

22 May 2015

Calls to boycott Ashers products unhelpful to promoting equality

The Equality Commission appreciates that retailers operate in a competitive environment and will make commercial decisions about what products to stock and sell in stores based on customer demand and generating sales. It is a matter for shoppers to choose where they shop and which products they will purchase and retailers generally will have a good commercial sense of what will sell based on local knowledge.

The recent judgment has highlighted the protections that Northern Ireland's equality legislation provides and the role of the courts and bodies like ourselves to ensure that they are upheld.

Calls for boycott and contract termination as a result of the current case are not helpful to promoting equality and we would not support any boycott of Asher's products or restrictions on their supply.

We would encourage reflection on how the divisive debate which we have witnessed can be moved on to a debate on how we progress towards a more inclusive and equal society in NI.