

Bulletin of the Committee on the Administration of Justice
**CAJ lodges formal complaint on
 Rosemary Nelson's case**

On 20th November 2000 CAJ lodged a formal complaint against the Chief Constable of the RUC, Sir Ronnie Flanagan, in relation to the case of murdered CAJ Executive member, Rosemary Nelson. The complaint was lodged with the newly established office of the Police Ombudsman, Nuala O'Loan.

The substance of the complaint relates to the failure of the Chief Constable to properly investigate written threats against Rosemary Nelson, which were forwarded by CAJ to the Minister for Security, Adam Ingram, seven months before Rosemary's death. At that time the Minister informed CAJ that he had passed the documents to the Chief Constable for immediate investigation.

During the following seven months neither CAJ, nor Rosemary heard anything about the investigation into the documents. However, within days of Rosemary's murder, CAJ were asked by the RUC for the originals of the documents to subject them to forensic and fingerprint examination. We did not have the originals but understand that the Port investigation does now have access to them.

It was therefore clear that the RUC had only begun to search for the originals after Ms. Nelson's death. We could not understand why the police had not sought the originals in order to subject them to forensic examination during the investigation which presumably followed the receipt of the documents the previous summer. The RUC's failure to look for the documents before Rosemary Nelson's death raised very serious questions about the efficacy of the initial investigation. It seemed clear that the RUC could have done more to protect Rosemary Nelson. In our view, it was possible that those responsible for producing the two documents may have been identified by way of forensic tests if the originals had been obtained prior to Rosemary Nelson's murder. Indeed this must

also have been the view of the RUC given that the reason they had sought the originals after the murder was to determine if there were fingerprints or DNA evidence on them.

This is the basis of our complaint. We believe that the Chief Constable or the officers he appointed to conduct the

assessment of the risk failed to protect Rosemary Nelson. They failed to undertake the most basic investigative steps to determine the source of the two documents.

The failure to seek originals of the documents prior to Rosemary's murder led CAJ to ask the Chief Constable for an explanation as to what investigative steps were taken by him during the seven months leading up to the murder. Despite repeated efforts, we have yet to receive a substantive response.

Although the complaint names only the Chief Constable, CAJ understands that the Chief Constable in all likelihood delegated responsibility for the day-to-day investigation to other RUC officers. In any event, as the head of the RUC, the Chief Constable maintains ultimate responsibility for the investigation. In addition, as Minister Ingram forwarded the threatening documents directly to the Chief Constable's office, it seems

clear that the Chief Constable would have been expected to report back to the Minister on any developments in the investigation.

The complaint also includes additional information about the failure of the RUC to inform and warn Rosemary Nelson about real and substantial threats to her life. However, due to the sensitive nature of this information, CAJ have decided not to publicise it at this stage.

CAJ has been left with little option but to lodge a formal complaint. This is because despite meetings and correspondence with the Chief Constable, the Minister for Security and indeed the Secretary of State, we have not been given any explanation as to what steps, if any, were taken by the authorities to investigate the threats which were forwarded to them. If an established NGO with credibility domestically and internationally cannot get answers to these most straightforward questions about the murder of a leading human rights lawyer who is also a member of our Executive, the prognosis for public accountability in Northern Ireland remains bleak. Hopefully, the Police Ombudsman will be more successful in establishing exactly what the police did or did not do in the months leading up to Rosemary's death.

Paul Mageean

**HAPPY CHRISTMAS
 &
 PEACEFUL NEW YEAR**

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CAJ's Bill of Rights Information Pack

Readers of Just News may recall a flier enclosed with last month's edition advertising a Bill of Rights Information Pack. This article explains where the Pack came from, what it contains and the response received so far.

The Information Pack is designed for use by local community groups, church groups, women's groups, and youth groups and could not be more easy to use. It comes in the shape of an A4 folder and inside are 5 handouts that have to be copied to the group at different stages in the exercises, and a booklet containing information for the group leader. The booklet begins with an introduction to the Bill of Rights debate, explaining where the idea of rights has come from and then moves on to a short history of the international human rights debate. This information should be shared with the group to set the context for the discussion.

The booklet then details two exercises to be conducted with the group. The first of these asks for the group to be divided up into smaller sections and for each section to consider what they think people need to flourish and develop as human beings. These findings are recorded on flipchart by the leader. After this the group are given a simplified version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to compare with their own suggestions. Although the language is often phrased differently, practice has shown that the issues raised by groups are covered by the rights outlined in the Declaration.

An additional exercise can be carried out if there is sufficient time. This again involves the group being divided up and being given copies of the rights provisions from the constitutions of South Africa, the US and Ireland. They are asked to consider what the extracts say about the society and its values. In addition, they would add any other rights and whether any of them should be included in a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland. In this way, groups can see how a Bill of Rights generally reflects the particular circumstances of the society for which they were created.

Question & answer section

Finally, the booklet contains some questions and answers for the information of the group leader. These relate to, for example, conflicting rights and rights and responsibilities. It is at the discretion of the group leader as to whether they want to initiate this discussion with the group; or simply use it for their own information should the group ask questions related to these issues.

Most importantly, the Pack contains a submission form to the Human Rights Commission so that groups can, either individually or collectively, send their ideas to the Commission.

The Pack began its life as an exercise designed for training sessions which CAJ was invited to conduct on human rights. In particular it developed from a training on a potential Bill of Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The exercise was carried out with a number of groups and was very well received. However, at a session in the Ulster People's College with community group leaders, the original exercise was followed by the Constitutions exercise and the two worked perfectly together. It was this, combined with positive feedback from many groups on the success of the exercise, that inspired CAJ to publish the pack in its present format.

Then the mailing began. The Pack itself is quite bulky and it was decided that while the Pack should be sent to some groups, a flier with an order form would be the most practical way forward. Over 12,000 copies of the flier have already been distributed in mailings and newsletters of various organisations and since then CAJ has been inundated with requests for the Pack. These have come from a wide variety of groups from all over Northern Ireland including Cullybackey Youth 2000 Initiative, NI Agoraphobia and Anxiety Society and Women in Rural Development. There is an obvious willingness to learn and get involved in the Bill of Rights consultation process. It is heartening for CAJ to see such interest.

Accessibility

CAJ is now in discussion with Disability Action, the Blind Centre and other groups to investigate methods of making the Pack widely accessible. It is hoped that these versions, if viable, will be available in the New Year.

Since the consultation process began, CAJ has stressed that it is absolutely essential that the debate around the Bill of Rights be as broad and inclusive as possible. If the consultation reaches out to and involves everyone, especially the marginalized in society, then the people of Northern Ireland will feel a real sense of 'ownership' of this Bill of Rights. In this way, it will have helped to build a document that protects and promotes their own future, as well as the future of generations to come. The widespread distribution of the Information Pack is one step closer to this goal, but there are many more steps to take.

Aideen Gilmore
CAJ Bill of Rights Project Worker

Human Rights Training Day

On 24 November, CAJ and the Council of Europe co-sponsored a Human Rights Training Day at the Institute of Professional Legal Studies at The Queen's University of Belfast. The Institute offers a one-year postgraduate course of vocational training for trainee barristers and solicitors. Anyone who intends to enter either branch of the legal profession in Northern Ireland must attend the Institute and receive its Certificate in Professional Legal Studies.

The Human Rights Training Day focused on the European Convention of Human Rights and the Human Rights Act 1998, which partially incorporated the protections of the European Convention into domestic UK law. Martin O'Brien opened the morning session; he gave a brief overview of CAJ's work and introduced the two speakers, Michael O'Boyle, the Registrar of the First Section of the European Court of Human Rights, and Stephen Livingstone, the director of the Human Rights Centre at Queen's University. Mr. O'Boyle gave the students an introduction to the European Convention and talked about how the Convention had influenced the law in Britain and Northern Ireland. Professor Livingstone took the students through the new Human Rights Act and spoke about how the Act would work in practice in Northern Ireland.

The students had an opportunity to ask questions and then broke into four working groups. Each working group was assigned a case study, which raised issues under various articles of the European Convention. The working groups were all divided into applicants and respondents. They were given copies of the European Convention and asked to prepare their cases for argument before a simulation European Court of Human Rights. Each set of applicants and respondents separated to consider what arguments to present and then chose two members of the group to argue before the Court and to answer any questions.

The afternoon session was devoted to the presentation of cases. The judges were Martin O'Brien, Michael O'Boyle, and Fiona Doherty, (CAJ's new Vice-Chair) and a barrister in Northern Ireland. In all of the cases, both sides had five minutes to present their arguments and five minutes to respond to questions from the Court. The judges then announced their decisions, explaining their reasoning under the law of the European Convention.

The judges complimented each group of students on their presentations. The day had been a great success. The students had clearly learned a lot about the importance of the European Convention and the new Human Rights Act and would take this training with them into their new careers.

Fiona Doherty
US volunteer

Tribute to Jean Craig

Jean Craig died on 23rd November 2000 after a long battle against cancer. She had been a long time member of CAJ and had previously held the positions of Treasurer, Vice Chairperson and Chairperson. Jean had a passionate commitment to human rights and was particularly concerned about the treatment of young people within both the justice and care systems. She was active in CAJ's campaign to end the Payments for Debt Act and was also deeply concerned about the imprisonment of fine defaulters.

Jean was a very talented researcher and worked as a civil servant on a wide range of research projects. She was extremely committed to her work and was highly thought of within the research community. I remember her outrage when she was told that her work with CAJ could be a barrier to promotion. Jean made it clear that she would be continuing with her work and that she would not tolerate any vetting or discrimination.

In all her activities Jean was driven by a desire to make a difference and to make things better for others. She even took this approach to her illness, securing a commitment from the health authorities that testing procedures would be dealt with in a different way in future.

Jean's life wasn't all work. She was devoted to her children, grand-children and great grand-children and had a great love for the theatre and for walking. Her home was a frequent venue for CAJ gatherings and parties. The night would often conclude with singing and Jean's beautiful voice would stand out among the others. She will be sadly missed.

Martin O'Brien

There is probably no tougher act in town to compete with than the President of the United States. As December 13 showed, when Bill Clinton comes to Belfast, everyone makes time to go and see him. The great, the good, the not so good, and the noisy, all turned up to the Odyssey complex to cheer, heckle, or wave – Mexican style! Across town however, CAJ, in conjunction with UNISON, was organising a rival event. Far from the madding media pack the Section 75 activists were too busy for the President of the United States, (or even his wife!).

I should hasten to add that this was not an intentional snub, unfortunately 'our' event was planned some weeks before it was confirmed that Air Force One would be touching down in Belfast. However, given the timescale and the fact that both speakers at the Section 75 seminar had busy schedules, there was no option but to go head to head with Bill Clinton. In fact, it is a testimony to the importance that public bodies and consultees place in the new statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, that the event was so well attended. Many people central to both the public sector and civil society turned down the opportunity to see the President or the first lady, and, notwithstanding the widespread traffic disruption, turned up to try and identify how *mainstreaming* could be made more effective.

What exactly did they hear that was so important? Well, as regular followers of the Section 75 debate will be aware, 120 public bodies are currently engaged in *screening* their policies for *impact assessment*. Or, in simpler language, public bodies are seeking, via consultation, to determine those of their policies that have an adverse impact on equality of opportunity. Where this happens, ways of delivering the policy outcomes which have a less adverse effect, or which better promote equality of opportunity, must be considered.

The Statutory equality duty applies to:

- (a) persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age marital status or sexual orientation;
- (b) men and women generally;
- (c) persons with a disability and persons without;
- (d) and persons with dependants and persons without.

Given that the duty is unique in many respects, it is perhaps understandable that both public bodies and consultees alike have been in search of guidance as to how exactly they can go about achieving these objectives. There has been some questioning, for example, of what terms like 'adverse impact' mean, how 'adverse' does it have to be before 'mitigating' action should be taken, and so on.

Running Agains

To date, direction on how the new statutory duty should be implemented has come from the Guidelines produced by the Equality Commission. The Commission has also recently awarded a tender to a consortium to tease out further issues around 'impact assessment'. The purpose of the event on the 13th December, however, was to provide some guidance in the interim. In this respect we were very fortunate to secure the services of two experts in the field Professor Christopher McCrudden (Lincoln College Oxford) and Jonathan Swallow (Swallow Consulting). Prof. McCrudden's mainstreaming credentials will be well known to all those familiar with Just News. From his work with SACHR in the late 1980s, through to the recent NI Affairs Committee, Prof. McCrudden has consistently identified the need to build equality outcomes into government policy. He was among the first to point out that only when organisations like the Industrial Development Board weave equality considerations into the fabric of their operations, will there be any hope of addressing the unemployment differential between the 'two communities'. Jonathan Swallow is a former local government officer, based in Britain, who has worked extensively on the impact of competitive tendering on the workforce in Britain and Northern Ireland.

Essentially, the day was divided into two parts, with a morning and an afternoon session. The morning was devoted to the groups and individuals with whom the public bodies are likely to be consulting in the coming years. Rather than a formal presentation, the event had the feel of a question and answer session. There were a number of exchanges in relation to issues such as 'monitoring for adverse impact' and 'prioritisation of policies for impact assessment'. In the afternoon session, the consultees were joined by around 100 representatives from public bodies, for a more formal presentation by the two speakers, which was again followed by a question and answer session.

Needless to say the discussion became quite technical from a fairly early stage and a Just News article is perhaps not the ideal forum for outlining the detail of the discussion. Indeed a full report of the event is currently in process of preparation and will be available from the office on request. (The report will also contain a glossary explaining some of the key terms associated with Section 75 such as *mainstreaming*, *screening* and *impact assessment*).

The Vision Thing

However, one of the added advantages of bringing outside experts to such an event is that it allows for an opportunity to engage beyond the minutiae of the process, and get a sense of the bigger picture, what might be termed 'the vision thing'. Given the amount of paperwork the process

st the President!

has generated to date, there is perhaps a sense in which those closest to it (present company included) lose sight of the wood for the trees. CAJ sent some form of response to all 120 bodies in relation to their original equality schemes. In addition we are bombarded almost on a daily basis by public bodies' attempts at finding ways of identifying those areas of their work that have most impact on equality of opportunity. The potential of the legislation has been obscured to such an extent that the main outcome of the process thus far would appear to be less trees, but not necessarily more equality!

Impacting on government

In relation to the 'big picture', perhaps the point is best illustrated in relation to the Draft Programme for Government and Budget. CAJ along with a number of organisations active in promoting section 75, recently attended a consultation meeting organised by the Department of Finance and Personnel on the Draft Budget. CAJ submitted a written response to both the Draft Budget and the Programme for Government. There were a number of issues raised by ourselves and other consultees in relation to both documents, not least the lack of data, and general detail contained in the respective 'impact assessments'. It was only when Professor McCrudden pointed out however that this is the first case, anywhere in the world, of an entire programme for government having to undergo an assessment in order to determine how it impacts on equality of opportunity that one realises the significance of the new legislation. Equally, the principle has now been accepted that the Budget determining how government resources are allocated must be assessed in order to determine the impact on equality of opportunity between the groups covered by the legislation. While the methodology of the impact assessments carried out thus far in relation to both documents left much to be desired, the message is clear - consultees will be expecting much more next time.

It should be noted however, that anyone attending the seminar expecting to be given 'an instant guide' to section 75 would have been disappointed. As Jonathan Swallow stated, 'there are no experts in this field, only apprentices'. While the purpose of the event was to provide some direction, the message was clear, section 75 requires public bodies to engage in meaningful consultation so that ultimately, society will be provided with a reduction in inequalities. In short, go back to your office and seek out the views of those affected by the decisions made by your organisation.

The second 'big' and related message coming out of the event concerns the mix of participants in the audience. While many of the organisations present in the hall were

veterans of Equality Coalition events, (Upper Springfield Development Trust, NICE, Disability Action, the Coalition on Sexual Orientation), it was striking that the list of attendees went well beyond the 'usual suspects'. By the afternoon, there were present a number of government departments including the Departments of Finance and Personnel, Health, Enterprise Trade and Investment, and both Regional and Social Development. Local Councils, Education and Library Boards and Health and Social Service Trusts were also well represented, both in terms of numbers and geographic spread. In addition there were also a range of criminal justice bodies such as the Northern Ireland Court Service and the Probation Board. Also present were a number of representatives from the Equality Commission, the organisation with statutory responsibility for ensuring compliance with section 75. Given such a wide range of groups, the event provided an interesting opportunity for both public bodies and consultees to outline the concerns they had regarding the operation of the process at present. Terms like "participation", and "consultation", have become some of the by-words of mainstreaming, and all were on show in the Wellington Park.

It is also worth noting that some months ago, Prof. McCrudden wrote:

'One of the most far-reaching 'by-products' of mainstreaming becomes the development of a crucial link between government and 'civil society'. This development encourages greater participation in decision-making by marginal groups, thus lessening the democratic deficit.'

Put more simply, the Council of Europe has argued that one of the most important targets of mainstreaming is nothing less than the 'development of democracy'. Given such worthy objectives, surely even Bill and Hillary would understand why we couldn't make it.

Tim Cunningham
CAJ Equality Project Worker

In the Headlines

CAJ holds newspaper clippings on more than 50 civil liberties and justice issues (from mid 1987). Copies of these can be purchased from CAJ office. The clippings are also available for consultation at the office.

Anyone interested in this service, should phone (028) 9096 1122.

Unfinished Business - The Voices who Tell the Stories

Human Rights violations can become a banal feature of a society which has, and continues to experience, conflict. Both individually and communally we get used to hearing statistics, media reports and occasionally legal outcomes arising from denials of human rights. However, we rarely get to hear the voices of those who experience loss, trauma and personal transgression. By this I mean that we rarely get to hear their voices firsthand, unfiltered and without being diluted. This is particularly true when the state has been responsible for taking the life of a citizen.

Bill Rolston's book *Unfinished Business State Killings and the Quest for Truth* is a unique contribution to the ongoing discussions in Northern Ireland about the use of lethal force by state agents. Its strength is that the voices of those bereaved are given full and uninterrupted scope to speak. They speak powerfully and the chorus is unmistakable - that the search for truth in case after case continues unabated.

Narrative is an extraordinarily powerful tool. In societies which have engaged fully with a process of truth seeking and truth telling, the power of telling stories has shaken the way in which the business of the state is done. The insight given to us by Bill Rolston's book, is that were we to fully listen and engage with the stories told about the taking of life by state agents, we would have a powerful incentive to challenge the state.

This book confirms the compelling power of story telling in a moving series of narratives, structured in chronological order. Each narrative is preceded by an organised account of the lethal force incident and a succinct synopsis of legal and other proceedings which took place. The book concerns itself with many of the most compelling cases involving the use of lethal force including Bloody Sunday, Carol Ann Kelly, the Gibraltar deaths, Brian Robinson, Peter McBride, and Robert Hamill amongst others. While many of these cases have been widely reported and discussed, the narratives explore the deaths from a personal perspective. The strongest voices are those of the

bereaved themselves, while those speaking solely from campaigns and support groups have, for obvious reasons, less intensity.

In telling their stories, those bereaved bring to the fore generally under-explored issues. Some of these issues constitute human rights violations in their own right. They include:

- the treatment of family members immediately following death by state agents;
- the harassment experienced by the extended family of a victim notably when redress is sought;
- the denial of their status as victims by various governmental inquiries such as the Bloomfield and Patten Commissions; and
- the ways in which families have sought to channel their frustration and anger into campaigning and activism.

This book also demonstrates clearly the extent to which the bereaved are secondary victims themselves. However, they are not passive victims. Story after story confirms the strength of ordinary people, faced with traumatic circumstances - choosing to confront the institutions and individuals who have created their circumstances. Thus, Margaret Caraher speaking of her motivation to campaign and lobby following the shooting of her husband Fergal in December 1990 says:

...although Brendan's [their son] a young fellow, if it ever comes to the point where he says, 'And what did you do about it?', I'd be able to look him straight in the eye and say, 'I did the very best I could'.

The narratives also confirm the strength and support individuals received and required from organisations such as the CAJ, Relatives for Justice and British Irish Rights Watch. They show how community networks, individual commitment and the willingness to record events seen and words spoken create a momentum of their own. There is persistent reference to the strength given to and received from similarly placed victims.

When human rights violations take place they crash onto the media headlines for a day or two and then quickly disappear. What Bill Rolston has done, is to take the murmur that continues long afterwards in kitchens, sitting rooms and pubs and show its formidable capacity. These voices are not going away, they are here for the long haul and they will not settle for less than full and equal accountability. Simply put by Mark Thompson - brother of Peter, killed by the 14th Intelligence Company in 1990; "Tell us the truth. Don't keep adding insult to injury by telling us lies; don't perpetuate the suffering."

We also want to positively contribute to a future society in which we are not left behind. If anything, we have a pivotal and central role to play in shaping our collective future. It is through our experiences that we will identify the failings of the past and set in place safeguards which will protect and promote human rights.

Fionnuala ni Aolain

Unfinished Business State Killings and the Quest for Truth, Bill Rolston
Published by Beyond the Pale Publications; Cost £12.99; pp325.

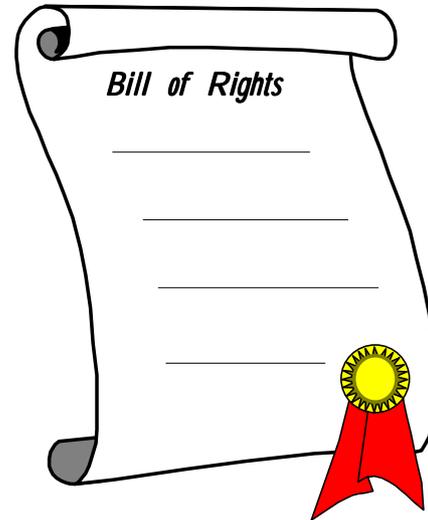
Continuing the series of perspectives on a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland

A Carer's perspective on a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland

So far, Just News, in its series on a proposed Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland has provided perspectives from a school teacher, a community worker and a young person. This time, its the turn of a carer.

Rights for Carers

1. The right to equal rights
2. The right to choose whether or not to take on, or continue caring and not be prejudiced for the decision.
3. The right to equity in access to all health care treatments and services for the carer and the person being cared for regardless of age, disability, gender, race and/or geographical location.
4. The right to a level of income that means a carer is no worse off financially than any other member of society receiving the minimum wage.
5. The right to a level of income that protects the full state pension rights of carers.
6. The right to receive good quality home care and support services from publicly accountable, responsive and transparent health care and/or welfare systems, and to choose to remain within this setting.
7. The right to effective mediation, arbitration and legal aid to pursue breaches and abuses of carer's rights.
8. The right to a break including respite care on a reasonably regular basis.
9. The right to a range of respite care provision commensurate with the needs of the person being cared for and the carer.



10. The right to a home life that ensures that quality of life and dignity are maintained for both the carer and person being cared for and the right to choose to continue living in this setting
11. The right to an effective and well-resourced lobby for carers.

Carers National Association can be contacted by telephone on (028) 90439843 or by posting to 11 Lower Crescent, Belfast BT7 1NR

Should anyone wish to contribute an article giving their perspective on a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland, contact Liz McAleer at the CAJ office on (028) 9096 1122.

Up to date with CAJ

CAJ as a member of the Equality Coalition held a conference on Section 75 – Screening and impact assessments (see report on pages 4/5)
 Maggie attended a seminar on community policing organised by Mediation Network.
 CAJ met with the police oversight commissioner, Tom Constantine to discuss his work.
 Martin attended an event organised by the Irish Language group, Pobail.
 Martin, Maggie and Paul attended the North South human rights conference in Dublin. Maggie acted as Conference Rapporteur.
 Martin attended Disability Action's AGM.
 Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to wish all CAJ members and subscribers a Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

Liz McAleer

And there's more.....

The NI Human Rights Commission has also produced a range of materials on the Bill of Rights. These include pamphlets relating to social and economic rights, criminal justice, victims, language, and a video.

Should anyone wish to hold a training session or access training materials and facilitators contact the Commission on (028) 90243987.

Civil Liberties Diary

2 Nov Members of the Chinese community met with RUC Chief Constable Sir Ronnie Flanagan. Director of the Chinese Welfare Association Anna Manwah Watson said a number of new initiatives were agreed. The meeting followed three robberies of Chinese families in Belfast in the previous two weeks.

3 Nov The new Police Ombudsman's office officially opened, as a result of which the RUC will no longer investigate complaints against its own officers. Ombudsman Nuala O'Loan will head an office staff of approximately 105, and hold an annual budget of £5.7 million.

7 Nov A consultation paper was issued on the viability criteria for Irish-medium and integrated schools. The review was announced by Education Minister Martin McGuinness last February, following concerns that current criteria for funding new schools were too strict.

8 Nov The Police Bill went before the House of Lords for final discussion of amendments including proposed changes on the oversight commissioner, the ombudsman, and the Policing Board

12 Nov It was reported that Michael McKinney, a brother of William McKinney who was killed on Bloody Sunday, was suing the commanding officer involved in the killings, for libel. It followed Lt Col Rick Wilford's comments on the BBC Radio 4 'Today' programme. Col Wilford claimed that Mr McKinney, who also took part in the interview, had links to "a republican organisation".

13 Nov The Bloody Sunday inquiry headed by Lord Saville resumed in Derry, giving the families of the victims the first chance to air their grievances in a public forum since the incident thirty years ago.

14 Nov Professor Shearing, director of criminology at the University of Toronto and former member of the Patten Commission expressed

serious criticism of the British government's handling of the Bill stating that "The Patten report has not been cherry-picked – it has been gutted".

15 Nov The Police Bill received its third reading before the House of Lords. Labour and Liberal Democrat members of the House of Lords voted together to reject amendments to the Police Bill proposed by Conservative and Unionist members, including a proposal to retain the current cap badge and to drop the '50:50' recruitment policy.

16 Nov The family of Sammy Devenny, a Derry man who died thirty years ago as a result of a beating from RUC officers, has asked Sir Ronnie Flanagan to acknowledge that RUC officers carried out the killing. Derry City Council agreed to Harry Devenny's request that it endorse his call for a new, full and independent inquiry into his father's death.

18 Nov Speaking at the annual general meeting of the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities, Executive Director Patrick Yu called for "sufficient resources" to tackle racism in Northern Ireland. Dr Paul Connolly, co-author of a research report into ethnic minority groups' experiences, outlined findings that racial harassment in schools and the workplace is a "very serious problem" for many. "Two thirds of ethnic minority children have suffered some form of racial harassment at school," he said.

20 Nov Philip Campbell Smith was charged with intimidating a key witness in a police investigation into alleged British army "dirty tricks" in Northern Ireland. A spokeswoman for the Stevens Inquiry said that the charge related to the sending of an e-mail about a former soldier to a Sunday newspaper.

21 Nov The Police Bill was passed by MPs voting in its final stage on the House of Lords amendments, before the Bill finally became law.

An assessment by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission of the RUC's training programme on the 1998 Human Rights Act stated that Special Branch police officers were told in a training session on human rights that people suing the RUC were "toe-rags" and there was a reference to the elderly as "custard dribbling old fools". The Commission also said three talks in the one-day training for strategic command were reasonably good. The commission concluded: "The serious flaws in the delivery of the training by the one internal RUC trainer and one of the external speakers indicates that there were significant weaknesses in the training programme."

25 Nov The Ministry of Defence announced that Scots Guards James Fisher and Mark Wright, who were convicted of the 1992 murder of north Belfast teenager Peter McBride, would not be dismissed from the army. The Independent Assessor for Military Complaints in Northern Ireland, Jim McDonald, joined in widespread criticism of the decision saying he would be demanding a full explanation. Secretary of State Peter Mandelson said the ruling was "entirely a matter for the army board".

Compiled by volunteers from various newspaper sources.

Just News

Just News welcomes readers' news, views and comments.

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