

May 2008

Welcome to Equality Focus - the e-newsletter of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. We hope you find this informative and that you will pass it on to anyone you think would find it interesting. We welcome any suggestions or comments you may have.

Employers' Survey

We were delighted with the results of a survey seeking the opinions of employers regarding their satisfaction with key aspects of the business support provided by the Commission which has highlighted an increase in overall satisfaction levels. 86% of all employers surveyed were satisfied with the services provided by the Commission. This represents an increase of 9 percentage points on the satisfaction level recorded in 2004 (77%). The majority (57%) of those organisations with a significant level of contact (i.e. 3 or more contacts) had changed existing equality/employment practices and /or procedures as a result of their contact with the Commission. Organisations with lower levels of contact were less likely to have introduced changes to their equality or employment practices.

The report is most encouraging, and the Commission is committed to further improving the service provided to employers in the future. [Click here](#) to view the consultation 'Satisfaction of Employers and Service Providers With Business Support Provided by the Equality Commission' which included respondents from both the public and private sectors and was carried out independently by Social & Market Research (SMR) between November 2007 and January 2008.

Consultation ends June 23 on Draft Guidance on "Eliminating Sexual Orientation Discrimination in Northern Ireland: A Guide on the Provision of Goods, Facilities, Services and Premises"

The Commission's draft Guidance "Eliminating Sexual Orientation Discrimination in Northern Ireland: A Guide on the Provision of Goods, Facilities, Services and Premises", is currently out for public consultation until Monday 23 June 2008.

The aim of the document is to provide advice on how to prevent discrimination against individuals on grounds of sexual orientation in accessing services, public functions and/or premises. [Click here](#) to view draft guidance and the consultation questionnaire, or contact Gayle Wilkinson, Promotion and Education Division, on 028 90 500689.

Educational migration



The Equality Commission has launched the findings of an expert paper which looks at the key patterns and drivers of educational migration and non-return of local students attending universities in Great Britain and Ireland.

The paper also considered the impact this may have on the community composition of the pool of labour available to employers in

Northern Ireland. The report, completed by Professor Ronald McQuaid and Dr Emma Hollywood from the Employment Research Institute (ERI) at Napier University, can be found on the Commission's website, [click here to view](#).

Report on Settlements 2006-2007

The Commission has published a detailed review of all discrimination cases assisted by the Commission in which settlements or tribunal and court decisions were achieved during the year 2006-2007. The total sum awarded to complainants or agreed in settlements during this particular year is £622,175. To see the full report [click here](#).

Changes to Sex Discrimination Regulations

On 6 April 2008, the Sex Discrimination (Amendment of Legislation) Regulations 2008 came into operation in Northern Ireland, and introduced protection from direct discrimination on grounds of gender reassignment in the provision of goods, facilities, services or premises.

On the same day, the Sex Discrimination (Amendment) Regulations 2008 came into operation in Northern Ireland, and introduced a number of important changes to the Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976. In particular the changes deal with pregnancy and maternity leave and harassment at work: [click here for more information](#).

If you need to know more about the implications and effects of this new legislation, please contact the Equality Commission Enquiry Line: 028 90 890 890.

Need advice or guidance about equality or discrimination?

The Commission provides free and confidential advice to individuals, employers and service providers on all aspects of equality. We also provide a range of training services. Contact our Enquiry line on 028 90 890 890 or [view our advisory publications here](#).

If you have any comments on this newsletter or would like it in other formats please email: Christina Martin, Communications Officer at cmartin@equalityni.org
If you received this newsletter from someone else and wish to subscribe to future issues of Equality Focus [please click here](#).

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