

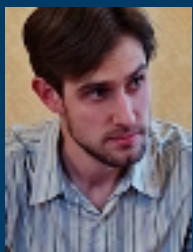


Law Research Briefing April 2023

Post-Brexit Rights Protections in Northern Ireland

Professor Colin Murray

- ◆ Professor Colin Murray, working alongside academics from four other universities, conducted an independent analysis examining the impact of Brexit and the risk of widening gaps in rights across the island of Ireland. The expert report was commissioned by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (Ireland and Northern Ireland’s statutory human rights and equality bodies).
- ◆ People in Northern Ireland, who already have fewer equality and human rights protections in some areas than their counterparts in Ireland and Great Britain, are at risk of facing a further widening disparity if the UK Government does not act. This analysis serves as a stark warning, urging policymakers to prevent significant rights and equality areas such as gender reassignment, accessibility, pay transparency reporting, work-life balance, and age discrimination in access to goods, facilities, and services from falling between the cracks following Brexit.
- ◆ The Report strongly recommends that the Irish Government, the Northern Ireland Executive, and the UK Government urgently work to enhance and harmonise equality and human rights protections on the island of Ireland, aligned to their respective remits, and make a clear commitment to ensuring rights are consistent.
- ◆ The statutory rights and equality bodies, reflecting their commitment to protect and strengthen equality and human rights protections on the island of Ireland, have made a series of recommendations based on the research. They will now meet with government officials to highlight the Report’s findings and ensure that these crucial rights continue to be safeguarded in Northern Ireland.
- ◆ Commenting on the Report, Professor Murray said: “The people of Northern Ireland were promised that the rights and equality protections secured in the 1998 Agreement, which before Brexit depended upon EU law, would remain in full effect. Now is the time those promises are being put to the test”.



Colin Murray is a Professor of Law and Democracy at Newcastle Law School. He is a prominent figure in the legal discourse surrounding Brexit. His extensive research and writings on UK constitutional law and Northern Ireland's devolution arrangements have significantly influenced official consultations and policy-making, particularly in the context of Brexit.



colin.murray@ncl.ac.uk



@colinmurray.bsky.social



<https://www.ncl.ac.uk/law/people/profile/colinmurray.html>



C. Murray and A. Deb, ‘Article 2 of the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol: a new frontier in human rights law?’, *European Human Rights Law Review*, 2023.

C. Murray and C. Rice, ‘Beyond trade: implementing the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol’s human rights and equalities provisions’, *Northern Ireland Legal Quarterly* 2021.