



Equality Commission

FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

improving people's lives

ANNUAL REPORT
AND ACCOUNTS
2014 - 2015



**EQUALITY COMMISSION FOR
NORTHERN IRELAND**

Annual Report and Accounts

for the year ended
31 March 2015

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

30 July 2015



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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 fifteenth annual report of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, covering the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015. 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

The year just ended has seen some very high profile work by the Commission, but that should not obscure the fact that every day our staff and Commissioners are working towards our Corporate Plan pledge to 'improve people's lives'.

Much of this work goes unnoticed, involving staff colleagues working with all our stakeholders to ensure that members of the public understand their rights and including particularly employers and public authorities to ensure that equality legislation is embedded in best practice.

Our daily engagement with employers relating to delivering equality in the workplace remains a priority. Individuals continue to raise complaints of discrimination at work with us, and it's clear there is work to be done to ensure equality of opportunity in workplaces across Northern Ireland. In addition to undertaking equality training organised by the Commission, staff from businesses and public sector organisations have also liaised with us to develop employment equality plans, and contacted us for advice and assistance on compliance with equality laws and good practice. Leading employers in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics sectors have signed up to the STEM Charter, a partnership initiative with the Department of Employment and Learning, which aims to improve gender balance in those sectors.

Under the anti-discrimination legislative framework, our legal team dealt with over 3,300 enquiries from individuals, giving free and confidential advice to everyone who asked for it. Although the vast majority of these enquiries were able to be resolved without recourse to legal support, the Commission, under its Policy for the Provision of Legal Advice and Assistance, supported 59 individuals with their cases during the year.

In this context, we still get more complaints of disability discrimination than any other ground. One of the most fundamental ways in which inequalities faced by disabled people can be tackled is through encouraging full implementation by Government of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. To this end, during the year we have worked extensively with disabled people and their organisations to highlight areas which need attention. Our disability focus included a research publication highlighting shortfalls in public policy and service delivery relating to the Convention and a detailed contribution to the UN's examination of the UK's compliance with the Convention.



One of the more high profile cases which the Commission supported during the year, *Lee v Ashers Baking Company Ltd*, has been in the headlines over the period under review. This case raised issues of public importance regarding the extent to which suppliers of goods and services can refuse service on grounds of sexual orientation, religious belief and political opinion. The Court's decision (just outside the year reported on) confirms the legal responsibilities on all service providers not to discriminate against their customers on these grounds.


It is clear that the case raised some genuine concerns and as a result sparked wide-ranging discussion on the interface between religion and belief and sexual orientation in Northern Ireland. While recognising that this is an important discussion in which the Commission will engage, we are clear that whatever the outcome, there should be no diminution in protection from discrimination, and that freedom of conscience should not be read as freedom to discriminate.

In more general terms, the Commission believes that equality law continues to play a vital role in ensuring protection against discrimination in Northern Ireland and have urged that such protection is both clear and comprehensive.

For this reason, we welcomed the announcement by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister that a public consultation would take place on policy proposals to prohibit unjustifiable age discrimination against people aged 16 and over by those providing goods, facilities and services. That said, it was extremely disappointing that the proposal does not cover those under 16 years old. We hope that the public consultation will explore opportunities to extend its protection to those under 16.

The current Programme for Government is strong on its commitments to addressing inequalities but it appears that making clear and sustained progress by the Executive has been difficult this year. The Commission continues to press the Executive to bring forward important strategies on gender, childcare, race and sexual orientation – we believe there is a pressing need to make progress in these areas, and others, towards greater equality.

I reported in the last Annual Report that progress had been made to lay the ground work for the formation of a new Equality and Good Relations Commission. Unfortunately this year, further work on this was deferred by OFMDFM pending progress on the legislation to establish the Commission. While regrettable, the Commission remains committed to supporting the implementation of the Together Building a United Community Strategy as appropriate, as there is a real need to have a clear focus on the development and maintenance of good relations which is vitally important to address the remaining fault lines of our divided society.



This year, the Commission has continued to manage significant budget reductions and there is no doubt that challenges remain as a result of the economic downturn and reductions in public expenditure generally. It is imperative that we continue to find ways to ensure that our work to address inequalities is not undermined by financial pressures. To this end I would once again commend Chief Executive Dr Evelyn Collins CBE and her staff colleagues for the hard work and dedication shown in what has been a difficult financial climate.

The independence of a body like the Equality Commission should not be underestimated, in the political context in which we work. The Commission is a crucial part of the institutional architecture for promoting equality and tackling inequalities and discrimination in Northern Ireland.

In the coming year I will have said goodbye to eleven Commissioner colleagues whose terms of office have been completed. I want to publicly thank them all, particularly the Deputy Chief Commissioner, Jane Morrice, for all their hard work and support over my past three years. It has been a privilege to work with you all. I would also like to welcome my 11 new Commissioner colleagues to the team.

I commend this Annual Report to you; it details our activities last year in pursuit of our goal of a more equal Northern Ireland.



Michael Wardlow
Chief Commissioner



Annual Report 2014 - 2015



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 72. The Accounting Officer authorised these financial statements for issue on 25 June 2015.

The Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) requires the Commission to treat grant-in-aid as financing rather than income. £6,216,000 (2013-14, £6,246,000) was received from OFMDFM in the year.


Comprehensive expenditure for the year was £5,969,008 (2013-14, £6,179,575).

There has been a movement in the Taxpayers' Equity of £248,487; from a deficit of £180,622 at 31 March 2014, to a surplus of £67,865 at 31 March 2015. The main reason for this was a net increase in fixed assets and a substantial decrease in the provisions, largely the result of removing the provision for severance and a smaller reduction in the provision for assisting legal complaints.

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 2015-16 has been approved and a budget is in place covering the next twelve months. Financial and staffing forecasts and scenarios have been prepared covering the next three years. A business case has been prepared to allow access to the Public Sector Restructuring Fund. Management accounts are prepared on a monthly and quarterly basis and, in the event of in-year budget reductions, the planning process can facilitate timely remedial actions. Formal arrangements for regular and frequent liaison with the Departmental sponsorship team are in place and there are no known events or conditions which would cast doubt on the Commission's ability to continue as a going concern.

The Commission was set the financial target by its Sponsoring Department of remaining within 0.5% (£30k) of its resource allocation. At the year end there was an under spend of 1.07%. This resulted from a reduction in the year end legal assistance provision (£15k), the receipt of an additional £20k in grant-in-aid near the year end and a greater than anticipated reduction in staffing levels due to Voluntary Exits in the final quarter.

There was a cash outturn variance of only £25.3k (0.39%). This was largely due to late payment of back pay, resulting from delay in the approval process.



During 2014-15 income of £245,605 was generated. Approval for retaining this income was obtained from the Sponsoring Department.

Business Review

In the context of continuing reductions in the Commission's budget, the upward pressure of staff costs continues to be the main challenge which the Commission faces. Due to the early initiation of a Voluntary Exit programme, funded from the Commission's own cash allocation in 2014-15, this pressure will be somewhat less intense over the coming year.

The reduction in full time equivalent (fte) posts reported in recent years continues. This year saw a further reduction in the average fte headcount from 110 to 105 posts. Due to the termination of contracts arising from the voluntary exits occurring late in the year, the reduction in the average fte headcount will continue into 2015-16.

This year expenditure on Staff and Commissioners' costs was £4,460,722, a decrease of £31,075 in net staffing costs compared with last year. The decrease was a consequence of the overall reduction in staff numbers, although many of these left near the year end and an increase in the holiday pay accrual resulting from a required change to the method of calculation.

During 2015-16 the Commission will continue to monitor and address upward pressure on staff costs by reducing the overall headcount in a planned and systematic way, and on a voluntary basis. To assist this process, we anticipate being able to access the Public Sector Restructuring Fund. We may also need to provide for the recruitment of a small number of key posts in some business areas.

The Voluntary Exits in 2014-15 were all on the basis of the Civil Service compensation scheme and no special severance payments were involved. Approval from OFMDFM was obtained. Information on the exit packages, as required, is included in the Remuneration Report.

Performance against Targets

This was the final year of the Commission's Corporate Plan for 2012 -15, 'Improving People's Lives'. In line with the 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



An additional objective in relation to influencing, advising and challenging Government and public authorities towards advancing Good Relations in Northern Ireland was added to the Business Plan this year.

In this year's Business Plan, across each of the Strategic Areas a number of high level objectives were developed. In total 20 objectives were included in the Business Plan 2014-15. Of the 20 objectives set, by the end of the year, 17 (85%) were fully met and three (15%) partly met.

The partly met objectives related to the negative tone of some of print and broadcast media coverage which meant we did not achieve the 80% positivity rating target, delays in the delivery of aspects of our work in relation to a review of the Commission's investigation powers and operational work in this area, as well as not meeting the timetables for some of our business improvement targets.


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

Likely Future Developments

The new financial year will see substantial changes to membership of the Commission. At the year end, recruitment by the Northern Ireland Office for the new Commissioners was ongoing and staff were engaged in developing an induction programme, including governance training, to be delivered in 2015-16.

In May 2013 OFMDFM published its Together: Building a United Community Strategy. The strategy included a proposal to augment the Commission's statutory remit and create a new Equality and Good Relations Commission with additional responsibilities relating to good relations. During the early part of 2014-15, work on these proposals was undertaken, with OFMDFM and the Community Relations Council, but in September 2014 further work was deferred by OFMDFM pending progress on the proposed legislation to establish the new Commission. It now appears unlikely that there will be a new Equality and Good Relations Commission in the foreseeable future. The Equality Commission has been asked by OFMDFM to deliver aspects of the work planned for the Equality and Good Relations Commission within its existing statutory remit and resources. At the end of the year, discussion on this was ongoing.

It is anticipated that the Executive's Reform of Property Management project will impact on the Commission. It is understood that, although the Commission will remain in Equality House until the lease ends in 2021, there may be changes to the lease arrangements. There may also be changes to the space utilised by the Commission in the building. Discussions with the Strategic Investment Board staff overseeing the project and the OFMDFM Sponsoring Team will continue into 2015-16.



The scope for significant additional sharing of common and core services will be dependent upon the outcome of discussions with the project team and the scope, scale and timing of proposals for the use of Equality House. Constraints due to the impact of the pressures on the Commission's own staff resource and the potential impact of crossing VAT registration thresholds are likely to remain.

■ 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 works 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 19,097 kilos in 2014-15 to 17,819 kilos, the percentage of waste recycled fell from 54% to 49%. This represents a reduction in the production of waste of 6.7% from last year and a reduction of 26% over a three year period.


The reduction in the percentage of waste recycled is primarily due to the marked reduction in the amount of obsolete printed material produced by the Commission. The recent focus on online materials and communication via social media has resulted in fewer hard copies being produced and therefore less waste.

The Commission’s waste and recycling figures for recent years are summarised in the table below.

Year	Total Waste (kilos)	Total Recycled (kilos)	%
2014-15	17,819	8,735	49.0
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, was retained with a slight improvement to an overall score of 63. The Commission has been advised that this level is 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 2014-15 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.



The Commission continues to recycle waste toner and ink cartridges through a third party with proceeds going to the Commission's nominated charities, MacMillan Cancer Support and the Northern Ireland Hospice. In addition, obsolete toner was donated to aid these charities in their important work. The Commission's Cycle to Work scheme now involves 10% of the workforce.

Following public tender, a new contract for facilities management was put in place. The new contract, which comes into effect in April 2015, places a requirement on the provider to adhere to economic, environmental and social clauses in accordance with the Sustainable Development Strategy for Northern Ireland.

Social and Community

Commission staff continued to raise funds for its two nominated charities, MacMillan and the Children's Hospice. At Christmas, a staff event raised nearly £300 for the staff charities and many gifts were donated for the Salvation Army/St Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal. Across the year various staff events brought our charitable donations this year to almost £1,000.

Workplace

The Commission is committed to providing a healthy and safe working environment. During the year under review, a number of initiatives were taken, including:

- Over 60% of Commission staff participated in a health event led by the Northern Ireland Chest Heart and Stroke Association which facilitated a range of important health checks that staff found beneficial.
- The Commission's new Assessing Performance and Promoting Development programme continued into its second year with greater focus on identifying and meeting staff development needs and strengthening the links between personal, team and corporate objectives.
- During the year 90 staff engaged in 92 training events and improvements to the Learning and Development processes led to less paperwork, more focused funding and increased ability to analyse feedback and to share learning.
- 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.

Staff also continue to have access to a wide range of flexible working arrangements in line with Northern Ireland Civil Service (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 by sex and community background 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.



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 Officer
25 June 2015



■ 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 present Chief Commissioner is Dr. Michael Wardlow and the Deputy Chief Commissioner, Ms. Jane Morrice.

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

Commission and Chief Commissioner

The following individuals set out in the table below served as members of the Commission during the reporting period. At the end of the year, nine of the Commissioners were male and seven female.

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 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	8
Stella Burnside		10	8
Fidelma Carolan		10	10
Anna Carragher		10	8
Kit Chivers		10	10
Patricia Feeney		10	8
Milton Kerr		10	9
Charo Lanao-Madden		10	5
Lyn Mc Briar		10	8
Stephen McIlveen		10	8
Liam Maskey		10	7
Dermot Nesbitt		10	10
Peter Sheridan		10	9
Norman Trotter		10	7
Murray Watt		10	9

Management Executive

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

The composition of the Management Executive by sex and community background, as well as the composition of all employees is included at Appendix 2.

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 two Committees of the Commission in addition to an Audit and Risk Committee

- Legal Funding Committee
- Statutory Duties Investigation 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.

Remuneration to auditors

There was no remuneration paid to the auditors for any non-audit work undertaken. No non-audit work was undertaken by the auditors.


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 97.8% of bills were paid within the thirty day standard, 82.9% of the total bills received were paid within 10 days. The comparative figures for 2013-14 were 96.3% and 80.5%.

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 46 Freedom of Information requests and 13 data protection requests all of which were responded to within the statutory time limits, except on two occasions when 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 Northern Ireland Civil Service. The Commission has a Managing Attendance Policy and provides training to Managers and other staff on its operation.

The Commission's number of average days lost in 2014-15 was 17.6 days, a substantial increase on last year's 10.4 days. Of the 17.6 days lost, 11 days lost related to long term absence (more than 20 days) and 6.6 days lost to short term absence (20 days or less).

There was an improvement during the course of the year and the figure for those staff in employment with the Commission on 31 March 2015 was 13.8 days. It is anticipated that this improvement will continue into 2015-16 and the Commission will continue working to reduce sickness absence levels during 2015-16.


During the year two staff retired early on grounds of ill-health.

Complaints Procedure

The Commission has in place a formal procedure for dealing with service complaints. The procedure has three formal stages, culminating in a final appeal to the Chief Executive. The procedure provides general advice to assist potential complainants and includes a Complaints Form and how to contact the Commission's Complaints Co-ordinator. The Complaints Co-ordinator can assist with further guidance.

Should complaints not be resolved through the internal procedure, they may be referred to the Commissioner for Complaints.

Information on complaints dealt with via the procedure is reported in the Annual Report.



During 2014-15, the Commission received three complaints from the public under its Complaints Procedure. Each of these was resolved at an early stage. During the year, an Ombudsman investigation of a complaint against the Commission was underway and, at the year end, was ongoing.

During 2015-16 a review of the Commission's complaints handling procedures will be included in the annual audit plan.

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
25 June 2015



Progress against agreed Key Performance Indicators

This is the final 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 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.

Further detail of the delivery in each of the Key Output areas in 2014-15 is included in the following pages.



1. Addressing Key Inequalities

This is the third and final year of the 2012-15 Corporate Plan. In accordance with its corporate objectives 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.

The Commission's work is grounded on the identification of key inequalities, upon which the formulation of recommendations can be made to influence policy making, based upon a strong evidence base. Work this year focused on the development of a series of Statements on Key Inequalities in the social policy areas of: employment, education, housing and communities, and participation in public life.

Over the period of the Corporate Plan independent research reports have been commissioned on, 'Inequalities in Employment in Northern Ireland' undertaken by Employment Research Institute at Edinburgh Napier University; 'Inequalities in Education in Northern Ireland' undertaken by Queen's University, Belfast; 'Inequalities in Housing and Communities in Northern Ireland' by the Centre for Housing Policy at University of York, and 'Inequalities in Participation in Public Life in Northern Ireland' by Ipsos Mori, Belfast.

Summarised below is the progress set out against the supporting annual Business Plan objectives during 2014-15.

Developing the research and evidence base

During 2014-15 final reports were received for the education, housing and participation in public life projects. These will be published in 2015-16, along with draft statements on key inequalities. The Commission will also initiate a programme of engagement with stakeholders on these draft statements.

The Commission also initiated research on 'Prejudice in Northern Ireland', and will be inviting tenders for research into 'Inequalities in Health and Social Care'. The projects are due to be completed in 2016-17.

On an annual basis, the Commission 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 2013', was launched in December 2014. 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 NI 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 equality grounds and to shape the development of Government policy, including through subsequent equality and good relations focused responses to public consultations.

Disability

Following 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 with OFMDFM, its partners in the Independent Mechanism and wider disability stakeholders to maximise the implementation of the Strategy and the obligations placed on Government under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

In 2014-15, the Commission launched its research on key gaps in policies and programmes relative to the requirements of the UNCRPD. The Commission has disseminated the Northern Ireland 'Parallel' Jurisdictional Report Working Paper and the UK Independent Mechanism (UKIM) 'List of Issues' interim report. The Commission has also undertaken engagement with stakeholders and officials on key issues to be addressed in implementation of the Executive's Disability Strategy.

Race

The Commission's policy positions on racial equality were widely disseminated following engagement with stakeholders from the black and minority ethnic sectors and formed the basis of our response to OFMDFM's consultation on both the draft Racial Equality Strategy and Racial Equality Indicators. We also participated in the Common Platform on the Racial Equality Strategy (RES), a network of organisations working for and with people from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds living and working in Northern Ireland. The Commission also participated in the OFMDFM Racial Equality Panel.

A number of Commission positions have been accepted by stakeholders and/or adopted by Government; key themes have been noted by OFMDFM officials in evidence at OFMDFM Committee meetings covering topics related to the need for reform of the racial equality laws, for a refugee integration strategy and for Roma and Traveller strategies.



Sexual Orientation

The Commission developed, refined and launched its Sexual Orientation policy position following extensive engagement. The policy paper was disseminated and used to inform the Commission's response to the OFMDFM consultation on its draft Sexual Orientation Strategy. The Commission is awaiting the outcome of the OFMDFM consultation. During the year, staff actively participated in the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Forum.

There was some evidence of a high level of acceptance and awareness of the Commission's positions, including through feedback from our roundtable engagements.

Gender

The Commission has an ongoing engagement with key stakeholders through participation in the OFMDFM Gender Advisory Panel and the ad hoc Women's Policy Group.

The Commission actively contributed to the development of a draft Gender Equality Strategy, through responding to the draft OFMDFM discussion paper on the strategy, as well as evidence to the Assembly and Executive Review Committee Inquiry on 'Women in Politics and the Northern Ireland Assembly'.

The Commission also provided responses to the consultation on a draft Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy, jointly undertaken by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) and the Department of Justice (DOJ), and to the DOJ consultation on changes to the criminal law on abortion.

Embedding Equality and Good Relations in wider Government Policy

Another key aspect of the work is engagement with 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 welfare reform in the Northern Ireland Assembly and in civil society, as well as relevant policy developments in Great Britain.

The Commission has highlighted the impact of welfare reform on disabled people in Northern Ireland in the UKIM draft 'List of Issues' paper for the UNCRPD Committee.



Furthermore, the Commission, as part of the Independent Mechanism for Northern Ireland (IMNI), made a submission on welfare reform to the CRPD inquiry under the Optional Protocol of the UNCRPD. The Commission is awaiting the outcome of interparty talks and subsequent Assembly consideration stage of a Welfare Reform Bill following on from the Stormont House Agreement. It will continue to press for adequate assessment of the impact of welfare reform and the development of mitigating measures to address any adverse impact.

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

The Commission made a submission to the inquiry by Northern Ireland Assembly Employment and Learning Committee on post SEN provision. The Commission also engaged with the Department of Education (DENI), as part of the Children's Rights Implementation Group (CRIG) working group, on the SEN reform framework.

Health and social care reform

Health issues for disabled people in Northern Ireland were also highlighted in the UKIM draft List of Issues paper for the UNCRPD Committee and this has been shared with key officials and other stakeholders.

Embedding Equality in the work of Government

The Commission also seeks opportunities to embed equality and good relations considerations in how Government works. A key area during this year was community planning and local government reform.

The Commission responded to the Department for the Environment (DOENI) consultation on the Northern Ireland Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors. It also provided advice to the Standards and Privileges Committee on the Code of Conduct of the Northern Ireland Assembly. The Commission also responded to the DOENI consultation on Local Government (Executive Arrangements) Regulations.

The Commission continues to engage stakeholders, working with organisations such as Community Places. It has also engaged with DOENI on draft community planning guidance, and on the pre-consultation and public consultation of the same.

Building support for legislative reform

Building on work undertaken in previous years, 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 on grounds of age (Age GFS).



The Commission has been proactive in engaging with political parties and the OFMDFM Junior Ministers, and provided evidence to the OFMDFM Assembly Committee on the introduction of legislation to extend protection against discrimination on the grounds of age into the area of goods, facilities and services. It also provided proposals for law reform in our response to the OFMDFM draft Active Ageing Strategy. As part of participation in the Children's Rights Implementation Group (CRIG), the Commission undertook engagement with the children and young people sector on Age GFS reform. In February 2015 OFMDFM confirmed its intention to consult on proposals to bring forward Age GFS legislation, covering those aged 16 plus, in 2015-16.

A report on older people's experiences when accessing goods and services was prepared and disseminated to key stakeholders. Law reform case studies, including online video content were produced and disseminated.

Disability law reform case studies, including video, have also been made available online and disseminated.

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 the 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'. In 2014-15, a final report was produced and disseminated.

A range of other substantive papers were produced and engagement events undertaken to inform stakeholders and promote this key area of work. The draft UKIM List of Issues Paper and NI Jurisdictional Report were shared with the UNCRPD Rapporteur for the UK. Ongoing engagement took place with stakeholders regarding UN delays in considering the State Party report and linking to our UKIM and IMNI reports.

In respect of the Executive's Disability Strategy, we have provided written comments on proposed indicators to OFMDFM officials at the Monitoring and Evaluation Sub Group. We also made response to consultation by OFMDFM on Annual Indicators for the Disability Strategy. We await a progress report on implementation of the strategy.



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

In respect of our CEDAW recommendations, the Commission has engaged with key stakeholders as part of participation in the OFMDFM Gender Advisory Panel and the ad hoc Women's Policy Group. It has also engaged with OFMDFM regarding our CEDAW recommendations in the context of the draft Gender Strategy.

The Commission's CEDAW recommendations were raised in response to DOJ/DHSSPS consultation on their draft Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy. They were also referred to, as part of our evidence to the Assembly and Executive Review Committee Inquiry on 'Women in Politics and the Northern Ireland Assembly'.

Advancing Good Relations

In 2014-15 the Commission decided to focus on the additional cross-cutting strategic area of advancing good relations; reflected in the business plan through a specific objective to influence, provide advice and challenge Government and public authorities towards advancing good relations in Northern Ireland.

The Commission contributed, in conjunction with the OFMDFM and Community Relations Council, to the preparatory work for establishing an Equality and Good Relations Commission as set out in the Executive's strategy – Together: Building a United Community (TBUC).

Discussions on this, through the auspices of the Transition Board, were postponed in September 2014 until the legislation for the establishment of the Equality and Good Relations Commission is progressed.

The Commission's work in relation to the TBUC strategy enabled:

- confirmation of the need for clarity in understanding the meaning of good relations, and therefore the necessity for a legal definition;
- engagement with key stakeholders on defining good relations; and
- evidence submitted to the Assembly Committee for the Office of First and Deputy First Minister's Inquiry into Building a United Community.

The Commission developed further relevant public policy positions on good relations, culture and identity to influence public service delivery. In particular:

- a policy position paper on the Framework Convention for National Minorities was developed;
- key messages on good relations, such as for the display of flags and emblems, were communicated;



- we engaged with the Department of Education and the Assembly's agenda on shared education;
- the Commission's position on the importance of leadership to advance good relations was reinforced, particularly in the context of the new Councils' Code of Conduct for Councillors.

The Commission continued to provide advice to public authorities and others on the statutory equality and good relations duties, and worked with the Community Relations Council to identify areas of coherence in our respective services to District Councils during the District Council reform period.

Communications and Promotion

The Commission's work continued to be covered extensively in the media this year. The Commission's work was referenced in 705 pieces of coverage across print and broadcast media this year. This was an increase of 177% from the 255 pieces the previous year.

The most prominent story in the media related to the Commission's support in the case of Lee v Ashers Baking Company Ltd. Media coverage of the case started in early July and stories ran across the remainder of the year. The story was covered by broadcast and print outlets across Northern Ireland at a number of periods during the year including extensive coverage in all the NI national dailies, news programmes and chat shows and current affairs.

Many of the major media outlets in GB, Europe and across the world carried high profile pieces on the story. BBC R4 dedicated a 30-minute programme to the issue.

Although a considerable amount of ill informed comment has been reported, as the story progressed throughout the year, coverage became better informed. The case was heard in March 2015 and, at the end of the year, a decision was awaited.

The Commission's response to the consultation by a Private Member on a Freedom of Conscience Amendment Bill, which proposed amending the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006, provided the Commission with the opportunity to provide an expert and authoritative view of the issues raised. The response was well received and extensively covered in the media.

The launch of the Commission's formal investigation under the Sex Discrimination Order (NI) 1976 into the treatment of pregnant workers and mothers in workplaces across Northern Ireland generated positive coverage, including online. The launch was covered by all daily papers in Northern Ireland and interviews with the Chief Commissioner and the Head of Legal Services were featured on TV and radio.



The issue of Newry and Mourne District Council's compliance with its equality scheme, in relation to its decision to name a play park after hunger striker Raymond McCreech, also generated a significant amount of media interest during this year.

Other significant matters of interest included: the Commission's response to comments on Islam by Pastor McConnell and the response of the First Minister to these and the Commission's views on the impact on good relations of comments about equality made by a number of public figures during the year. In relation to good relations, the Commission also placed an article in the Irish News on the display of flags and emblems at the start of November. The Chief Commissioner also wrote a piece for An Phoblacht entitled "Uncomfortable Conversations".

Less controversial and high profile were the publication of the annual Fair Employment Monitoring Report, the Commission's work in relation to STEM initiatives, Women in Business and the general issue of gender equality in the workplace.

Website

The new website, which was launched in March 2014, enjoyed a significant increase in traffic over the year. In each quarter, the number of visitors and page views was higher than in the previous one.

Over the course of the year the website saw four notable peaks in traffic. These coincided with Pastor McConnell's comment about Islam, the First Minister's response in support of his views, the initial interest in the Lee v Ashers Baking Co Ltd. case being covered for the first time in the media and the issuing of an employer ezine which featured an equality law update and range of new training sessions.

The Commission's statement, confirming that it was going to proceed with the Lee v Ashers Baking Co. Ltd case, saw the largest spike in interest with approx 1,000 visitors (80% of which were new) making approximately 4,000 web page views.

The website and social media continues to be a useful way of engaging with groups such as the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) sector that are more difficult to reach using more traditional methods.

During 2015-16 work will continue to develop the website to ensure that it meets the needs of all stakeholders.

Ezine

Twenty ezines were issued in total this year, up from the 16 sent last year. The average opening rate was 23%, slightly higher than the industry average. The majority of Commission ezines include matters of interest to the wide range of Commission



stakeholders. A number are focused on specific groups, such as employers and service providers or MLAs. The total number of ezine subscribers across all stakeholder groups now stands at 6,800.

Twitter

There was a renewed focus on developing the Commission's Twitter channels and engagement was improved through using Twitter more proactively to communicate the Commission's full range of work. This approach has increased the number of people following the Commission on Twitter, with followers rising steadily to 3,203, an increase of 48% since April 2014.

During 2014-15, a review of the Commission's use of social media was undertaken and guidance from the review will be implemented in the coming year.

Stakeholder engagement

In addition to the day to day operational interaction, which forms the bulk of the Commission's engagement with key stakeholders, the Commission seeks to build positive relationships with leaders and opinion formers in the political and civic spheres, including with church leaders this year. This is particularly important against the context of the Commission's work on issues that are perceived as unpopular or controversial.

The Commission rolled out an engagement programme in support of its policy agenda with representative organisations, including elected representatives, through roundtables, seminars and partnership events.

Since the beginning of the year, the Commission attended a total of 65 public facing events. Such participation is used to raise awareness of the Commission's role and services and events involved all key target audiences. Over the year, staff engaged directly with approximately 6,450 individuals and over 2,000 students through Freshers and other Students' Union events.

Highlights for this year included the Mela and Ubuntu multi-cultural festivals, the Chinese New Year, Community Relations Week events organised by Derry City Council, Anti-Homophobia and Transphobia Week, the Rainbow organised Families in Europe conference, the first ever Disability Pride event, the biennial Disability Exhibition organised by Disability Action, disability advice events with Omnibus Partnership, the International Business Women's conference organised by Women in Business and a number of International Women's Day events, to name some.

The Commission continued to deliver talks in schools and colleges through its – Do You Mean Me? - initiative. The Commission also attended the Northern Ireland Schools and Colleges Careers Association autumn conference.



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.

The Commission also continued to deliver its 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 made in delivering its objectives in 2014-15.

Working with others to improve equality practices

During 2014-15, the Commission oversaw 205 improvements in employment practices with nearly 100 employers. These were the result of following up settlements agreed at the conclusion of cases alleging discrimination, reviewing with employers the findings of their FETO Article 55 reviews, as well as advisory work following training, conferences and network meetings.

The Commission also provided advice to 85 employers following receipt of their FETO Article 55 Reviews and considered 13 progress reports on affirmative action.

Other Engagement and Partnership Working

Given the statutory equality and good relations duties on public authorities, there is an inter-relationship between the general employment work undertaken by Commission staff and the section 75 advice which is also provided. Key areas of work included this year included:

Central Government: The Commission worked with the Equality Practitioners Group. This is facilitated by OFMDFM to advise on equality issues, and includes representatives of all government departments. Additionally, work was undertaken with individual departments.

The Commission advised the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) on the review of its apprenticeship scheme and on encouraging more women to apply for non-traditional apprenticeship opportunities.



Workshops were also provided for employment service staff in DEL to improve equality awareness, particularly in relation to disabled jobseekers. Further advice was also provided on disability issues in pre-employment training.

OFMDFM was provided with extensive section 75 advice in the context of eight key policy consultations. Staff also provided advice to the quarterly Department for Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) Equality Forum. A workshop was held with policy staff in the Department for Social Development (DSD) to advise on mainstreaming equality in policy development. Advice was also provided to the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) on high level screening of budget decisions.


Local Government: The Commission is a member of the Local Government Equality and Diversity Steering Group and the Local Government Staff Commission (LGSC) Statutory Duty Network. The Commission also met with the newly appointed Chief Executives of the new Councils to advise on their equality responsibilities.

Criminal Justice: The Commission continued its engagement with the Police Service for Northern Ireland (PSNI) on a range of issues, including section 75 screening and the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) of the PSNI resourcing model.

It also provided advice to the Department of Justice (DOJ) on the section 75 aspects of a number of consultations, including the consultation on the proposed amendment to the criminal law on abortion legislation. Staff attended the Equality Group meetings in relation to each of the prison establishments, which continue to review monitoring data on the outcomes of discipline, education, work allocation and compassionate leave. In addition, staff provided advice on the equality screening of prison policies.

Advice was also provided to the Criminal Justice Inspectorate and the Police Ombudsman in relation to monitoring under section 75. Advice on screening was provided to the Northern Ireland Policing Board and the Probation Board. The Police and Community Partnerships (PCSP) were provided with feedback on their section 75 annual progress reports.

Health: The Commission maintained regular contact with practitioners in the health sector. In this year, advice has included annual meetings with the Health and Social Care sector's Business Services Organisation (BSO) and the organisations with which it has service level agreements, the DHSSPS, the five Health and Social Care Trusts (HSCT) and the NI Fire and Rescue Service. This advice has covered a range of matters including screening templates, complying with section 75 duties, annual reporting information as well as providing feedback to the five Health and Social Care Trusts on their draft section 75 audits of inequalities and resulting section 75 action plans and Disability Action Plans. Commission staff also attended the Belfast HSCT



Good Relations working group and delivered an advice clinic at the Public Health Agency conference.

Education and Skills: The Commission continued to provide advice to the education sector in preparation for the formation of the new Education Authority (EA). During the year this work has included delivering four workshop sessions with the Education & Library Boards and a master class for senior staff from each of the Boards. Advice was also provided to each of the Further Education and Higher Education providers and the NI Library Authority. The Commission also participated at an event marking ten years of the Joint Consultative Forum in the education sector.

Employability Initiatives: The Commission is represented on the Social Clause Delivery Forum and the Care to Careers Regional Steering group (led by DEL) and engages with other groups such as GEMS (NI).

During this period the work included:

- South Belfast Economic Forum: social clause contracts for the long term unemployed – engagement on procurement issues at Windsor Park and Casement Park
- Southern Health and Social Care Trust: social clause contracts for looked after children – current engagement on provision of six placements in Banbridge Health Centre
- Concentrix/BT: employability apprenticeship scheme
- Simon Community: apprenticeship scheme for service users.
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE): opportunities for work placements for homeless people
- Regional Employability Group: attended two meetings.
- Belfast City Council: responded to social clause policy consultation.

Goods, Facilities and Services

During 2014-15 the Commission commenced a programme of activities to assist service providers improve their accessibility and service delivery practices for disabled people. This included the publication of a range of advisory publications aimed at service providers. These included examples of good practice in service provision, a template service delivery policy, a statement of commitment and an audit tool to assist service providers to develop and implement improvements specific to their situation.

The Commission also developed a programme of work on disability access with small service providers in Newtownards. The initiative - Every Customer Counts - was launched in Newtownards with the support of Ards Borough Council. The launch was attended by service providers and other agencies, such as Council Building Control and the local Chamber of Commerce.



There is ongoing contact with local traders in Newtownards to encourage them to conduct service provision audits. Customer care training has been provided to a range of service providers in the town and a further service provision clinic was held there.

By the end of the year, eleven service providers have made a commitment to equal access for all service users, one service provision audit has been completed and one service provision policy has been developed. The project will continue in 2015-16 and planning for this is underway, based on an evaluation of the work to date. A webpage has been developed to support the initiative.

Encouraging women into STEM careers (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics): This initiative followed on from a partnership event with the STEM Business Group and DEL and is targeted at recruiting women into STEM industries.

A STEM Charter was jointly launched by the DEL co-ordinated STEM Business Group and the Equality Commission in June 2014. Thirty leading employers in the STEM sector in Northern Ireland have now signed up to the Charter to demonstrate their commitment to improving the gender balance in their business. A STEM network of employers has been developed to enable the employers to share best practice. The network has met twice during this year and its work has focused on mentoring and coaching.

Advisory service

This year staff responded to 3,269 telephone enquiries. The majority of these calls related to enquiries about Article 55 Reviews, FETO monitoring, training requests and the statutory equality and good relations duties.

The Commission also continued to provide a comprehensive training programme for employers and service providers. Commission staff provided 111 training and information sessions, employer networks and seminars. In total these sessions attracted 1,313 attendees representing 382 employers from across Northern Ireland.

The Commission also delivered 25 other employer events which attracted 724 attendees representing 327 employers. Some of these events were partnership events, and included the STEM initiative with the STEM Business Group and DEL and an event focusing on employability and disability, run in partnership with Belfast City Council. The Commission also organised an event to consider good employment practices for migrant workers and two events focusing on statutory equality and good relations duties.



The Commission continues to develop its web based guidance to support employer advisory services. Two further guidance notes for public authorities were developed in this period to assist them to comply with their statutory equality and good relations duties.

There was a range of initiatives focused at small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). The Commission facilitated a roundtable event in partnership with Business in the Community which was attended by other public sector organisations that provide services to small businesses – Labour Relations Agency (LRA), Health and Safety Executive, HM Revenue and Customs and the Social Security Agency. It is planned to undertake similar joined-up working with the SME sector.

The Commission also provided input to a series of information sessions for SMEs, including Federation of Small Business (FSB) meetings, local solicitors' associations, Women into Business and Derry Enterprise week.

The Commission also continued to promote model employment equality policies aimed at small and medium sized employers and to promote the range of our services to small businesses through the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce, local enterprise agencies, Business in the Community and the LRA.

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 2014-15, 24 settlements were passed to advisory staff for follow up and work was completed on three settlements received in 2013-14. By the year end work with 20 of these had been completed, with action on the remaining seven ongoing.

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 15,564 phone calls and items of correspondence on compliance issues. Of the 3,652 Monitoring Returns received this year from employers, by the year end 3,472 had been audited, with more than 99% in compliance.



The Commission received 136 Article 55 employer reviews during 2013-14. Employers' compliance with their Article 55 Review requirements was consistently high and, of the 136 reviews received, 129 had been audited by the year end and 125 (96.9%) were in compliance. Advice is being provided to the four employers to enable them to comply.

Section 75 Statutory equality and good relations duties

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.

The Commission worked with the local government sector this year in preparation for the establishment of the eleven new Councils. The Commission provided advice to the Councils, working in shadow form and responded to all of the new local Councils' draft equality schemes. The Commission approved eight equality schemes for the new Councils in this year with negotiations on their schemes ongoing with the remaining three councils.

The Commission implemented actions from its strategic plan to monitor public authority compliance with equality scheme commitments. These actions included:

- **Providing advice** to the bulk of public authorities, that is all of the NI government departments, local councils, and the main organisations in each of the sectors. This includes meetings with 171 public authorities and written advice to a further seven public authorities with an approved Equality Scheme. The Commission has also had engagement with two designated public authorities, which currently do not have an agreed equality scheme with the aim of progressing their equality scheme submission. Public authorities have in the main positively engaged with the Commission on their section 75 duties and this engagement has increased over the year with the development of a client officer caseload approach. The main areas for Commission engagement have been on the meaning and application of the due regard and regard duties; screening, monitoring, consultation and training. The Commission has provided feedback to public authorities on their annual progress reports and has provided advice on 105 screening reports and it will be evaluating the section 75 practices in 2015-16.

- **Providing training** for public authorities on the duties and other events focusing on public sector duties, that is, reviewing the annual report template and sharing good practice disability action measures.
- **Producing guidance notes** to assist public authorities to implement their section 75 duties. Two were produced this year, covering specific advice on the concepts of due regard and regard and the application of the section 75 duties to setting budgets. The Commission also wrote to all government departments and to the Head of the NICS to emphasise the importance of ensuring the effective application of the section 75 duties to the budgeting policies.
- **Consulting** with public authorities to review the template used to enable public authorities to complete their annual reports of progress, as required by their scheme commitments. The revised template was piloted by a number of public authorities in 2014 and will be used by public authorities to report on their progress in 2015. In reviewing the annual reporting template, the Commission aimed to ensure that the annual progress reports were of value to the public authority and its stakeholders in terms of reporting on scheme commitments and ensuring accessibility of information.

The Commission will be evaluating its engagement over this period so that it may further tailor its services and guidance to public authorities' requirements.

Public Sector Disability Duty

In relation to the public sector disability duty, 171(96%) of the 178 public authorities that are required to have a Disability Action Plan (DAP), have a Disability Action Plan in place.

The Commission reviewed 83 of these DAPs in this business year with the aim of engaging with public authorities to ensure that the action measures contained in the plans are appropriate to the duty.

The Commission provided advice to 68 public authorities on their existing DAPs and has input to a further 40 public authorities consulting on revised DAPs. The Commission held an event to share examples of good practice action measures arising from Disability Action Plans during the year. This event was attended by over 100 public authorities.

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 2014-15, a total of 24 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.

Six written complaints were initiated by individuals under Paragraph 10 of Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act. Following consideration, two of these have not been authorised for investigation. As required under the legislation, those complainants were provided with reasons for not investigating. Two of the complaints were authorised and these investigations are on-going at the year end. The further two complaints remain to be considered as additional information has been requested.

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. This was in relation to the Department of Social Development's Housing Strategy and related policies. At the year end, this investigation was ongoing.

Two Paragraph 11 investigations were finalised and completed – University of Ulster and Newry and Mourne District Council. In the former, the Investigation concluded that there was not a breach of equality scheme commitments.

In the latter, recommendations were issued following a finding that the Council had breached its equality scheme commitments. The Commission recommended that the name of the Play Park in Patrick Street be reviewed. The Council carried out this review by March 2015. The investigation report had also recommended that the Council review its naming policies generally and had agreed that this could be conducted by the new Newry, Mourne and Down Council in 2015-16.

Other investigatory powers

A Formal Investigation entitled “Expecting Equality” conducted 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 launched on 15 January 2015.

Focus groups were held across Northern Ireland and an online survey was undertaken. The survey was completed by 935 women who were pregnant within the last five years. The investigation is currently gathering information from employers, trade unions and voluntary associations. The investigation is expected to conclude by 31 March 2016.

A review of the Commission's strategic approach to the use of its investigation powers was completed. The recommendations will be considered in the coming year.



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 2014-15.

Advice to potential complainants

During the year the Commission provided advice to 3,313 people in response to discrimination queries, a similar figure to last year. Of those enquiries within the Commission's remit 39% were in relation to disability (including the Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order, (SENDO); 27% related to gender; 13% to religious belief/political opinion, 11% to race; 8% to age; and 2% related to sexual orientation. This pattern is very similar to enquiries in previous years.

Enquirers were advised on their rights and remedies, jurisdiction, time limits, lodgement of proceedings, informal resolution and the role of the Equality Commission in providing assistance with litigation. Customer satisfaction continues to be monitored and an on-line feedback form is in development.

Assisting complainants

A number of those who sought advice did not resolve their problems informally and sought assistance to pursue a legal case (8.6%). During the course of the year, 286 applications were considered by a Legal Funding Committee and 59 (20.6%) were granted assistance, under the terms of the Commission's Policy on the Provision of Legal Advice and Assistance. This is a reduction from previous years and is reflective of the extent to which the applications for assistance received met, or did not meet, the strategic grounds for the grant of assistance.

During 2014-15, cases brought by 45 individuals were concluded. In 42 of these, a satisfactory outcome was achieved (93%). Successful outcomes include appropriate compensation and agreements reached with respondents to undertake revisions to practices and procedures. These agreements may have a wider positive impact than simply the particular circumstances of the complaint being settled.

During 2014-15, seven cases of alleged discrimination in employment supported by the Equality Commission were heard by tribunals and courts in Northern Ireland. Of these cases, three were upheld by the tribunals and compensation awarded; one case was dismissed; two were awaiting judgement at the year end. At an appeal hearing the Court of Appeal remitted part of a case for a re-hearing in the tribunal.



All three of the cases upheld related to sex discrimination and a total of £44,215 was awarded in compensation.

A further five cases of alleged discrimination in goods, facilities or services were heard in the county courts. Two of these were upheld, two were dismissed and one - Lee v Ashers Baking Co. Ltd., was awaiting judgement at the end of the business year. Both of the County Court cases involved discrimination against a member of the Irish Traveller community and a total of £1,500 was agreed.

In addition, 33 cases were concluded by way of negotiated/conciliated settlement. This includes cases where there was more than one claimant and the claims were linked. This year, £217,630 was recovered in compensation and agreements were secured from respondents to commit to equality principles, to liaise with the Equality Commission to review practices and procedures, to provide equality training and to provide apology and employment reference.

All of the tribunal cases were concluded within twelve months of the decision of a Legal Funding Committee to assist the case. Cases in the County Court, on average were resolved within 14 months.


Highlighting protections and publicising outcomes

This year, outreach to highlight the legal protections from discrimination included an event for advice providers held in Equality House. This was followed by engagement with advisory non-governmental organisations (NGOs), trade unions and trainee legal professionals. The continued link with the Employment Lawyers Group (NI) included support for a lecture by Michael Rubenstein on employment law developments and one by Rachel Crasnow QC on pregnancy issues in the workplace.

Media and publicity

The cases assisted by the Commission continue to generate media interest. Press releases and other information is made available to inform the public of our work in this area and to highlight the protections afforded in the legislation. To supplement this, the Commission provides training and other guidance to employers and service providers in the key areas where difficulties often arise, including any lessons from the case law.

During 2014-15, one of the most prominent media stories related to the Commission's assistance in the case of Lee v Ashers Baking Co. Ltd. Media coverage of the case started in early July and stories ran across the remainder of the year. At the year end the decision was awaited.



As well as coverage of Lee v Asher Baking Company Ltd, the following cases also generated significant media interest this year.

Sheil v Stena Line: a case of harassment on grounds of sexual orientation and unfair dismissal and the subsequent appeal.

McNamee v Melting Moments: a pregnancy discrimination case.

Cosgrove v Bangla Restaurant: a disability discrimination case of a blind man turned away from a restaurant because of his guide dog.



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. To assess delivery the Commission set targets in relation to maintaining the confidence of its sponsor Department, OFMDFM, in relation to its governance and financial control, variance from budget profiles, audit assurance levels and external recognition achieved.

Across each of these areas, in most cases, the Commission met its targets. Targets were partly met in relation to meeting the timetables for some of the business improvement work.

Corporate Governance

During 2014-15 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 11 August 2014. The Commission appeared before the Committee for the First Minister and deputy First Minister on 19 November 2014 to provide an overview of its work.

The Commission received an unqualified audit opinion for its 2013-14 Annual Report and Accounts. The Report to those charged with Governance contained one Priority 1 issue, relating to the manner in which we calculated a provision for staff severance in 2014-15. During this year, a business case for the Voluntary Exit of a number of staff was prepared which addressed the Priority 1 issue. The business case was approved and the Voluntary Exits effected, prior to the year end.

During 2014-15 all of the work undertaken by the Commission's internal auditors provided at least satisfactory assurance, with substantial assurance being provided in the majority of areas.



Five internal audits were completed this year.

Substantial assurance was provided in relation to:

- Reviews of Budgetary Control and Programme Expenditure Management;
- Regulatory Compliance: Health and Safety, Data Protection and Freedom of Information;
- Administration of Payroll and Travel and Subsistence.

Satisfactory Assurance was provided in relation to

- Management of Contracts and Service Level Agreements; and
- Procurement Systems and Guidance.

Budgetary Control

In 2014-15 the Commission delivered the required annual efficiency savings from its Grant-in-aid of a further £175k. The requirement for delivering in-year budget reductions of a further 4.4% was also met, though this did have an impact on delivery across a number of areas and caused a number of projects to be deferred. During 2014-15, £245,605 of income was generated. The main sources of income were again the recovery of rent and other accommodation costs and service level agreements for the delivery of ICT, Finance and Human Resources support to other Arms Length bodies.

The cash outturn variance was £25.3k, (0.39%) from the business plan forecast. The cash variance was largely due to a delay in the confirmation of approval of the 2014-15 pay remit, which resulted in a late payment.

In response to the continuing pressures on public sector budgets, the Commission continues to strive to control its staffing costs. During 2014-15 staffing costs decreased by a further £31,075. This mainly resulted from the continued reduction in the average number of full-time equivalent posts. The programme of Voluntary Exits funded at the end of 2014-15 and reported above, will assist in controlling staff costs in 2015-16 and result in considerable savings in future years.



Corporate and Business planning

During the course of the year, progress on delivering the 2014-15 Business Plan and budget was reported to the Commission on a quarterly basis.

This year is the final year of the 2012-15 Corporate Plan period. In October 2014, given the uncertainty around the budget position, the potential for an augmentation of the Commission's role within a new Equality and Good Relations Commission and the anticipated significant changes to the Commission's membership, the Commission sought approval for an extension of the current planning period into 2015-16. In March 2015 this approval was granted. A new Business Plan for 2015-16 was prepared in line with the relevant timetable. Formal approval, subject to conclusion of discussions on aspects of the TBUC strategy, was awaited at the year end.

During 2014-15 Service Level Agreements (SLAs) continued to be 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 (NIHRC) for ICT services. SLAs for some financial services were delivered for COPNI and the Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission (NIJAC) and human resource 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 and corporate services work, under Lexcel and ISO 9001, respectively. In light of the potential for a new Equality and Good Relations Commission and the difficult budget position, an EFQM accreditation assessment was deferred until the new financial year.

A survey of staff opinions was completed in August 2014. There was a slight improvement in overall staff satisfaction levels (74%) from the existing high level reported in 2008 (73%) and a substantial improvement against the original 2005 baseline survey (46%). An action plan to assist further improvements across a number of the survey areas has been prepared and will be implemented over the new corporate planning period.

Although the completion rate for Performance Assessment Reviews substantially improved from last year in most areas, further efforts are necessary to complete these reviews in a timelier manner. The Corporate Training Plan was updated and, despite the financial constraints, a substantial programme of staff training was delivered. A proposed programme of Leadership training was postponed due to in-year budget reductions.



Legal obligations

An internal audit of regulatory compliance, covering Health and Safety, Data Protection and Freedom of Information arrangements was undertaken during this year. Substantial assurance was provided and only a small number of minor issues reported. All of these were addressed in-year.

No major issues were identified in the Health and Safety and Fire Risk assessments undertaken in 2013-14. An action plan to address any minor issues and recommendations was prepared and action to address outstanding issues undertaken during 2014-15.

A substantial self assessment of Information security arrangements was completed during the year and reported to OFMDFM. One data protection incident was investigated. The incident related to a staff error in using Microsoft Outlook's automatic email address recognition facility. Remedial action was taken.

During the year, 46 Freedom of Information requests and 13 Data Protection requests were received. All were dealt with or were being dealt with at the end of the year, in line with the relevant protocols.

In May 2014 the Commission's annual Monitoring Return Form was submitted. The workforce community background composition showed a slight increase in the percentage of staff from the Protestant community background.

Between January and March 2015, a further increase resulted when the impact of the Voluntary Exits implemented in February 2015, was assessed. During the year a further fair employment Article 55 Review was undertaken and will be completed and the results reported in 2015-16. Further information on the Commission's workforce composition can be found at Appendix Two.



Evelyn Collins CBE
Chief Executive and Accounting Officer
25 June 2015



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 sections provide details of the remuneration and pension interests of the Commissioners and the most senior management of the Commission.

Remuneration (including salary) and pension entitlements (Audited Information)

Commissioners	2014-15				2013-2014					
	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)
Michael Wardlow Chief Commissioner	55-60 (FTE 70-75)	0	0	23	80-85 (FTE 95-100)	55-60 (FTE 70-75)	0	0	210*	265-270 (FTE 280- 285)
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	2014-15				2013-2014					
	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

* The Chief Commissioner brought in a transfer value in the 2013-14 financial year which amounted to £125,000 increasing his pension benefit.

Senior Management

Official	2014-15				2013-2014					
	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	9	85-90	75-80	0	0	26	100-105
Keith Brown Head of Corporate Services	60-65	0	0	9	70-75	60-65	0	0	3	65-70
Eileen Lavery Head of Legal, Policy and Research	60-65	0	0	7	70-75	60-65	0	0	(1)	60-65

* 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 include increases due to inflation and any increase or decreases due to a transfer of pension rights.

Fair Pay Review Disclosure

	2015 £	2014 £
Band of Highest Paid Employee - Chief Executive	75,000 – 80,000	75,000 – 80,000
Median Other Staff Remuneration	26,991	27,060
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 2014-15 was £75,000 to £80,000 (2013-14, £75,000 to £80,000). This was 2.9 times (2013-14, 2.9 times) the median remuneration of the workforce, which was £26,991 (2013-14, £27,060).

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 2014-15 relate to performance in 2014-15 and the comparative bonuses reported for 2013-14 relate to the performance in 2013-14. 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 pension age as at 31/03/15 and related lump sum £'000	Real increase in pension and related lump sum at pension age £'000	CETV at 31/3/15 £'000	CETV at 31/3/14 £'000	Real increase in CETV £'000
Michael Wardlow Chief Commissioner	10-15 plus lump sum 0	0-2.5 plus lump sum 0	215	185	16
Evelyn Collins Chief Executive	30-35 plus lump sum 90-95	0-2.5 plus lump sum 0-2.5	643	605	7
Keith Brown Head of Corporate Services	20-25 plus lump sum 60-65	0-2.5 plus lump sum 0-2.5	470	439	9
Eileen Lavery Head of Legal, Policy and Research	25-30 plus lump sum 80-85	0-2.5 plus lump sum 0-1.5	612	576	6

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).

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 the Assembly 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.

A new pension scheme, alpha, will be introduced for new entrants from 1 April 2015. The majority of existing members of the NICS pension arrangements will move to alpha from that date. Members who on 1 April 2012 were within 10 years of their normal pension age will not move to alpha and those who were within 13.5 years and 10 years of the normal pension age were given a choice between moving to alpha on 1 April 2015 or at a later date determined by their age. Alpha is also 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 scheme membership. The rate will be 2.32%. CARE pension benefits are increased annually in line with increases in the CPI.

For 2015, public service pensions will be increased by 1.2% for pensions which began before 6 April 2014. Pensions which began after 6 April 2014 will be increased proportionately.

Employee contribution rates for all members for the period covering 1st April 2015 – 31st March 2016 are as follows:

Scheme Year 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016

Pay Band – assess each pay period		Contribution rates – Classic members	Contribution rates – classic plus, premium, nuvos and alpha
From	To	From 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016	From 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016
£0	£15,000.99	3%	4.6%
£15,001.00	£21,000.99	4.6%	4.6%
£21,001.00	£47,000.99	5.45%	5.45%
£47,001.00	£150,000.99	7.35%	7.35%
£150,001.00 and above		8.05%	8.05%

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**. The normal pension age in alpha will be linked to the member's State Pension Age but cannot be before age 65. Further details about the NICS pension 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 2003-04 the other pension details, include the value of any pension benefit in another scheme or arrangement which the individual has transferred to the NICS pension 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 include the increase in accrued pension due to inflation and 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 2014-15 is included at note 3(d) to the Accounts.



Evelyn Collins CBE
Chief Executive and Accounting Officer
25 June 2015



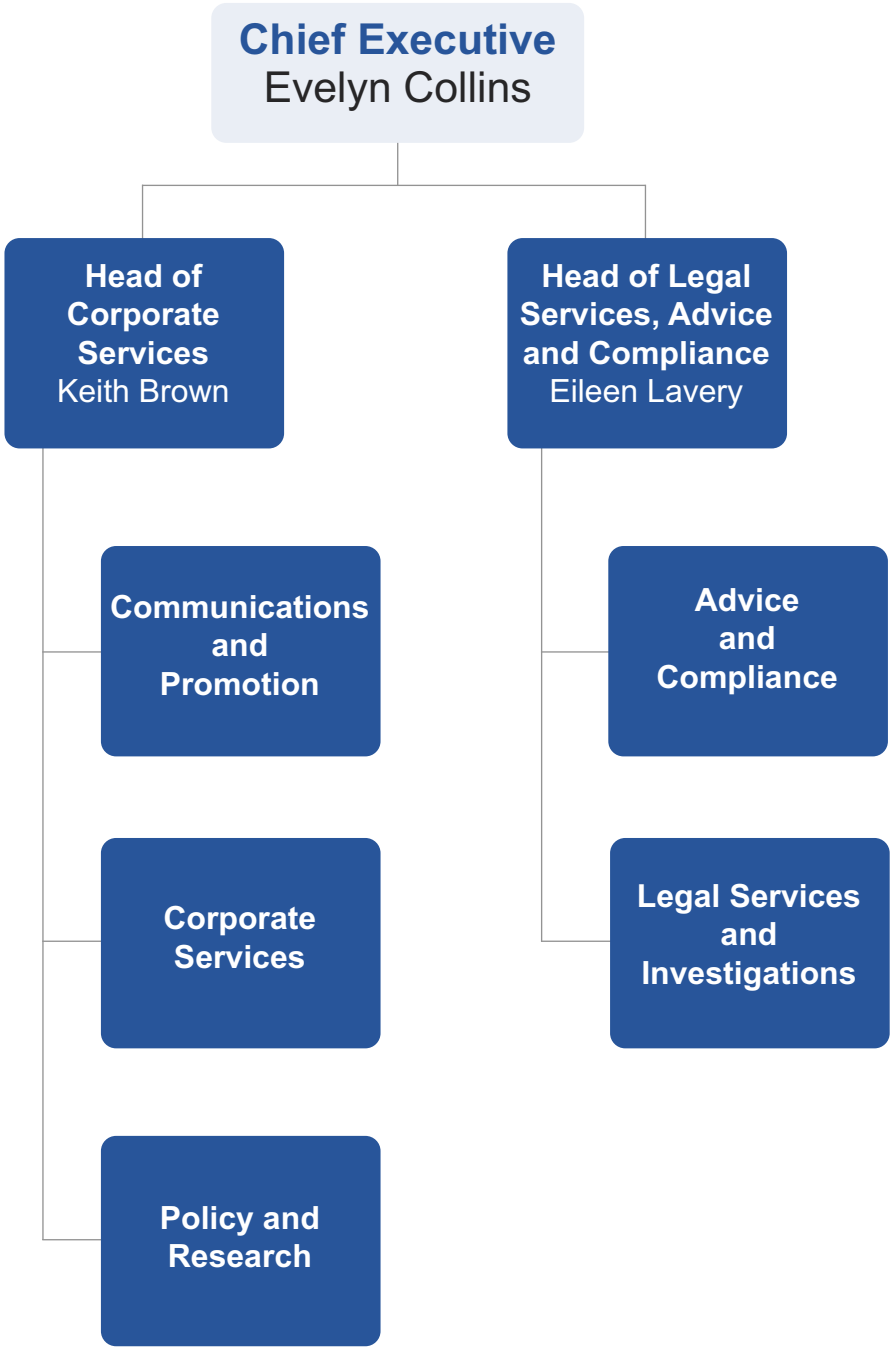
Appendices

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 2015

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]	126 [123]	44 (34.9%) [35.8%]	79 (62.7%) [64.2%]	3 (2.4%)	43 (34.1%)	83 (65.9%)

* Community background could not be determined

** Includes staff on career break

This year shows a further reduction in the number of employees from 130 in January 2014 to 126 in January 2015.

The Monitoring Return date was before the completion of the Voluntary Exit programme, which was completed in February 2015. Given the numbers of staff leaving the Commission prior to the year end, the position at 31 March 2015 has also been included below.

Community background and gender composition of Equality Commission staff at 31 March 2015

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]	109 [107]	41 (37.6%) [38.3%]	66 (60.6%) [61.7%]	2 (1.8%)	39 (35.8%)	70 (64.2%)

Compared with the year end position at 31 March 2015, there has been a decline in the Commission's workforce since 1 January 2014, of 21 employees (16.2%).

By community background, there was a fall of two in those employees from, or could be associated with, the Protestant community and a fall of 18 in employees from the Roman Catholic community. This results in an increase in the composition of Protestant staff from [33.9%] last year to [38.3%] at 31 March 2015. The Protestant composition is now close to 40 per cent.

Only one external recruitment exercise was completed in 2014. In addition, there was one internal trawl undertaken over the period. There was a single applicant for the post which was trawled. The applicant was appointed. The table below summarises the applications for the externally advertised post. Due to the risk of identifying a specific individual, the community background of the appointee cannot be provided. Given the small numbers involved no conclusions could be drawn from the statistical outturn.

Grade	Total	P	RC	ND*	M	F
Applicants	47	26 (55.3%) [60.5%]	17 (36.2%) [39.5%]	4 (8.5%)	4 (8.5%)	43 (91.5%)
Appointees	1					1 (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 2014 – 31 March 2015. The number of meetings which took place have been placed in brackets ().

Audit & Risk Committee

COMMISSIONER	MEETINGS ATTENDED (5)
Norman Trotter (Chair)	4
Jane Morrice	3
Stella Burnside	4
Kit Chivers	5
Peter Sheridan	2
Anna Carragher	4
Fidelma Carolan	5
Stephen McIlveen	3

Statutory Duty Investigations Committee

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



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 2014-15 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 2015





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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
25 June 2015



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 under which grant-in-aid is paid to the Commission and the delegations within which the Commission operates.

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 nearing completion.

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 2014-15 can be found in the Director's Report at page 12. 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 Committee meeting. Guidance on declaration and conflict of interests is contained in the Commissioner Handbook provided to all Commissioners on appointment.

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).

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 full responsibilities are set out in its Terms of Reference, which were last reviewed in February 2015. Its core work for the year is set in a work programme structured around the guidance in the Department of Finance and Personnel's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Handbook (NI) (March 2014).

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.

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 2015 and up to the date of approval of the Annual Report and Accounts. It accords with Department of Finance and Personnel guidance.



■ 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. The Plan for 2014-15 was approved in June 2014. I am liaising with OFMDFM in relation to arrangements for the preparation of a Corporate Plan for 2016-19 and obtaining approval for the 2015-16 Business Plan.

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. A further review is scheduled to take place in September 2015. A Security Risk Management Overview (SRMO) for 2014-15 was completed and submitted to OFMDFM in May 2015. An internal audit review of Data Protection and Freedom of Information processes was completed this year; 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 coordinators are briefed. The Commission is aware of and has approved these arrangements. There have been no data losses or other significant lapses of security during 2014-15.

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. A further audit is scheduled for September 2015. The ICT continuity and disaster recovery arrangements are regularly tested.



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.

Whistle blowing

The Commission's Whistle blowing procedures were updated in August 2014 and will be further reviewed in light of the new guidance issued by NIAO and others.

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.

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 was higher than the NICS target figure during 2014-15. Further work is ongoing in addressing long term sickness absence.

Complaints

In January 2015, an Industrial Tribunal found aspects of the Commission's Career Break policy to be indirectly discriminatory, albeit that the discrimination was unintentional. The Tribunal dismissed claims in relation to unlawful deduction of wages and redundancy. The Tribunal awarded the Claimant £7,500 in relation to injury to feelings and made three recommendations in relation to the career break and redundancy policies and the implications of the proper application of these for the Claimant. To address this latter recommendation and in full and final settlement of all aspects of the case, the Commission paid the Claimant a further £19,500. As required by the Financial Memorandum, approval from OFMDFM was obtained for this payment. The Commission has also amended aspects of the implementation of its career break policy.

At the year end the Commission awaited receipt of a final report of an investigation undertaken by the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Complaints into a complaint of Maladministration in relation to the Commission's initial handling of an application for legal assistance by an individual.

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.

During the current year the internal auditors, PwC, have conducted reviews in line with their Annual Audit Plan covering:

Audit Area	Assurance Rating
Payroll systems, Travel and Subsistence	Substantial
Procurement systems and guidance	Satisfactory
Budgetary Control and Programme expenditure management	Substantial
Regulatory compliance, Data Protection and Freedom of Information	Substantial
Management of Contracts and SLAs	Satisfactory

In its Annual Report to the Audit and Risk Committee, internal audit provided a Satisfactory level of assurance for 2014-15.

Risk Management Status

The ongoing requirement for the effective management of budgetary reductions continues to be a 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.

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 will continue into 2015-16.

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. Additional risks and opportunities may arise in the process of transition to an Equality and Good Relations Commission. Pending legislative developments, further work on this has been postponed.



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.

Review of Effectiveness

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 Northern Ireland Audit Office in its 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.

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 and the different types and levels of data used by the Commission to undertake its governance responsibilities. A Quarterly Stewardship report provided by the Accounting Officer is considered at each Audit and Risk Committee.

The Commission considers that the information provided is sufficient to enable it to effectively discharge its strategic planning and governance responsibilities.

Internal Audit last undertook a review of the Commission's Committee structures and processes and Board Effectiveness in May 2012. The audit provided Satisfactory assurance. The Commission also undertakes an annual self assessment of its effectiveness against the NAO Good Practice Principles for Audit Committees.



Due to the anticipated changes in Board and Audit Committee membership the annual self assessment was not undertaken this year. A self assessment will be completed in 2015-16 and a further review by internal audit will be scheduled for 2016-17 following the bedding in of the changes to Board membership.

Significant internal control issues

There are no significant internal control issues at present.



Evelyn Collins CBE
Chief Executive and Accounting Officer
25 June 2015



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 2015 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 2015 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 Minister 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 Minister and deputy First Minister directions made under the Northern Ireland Act 1998; and
- the information given in the Director's Report, Strategic Report, Sustainability Statement and Progress against Key Performance Indicators 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

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

30 June 2015

Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2015

		2014-15	2013-14
	Note	£	£
Expenditure			
Staff and Commissioners' Costs	3	(4,460,722)	(4,491,797)
Depreciation	6	(72,018)	(65,797)
Amortisation	7	(15,976)	(13,996)
Other Expenditures	4	(1,665,897)	(1,864,692)
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		(6,214,613)	(6,436,282)
Income			
Income from Activities	5	245,605	256,707
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Net Expenditure		(5,969,008)	(6,179,575)
Other Comprehensive Expenditure			
		2014-2015	2013-14
	Note	£	£
Net gain on revaluation of Plant and Equipment	6	1,495	2,259
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Total Comprehensive Expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2015		(5,967,513)	(6,177,316)

The notes on pages 76 to 92 form part of these accounts.

Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2015

	Note	2015 £	2014 £
Non-Current assets:			
Plant and equipment	6	227,447	225,989
Intangible assets	7	48,341	21,922
Total non-current assets		275,788	247,911
Current assets:			
Trade and other receivables	9	77,492	90,966
Cash and cash equivalents	10	74,380	49,126
Total current assets		151,872	140,092
Total assets		427,660	388,003
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	11	(269,200)	(260,604)
Other liabilities		nil	nil
Total current liabilities		(269,200)	(260,604)
Non-current assets plus/less net current assets/liabilities		158,460	127,399
Non-current liabilities			
Provisions	12	(90,595)	(305,681)
Other payables		nil	(2,340)
Total non-current liabilities		(90,595)	(308,021)
Assets less liabilities		67,865	(180,622)
Taxpayers' equity			
Revaluation reserve		46,552	45,057
SOCNE reserve		21,313	(225,679)
		67,865	(180,622)

The financial statements on pages 72 to 92 were approved by the Commission on 24 June 2015 and were signed on its behalf by;



Signed
Evelyn Collins CBE
Accounting Officer and Chief Executive
The notes on pages 76 to 92 form part of these accounts.

25 June 2015

Statement of Cash Flows for the year ended 31 March 2015

		2014-15 £	2013-14 £
	Note		
Cash Flows from operating activities			
Net Expenditure		(5,969,008)	(6,179,575)
Adjustments for non-cash transactions			
Depreciation	6	72,018	65,797
Amortisation	7	15,976	13,996
Revaluation	6	-	-
(Increase)/Decrease in trade and other receivables	9	13,474	47,104
Increase/(Decrease) in trade payables	11	6,256	(26,559)
Increase/(Decrease) in provisions	12	(215,086)	(27,379)
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Net cash outflow from operating activities		(6,076,370)	(6,106,616)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of plant and equipment	6	(71,981)	(84,370)
Purchase of intangible assets	7	(42,395)	(5,994)
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Net cash outflow from investing activities		(114,376)	(90,364)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Financing from OFMDFM		6,216,000	6,246,000
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Net financing		6,216,000	6,246,000
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents in the period	10	25,254	49,020
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period		49,126	106
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period	10	74,380	49,126

The notes on pages 76 to 92 form part of these accounts.

Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity for the year ended 31 March 2015

	Note	Reval Reserve £	SoCNE Reserve £	Total Reserves £
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)
Changes in Taxpayers' Equity 2014-15				
Grant from OFMDFM		0	6,216,000	6,216,000
Transfer between reserves Comprehensive Expenditure for the year		0	(5,969,008)	(5,969,008)
Movements in Reserves				
Additions Recognised in Statement of Comprehensive Expenditure		1,495	0	1,495
Balance at 31 March 2015		46,552	21,313	67,865

The notes on pages 76 to 92 form part of these accounts.



Notes to the Accounts

Statement of accounting policies

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with paragraph 7(2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and the 2014-15 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.

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 exists), 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 employees are covered by the provisions of Civil Service Pensions (NI). The CSP (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 as at 31 March 2012 and these details are available in the CSP (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 NDPB's 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 31/03/2015 Total £	Salaries & Associated Costs £	Programme Costs £	*Other Costs £	12 mths to 31/03/2014 Total £
Integrated/ New Areas	1,194,224	230,547	0	1,424,771	1,215,634	358,257	0	1,573,891
Disability	415,638	80,166	0	495,804	415,447	74,675	0	490,122
Religion & Politics	546,491	9,752	0	556,243	551,033	55,326	0	606,359
Gender	289,742	90,365	0	380,107	295,423	93,033	0	388,456
Race	392,600	62,322	0	454,922	393,375	55,027	0	448,402
Statutory Duty	424,871	1,326	0	426,197	450,525	0	0	450,525
Resources	755,730	35,105	0	790,835	738,264	30,308	0	768,572
Executive	282,578	0	0	282,578	274,205	0	0	274,205
Total Costs	4,301,874	509,583	0	4,811,457	4,333,906	666,626	0	5,000,532
Members Costs	158,848	7,058	0	165,906	157,891	12,000	0	169,891
Other Costs	0	0	991,645	991,645	0	0	1,009,152	1,009,152
Total	4,460,722	516,641	991,645	5,969,008	4,491,797	678,626	1,009,152	6,179,575

* 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:

				2014-15	2013-14
	Commissioners	Permanently employed staff	Others	Total	Total
	£	£	£	£	£
Wages and Salaries	138,812	3,362,631	16,949	3,518,392	3,543,983
Social security costs	6,215	247,560	0	253,775	261,413
Other pension costs	13,821	674,734	0	688,555	686,401
Total net costs	158,848	4,284,925	16,949	4,460,722	4,491,797

3(b) Pension Disclosure

The Northern Ireland Civil Service pension arrangements are unfunded multi-employer defined benefit schemes 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 2012. This valuation is then reviewed by the Scheme Actuary and updated to reflect current conditions and rolled forward to the reporting date of the DFP Superannuation and Other Allowances Resource Accounts as at 31 March 2015.

For 2014-15, employer's contributions of £688,555 were payable to the NICS pension arrangements (2013-2014 £686,401) 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 scheme funding valuation based on data as at 31 March 2012 was completed by the Actuary during 2014-15. This valuation was used to determine employer contribution rates for the introduction of a new career average earning scheme from April 2015. From 2015-16, the new rates will range from 20.8% to 26.3%. The contribution rates are set to meet the cost of the benefits accruing during 2014-15 to be paid when the member retires, and note 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.

Two individuals retired early on ill-health grounds; all additional accrued pension liabilities are met by the Principal Civil Servants Pension Scheme for Northern Ireland. There are no additional costs to the Commission (No staff retired on the grounds of ill-health in 2013-14).

3(c) Average number of persons employed

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

			2014-15	2013-14
	Permanent staff	Others	Total	Total
Directly Employed	104	1	105	110
Other	0	0	0	0
Total	104	1	105	110

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	5	5
£10,000 - £25,000	0	8	8
£25,000 - £50,000	0	3	3
£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	16	16
Total resource cost/£	0	267,847	267,847

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

	2014-15 £	2013-14 £
Note		
General Costs		
Travel and Subsistence	21,127	22,989
Staff Recruitment	2,419	11,662
Staff Costs (incl. severance)	39,606	20,811
Postage	11,565	12,257
Telephones	33,998	38,353
Hospitality	0	79
Audit	10,014	9,600
Insurance	0	18,202
Miscellaneous	22,545	9,431
Office Consumables	37,471	52,258
R&M Equipment	0	961
Annual Contracts	44,095	40,847
Legal Costs	19,508	9,490
Corporate Services	39,092	15,048
Early Retirement Costs	(3,682)	26,400
Severance Payments	49,277	37,067
	327,035	325,455
Premises		
Rents	346,110	346,869
Rates	209,916	206,850
Service Charge	21,974	21,339
Fuel Charge	73,075	75,901
R&M Buildings	17,997	61,585
Facilities	153,148	148,067
	822,220	860,611
Programme		
Education & Advice	154,786	230,438
Legal Fees	281,603	329,215
Other	80,253	118,973
	516,642	678,626
Non-Cash Costs		
Depreciation	72,018	65,797
Amortisation	15,976	13,996



5. Income

Source	2014-15 Total £	2013-14 Total £
Service Level Agreements	73,855	72,207
Secondment recovery	0	5,867
Accommodation	171,750	171,000
Other	0	7,633
	<hr/> 245,605	<hr/> 256,707

All income is based on full cost recovery.

6. Plant and equipment

2014-15

	Information Technology £	Office Equipment £	Furniture £	Fixtures & Fittings £	Total £
Cost/Valuation					
At 1 April 2014	333,294	91,045	330,794	180,634	935,767
Additions	71,981	0	0	0	71,981
Disposals	(12,666)	0	(87,433)	0	(100,099)
Revaluations	1,974	1,413	1,820	1,272	6,479
At 31 March 2015	394,583	92,458	245,181	181,906	914,128
Depreciation					
At 1 April 2014	251,618	39,210	320,966	97,984	709,778
Charged in year	46,275	10,122	4,243	11,378	72,018
Disposals	(12,666)	0	(87,433)	0	(100,099)
Revaluations	1,702	764	1,779	739	4,984
At 31 March 2015	286,929	50,096	239,555	110,101	686,681
Carrying amount at 31 March 2015	107,654	42,362	5,626	71,805	227,447
Carrying amount at 31 March 2014	81,676	51,835	9,828	82,650	225,989
Asset Financing					
Owned	107,654	42,362	5,626	71,805	227,447
Finance lease Contracts	0	0	0	0	0
Carrying amount at 31 March 2015	107,654	42,362	5,626	71,805	227,447

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

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	0	0	0	0	0
On-balance sheet	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.

7. Intangible assets

Intangible assets comprise software and licenses.

2014-15

	Information Technology	Software Licences	Total
	£	£	£
Cost or Valuation			
At 1 April 2014	18,862	86,814	105,676
Additions	8,114	34,281	42,395
Disposals	0	0	0
At 31 March 2015	26,976	121,095	148,071
Amortisation			
At 1 April 2014	15,606	68,148	83,754
Charged in year	3,005	12,971	15,976
Disposals	0	0	0
At 31 March 2015	18,611	81,119	99,730
Carrying amount at 31 March 2015	8,365	39,976	48,341
Carrying amount at 31 March 2014	3,256	18,666	21,922
Asset financing:			
Owned	0	0	0
Finance Leased Contracts	0	0	0
	8,365	39,976	48,341
Carrying amount at 31 March 2015	8,365	39,976	48,341


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
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
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
Carrying amount at 31 March 2014	3,256	18,666	21,922

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

	2014-15 £	2013-14 £
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Prepayments	71,837	79,351
Accrued Income	5,655	10,865
Other Receivables	0	750
	77,492	90,966

9.1 Intra-Government Balances - Receivables

	Amounts falling due within one year		Amounts falling due after more than one year	
	2014-15 £	2013-14 £	2014-15 £	2013-14 £
Balances with other central government bodies	5,655	10,865	0	0
Balances with bodies external to government	71,837	80,101	0	0
Total receivables at 31st March 2015	77,492	90,966	0	0

10. Cash and cash equivalents

	2014-15	2013-14
	£	£
Balance at 1 April	49,126	106
Net change in cash and cash equivalent balances	25,254	49,020
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Balance at 31 March	74,380	49,126
The following balances at 31 March were held at:		
Government Banking Service	74,350	49,102
Cash In Hand	30	24
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Balance at 31 March	74,380	49,126

11. Trade payables and other current liabilities

	2014-15	2013-14
	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year		
Accruals and deferred Income	269,200	260,604
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	269,200	260,604
Amounts falling due after more than one year		
	0	2,340
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	0	2,340

11.1 Intra-Government Balances - Payables

	Amounts falling due within one year		Amounts falling due after more than one year	
	2014-15 £	2013-14 £	2014-15 £	2013-14 £
Balances with other central government bodies	27,208	23,055	0	0
Balances with bodies external to government	241,992	239,889	0	0
Total payables at 31 March 2015	269,200	262,944	0	0

12. Provisions for liabilities and charges

	2014-15		2013-14	
	Severance Costs £	Legal Costs £	Severance Costs £	Legal Costs £
Balance at 1 April 2014	200,000	105,681	250,000	83,060
Provided in the year	0	292,584	37,067	413,680
Provisions not required written back	0	(87,962)	0	(109,156)
Provisions utilised in the year	(200,000)	(219,708)	(87,067)	(281,903)
Balance at 31 March 2015	0	90,595	200,000	105,681

The Commission makes provision for expenditure authorised for legal assistance before it is committed to an external provider.

13. Capital commitments

	2014-15	2013-14
Contracted capital commitments at 31 March 2015 not otherwise included in these financial statements		
Plant and equipment	0	0
Intangible assets	8,720	0
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	8,720	0

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.

	2014-15 £	2013-14 £
Obligations under operating leases comprises:		
Buildings		
Not later than one year	336,000	336,000
Later than one year and not later than five years	112,000	1,344,000
Later than five years	0	784,460
Other:		
Not later than one year	4,426	4,426
Later than one year and not later than five years	17,696	2,868
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 2015.

16. Contingent liabilities disclosed under IAS 37

The Commission has no known contingent liabilities.



17. Losses and special payments

£8,137 was paid to a claimant following an award of compensation following an Industrial Tribunal. An authorised special payment of £19,500 was paid to a member of staff on their exit.

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
(£6,216,000 of which £Nil was outstanding at the year end),
- the Northern Ireland Commission for Children and Young People
(£134,000 of which £ Nil was outstanding at the year end),
- the Commission for Victims and Survivors
(£14,156 of which £ Nil was outstanding at the year end),
- the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission
(£14,300 of which £ Nil was outstanding at the year end),
- the Commissioner for Older People Northern Ireland
(£80,501 of which £5,655 was outstanding at the year end),
- the Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission
(£700 of which £ Nil was outstanding at the year end),
- the Charity 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 C & AG signs his audit report.

Equality Commission

FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

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