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PRESS RELEASE

Equality Commission speaks out to support Pride 2016

“A chance to celebrate the positives - and to look forward to overcoming the challenges.” That is how Dr Michael Wardlow, Chief Commissioner of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, described this year’s Belfast Pride Festival.

In a message of support to Belfast Pride, Dr Wardlow said: “No one could be in any doubt that LGB&T people have a stronger voice now than at any time I can remember. Gradually that is bringing about an increase in the equality and the respect that they deserve alongside the rest of our society. Earlier this year we saw the lifting of the lifetime ban on blood donation by gay men and we’ve also seen the strength of public opinion in favour of equal civil marriage.

“The Commission is hopeful that the long-awaited Sexual Orientation Strategy will be progressed as part of the implementation of the Executive’s Programme for Government. In our response to the Programme for Government consultation in the middle of July, we called for a timetabled commitment to developing and implementing the Sexual Orientation Strategy, which would enhance the protection of the rights of LGB people in Northern Ireland.

“The annual Pride celebrations have grown, year on year,” Dr Wardlow concluded, “and it’s a day when all of us have a chance to speak up for equality, respect and dignity for all citizens, gay and straight.”

The Equality Commission will have an information stand at the Pride Village and will be taking part in the Belfast Pride Parade on Saturday 6 August.

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