

Press release: £230M boost for British beef as China agrees market access

British beef could be served on Chinese dinner plates by the end of the year, following an agreement reached between China and the UK.

Press release: APPOINTMENTS TO THE EQUALITY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

APPOINTMENTS TO THE EQUALITY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt. Hon Karen Bradley MP, has today announced the appointment of Geraldine McGahey to be the new Deputy Chief Commissioner and Neil Anderson, June Best, Theresa Donaldson, Hazel Francey, Stephen Mathews, Joe McVey, Dawn Purvis and Katy Radford as Commissioners. The appointments will be for a period of three years ending on 31 May 2022.

These appointees will replace Lesley Carroll (Deputy Chief Commissioner) and William Gamble, Judith Gillespie, Tom Hartley, David Rose who have completed their terms of office, and William McKee (Commissioner) who sadly passed away in December last year.

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

The Equality Commission was established in 1999, as part of the implementation of the Good Friday Agreement. It took over the functions of the Fair Employment Commission, Equal Opportunities Commission, and Council for Racial Equality and Northern Ireland Disability Council.

The Equality Commission is a non-departmental public body established by the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Its powers and duties derive from a number of statutes which have been enacted over the last decades, providing protection against discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, race, religion and political opinion, sex and sexual orientation. It also has responsibilities arising from the Northern Ireland Act 1998 in respect of the statutory equality and good relations duties which apply to public authorities.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland is responsible under the Northern Ireland Act 1998 for making appointments to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

More information can be found on the Equality Commission's website.

Terms of appointment

The positions are part-time appointments.

The position of Deputy Chief Commissioner attracts a fixed remuneration of £10,000 per annum, while the Commissioner roles attract a fixed remuneration of £5,000 per annum for a commitment of approximately two days a month.

Biography of Appointees

Geraldine McGahey: Former Chief Executive of Larne Borough Council, and SOLACE gender champion. She is currently an Equality Commissioner and a Parades Commissioner.

Neil Anderson: Currently head of NSPCC in Northern Ireland, with a career based in HR across a variety of organisations and sectors.

June Best: Retired head teacher with extensive experience in disability rights. Advocate for Guide Dogs for the Blind and ambassador for Disability NI. She was awarded an MBE in 2018 for services to people with a disability.

Theresa Donaldson: Former Chief Executive of Craigavon Borough Council and Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council. She is currently Vice Chair of Eirgrid and a member of the Probation Board.

Hazel Francey: Retired former Good Relations Manager for Belfast City Council. She holds roles on the National Museums Board, and is chair of its Finance Committee and has served as an Equality Commissioner for Northern Ireland.

Stephen Mathews: Chief Executive of Cedar Foundation, a charity supporting children, young people and adults with disabilities.

Joe McVey: Chief Executive of Brain Injury Matters, having been previously managing partner in a Consultancy business and has served as Equality Commissioner for Northern Ireland.

Dawn Purvis: Chief Executive of a Victoria Housing Estates (VHE). She is a former Northern Ireland Programme Director for Marie Stopes and previously served as an MLA and leader of the PUP.

Katy Radford: Social anthropologist currently employed at the Institute for Conflict Research. Vice Chair of Arts Council of Northern Ireland, member of the Commission for Flags, Identity, Culture and Tradition and member of the Executive Council of the Northern Ireland Jewish Community.

Political Activity

All appointments are made on merit and with regards to the statutory requirements. Political activity plays no part in the selection process. However, in accordance with the original Nolan recommendations, there is a

requirement for appointees' political activity in defined categories to be made public.

As noted in the biographies, only one of the appointees, Dawn Purvis, has declared political activity in the past ten years.

Regulatory Requirements

The appointments process has been regulated by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointment (OCPA) and all stages of the process were overseen by an independent panel member.

Statutory Requirements

These appointments are made by the Secretary of State in accordance with the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Press release: APPOINTMENTS TO THE EQUALITY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has made appointments to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

Press release: Measures to end unequal mental health treatment kickstarted by PM

New measures to overhaul urgently mental health laws and end the unequal treatment faced by ethnic minority groups have been set out by Prime Minister Theresa May today.

The government will take forward key recommendations from Sir Simon Wessely's independent review of the Mental Health Act, which found black adults are approximately four times more likely than white adults to be detained under the Act.

The Prime Minister also confirmed that a White Paper will be published by

DHSC and MoJ before the end of the year in response to the review. This will set out the steps necessary to provide greater dignity and better care for all those treated under the Mental Health Act, and to tackle inequalities in the mental health care system.

Healthcare bosses and senior members of the Independent Review of the Mental Health Act attended a roundtable with the Prime Minister at Number 10 Downing Street this afternoon. They discussed the government's plans for early action to reform mental health legislation and services to particularly benefit ethnic minority groups, which include:

- the first ever Race Equality Framework will ensure NHS mental healthcare providers work with their local communities to improve the ways in which patients access and experience treatment, and ensure data on equality of access is monitored at board level and acted on
- working with Black African and Caribbean community groups alongside others to develop a White Paper formally setting out a response to Sir Simon's review
- further work towards eradicating the use of police cells as a place to detain people experiencing mental illness ahead of banning it in law, building on the Prime Minister's work to end this practice for under-18s
- launching a pilot programme of culturally-sensitive advocates in partnership with local authorities and others, to identify how best to represent the mental health needs of ethnic minority groups
- a partnership between the Care Quality Commission and Equality and Human Rights Commission to review how they can use their regulatory powers to better support equality of access to mental health services
- an open call for research into how different ethnic minority groups experience mental health treatment and how this can be improved – to be launched later this year by the National Institute for Health Research

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

Mental illness can affect us all, but the shocking evidence that black people are much more likely to be detained under the Mental Health Act shows that we need urgent action to address inequalities in our healthcare system.

Today's measures will drive forward an important conversation about how we best look after people from ethnic minority backgrounds living with mental health conditions and make sure their needs are met.

These commitments come alongside a wide-ranging series of prevention measures announced today by the Prime Minister to make sure people have the support they need to look after their mental health. The package includes training for all new teachers so they can spot the signs of mental health issues and updated professional standards for social workers across England to increase their knowledge and skills when dealing with mental illness.

Today marks one year since the Prime Minister announced a historic cash funding boost for the health service, driving the largest expansion of mental health services in a generation under the NHS Long-Term Plan.

Attending today's roundtable were:

Press release: Measures to end unequal mental health treatment kickstarted by PM

Prime Minister Theresa May hosts mental health and community leaders in Downing Street following independent review of Mental Health Act.