

August 2007

Chief Commissioner's View from the Chair



Bob Collins

Why we need to develop a more enlightened attitude

It is now 10 years since the introduction of the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order and the foundation of what was then the Commission for Racial Equality (Northern Ireland) in 1997. Although some things have remained almost unchanged, there have also been enormous changes in Northern Ireland in the decade since 1997.

In this month's View from the Chair, Chief Commissioner, Bob Collins encourages employers to take advantage of the opportunities presented by a more ethnically diverse society and encourages all of us to address our outmoded assumptions and change any practices or behaviours that are no longer appropriate. [Click here to read the article.](#)

Commission Looks into Youth 'Brain Drain'

The Equality Commission wants to know more about why many young people leave Northern Ireland to study and do not come back and the potential impact this has for future labour markets.

"This undergraduate migration, more commonly known as the 'brain drain', is not in itself exceptional. But coupled with the fact that those leaving are twice as likely to be Protestant than Catholic and one third of those leaving do not return after graduation there are real issues for our future labour pool," said Bob Collins, Chief Commissioner.

The Commission has appointed the Employment Research Institute from Napier University, Edinburgh to research this phenomenon and will publish the report next year. Full Terms of Reference for the project can be viewed at [Educational Migration Terms of Reference](#).

Annual Conference - October 2007

The theme for our Annual Conference this year is "Equality for All - A Focus on Rights and Representation". It will be held in Belfast in October as part of a programme of activities for the [European Year of Equal Opportunities for All](#).



We have a range of brilliant speakers lined up, including our Chief Commissioner, Bob Collins, who will be announcing 'Key Inequalities'. In addition, Gay Moon will be talking about Multiple Discrimination and Colm O'Cinneide will be discussing the role of Positive Action and the Positive Duties in increasing participation of under-represented groups. In an innovative feature we will be welcoming a number of stakeholders who will present their experiences of seeking to achieve equality through their particular roles. The day will conclude with a panel discussion.

If you would like to receive the conference programme and registration form please register your interest with Bronagh Kelly on Email: bkelly@equalityni.org or Tel. (028) 90 500 588.

Employer Networks

The Commission has set up a number of employer networks based around geography, sectors or themes. They are a source of information and support to employers and meet regularly to consider a range of equality and diversity matters in the workplace.

We are currently setting up an Employment Equality Forum for private sector employers in North & West Belfast. If you are interested in joining this network or finding out about other existing networks please visit the [Employers' Section of our website](#).

How the Equality Commission can help you

Last year the Equality Commission gave free advice to over 8,000 people and this number is growing every year. Almost 20% of these enquiries came by email or through [our website](#) - every day over 650 people visit the site for information on equality law and their rights.

If you need information about your rights or you think you have been discriminated against on the grounds of sex, marital status, sexual orientation, religion, political opinion, race, age or disability contact us for free advice. We may also be able to offer you legal assistance. Employers and service providers can also get free information, advice and training to help them ensure that they don't discriminate.

For free advice call our Enquiry Line on (028) 90 890 890, Text phone (028) 90 500 589 or email the advice team on information@equalityni.org. We also have

a range of free advisory [publications](#) available on our website or in hard copy from our Enquiry Line.

If you have any comments on this newsletter or would like it in other formats please email: Kelly Loughran, Communications Officer at kloughran@equalityni.org

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