racial Equality Indicators Advisory Group, to the development of indicators to assess the effectiveness of the Strategy.

Sexual Orientation

The Commission developed, refined and launched its Sexual Orientation policy position following engagement with Government and stakeholders. It also undertook proactive engagement with key stakeholders (including two roundtables with the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual (LGB sector) to raise awareness and adoption of its positions. The Commission participated in the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Forum.

Gender

Gender policy positions regarding women were updated and disseminated in the early part of the year. Since then, engagement with Government and stakeholders has been ongoing, mainly in the context of the Commission's recommendations to the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the review, now revision, of the Executive's Gender Equality Strategy and development of action plans. Work to update our gender policy position is underway (to include issues for Transsexuals and Men). Oral Evidence was also given to inform the Westminster Associate Parliamentary Group UNSCR 1325 - 'Inquiry into the Actions and Level of Implementation of UNSCR 1325 Women, Peace and Security for Women in Northern Ireland since the Peace Process,' in December 2013.

Embedding Equality and Good Relations in wider Government Policy

Another key aspect of the work is engagement with other key Government programmes impacting on equality and good relations, and on embedding equality in their working practices. Some key activities are set out below.

Welfare reform

The Commission has continued to closely monitor the debate around the Welfare Reform Bill in the Northern Ireland Assembly and in civil society, as well as relevant policy developments in GB.

Across the year it also responded to the following welfare reform-related consultations: Department for Social Development: 'Discretionary Support Fund' and 'Personal Independence Payment - Moving Around Activity'; Department for Finance and Personnel: 'Rate Rebate Replacement'; Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment: 'Financial Capability Strategy'; Department for Work and Pensions: 'Commissioning Strategy'.



Special educational needs (SEN)

The Commission forwarded a written submission to the Northern Ireland Assembly's Employment and Learning Committee's 'Inquiry into post SEN provision for employment and training for those with learning disabilities', highlighting the onus on public authorities to work towards the realisation of rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; the need for consistency in delivery of services at a regional and local level; the need for improved access to mainstream employment programmes; and for improved data collection and monitoring.

The Commission also undertook engagement with the Department of Education on Special Educational Needs; as well highlighting its proposals for reform of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST) in its response to Department of Justice (DOJ) consultation on tribunal reform.

Health and social care reform

The Commission has been involved in a range of engagement activities, including those associated with the equality aspects of the flagship 'Transforming Your Care' policy. Representatives of the Commission met with officials from the Health and Social Care Board to discuss the policy consultation document 'Making Choices, the current and future accommodation needs of older people'.

In our subsequent written response to the consultation, we recommended that the criteria for assessing the viability of existing homes were amended to include a transparent assessment of the quality of alternative provision; putting in place safeguards to ensure that people have both the capacity and support, as appropriate, to live at home; and ensuring that the standard of private or third sector provision should be no less than that available in the statutory sector.

The Commission also responded to consultations by the Department for Health, Social Services and Public Safety on 'Minimum Standards for Independent Healthcare Establishments' and by the Health and Social Care Board on 'Future Arrangements for Language Interpreting and Translation Services'. The Commission contributed to a seminar involving key stakeholders on 'Transforming Your Care'.

Good Relations

Our policy work on Good Relations was centred around a consideration of the proposals set out within the OFMDFM strategy - 'Together: Building a United Community' and the Haass talks on parades, flags and dealing with the past. We engaged with and submitted material to the Haass process and have been in regular engagement with OFMDFM and others regarding the TBUC proposals and how best to advance equality and good relations, including through an expanded role for the Equality Commission.



Embedding Equality in the work of Government

The Commission also seeks opportunities to embed equality and good relations consideration in how Government works. The following paragraphs set out some key areas advanced during the year.

Community planning and local government reform

The Commission has had ongoing engagement with the Department of the Environment (DOE) on its draft Code of Conduct for Councillors; and community planning and designation issues relating to Review of Public Administration (RPA) of Local Government and Public Bodies.

We submitted evidence to the Assembly Committee for the Environment on the draft Local Government Re-organisation Bill, as well as a response to the DOE pre-consultation on the draft Code of Conduct for Councillors.

Work was also undertaken to allow evidence to be submitted to the Assembly Committee for Standards and Privileges review of the Assembly Code of Conduct in the first quarter of 2014/15.

Equality responsive budgeting in Government

The Commission convened a roundtable of stakeholders on Equality Budgeting. The focus of discussions was an expert paper, prepared for the Commission, by Sheila Quinn, which centred on how equality responsive budgeting can be used within budgetary processes to further assist public authorities to promote equality of opportunity and good relations by contributing to and assisting the existing measures and tools under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 or by providing additional methodologies. Alongside increasing awareness and understanding of the concept, the seminar also sought to explore possible entry points in the policy and budget cycle of the Northern Ireland administration. The expert paper was disseminated to a wide range of stakeholders for wider consideration.

Commission staff also participated in a pre-consultation by Department of Finance and Personnel officials in November 2013 on the draft budget for 2015/16.

Building support for legislative reform

Building on work undertaken last year, a key focus this year remained the objective of influencing the content of any legislation to address discrimination in respect of the provision of goods, facilities and services irrespective of age.

The Commission undertook a wide range of joint work with the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) on the need for inclusion of



Children and Young People in the proposed legislation; including through the procurement of a legal opinion and development and finalisation of full and summary policy position papers. It also undertook proactive engagement including a joint roundtable with the children's sector, a large scale seminar, and engagement with the OFMDFM Junior Ministers and political parties in order to advance key arguments.

Further, it commissioned a report which highlighted a range of case studies that presented real world examples of older people's experiences when accessing goods, facilities and services. It raised awareness of the discrimination issues facing older people when accessing goods and services including at the Pensioners Parliament and the Age NI health care seminar. The Commission also submitted evidence to the Joint Committee on Human Rights in relation to gaps in equality law across a number of grounds including Age GFS.

The Commission sought disability case studies which highlighted gaps in disability equality law. It also refined its proposals for race law reform and disseminated summary race law reform proposals. Engagement also took place with racial equality sector stakeholders on wider Commission proposals for race equality; including two race sector roundtables. It also commissioned an expert opinion in order to inform its considerations of the impact of certain aspects of welfare reform proposals on ethnic minority groups.


The Commission engaged with the Department for Employment and Learning and submitted a response to the DEL consultation on employment law reform.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD)

The Equality Commission and the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission are jointly designated as the "Independent Mechanism" in Northern Ireland (IMNI) to promote, protect and monitor the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

Aligned to revised timelines emanating from the UN work programme and their subsequently confirmed plans to consider the UK state party report in 2014 and 2015, we commissioned additional research : '*UNCRPD: Shortfalls in public policy and programme delivery in Northern Ireland relative to the Articles of the UNCRPD*'. By the year end an interim report had been produced and extensive engagement had been undertaken with the sector and with persons with disabilities.

A key element of our work during the year was a series of engagement events with disabled people, disabled people's organisations and other non-governmental groups, to raise awareness of imminent consideration by the United Nations Committee on the



Rights of Persons with Disabilities of a 'List of Issues' arising from the first periodic state report on implementation of the CRPD by the United Kingdom. During these events we highlighted the opportunities for NGOs to develop their own shadow reports or to contribute to the development of a parallel report by the United Kingdom Independent Mechanism (UKIM) on the implantation of the Convention.

Drawing on the above research and feedback received during the engagement events, IMNI also worked closely with the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the Scottish Human Rights Commission (together comprising UKIM) to develop a draft submission on the List of Issues to the CRPD Committee on Convention implementation across the UK.

IMNI has continued to work to promote, protect and monitor the Convention, including through mainstreaming references to the CRPD into our responses to policy consultations (see above) and continuing engagement with a range of stakeholders. With respect to the latter, for example, the Chief Commissioner delivered a keynote address to a seminar for senior Health and Social Care Trust staff on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and made direct reference to considerations to be given in the context of the current programme of Health Service Reform.

Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

The Commission completed a Shadow Report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women for its examination of the UK in July 2013. The Shadow Report made recommendations on women's equality in general and on the themes of women's economic independence and women's participation in politics and public life. The Commission supported the discussion of issues before the hearing and held an event on the day of the examination to stream the hearing.

Communications and Promotion

Underpinning the Commission's research and policy objectives is a programme of communications and engagement with key stakeholders. This included roundtables and seminars with key stakeholders across a number of equality areas reported on above. Political engagement was also undertaken in order to build awareness of and secure acceptance of key policy positions. This included, for example, briefings with political parties about the inclusion of children and young people in relation to any legislative protection on grounds of age, as well as evidence to a number of Assembly Committees, including the OFMDFM Committee. Further policy positions were disseminated through summary briefings, articles and ECNI ezines.



More broadly, media promotion continues to perform strongly with around 93% of all coverage (print and broadcast) rated independently as positive.

This year also saw a strong focus on the development of online platforms to increase the reach of the Commission's work. This included the continued roll-out of the So-Me initiative across a dedicated website, Twitter, Facebook and YouTube, with a trebling of contact from individuals who feel they have been discriminated against because of their sexual orientation, compared to previous years.

In November 2013 the Do You Mean Me? educational resource was launched and in its first five month period was rolled out at 72 school locations involving around 1,000 young people. Around 5,000 visits were made to the online site with, on average, one-third visiting more than once.

The number of people following us on Twitter also rose steadily to 2,200 and our electronic newsletter performed well, maintaining an average opening rate of 26%, rising to 30% amongst key corporate influencer and connector audiences.

Our new website was launched in March 2014 with a more streamlined, customer orientated approach. It was informed by customer feedback and analysis, and incorporates a range of user-friendly functions including dedicated search facilities for all of the Commission's casework, consultation responses, statements and publications.

Continued improvements in digital marketing, partnership working and content creation were outlined in the Commission's Corporate Communications Strategy, adopted in March 2014.



2. Extending equality practices in workplaces and in the provision of goods, facilities and services

During this year the Commission continued to provide a responsive, expert advice and training service to employers and service providers across the full range of equality grounds. This year included working with service providers to promote access to goods, facilities and services, with a particular focus on the grounds of disability.

We also continued to deliver our regulatory responsibilities; ensuring high levels of compliance with the specific duties on employers arising from the Fair Employment and Treatment Order 1998 (FETO) and with the equality and good relations duties on public authorities under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and the Disability Discrimination Order 2006 .

Outlined below is a summary of progress we made in delivering our objectives in 2013/14.

Working with others to improve equality practices

During 2013/14, the Commission oversaw 179 significant improvements in employment practices. These were the result of following up settlements agreed at the conclusion of discrimination cases; from reviews of affirmative action agreements and Employment Equality Plans; as well as advisory work following training, conferences and network meetings.

We also worked with 62 employers following their FETO Article 55 Reviews and work at the year end was ongoing with a further 26 employers. Ten progress reports on affirmative action were considered during the course of the year.

Other Engagement and Partnership Working

Key areas of work included:

Central Government: We worked with the Equality Practitioners Group, which is facilitated by OFMDFM and includes representatives of all government departments to advise on equality issues. Additionally, we worked with individual departments for example DEL on the review of the apprenticeship scheme; DOE on the issue of taxi licensing; DARD Equality forum; OFMDFM, advising on equality assessing high level strategies, and we spoke at OFMDFM event for the Gender Strategy consultation.

Local Government: The Commission's Deputy Chief Commissioner chairs the Local Government Equality and Diversity Steering Group and the Commission also works with the Local Government Statutory Duties (Section 75 and Disability Duties) Forum to advise on the equality issues and local government reform (RPA). We contributed to



the Belfast City Council Consultative Forum. We also worked with individual councils to provide specific advice on local government reform and a number of Flags and Emblems issues.

Criminal Justice: We continued our engagement with PSNI to discuss a range of issues (police trainee recruitment and outreach programme; vetting; resourcing model and monitoring adverse impacts); and with the Prison Service in relation to equality data; the review of policies etc. We provided advice to the Department of Justice (DOJ) on the criteria for the appointment of the Chief Constable. We facilitated a workshop session with the Department of Justice and its Arms Length Bodies on the meaning of “due regard”. We worked closely with the equality committees in each of the three prison establishments on reviewing monitoring data on the prison population.

Health: ECNI worked with the DHSSPS, Health and Social Care Board and Health Trusts regarding health sector reform (Transforming Your Care).

Education and Skills: We continued to provide advice to the Education and Skills Authority Implementation Team on the review and development of equality policies, practices and procedures and to the Department of Employment and Learning (DEL) in relation to the equality aspects of their Apprentice Scheme.

Employability Initiatives

The Commission’s employability initiative continued this year and this included providing advice to the Queen’s University Belfast on the development of 14 apprenticeships for disabled people and to the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and the Health Trusts on developing work experience programmes for young people.

There was engagement with a range of other stakeholders to encourage employability initiatives. These organisations included the Simon Community Apprenticeship Scheme, the South Belfast Economic Forum, the Belfast City Council Cleansing Posts Project, Ulster Hospital, Banbridge Health Clinic, the Western Health and Social Care Trust and Northern Health and Social Care Trust Steering Groups, and BT NI Customer Care. Commission staff also worked with GEMS NI on a project to provide innovative training interventions for 95 young people.

Work continued with the DEL on its employability initiatives and with the Social Clause Delivery Forum, a group of public sector employers, with the aim of building awareness and promoting good practice in relation to promoting social clauses in procurement contracts.

In support of this work, during the year the Commission published ‘Making Equality Work’ and a number of other advisory publications.



Goods, Facilities and Services (GFS)

During 2013/14 a Report on current access to goods facilities and services for disabled people was completed on behalf of the Commission by Adapt NI. An Action Plan to progress the Report's recommendations has been developed. At year end, a range of advisory publications are in preparation, which aim to assist service providers improve their accessibility and service delivery practices.

Advisory service

This year staff responded to 3,088 enquiries; the majority of these calls related to enquiries about Article 55 Reviews, monitoring, training requests and the public sector statutory duties.

The Commission also continued to provide a comprehensive training programme for employers and service providers. Commission staff provided 170 training and information sessions, including 56 sessions through its open Employer Training Programme and 58 sessions for individual employers. In total these sessions attracted 1,875 attendees representing 590 employers from across Northern Ireland.

Three employer conferences were held in this year. This included a useful partnership event with the STEM Business Group and DEL focusing on recruiting women into STEM industries; a conference on Positive Action for Disability and a partnership event with NIAMH (Action Mental Health) advising on managing mental health in the workplace. All these events were well attended by employers from across Northern Ireland. Staff from the Advice and Compliance team spoke at a further five conferences including at the CBI annual conference.

There were a range of initiatives focused at small and medium sized enterprises (SME), including an event held in partnership with Federation of Small Businesses. The Commission also provided input to a series of information sessions for SME (small and medium) employers organised by Department for Employment and Learning. The Commission produced template employment equality policies aimed at small and medium sized employers.

Over the year, five network events were delivered for private sector employers in the Northwest, Craigavon and Dungannon. A further four events were delivered in partnership with NICVA and Volunteer Now. This included two events aimed at assisting small community groups to develop improved employment practices. The Commission also hosted an event for the Recruitment Employment Confederation, bringing together Confederation members and employers for a roundtable discussion on equality issues in the sector.



The Advice and Compliance team followed up on the good practice terms agreed by respondents during the course of settling discrimination complaints. This settlement follow up work takes place in a largely no-fault environment and the objective is the improvement of the policies, procedures or practice, which may have given rise to the original complaint. During 2013/14, 27 settlements were passed to advisory staff for follow up. By the year end work with 21 of these had been completed, with action on the remaining six ongoing.

Complaints about the potentially discriminatory nature of three public advertisements were received. Work on following up two of these has been completed. These related to gender and race respectively. The third advertisement which relates to religion is ongoing.

Codes of Practice

The Commission launched a revised Equal Pay Code in July 2013; the Code provides practical guidance to employers and employees, including advice on how to avoid sex discrimination in pay structures and guidance on how to carry out an equal pay review.

The Code of Practice was launched by OFMDFM Junior Ministers Jennifer McCann and Jonathan Bell at an event in Equality House attended by employer representatives, trade officials, and women's sector organisations. The Ministers noted that equal pay for work of equal value is a key goal and a strategic objective of the Executive's Gender Equality Strategy and noted the contribution the Code of Practice makes towards that goal.

Compliance and Enforcement

This compliance relates to the statutory duties which registered concerns and public authorities have to fulfil under the Fair Employment and Treatment Order (FETO), the Northern Ireland Act (NIA) and the Disability Discrimination Order (DDO).

Maintaining compliance with FETO

FETO compliance levels remain high and above the 95% target set in the Business Plan. During the year, staff dealt with 16,600 phone calls and items of correspondence on compliance issues. Of the 3,641 Monitoring Returns received this year from employers, by the year end 3,551 had been audited, with more than 99% in compliance. The Commission received 140 Article 55 employer reviews during 2013/14. Employers' compliance with their Article 55 Review requirements was consistently high and of the 140 reviews received, 139 (97.3%) were in compliance. Advice is being provided to one employer to enable it to comply.



Section 75

Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 places a number of duties on the Commission with respect to enforcement of Section 75:

- to keep under review the effectiveness of the legislation;
- to offer advice to public authorities and others in connection with Section 75;
- to approve equality schemes and request any public authority to make a revised scheme;
- to consider complaints received regarding Section 75, and to investigate where appropriate.

The Commission took a number of steps in furtherance of these duties during the year under review.

In 2013/14 the Commission completed its strategic objective of reviewing revised and new schemes requested from Public Authorities on a rolling basis. The strategy was completed in December 2013 with a further 57 revised schemes approved during the reporting period. In total 187 Public Authority Equality Schemes were approved over the course of the strategy. No reports to the Secretary of State were necessary.


An action plan to monitor public authority compliance with their commitments has been developed. Work this year included proactive interventions to provide advice and guidance on screening, EQIAs and annual progress reports.

During the year, we have been attempting to align our work across the statutory duties placed on public authorities, including the requirement to develop Disability Action Plans. A plan of activities to assist public authorities to comply with their duties under the Disability Discrimination Order has been developed and is being implemented.

There was ongoing engagement with Public Authorities in relation to their Statutory Duties. This included ongoing engagement with senior staff in Government Departments; the PSNI; Health Bodies and Local Government.

Other meetings held included with senior staff in the Department of Justice, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) Equality Forum; the cross Departmental Equality Practitioners Group and the Local Government Statutory Network.

This included meetings with Health Trusts Statutory Duty Forum, participation in Belfast Trust Good Relations Forum, speaking about consultation on revised Disability Action Plans and Section 75 Action Plans, Business Support Organisation (BSO) forum (nine smaller health trusts) on screening and EQIA.



The Commission facilitated a Masterclass with senior staff from Department of Education on effective implementation of the S75 duties.

Section 75 Complaints and Investigations

Our target this year was to complete all Section 75 paragraph 10 and 11 processes within four months of commencement.

During 2013/14, a total of 34 individuals contacted the Commission with queries regarding the obligations of public authorities under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. They were all given advice on the process for making a complaint where they believed that a public authority may have failed to comply with its Section 75 duties.

Eight written complaints were initiated by individuals under Paragraph 10 of Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act. Following consideration, none of these have been authorised for investigation. As required under the legislation, all complainants were provided with reasons for not investigating.

During 2013/14 two investigations, arising from complaints in 2012/13, were completed; a breach of scheme was not established in either.

All paragraph 10 complaints were considered by the Commission's Statutory Duty Investigations Committee within four months of commencement.

In addition, the Commission authorised one investigation on its own volition (under Paragraph 11), where it believed that a public authority may have failed to comply with its approved scheme. At the year end, this investigation was ongoing.

A paragraph 11 investigation of Newry and Mourne District Council, which was authorised in 2012/13, was completed.

Other investigatory powers

The proposed review of the Commission's strategic approach to the use of its investigation powers was commissioned and by the year end the Review was nearing completion.

A formal investigation under the Sex Discrimination Order - into the experience of women in employment in Northern Ireland when pregnant, on maternity leave and/or returning to work after the birth of a child; and the issues faced by employers in response to same – was approved by the Commission at its meeting in March 2014. Work on progressing the investigation will be undertaken in 2014/15.



3. Challenging discrimination

Over the period of its Corporate Plan, the Commission committed itself to maintaining its effort to challenge discrimination and continuing to use its legal assistance powers strategically to effect positive change. Outlined below is the progress made in 2013/14.

Advice to potential complainants

During the year the Commission provided advice to 3,330 people in response to discrimination queries, a similar figure to last year. Of those enquiries within the Commission's remit 41% were in relation to disability (including the Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order, (SENDO); 24% related to gender; 13% to race, 11% to religion/politics; 9% to age; and 2% related to sexual orientation. This pattern is very similar to last year's enquiries.

Following the positive findings of last year's customer satisfaction survey an improvement plan was developed and is being implemented.

Assisting complainants

A number of those who sought advice did not resolve their problems informally and sought assistance to pursue a legal case (9.5%). During the course of the year, 315 applications were considered by the Legal Funding Committee and 110 (34.9%) were granted assistance, under the terms of the Commission's Policy on the Provision of Legal Advice and Assistance. These figures are a small increase on those for 2012/13.

During 2013/14, cases brought by 61 individuals were concluded. In 58 of these, a satisfactory outcome was achieved (93.5%). Successful outcomes include appropriate compensation and agreements reached with respondents to undertake revisions to practices and procedures, which may have a wider positive impact than simply the particular circumstances of the complaint being settled.

During 2013/14, eleven decisions were issued in cases supported by the Commission. Eight were upheld and three dismissed.

Two claims of sex discrimination were upheld by the Tribunal. Three religious and political discrimination decisions were upheld – two in the Fair Employment Tribunal and one in the County Court. Two race cases were upheld – both in the County Court and relating to discriminatory service provision. The first of these involved a group of nine Traveller complainants and the second involved three Traveller complainants who were refused service. One sexual orientation decision was upheld, involving dismissal of a gay employee however this is currently under appeal. Three cases were dismissed. They involved allegations of sex and age discrimination. In total £115,957 was awarded



by Courts and Tribunals to 18 claimants in discrimination cases assisted by the Commission in this business year.

In addition, 50 cases (on behalf of 48 individuals) have been concluded by way of negotiated/conciliated settlement. £235,125 has been recovered in compensation along with secured agreements to commit to equality principles, liaise with ECNI to review practices and procedures, provide equality training and provide apology and employment reference.

All cases were concluded within 12 months of the decision of a Legal Funding Committee to assist the case.

Highlighting protections and publicising outcomes

A new searchable online database of all of the cases assisted by the Commission was launched in March. The database features over 900 cases. In addition, hundreds of case stories, featuring video and photographs have been created on the new website. The Decisions and Settlements Review for 2012/13 was also published on-line.

Four cases were publicised through traditional media, three of which were Tribunal decisions. Around 48 stories were generated through the local and national media with a PR value of around £94,000; overall coverage was rated as positive.

Of particular interest was the case of Connolly –v- Oakdene Services in which the claimant alleged religious discrimination during his employment with this firm on the basis that he did not belong to the Brethren faith of which the majority of the work force were members. He was awarded £16,262 in compensation by the Fair Employment Tribunal. The matter was appealed to the Court of Appeal and while an Order was attached to the tribunal judgement the award of compensation was untouched.

The case of Shiel v Stena line also attracted significant attention following an award of £45,493 for sexual orientation discrimination and unfair dismissal of a docker. The matter is under appeal.

During 2013/14, the legal team provided speakers for the ICTU/Migrant Workers Forum; a Hungarian Ethnic Minority Group based in Omagh; an Epilepsy Group in Cookstown; and the MS Society. The team also supported drop-in clinics at Equality House. A revised outreach programme for advice providers including NIACAB, Advice NI and political parties is in development as is an adviser section on the new Commission website.

The Commission also contributed to BBC NI documentary on the work of Barristers in Northern Ireland. The series featured a Commission assisted case.



4. Delivering effective and efficient services

The Commission continues to deliver its services and business plan objectives within a context of financial constraint. Against this background, objectives were set in relation to governance and internal control, budgetary control, business improvements and to assist in fulfilling equality of opportunity and other legislative obligations as an employer.

Corporate Governance

During 2013/14 the Commission continued to demonstrate high levels of governance and internal control.

In line with its targets the Annual Report and Accounts were prepared in compliance with the timetable and standards set by the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) and laid before the Assembly on 18 July 2013. The Commission received another unqualified audit for its 2012/13 Annual Report and Accounts and a positive Report to those charged with Governance. The Report contained a single Priority 1 issue, which related to the extension of its Facilities Management contract beyond the relevant period. During this year a business case was prepared for putting in place a new contract. This has been approved and a tendering exercise was ongoing at the year end.

During the year work undertaken by the Commission's internal auditors provided at least satisfactory assurance, with substantial assurance being provided in the majority of areas.

Four internal audits were completed this year: Substantial assurance was provided in reviews of Financial Processes and Reporting, Corporate Governance and Risk Management and in the review of the Policy and Research Team. Satisfactory assurance was provided by the review of the Commission's Communications and Promotion Division.

Budgetary Control

In 2013/14 the Commission delivered the required annual efficiency savings of a further £175k. The target of generating at least £250k income from activities was also met. During 2013/14, £256,707k of income was generated. The main sources of income were the recovery of rent and other accommodation costs and service level agreements for the delivery of ICT, Finance and HR support to other Arms Length bodies.

During the year, easements totalling £125k were returned to OFMDFM. Most of this related to an unspent provision for potential staff severance costs.



The Commission continues to strive to control its staffing costs. During 2013/14 staffing costs decreased by £140,292. This mainly resulted from a reduction in the average number of full-time equivalent posts.

Corporate and Business planning

During the course of the year, progress on the 2013/14 Business Plan and budget was reported to the Commission on a quarterly basis and by the year end a new Business Plan and budget for 2014/15 were in place. During 2013/14 Service Level agreements (SLA) for ICT services were delivered for the Commissioner for Older People (COPNI), the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) and the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission. SLAs for some financial services were delivered for COPNI and the Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission (NIJAC) and HR support to the Charities Commission for Northern Ireland.

The Commission continues to share Equality House and premises costs with COPNI and NICCY.


Business Improvement

During the year the Commission also retained the accreditations for its legal casework teams and Corporate Services Division, under Lexcel and ISO 9001, respectively. Preparations were made for a survey of staff opinions. The survey has been designed to facilitate benchmarking against recent survey work undertaken by Government Departments and will be completed in 2014/15. Initial work was also undertaken in preparation for the Commission's next EFQM and Investor in People assessments.

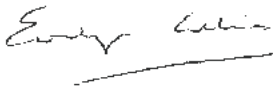
A key objective for 2013/14 was the implementation of a new Staff Performance Review system and during this year the new scheme was put into operation. A new Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability Policy was developed.

Legal obligations

During 2013/14 Health and Safety and Fire Risk assessments were undertaken. No major issues were identified and an action plan in relation to meeting any recommendations made was prepared and implemented.



Like other employers, the Commission is required to make a Fair Employment monitoring return. This was undertaken. The Commission also completed an audit of staff composition across the other equality grounds. During 2014/15 a new fair employment Article 55 Review will be undertaken, which will be used to inform the Commission's affirmative action work over future years. Further information on the Commission's workforce composition can be found at Appendix Two.



Evelyn Collins CBE
Chief Executive and Accounting Officer
26 June 2014



Remuneration Report



Remuneration Policy

The remuneration of senior civil servants (SCS) is set by the Minister for Finance and Personnel. The Minister approved a restructured SCS pay settlement broadly in line with the Senior Salaries Review Board report which he commissioned in 2010. The commitment to a Pay and Grading Review for SCS was the second phase of the equal pay settlement approved by the Executive.

Of the Commission's senior management, only the Chief Executive has remuneration arrangements analogous to a senior civil servant. The remuneration of the other staff included in the remuneration report and all other Commission staff follows that of the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

The remuneration of Commission members is determined by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

Service Contracts

Commission staff appointments are made in accordance with the Commission's Recruitment Policy which requires appointment to be on merit on the basis of fair and open competition but also includes the circumstances when appointments may otherwise be made.

Unless otherwise stated below, the staff covered by this report hold appointments which are open-ended. Early termination, other than for misconduct, would result in the individual receiving compensation as set out in the Civil Service Compensation Scheme.

Commission members are appointed by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland following open competition.

Salary and pension entitlements

The following section provides details of the remuneration and pension interests of the Commissioners and the most senior management of the Commission.

Remuneration (including salary) and pension entitlements Commissioners and Senior Management - (Audited Information)

Commissioners	2013-14				2012-2013					
	Salary £,000	Bonus Payments £'000	Benefits in kind (to nearest £100)	Pension Benefits (£,000)**	Total (£,000)	Salary £,000	Bonus Payments £'000	Benefits in kind (to nearest £100)	Pension Benefits (£,000)**	Total (£,000)
Commissioner										
Michael Wardlow Chief Commissioner	55-60 (FTE 70-75)	0	0	210*	265 -270 (FTE 280- 285)	50-55 (FTE 70-75)	0	0	22	75-80 (FTE 90-95)
Jane Morrice Deputy Chief Commissioner	5-10	0	0	0	5-10	5-10	0	0	0	5-10
Stella Burnside	0-5	0	0	0	0-5	0-5	0	0	0	0-5
Fidelma Carolan	0-5	0	0	0	0-5	0-5	0	0	0	0-5
Anna Carragher	0-5	0	0	0	0-5	0-5	0	0	0	0-5
Kit Chivers	0-5	0	0	0	0-5	0-5	0	0	0	0-5

Remuneration (including salary) and pension entitlements Commissioners and Senior Management - (Audited Information)

Commissioners	2013-14				2012-2013					
	Salary £,000	Bonus Payments £'000	Benefits in kind (to nearest £100)	Pension Benefits (£,000)**	Total (£,000)	Salary £,000	Bonus Payments £'000	Benefits in kind (to nearest £100)	Pension Benefits (£,000)**	Total (£,000)
Commissioner										
Patricia Feeney	0-5	0	0	0	0-5	0-5	0	0	0	0-5
Milton Kerr	0-5	0	0	0	0-5	0-5	0	0	0	0-5
Charo Lanao- Madden	0-5	0	0	0	0-5	0-5	0	0	0	0-5
Lyn McBriar	0-5	0	0	0	0-5	0-5	0	0	0	0-5
Stephen McIlveen	0-5	0	0	0	0-5	0-5	0	0	0	0-5
Liam Maskey	0-5	0	0	0	0-5	0-5	0	0	0	0-5
Dermot Nesbitt	0-5	0	0	0	0-5	0-5	0	0	0	0-5
Peter Sheridan	0-5	0	0	0	0-5	0-5	0	0	0	0-5
Norman Trotter	0-5	0	0	0	0-5	0-5	0	0	0	0-5
Murray Watt	0-5	0	0	0	0-5	0-5	0	0	0	0-5

* Michael Wardlow brought in a transfer value in the 13/14 financial year which amounted to £125,000 increasing his pension benefit.

Senior Management

Official	2013-14				2012-2013					
	Salary £,000	Bonus Payments £'000	Benefits in kind (to nearest £100)	Pension Benefits (£,000)**	Total (£,000)	Salary £,000	Bonus Payments £'000	Benefits in kind (to nearest £100)	Pension Benefits (£,000)**	Total (£,000)
Evelyn Collins Chief Executive	75-80	0	0	26	100-105	85-90*	0	0	4	90-95
Keith Brown Head of Corporate Services	60-65	0	0	3	65-70	60-65	0	0	49	110-115
Eileen Lavery Head of Legal, Policy and Research	60-65	0	0	<1>	60-65	60-65	0	0	2	60-65

* This includes a 1% pay non consolidated increase for 2012/13 and other pay awards owing from the period 2009-12.

** The value of pension benefits accrued during the year is calculated as (the real increase in pension multiplied by 20) plus (the real increase in any lump sum) less (the contributions made by the individual). The real increases exclude increases due to inflation or any increase or decreases due to a transfer of pension rights.

Fair Pay Review Disclosure

	2014 £	2013 £
Band of Highest Paid Employee - Chief Executive	75,000 – 80,000	75,000 – 80,000
Median Other Staff Remuneration	27,060	27,066
Ratio	2.9	2.9

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland is required to disclose the relationship between the remuneration of the highest paid employee in the organisation and the median remuneration of the Commission's workforce.

The banded remuneration of the highest paid employee in the Commission in the financial year 2013/14 was £75,000 to £80,000 (2012/13, £75,000 to £80,000). This was 2.9 times (2012/13, 2.9 times) the median remuneration of the workforce, which was £27,060 (2012/13, £27,066).

Salary

'Salary' includes gross salary; overtime; reserved rights to London weighting or London allowances; recruitment and retention allowances; private office allowances and any other allowance to the extent that it is subject to UK taxation and any gratia payments.

Benefits in kind

The monetary value of benefits in kind covers any benefits provided by the employer and treated by HM Revenue and Customs as a taxable emolument. No benefits in kind were paid to Commissioners or staff during this period.

Bonuses

Bonuses for staff are based on performance levels attained and are made as part of the appraisal process. Bonuses relate to the performance in the year in which they become payable to the individual. The bonuses reported in 2013/14 relate to performance in 2013/14 and the comparative bonuses reported for 2012/13 relate to the performance in 2012/13. Due to the current public sector pay freeze, no bonuses to staff were payable in either of these years.

No bonus payments were paid to Commissioners in these years.

No other employee received more than the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer in either year.

Total remuneration includes salary, non-consolidated performance related pay, benefits-in-kind as well as severance payments. It does not include employer pension contributions and the cash equivalent transfer value of pensions.

Pension Benefits (Audited Information)

	Accrued pension at age 60 as at 31/03/14 and related lump sum £'000	Real increase in pension and related lump sum at age 60 £'000	CETV at 31/3/14	CETV at 31/3/13	Real increase in CETV
Michael Wardlow Chief Commissioner	10-15 plus lump sum 0	10-12.5 plus lump sum 0	185	20	160
Evelyn Collins Chief Executive	30-35 plus lump sum 90-95	0-2.5 plus lump sum 2.5-5	605	548	22
Keith Brown Head of Corporate Services	20-25 plus lump sum 60-65	0-2.5 plus lump sum 0-2.5	439	408	3
Eileen Lavery Head of Legal, Policy and Research	25-30 plus lump sum 80-85	0-2.5 plus lump sum 0-2.5	576	542	(1)

The Equality Commission made no employer contributions to a Partnership Pension Account for any of the above.



Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Pension arrangements

Pension benefits are provided through the Northern Ireland Civil Service pension arrangements which are administered by Civil Service Pensions (CSP).

Commission members other than the Chief Commissioner do not receive any pension entitlements.

There were no partnership pension accounts.

The Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) [PCSPS (NI)] is an unfunded multi-employer defined benefit scheme but the Equality Commission is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities. The most up to date actuarial valuation was carried out as at 31 March 2010. The pension scheme liability reported in the DFP Superannuation and Other Allowance Resource Accounts last year was as at 31 March 2010, however, work is ongoing to provide a report on an updated valuation as at 31 March 2012 for the basis of the actuarial valuation rolled forward to the reporting date of the DFP Superannuation and Other Resource Accounts for 2014.

For 2013-14, employers' contributions of £686,401 (2012-13 £719,065) were payable to the PCSPS(NI) at one of four rates in the range 18% to 25% of pensionable pay, based on salary bands. The scheme's Actuary reviews employer contributions every four years following a full scheme valuation. A new valuation scheme based on data as at 31 March 2012 is currently being undertaken by the Actuary to review employer contribution rates for the introduction of a new career average scheme from April 2015. From 2014-15, the rates will remain in the range 18% to 25%. The contribution rates are set to meet the cost of the benefits accruing during 2013-14 to be paid when the members 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. No such employer contributions were made in this year.

No staff left on grounds of ill-health retirement.

Staff in post prior to 30 July 2007 may be in one of three statutory based 'final salary' defined benefit arrangements (classic, premium and classic plus). These arrangements are unfunded with the cost of benefits met by monies voted by Parliament each year.



From April 2011 pensions payable under classic, premium and classic plus are increased annually in line with changes in the Consumer Prices Index (CPI). Prior to 2011, pensions were increased in line with changes in the Retail Prices Index (RPI). New entrants joining on or after 1 October 2002 and before 30 July 2007 could choose between membership of premium or joining a good quality ‘money purchase’ stakeholder arrangement with a significant employer contribution (partnership pension account).

New entrants joining on or after 30 July 2007 are eligible for membership of the nuvos arrangement or they can opt for a partnership pension account. Nuvos is a ‘Career Average Revalued Earnings’ (CARE) arrangement in which members accrue pension benefits at a percentage rate of annual pensionable earnings throughout the period of the scheme membership. The current rate is 2.3%.

CARE pension benefits are increased annually in line with increases in the CPI. For 2014, public service pensions will be increased by 2.7% for pensions which began before 8 April 2013. Pensions which began after 8 April 2013 will be increased proportionately.

Employee contributions are determined by the level of pensionable earnings. The employee contribution rates for the year 2014/15 are as follows:

Members of **classic**:

Annual pensionable earnings (full-time equivalent basis)	2014 contribution rate before tax relief
Up to £15,000	1.50%
£15,001-£21,000	3.00%
£21,001-£30,000	4.48%
£30,001-£50,000	5.27%
£50,001-£60,000	6.06%
Over £60,000	6.85%

Members of **premium**, **nuvos** and **classic plus**:

Annual pensionable earnings (full-time equivalent basis)	2014 contribution rate before tax relief
Up to £15,000	3.50%
£15,001-£21,000	5.00%
£21,001-£30,000	6.48%
£30,001-£50,000	7.27%
£50,001-£60,000	8.06%
Over £60,000	8.85%

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% and 12.5% (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% of pensionable salary (in addition to the employer's basic contribution). Employers also contribute a further 0.8% 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 pension age, or immediately on ceasing to be an active member of the scheme if they are at or over pension age. Pension age is 60 for members of **classic**, **premium**, and **classic plus** and 65 for members of **nuvos**. Further details about the CSP arrangements can be found at the website www.dfpni.gov.uk/civilservicepensions-ni.



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 pensions 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 2003/4 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. 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 in accordance with The Occupational Pension Schemes (Transfer Values) (Amendment) Regulations and do not take account of any actual or potential benefits resulting from Lifetime Allowance Tax which may be due when pension benefits are taken.

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.

Compensation for Loss of Office

There was no compensation for loss of office by senior managers during the year. Reporting of compensation and exit packages for all staff 2013/14 is included at note 3(d) to the Accounts.

Evelyn Collins CBE
Chief Executive and Accounting Officer
26 June 2014

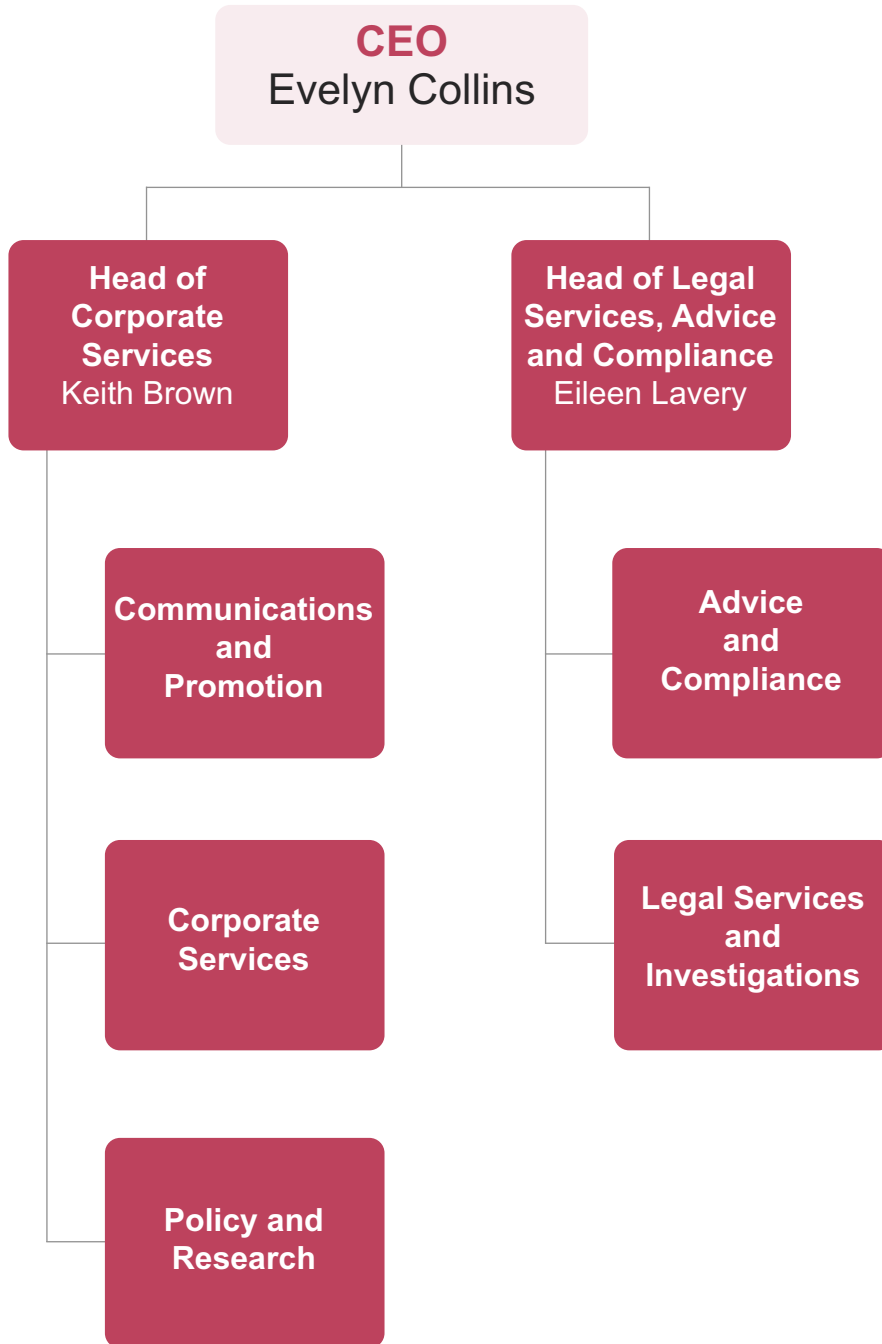


Appendices

1. Organisational Structure
2. Community Background and Gender Composition of Equality Commission Staff
3. Committee Membership

APPENDIX ONE

Equality Commission Organisational Structure



APPENDIX TWO

Community background and gender composition of Equality Commission staff at 1 January 2014

Grade	Total	P	RC	ND*	M	F
Senior Mgt Team	3	2 (66.6%)	1 (33.3%)		1 (33.3%)	2 (66.6%)
All Staff** [excl. ND]	130 [127]	43 (33.1%) [33.9%]	84 (64.6%) [66.1%]	3 (2.3%)	45 (34.6%)	85 (65.4%)

* Community background could not be determined

** Includes staff on career break

This year shows a reduction by three in the number of employees from, or could be associated with, the Protestant community and a fall of six in employees from the Roman Catholic community. This results in a very slight increase in the composition of Protestant staff from [33.8%] last year to [33.9%] at 1 January 2014.

Two recruitment exercises were completed in 2013, an external exercise for an Assistant Policy and Research Officer and an internal trawl for a temporary Senior Personal Assistant. The table below records the outcome. However, given the small numbers involved no conclusions can be drawn from the statistical outturn.

Grade	Total	P	RC	ND*	M	F
Applicants	77	38 (49.4%) [55.9%]	30 (39.0%) [44.1%]	9 (11.7%)	29 (37.7%)	48 (62.3%)
Appointees	3	2 [66.6%]	1 [33.3%]	0	0	3 (100.0%)

* Community background could not be determined

The composition of the working age population in Northern Ireland (16-64) at the time of the most recent census in 2011 was [50.8%] Protestant and [49.2%] Roman Catholic. The comparable figures from the previous 2001 Census were [57.3%] Protestant and [42.7%] Roman Catholic.

The composition of the population (age 16-34) at the time of the Census was [45.8%] Protestant and [54.2%] Roman Catholic.



APPENDIX THREE

Committee Membership

The following Commissioners served on the Commission's Committees during the period 1 April 2013 – 31 March 2014. The number of meetings held have been placed in brackets ().

Audit & Risk Committee

COMMISSIONER	MEETINGS ATTENDED (5)
Norman Trotter (Chair)	5
Jane Morrice	3
Stella Burnside	4
Kit Chivers	5
Peter Sheridan	3

Statutory Duty Investigations Committee

COMMISSIONER	MEETINGS ATTENDED (6)
Kit Chivers (Chair)	6
Michael Wardlow	6
Fidelma Carolan	6
Murray Watt	6
Lyn McBriar	5



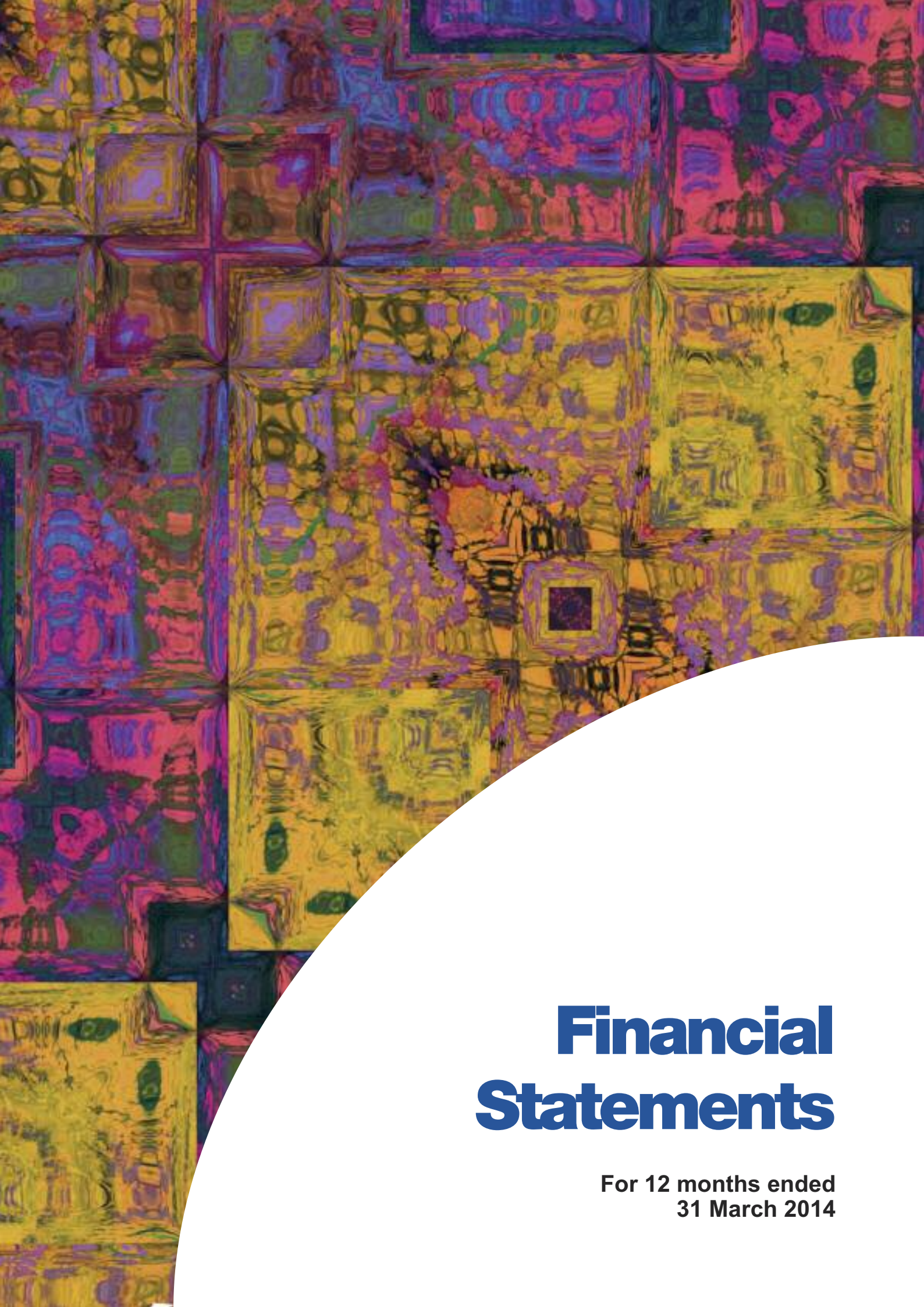
Equality Scheme Approvals Committee

COMMISSIONER	MEETINGS ATTENDED (4)
Jane Morrice (Chair)	3
Michael Wardlow	3
Patricia Feeney	4
Stephen McIlveen	2
Dermot Nesbitt	4
Peter Sheridan	1
Stella Burnside	3
Norman Trotter	1

Legal Funding Committee

The Legal Funding Committee normally meets fortnightly. Committee members are rotated to ensure that each meeting has three committee members present. The Chair of this Committee rotates between all members. In addition to the set meetings, Commissioners may be called upon to consider emergency applications as they arise.

During 2013/14 the following Commissioners served on Legal Funding Committees: Anna Carragher, Patricia Feeney, Milton Kerr, Charo Lanao- Madden, Liam Maskey, Stephen McIlveen, Lyn McBriar, Norman Trotter, Michael Wardlow.



Financial Statements

**For 12 months ended
31 March 2014**



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Statement of the Accounting Officer's responsibilities

Under Paragraph 7(2) (a) of Schedule 8 of the Northern Ireland Act 1988, the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister with the approval of the Department of Finance and Personnel has directed the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland 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 Commission and of its net resource outturn, application of resources, changes in taxpayers' equity and cash flows for the financial year.

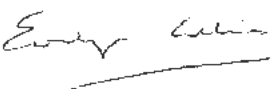
In preparing the accounts the Accounting Officer is required to comply with the requirements of the Government Financial Reporting Manual and in particular to:

- observe the Accounts Direction issued by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, 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 accounts; and
- prepare the accounts on a going concern basis.

The Accounting Officer of the Office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister has designated the Chief Executive as the Accounting Officer of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

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 Commission's assets, are set out in the Non-Departmental Public Bodies Accounting Officer's Memorandum and in Managing Public Money Northern Ireland, published by the Department of Finance and Personnel.

Signed by:



Evelyn Collins CBE
Chief Executive and Accounting Officer
26 June 2014



Governance Statement

As 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, whilst safeguarding the public funds and Commission assets for which I am personally responsible, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to me in Managing Public Money Northern Ireland.

■ THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

The Commission

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland is an executive non departmental public body (NDPB) established as a body corporate by Section 73 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The Commission's primary source of income is grant-in-aid provided by the Office of the First and deputy First Minister (OFMDFM). Statutory authority for the payment of grant-in-aid is contained in Schedule 8 to the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Relationships between the Commission and the Ministers and their Department are governed by the "arm's length" principle, wherein the primary role of Ministers is to set the Commission's legal and financial framework including the structure of its funding and governance.

These responsibilities are discharged on a day-to-day basis on the Minister's behalf by the Sponsoring Department. Within this framework, it is the role of the Commission to determine its equality policies and activities in keeping with its statutory responsibilities and the objectives of Government policy.

The Commission has agreed a Management Statement with OFMDFM. This sets out the relationship between the two organisations and defines the financial and administrative framework within which the Commission operates. It also sets out the conditions on which grant-in-aid is paid to the Commission and the delegations within which the Commission operates. The Management Statement has been approved by Ministers responsible for OFMDFM.

It is supplemented by a Financial Memorandum agreed with the Commission and approved by OFMDFM and the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP).

A joint review of the Management Statement and Financial Memorandum is presently ongoing.

The Commission is led by a Chief Commissioner, supported by a Deputy Chief Commissioner. Including the Chief Commissioner and Deputy Chief Commissioner there are currently 16 Commissioners. The responsibilities of the Chief Commissioner



and Commissioners are set out in the founding legislation and more fully in the Code of Practice agreed between the Sponsoring Department and the Commission.

A record of Commissioners attendance during 2013/14 can be found at page 3 of the Director's Report. Commissioners identify and update their interests and the Register of Interests is publicly available. The identification of potential conflicts is addressed at the beginning of each Commission and Audit and Risk meeting. Guidance on declaration and conflict of interests is contained in the Commissioner Handbook provided to all new Commissioners.

Although it is primarily directed at central Government Departments, the Commission complies in all material respects with the guidance set out in Corporate governance in central government departments: Code of good practice NI (DFP, 2013).


The Commission receives quarterly reports on finance, staffing and progress against business plan targets. Minutes of each Audit and Risk Committee are presented and regular reports from the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee and the Chief Executive are provided. The Commission formally approves the Corporate Risk Register at six monthly intervals and is advised on emerging risks and 'near misses'. An assurance map has been prepared, outlining the scope and levels of assurance received. A Stewardship report provided by the Accounting Officer is considered at each Audit and Risk Committee.

Audit and Risk Committee

The Commission seeks to ensure high standards of corporate governance and high levels of compliance with the values of public service. It has an Audit and Risk Committee which oversees internal audit arrangements and ensures that they are conducted in accordance with the objectives and standards of the Government Internal Audit Manual. The Committee also oversees the Commission's arrangements for risk management.

The Committee's responsibilities are set out in its Terms of Reference, which were last reviewed in March 2014. Its core work for the year is set in a work programme structured around the guidance in HM Treasury's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Handbook.

The Audit and Risk Committee meets at least four times per year. Minutes of Audit and Risk Committee meetings are provided to the full Commission and the Chair of the Committee reports to Commission meetings at regular intervals. On an annual basis, the Audit and Risk Committee undertakes a self assessment of its operations and a formal written report of its work is presented to the Commission.



Internal Audit undertook a review of the Commission's Committee structures and processes and Board Effectiveness in May 2012. The audit provided Satisfactory assurance.

Accounting Officer

The Commission's Chief Executive has been designated as the Accounting Officer. The Accounting Officer's role and responsibilities are set out in the Management Statement and in more detail in Managing Public Money Northern Ireland (MPMNI).

The Equality Commission's Annual Report and Accounts are prepared in accordance with Schedule 8 of the Northern Act 1998 and in a form directed by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister with the approval of the Department of Finance and Personnel.

Risk Management and Assurance

As the Accounting Officer, I have overall responsibility for the Commission's corporate business and decisions and ensuring the effective management of the key associated risks.

The Commission has appropriate procedures in place to ensure that it has identified its objectives and risks and determined a control strategy for its strategic risks. A corporate approach to risk, involving Commissioners, the Executive Team and other staff is taken. Ownership of risks has been allocated to the relevant staff at appropriate levels and they have received the necessary training to assist them in handling these risks.

Risk management is cascaded down the organisation and Risk Registers are produced for each Division. Quarterly stewardship statements are completed by corporate risk owners and forwarded to me as Accounting Officer. These provide me with assurance that risk management processes are effective and operating in line with the Commission's risk management framework.

Staff receive regular training in Governance, Risk Management and Fraud Awareness.

As Accounting Officer, I submit a quarterly stewardship statement to the Audit and Risk Committee and to the Commission's Sponsoring Department OFMDFM.

The risk and control framework

The Commission has ensured that procedures are in place for verifying that risk management and internal control are regularly reviewed and reported on. Risk appetite is assessed by the Commission and targets approved by the Commission are included on the risk register.



Corporate Risk is routinely reviewed by the Management Board and at each Audit and Risk Committee meeting and the corporate risk register updated as necessary. The Commission, its Audit and Risk Committee and the Management Board receive regular reports on internal control and monitor progress on addressing internal audit recommendations.

The system of internal control has been in place in the Commission for the year ended 31 March 2014 and up to the date of approval of the Annual Report and Accounts. It accords with Department of Finance and Personnel guidance.

As 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 Report to those charged with Governance.

I have been advised on the implications of the result of my review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control by the Commission and its Audit and Risk Committee.

The Commission has an internal audit service, provided by Price Waterhouse Cooper, which operates to standards defined in the Government Internal Audit Manual. It submits reports on its work, which include the Head of Internal Audit's independent opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Commission's system of internal control together with recommendations for improvement.

■ POTENTIAL RISK ISSUES

The areas of potential risk outlined below are those on which the Commission reports to its Sponsoring Department on a monthly basis or any other significant issue referred to in the Commission's corporate risk or other risk register.

Business Planning and budgeting

The Commission has in place a Corporate Plan approved by the OFMDFM Ministers, covering the period 2012-2015. This Plan is supported by annual Business Plans. Although there was a significant delay in obtaining formal approval for the 2013-2014 Plan, this was obtained. There was little difference between the plan submitted for approval and the plan finally approved.



Information Assurance

The Commission is proactive in developing and implementing policies and procedural guidance to manage Information Risk. Information risk management is a key element of information governance and is an integral part of good management.

The Commission undertakes regular reviews of its ICT infrastructure and security arrangements and information security risks and controls are included on the Commission's Corporate ICT risk register.

During 2012/13 an audit of the Commission's Information Management arrangements had been undertaken. Substantial assurance was provided.

The Commission has a Freedom of Information policy and satisfactory arrangements in place to ensure compliance. The Commission's Data Protection and Freedom of Information Officer receives regular training and Divisional co-ordinators are briefed. The Commission is aware of and has approved these arrangements.

There were no data losses or other significant lapses of security during 2013/14.

Business Continuity Plans

The Commission has undertaken a business continuity risk assessment and up to date business continuity and other contingency arrangements are in place. The Business Continuity Management arrangements were audited during 2012/13 and Substantial assurance was provided by the review. The ICT continuity and disaster recovery arrangements are regularly tested. The testing of other aspects of the arrangements is necessary and will be undertaken in 2014/15.

Gifts and Hospitality

Appropriate arrangements for the management of Gifts and Hospitality are in place and all offers, both to Commissioners and Staff are included on a Gifts and Hospitality Register. The Commission's Code of Conduct for Staff outlines the arrangements for whistle blowing. A separate Whistle blowing procedure has been prepared and will come into operation in 2014/15.

Fraud

The Commission has a Fraud Policy and Fraud Response Plan. There were no incidents of fraud or potential fraud to report over the current period. The policy and response plan will be reviewed in 2014/15.

Managing Attendance

A Managing Attendance Policy is in place and quarterly indicators of staff absence are provided to management in the Commission and to the OFMDFM Sponsoring Team.



The Commission’s sickness absence level, although slightly reduced from last year, remains higher than the NICS target figure. Further work is ongoing in addressing long term sickness absence.

Third Party Organisations

Although it has the vires to award grants under some of the legislation from which it derives its powers and duties, the Commission has not utilised its discretion in relation to the provision of such grants.

Related party transactions are reported in its Annual Accounts.

Internal & External Audit Reports

The Commission’s external auditor is the Northern Ireland Audit Office. It audits and certifies the Commission’s Financial Statements and issues a Report to those charged with Governance.

At the start of the year the Commission was advised that its existing provider was no longer in a position to continue to deliver its internal audit service. A new contractor was appointed and a full audit programme was delivered. During the current year the internal auditors, PwC, have conducted reviews in line with their Annual Audit Plan covering:


Audit Area	Assurance Rating
Financial Processes and Reporting	Substantial
Governance and Risk Management	Substantial
Policy and Research Department	Substantial
Communications and Promotions Division	Satisfactory

In their Annual Report to the Audit and Risk Committee internal audit provided a Substantial level of assurance.

Risk Management Status

The Commission continues to operate in an environment of financial constraint and uncertainty and is required to effectively manage the upward pressure from its staffing costs. To do so has involved a reduction of staff numbers over the past number of years and this has continued throughout 2013/14. The Commission has been able to do this through the management of flexible working arrangements, natural wastage and facilitating where practicable voluntary severance and voluntary early retirement.

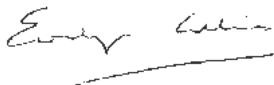
In the incoming year this will continue, albeit with the additional risks and opportunities that may arise in the process of transition to an Equality and Good Relations Commission.



I am satisfied that the controls in place to manage risks for which I am responsible are appropriate. They provide reasonable assurance that the risk will not occur or if it does occur that it will be detected and corrected in sufficient time to reduce the impact of the risk to tolerable or negligible levels.

Significant internal control issues

The ongoing requirement for the effective management of budgetary reductions continue to be a significant risk facing the Commission. The Commission has plans in place to reduce costs in staffing, the largest area of expenditure, and to deliver the efficiency savings sought by its Sponsoring Department. These plans include cost sharing with other ALBs and the generation of a limited amount of income from the provision of shared services to a number of these bodies.



Evelyn Collins CBE
Chief Executive and Accounting Officer
26 June 2014



The Certificate and Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General to the Northern Ireland Assembly

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland for the year ended 31 March 2014 under the Northern Ireland Act 1998. These comprise the Statements of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, Financial Position, Cash Flows, Changes in Taxpayers' Equity 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 been audited.

Respective responsibilities of the Accounting Officer and auditor

As explained more fully in the Statement of Accounting Officer's Responsibilities, the Accounting Officer is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view. My responsibility is to audit, certify and report on the financial statements in accordance with the Northern Ireland Act 1998. I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland). Those standards require me and my staff to comply with the Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards for Auditors.

Scope of the audit of the financial statements

An audit involves obtaining evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. This includes an assessment of: whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland's circumstances and have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed; the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland; and the overall presentation of the financial statements. In addition I read all the financial and non-financial information in the Annual Report to identify material inconsistencies with the audited financial statements and to identify any information that is apparently materially incorrect based on, or materially inconsistent with, the knowledge acquired by me in the course of performing the audit. If I become aware of any apparent material misstatements or inconsistencies I consider the implications for my certificate.

I am required to obtain evidence sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the expenditure and income recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by the Assembly and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

Opinion on regularity

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



Opinion on financial statements

In my opinion:

- the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland's affairs as at 31 March 2014 and of the net expenditure, cash flows and changes in taxpayers' equity for the year then ended; and
- the financial statements have been properly prepared in accordance with the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Office of the First and Deputy First Minister directions issued thereunder.

Opinion on other matters

In my opinion:

- the part of the Remuneration Report to be audited has been properly prepared in accordance with Office of the First and Deputy First Minister directions made under the Northern Ireland Act; and
- the information given in the Chief Commissioner's Foreword and Management Commentary for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.

Matters on which I report by exception


I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters which I report to you if, in my opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements and the part of the Remuneration Report to be audited are not in agreement with the accounting records; or
- I have not received all of the information and explanations I require for my audit; or
- the Governance Statement does not reflect compliance with Department of Finance and Personnel's guidance.



Report

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.



*KJ Donnelly
Comptroller and Auditor General
Northern Ireland Audit Office
106 University Street
Belfast
BT7 1EU*

Date 30 June 2014

Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2014

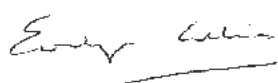
		2013-14	2012-13
	Note	£	£
Expenditure			
Staff and Commissioners' Costs	3	(4,491,797)	(4,632,089)
Depreciation	6	(65,797)	(48,072)
Amortisation	7	(13,996)	(17,089)
Other Expenditure	4	(1,864,692)	(2,000,647)
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		(6,436,282)	(6,697,897)
Income			
Income from Activities	5	256,707	358,622
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Net Expenditure		(6,179,575)	(6,339,275)
Other Comprehensive Expenditure			
		2013-14	2012-13
	Note	£	£
Net gain on revaluation of Plant and Equipment	6	2,259	7,619
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Total Comprehensive Expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2014		(6,177,316)	(6,331,656)

The notes on pages 66 to 83 form part of these accounts.

Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2014

	Note	2014 £	2013 £
Non-Current assets:			
Plant and equipment	6	225,989	205,157
Intangible assets	7	21,922	29,924
Total non-current assets		247,911	235,081
Current assets:			
Trade and other receivables	9	90,966	138,070
Cash and cash equivalents	10	49,126	106
Total current assets		140,092	138,176
Total assets		388,003	373,257
Current liabilities (<1 year)			
Trade and other payables	11	(260,604)	(289,503)
Other liabilities		nil	nil
Total current liabilities		(260,604)	(289,503)
Non-current assets plus/less net current assets/liabilities		127,399	83,754
Non-current liabilities (>1 year)			
Provisions	12	(305,681)	(333,060)
Other payables		(2,340)	nil
Total non-current liabilities		(308,021)	(333,060)
Assets less liabilities		(180,622)	(249,306)
Taxpayers' equity			
Revaluation reserve		45,057	42,798
SOCNE reserve		(225,679)	(292,104)
		(180,622)	(249,306)

The financial statements on pages 62 to 83 were approved by the Commission on 25 June 2014 and were signed on its behalf by;



Signed
Evelyn Collins CBE,
Accounting Officer and Chief Executive

The notes on pages 66 to 83 form part of these accounts.

Statement of Cash Flows for the year ended 31 March 2014

		2013-14 £	2012-13 £
	Note		
Cash Flows from operating activities			
Net Expenditure		(6,179,575)	(6,339,275)
Adjustments for non-cash transactions			
Depreciation	6	65,797	48,072
Amortisation	7	13,996	17,089
Revaluation	6	-	-
(Increase)/Decrease in trade and other receivables	9	47,104	24,425
Increase/(Decrease) in trade payables	11	(26,559)	95,153
Increase/(Decrease) in provisions	12	(27,379)	(17,099)
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Net cash outflow from operating activities		(6,106,616)	(6,171,635)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of plant and equipment	6	(84,370)	(138,039)
Purchase of intangible assets	7	(5,994)	(15,582)
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Net cash outflow from investing activities		(90,364)	(153,621)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Financing from OFMDFM		6,246,000	6,200,000
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Net financing		6,246,000	6,200,000
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents in the period	10	49,020	(125,256)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period		106	125,362
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period	10	49,126	106

The notes on pages 66 to 83 form part of these accounts.

Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity for the year ended 31 March 2014

	Note	Reval Reserve £	SoCNE Reserve £	Total Reserves £
Balance at 31 March 2012		35,179	(152,829)	(117,650)
Changes in Taxpayers' Equity 2012-13				
Grant from OFMDFM		0	6,200,000	6,200,000
Transfer between reserves				
Comprehensive Expenditure for the year		0	(6,339,275)	(6,339,275)
Movements in Reserves				
Additions				
Recognised in Statement of Comprehensive Expenditure		7,619	0	7,619
Balance at 31 March 2013		42,798	(292,104)	(249,306)
Changes in Taxpayers' Equity 2013-14				
Grant from OFMDFM		0	6,246,000	6,246,000
Transfer between reserves				
Comprehensive Expenditure for the year		0	(6,179,575)	(6,179,575)
Movements in Reserves				
Additions				
Recognised in Statement of Comprehensive Expenditure		2,259	0	2,259
Balance at 31 March 2014		45,057	(225,679)	(180,622)

The notes on pages 66 to 83 form part of these accounts.



Notes to the Accounts

1. Statement of accounting policies

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with paragraph 7(2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and the 2013-14 Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) issued by the Department of Finance and Personnel for Northern Ireland.

The accounting policies contained in the FReM apply International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) as adapted or interpreted for the public sector context. Where the FReM permits a choice of accounting policy, the accounting policy which is judged to be the most appropriate to the particular circumstances of the Equality Commission for the purpose of giving a true and fair view has been selected. The particular policies adopted by the Commission are described below. They have been applied consistently in dealing with items that are considered material to the accounts.

1.1 Accounting convention

These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention modified to account for the revaluation of property, plant and equipment and intangible assets and inventories.

1.2 Non-Current assets

Non-current assets are fully funded by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.

Plant and equipment have been valued at historic cost revalued by indices published by the National Statistics Office. A capitalisation threshold of £500 has been applied.

Intangible assets (computer software and licences) are valued at historic cost.

1.3 Depreciation and Amortisation Rates

Depreciation and amortisation are provided on all non-current assets at rates calculated to write off the cost of each asset over its expected life with rates as follows:

IT Equipment	25-33%
Office Equipment	10-33%
Furniture	10%
Fixtures & Fittings	10-33%
Intangible Assets	25-33%

1.4 Inventories

The value of inventories of consumables is immaterial and the Commission does not attribute any value for inventories in the accounts.



1.5 Income

All income from operations is credited to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure. Income is based on full cost recovery of services provided.

1.6 Grant in Aid

Grant in Aid received, used to finance activities and expenditure which support the statutory and other objectives of the Commission, are treated as financing. They are credited to the SoCNE Reserve because they are regarded as contributions from a controlling party.

1.7 Leased Assets

Leases are classified as operating leases whenever the terms of the lease do not transfer substantially all the risks and benefits to the lessee. Rentals under operating leases are expensed to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure as incurred.

1.8 Financial Instruments

Financial assets and liabilities are recognised on the Statement of Financial Position when the Commission becomes a party to a contractual provision of the instrument.

The Commission's financial assets and liabilities are classified as Loans and Receivables and are held at cost which approximates to their fair value because of their short maturities.

1.9 Provisions


The Commission makes provision for liabilities and charges where, at the Statement of Financial Position date, a legal or constructive liability exists (that is a present obligation from past events), where the transfer of economic benefits is probable and a reasonable estimate can be made. IAS 37 requires that where the effect of the time value of money is material the amount of a provision should be the present value of the expenditures expected to be required to settle the obligation. Where cash flows have been adjusted for risk the standard requires the use of a risk free discount rate.

1.10 Legal Fees

The Commission makes provision for expenditure authorised for legal assistance with letters of commitment to individuals before legal assistance is commissioned to an external provider.

1.11 Pensions

Past and present staff have the opportunity to join the Principal Civil Service Scheme (NI). The PCSPS (NI) is a non-funded defined benefit scheme which produces its own resource accounts, but the Commission is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities.



The most up-to-date actuarial valuation was carried out on 31 March 2010 and these details are available in the PCSPS (NI) resource accounts.

1.12 VAT

The Commission is not registered for VAT.

1.13 Staff Costs

Under IAS19, Employee Benefits legislation, all staff costs must be recorded as an expense as soon as an organisation is obligated to pay them. This includes the cost of any holiday pay, flexible time owed at the year end.

1.14 Adoption of New and Revised Standards

There are no new Revised Standards affecting these statements.

Accounting boundary IFRS are currently adapted in the FReM so that the Westminster departmental accounting boundary is based on ONS control criteria, as designated by Treasury. A review of the NI financial process is currently under discussion with the Executive, which will bring NI departments under the same adaptation. Should this go ahead, the impact on departments is expected to focus around the disclosure requirements under IFRS 12. The impact on the consolidation boundary of NDPBs and trading funds will be subject to review, in particular, where control could be determined to exist due to exposure to variable returns (IFRS 10), and where joint arrangements need reassessing.

2. Statement of Operating Costs by Operating Segment

Under Schedule 8, paragraph 5 (2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Commission is required to give details of how resources have been divided between the functions previously exercised by the bodies dissolved at the time of its formation.

	Salaries & Associated Costs	Programme Costs	*Other Costs	12 mths to 31/03/2014 Total	Salaries & Associated Costs	Programme Costs	*Other Costs	12 mths to 31/03/2013 Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Integrated/ New Areas	1,215,634	358,257	0	1,573,891	828,774	425,217	0	1,253,991
Disability	415,447	74,675	0	490,122	562,048	102,067	0	664,115
Religion & Politics	551,033	55,326	0	606,359	680,133	64,744	0	744,877
Gender	295,423	93,033	0	388,456	388,056	80,696	0	468,752
Race	393,375	55,027	0	448,402	466,816	72,155	0	538,971
Statutory Duty	450,525	0	0	450,525	381,902	966	0	382,868
Resources	738,264	30,308	0	768,572	860,298	68,238	0	928,536
Executive	274,205	0	0	274,205	312,365	0	0	312,365
Total Costs	4,333,906	666,626	0	5,000,532	4,480,392	814,083	0	5,294,475
Members Costs	157,891	12,000	0	169,891	151,697	4,300	0	155,997
Other Costs	0	0	1,009,152	1,009,152	0	0	888,803	888,803
Total	4,491,797	678,626	1,009,152	6,179,575	4,632,089	818,383	888,803	6,339,275

* Other costs include general administrative costs, premises and non cash costs less income from activities.

3. Staff numbers and related costs

3(a) Staff and Commissioner costs comprise:

				2013-14	2012-13
	Commissioners	Permanently employed staff	Others	Total	Total
	£	£	£	£	£
Wages and Salaries	138,114	3,404,092	1,777	3,543,983	3,630,489
Social security costs	6,188	255,225	0	261,413	270,227
Other pension costs	13,589	672,812	0	686,401	731,373
Total net costs	157,891	4,332,129	1,777	4,491,797	4,632,089

3(b) Pension Disclosure

The Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) [PCSPS (NI)] is an unfunded multi-employer defined benefit scheme but the Equality Commission is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities. The most up to date actuarial valuation was carried out as at 31 March 2010 and details of this valuation are available in the PCSPS (NI) resource accounts.

For 2013/14, employer contributions of £686,401 (2012/2013 £719,065) at one of four rates in the range 18% to 25% of pensionable pay, based on salary bands. The scheme's Actuary reviews employer contributions every four years following a full scheme valuation. However HM Treasury has instructed the scheme to cease further work on the March 2010 valuation. A new valuation scheme based on data as at 31 March 2012 is currently being undertaken by the Actuary to review employer contribution rates for the introduction of a new career average scheme from April 2015. From 2013/14 the rates will remain in the range 18% to 25%. The contribution rates are set to meet the cost of the benefits accruing during 2013/14 to be paid when the members retire 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. No such employer contributions were made in this year.

No staff left on grounds of ill-health retirement.

3(c) Average number of persons employed

The average number of whole-time equivalent persons employed during the year was as follows.

			2013-14	2012-13
	Permanent staff	Others	Total	Total
Directly Employed	110	0	110	116
Other	0	0	0	0
Total	110	0	110	116

3(d) Reporting of Civil Service and other compensation schemes – exit packages

Exit Package Cost band	Number of compulsory redundancies	Number of other departures agreed	Total number of exit packages by cost band
<£10,000	0	1	1
£10,000 - £25,000	0	2	2
£25,000 - £50,000	0	1	1
£50,000 - £100,000	0	0	0
£100,000 – £150,000	0	0	0
£150,000 - £200,000	0	0	0
Total number of exit packages	0	4	4
Total resource cost/£	0	113,467	113,467

Redundancy and other departure costs are paid in accordance with the provisions of the Civil Service Compensation Scheme (Northern Ireland), a statutory scheme made under the Superannuation (Northern Ireland) Order 1972. Exit costs are accounted for in full in the year of departure. Where the department has agreed early retirements, the additional costs are met by the Commission and not by the Civil Service pension scheme. Ill-health retirement costs are met by the pension scheme.

4. Other Expenditure

	2013-14 £	2012-13 £
Note		
General Costs		
Travel and Subsistence	22,989	26,718
Staff Recruitment	11,662	4,282
Staff Costs (incl. severance)	20,811	26,020
Postage	12,257	27,468
Telephones	38,353	51,195
Hospitality	79	104
Audit	9,600	10,900
Insurance	18,202	18,171
Miscellaneous	9,431	12,517
Office Consumables	52,258	56,528
R&M Equipment	961	1,625
Annual Contracts	40,847	78,233
Legal Costs	9,490	0
Corporate Services	15,048	10,987
Early Retirement Costs	26,400	0
Severance Payments	37,067	0
	325,455	324,748
Premises		
Rents	346,869	346,806
Rates	206,850	203,853
Service Charge	21,339	24,435
Fuel Charge	75,901	70,286
R&M Buildings	61,585	71,673
Facilities	148,067	140,463
	860,611	857,516



	2013-14 £	2012-13 £
Note		
Programme		
Education & Advice	230,438	363,232
Legal Fees	329,215	319,305
Other	118,973	135,846
	678,626	818,383
Non-Cash Costs		
Depreciation	65,797	48,072
Amortisation	13,996	17,089

5. Income

Source	2013-14 Total £	2012-13 Total £
Service Level Agreements	72,207	76,951
Secondment recovery	5,867	102,457
Accommodation	171,000	167,393
Other	7,633	11,821
	256,707	358,622

All income is based on full cost recovery.

6. Plant and equipment

2013-14

	Information Technology £	Office Equipment £	Furniture £	Fixtures & Fittings £	Total £
Cost/Valuation					
At 1 April 2013	336,431	123,106	326,227	184,988	970,752
Additions	51,490	30,500	nil	2,381	84,371
Disposals	<58,792>	<63,514>	nil	<9,439>	<131,745>
Revaluations	4,165	953	4,567	2,704	12,389
At 31 March 2014	333,294	91,045	330,794	180,634	935,767
Depreciation					
At 1 April 2013	269,622	91,722	312,272	91,979	765,595
Charged in year	37,121	10,459	4,263	13,954	65,797
Disposals	<58,792>	<63,514>	nil	<9,439>	<131,745>
Revaluations	3,667	543	4,431	1,490	10,131
At 31 March 2014	251,618	39,210	320,966	97,984	709,778
Carrying amount at 31 March 2014	81,676	51,835	9,828	82,650	225,989
Carrying amount at 31 March 2013	66,809	31,384	13,955	93,009	205,157
Asset Financing					
Owned	81,676	51,835	9,828	82,650	225,989
Finance lease Contracts	0	0	0	0	0
Carrying amount at 31 March 2014	81,676	51,835	9,828	82,650	225,989

Plant and equipment are revalued annually by reference to the indices issued by the Office for National Statistics for the different types of assets.

2012-13

	Information Technology £	Office Equipment £	Furniture £	Fixtures & Fittings £	Total £
Cost/Valuation					
At 1 April 2012	359,085	92,029	320,643	99,968	871,725
Additions	25,573	29,081	0	83,385	138,039
Disposals	(87,342)	0	0	0	(87,342)
Revaluations	39,115	1,996	5,584	1,635	48,330
At 31 March 2013	336,431	123,106	326,227	184,988	970,752
Depreciation					
At 1 April 2012	287,037	89,343	302,484	85,290	764,154
Charged in year	36,467	1,941	4,443	5,221	48,072
Disposals	(87,342)	0	0	0	(87,342)
Revaluations	33,460	438	5,345	1,468	40,711
At 31 March 2013	269,622	91,722	312,272	91,979	765,595
Carrying amount at 31 March 2013	66,809	31,384	13,955	93,009	205,157
Carrying amount at 31 March 2012	72,048	2,686	18,159	14,678	107,571
Asset Financing					
Owned	66,809	31,384	13,955	93,009	205,157
Finance lease	0	0	0	0	0
On-balance sheet	0	0	0	0	0
Carrying amount at 31 March 2013	66,809	31,384	13,955	93,009	205,157

Plant and equipment are revalued annually by reference to the indices issued by the Office for National Statistics for the different types of assets.

7. Intangible assets

Intangible assets comprise software and licenses.

2013-14

	Information Technology	Software Licences	Total
	£	£	£
Cost or Valuation			
At 1 April 2013	18,862	80,820	99,682
Additions	0	5,994	5,994
Disposals	0	0	0
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
At 31 March 2014	18,862	86,814	105,676
Amortisation			
At 1 April 2013	11,662	58,096	69,758
Charged in year	3,944	10,052	13,996
Disposals	0	0	0
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
At 31 March 2014	15,606	68,148	83,754
Carrying amount at 31 March 2014	3,256	18,666	21,922
Carrying amount at 31 March 2013	7,200	22,724	29,924
Asset financing:			
Owned	0	0	0
Finance Leased	0	0	0
Contracts	3,256	18,666	21,922
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Carrying amount at 31 March 2014	3,256	18,666	21,922



2012-13

	Information Technology £	Software Licences £	Total £
Cost or Valuation			
At 1 April 2012	12,979	71,121	84,100
Additions	5,883	9,699	15,582
Disposals	0	0	0
At 31 March 2013	18,862	80,820	99,682
Amortisation			
At 1 April 2012	9,940	42,729	52,669
Charged in year	1,722	15,367	17,089
Disposals	0	0	0
At 31 March 2013	11,662	58,096	69,758
Carrying amount at 31 March 2013	7,200	22,724	29,924
Carrying amount at 31 March 2012	3,039	28,392	31,431
Asset financing:			
Owned	0	0	0
Finance Leased	0	0	0
Contracts	7,200	22,724	29,924
Carrying amount at 31 March 2013	7,200	22,724	29,924

8. Financial Instruments

As the cash requirements of the Equality Commission are met through Grant-in-Aid provided by the Office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister, financial instruments play a more limited role in creating and managing risk than would apply to a non-public sector body. The majority of financial instruments relate to contracts to buy non-financial items in line with the Commission's expected purchase and usage requirements and the Commission is therefore exposed to little credit, liquidity or market risk.

9. Trade receivables and other current assets

	2013-14 £	2012-13 £
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Prepayments	79,351	81,880
Accrued Income	10,865	55,890
Other Receivables	750	300
	<hr/> 90,966	<hr/> 138,070

9.1 Intra-Government Balances - Receivables

	Amounts falling due within one year		Amounts falling due after more than one year	
	2013-14	2012-13	2013-14	2012-13
Balances with other central government bodies	10,865	55,890	0	0
Balances with bodies external to government	80,101	82,180	0	0
Total receivables at 31 st March 2014	<hr/> 90,966	<hr/> 138,070	<hr/> 0	<hr/> 0

10. Cash and cash equivalents

	2013-14 £	2012-13 £
Balance at 1 April 2013	106	125,362
Net change in cash and cash equivalent balances	49,020	(125,256)
Balance at 31 March 2014	49,126	106

11. Trade payables and other current liabilities

	2013-14 £	2012-13 £
Amounts falling due within one year		
Accruals and deferred Income	260,604	289,503
	260,604	289,503
Amounts falling due after more than one year		
	2,340	Nil
	2,340	Nil

11.1 Intra-Government Balances - Payables

	Amounts falling due within one year		Amounts falling due after more than one year	
	2013-14 £	2012-13 £	2013-14 £	2012-13 £
Balances with other central government bodies	23,055	11,778	0	0
Balances with bodies external to government	239,889	277,725	0	0
Total payables at 31 March 2014	262,944	289,503	0	0

12. Provisions for liabilities and charges

	2013-14		2012-13	
	Severance Costs £	Legal Costs £	Severance Costs £	Legal Costs £
Balance at 1 April 2013	250,000	83,060	245,000	105,159
Provided in the year	37,067	413,680	5,000	383,224
Provisions not required written back	0	(109,156)	0	(121,997)
Provisions utilised in the year	(87,067)	(281,903)	0	(283,326)
Balance at 31 March 2014	200,000	105,681	250,000	83,060

The Commission makes provision for expenditure authorised for legal assistance before it is committed to an external provider. A provision of £200,000 has been retained in respect of potential exit packages necessary in the future.

13. Capital commitments

	2013-14 £	2012-13 £
Contracted capital commitments at 31 March 2014 not otherwise included in these financial statements		
Plant and equipment	0	22,000
Intangible assets	0	0
	<u>0</u>	<u>22,000</u>

14. Commitments under leases

14.1 Operating leases

Total future minimum lease payments under operating leases are given in the table below for each of the following periods.

	2013-14 £	2012-13 £
Obligations under operating leases comprise:		
Buildings		
Not later than one year	336,000	336,000
Later than one year and not later than five years	1,344,000	1,344,000
Later than five years	784,460	1,120,230
Other:		
Not later than one year	4,426	4,426
Later than one year and not later than five years	2,868	7,291
Later than five years	0	0

14.2 Finance Leases

The Commission had no commitments under finance leases

15. Other financial commitments

The Commission had no other financial commitments at 31 March 2014.

16. Contingent liabilities disclosed under IAS 37

The Commission has no known contingent liabilities.

17. Losses and special payments

There were no losses or special payments made in the year or in the previous year.



18. Related-party transactions

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland is a non-departmental public body sponsored by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM). OFMDFM is regarded as a related party.

In addition, the Commission has had related transactions with other central government bodies.

During the year the Commission had various material transactions with;

- OFMDFM
(£6,246,000 of which £Nil was outstanding at the year end),
- the Northern Ireland Commission for Children and Young People
(£131,416 of which £Nil was outstanding at the year end),
- the Commission for Victims and Survivors
(£11,000 of which £Nil was outstanding at the year end),
- the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission
(£11,716 of which £Nil was outstanding at the year end),
- the Commission for Older People Northern Ireland
(£108,454 of which £9,326 was outstanding at the year end),
- the Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission
(£700 of which £Nil was outstanding at the year end),
- Northern Ireland Co-operation Overseas
(£1,539 of which £1,539 was outstanding at year end), and
- the Charities Commission for Northern Ireland
(£2,748 of which £Nil was outstanding at the year end).

No Commissioner or key management executive has undertaken any material transactions with the Equality Commission during the year.

There were no other related party transactions.



19. Third-party assets

The Commission has no third-party assets.

20. Events after the Reporting Period

There were no events after the reporting period impacting on these statements and the accounts are authorised for issue from the date the Comptroller and Auditor General signs his audit report.

Equality Commission

FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

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