



Northern Ireland
Assembly

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON A BILL OF RIGHTS

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Thursday 19 November 2020
Room 29, Parliament Buildings

Present, Room 29:	Emma Sheerin MLA (Chairperson) Mike Nesbitt MLA (Deputy Chairperson) Michelle McIlveen MLA Christopher Stalford MLA
Present, via StarLeaf:	Mark Durkan MLA John O'Dowd MLA (deputising for Carál Ní Chuilín MLA)
Apologies:	Paula Bradshaw MLA
In Attendance:	Caroline Perry (Assembly Clerk) Gareth Cross (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced in open session at 2.02 p.m.

1. Apologies

As noted above.

2. Briefing by Professor Colm O'Coinneide on Brexit and its wider implications for human rights in Northern Ireland

Colm O'Coinneide, Professor of Constitutional and Human Rights Law at University College London, joined the meeting via StarLeaf at 2.03 p.m.

His briefing outlined the legal consequences of Brexit for a number of areas of human rights protection including: equality, non-discrimination and employment rights. It also considered how the circumstances of Northern Ireland were ‘particular’, noting that most of the equality law in Northern Ireland is in the form of regulations rather than comprehensive legislation which makes it uniquely easy to amend.

Christopher Stalford joined the meeting at 2:10pm.

Mark Durkan joined the meeting at 2:15pm.

The oral evidence was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked Colm for his evidence.

The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

3. Briefing by Brian Gormally, Director of the Committee on the Administration of Justice, and Dr Anne Smith, CAJ Executive member

Brian Gormally, Director of the Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ), and Dr Anne Smith from the CAJ’s Executive, joined the meeting via StarLeaf at 2.39p.m.

Their briefing considered challenges for Northern Ireland in the immediate future and the potential role of a bill of rights in addressing them. These included: Brexit; the Covid-19 pandemic; legacy of the conflict; *New Decade, New Approach*; and, constitutional conversations.

Mark Durkan left the meeting at 3:03pm.

The oral evidence was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked Brian and Anne for their evidence.

The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

4. Chairperson’s Business

There was no Chairperson’s business.

5. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Ad Hoc Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 12 November 2020.

6. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

7. Correspondence

Members noted correspondence from the Coalition of Carers Organisations inviting them to participate in a round table discussion on "Carers Rights in Northern Ireland: during and beyond the pandemic" on Thursday 26th November.

8. Forward Work Programme

The Chairperson referred Members to the draft Forward Work Programme.

Members noted the Forward Work Programme.

9. Any other business

There was no other business.

10. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting will be on Thursday 26 November 2020 at 2.00 p.m. in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting adjourned at 3.40 p.m.

Ms Emma Sheerin MLA
Chairperson, Ad Hoc Committee on a Bill of Rights