

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.

Show you don't put up with Racism in Your Workplace!

This is the eighth year of Anti-Racist Workplace Week. This year it will run from 3-7 November and will be marked by



- a launch event at the Waterfront Hall on Monday November 3
- the publication of a best practice booklet,
- posters and other materials for use in the workplace and
- an event at Stormont for employers on November 7.

Workplaces all over NI will be actively showing that they don't tolerate racism at work and some are already excellent at incorporating ethnic minority workers into their workforce.

If your company or organisation has planned an event or activities for the week, please let us know and we can feature them on our website.

Keep an eye out for more information on how to mark Anti-Racist Workplace Week in your workplace - visit the [news and events section](#) of our website.

Also on race, Chief Commissioner Bob Collins commented on the recent appearance of a notice on a house to let - but not to 'foreigners' - in his recent [View from the Chair](#) article.



Race Investigation

The Commission started an investigation under Race Relations Order into recruitment

agencies' policies and practices on 2 September, with the placement of a [notice in the press](#) setting out the terms of reference for the investigation. We are keen to get as much participation as possible, and the Investigations team has set up over thirty focus groups with migrant workers throughout Northern Ireland. These meetings will take place between September 2008 and February 2009. To facilitate communication, the focus groups will be largely nationality based. The Investigations team is developing background documentation and questionnaires to be translated into ten different languages. We will also be speaking to recruitment agencies/businesses and employers who use or have used their services.

More information from Paul O'Neill 028 90 500 577, email poneill@equalityni.org

Code of Practice: Racial Equality in Housing

We have been working to finalise a Code of Practice on Racial Equality in Housing following public consultation. The Code sets out the requirements of the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 (as amended) in respect of housing and accommodation and explains how people, on grounds of colour or nationality, or race or ethnic or national origin, are protected by the race equality legislation in this area.

The document will be of particular use to legal advisers when advising their clients, and will assist courts and industrial tribunals when interpreting the legislation. The Code brings together guidance on the broad range of services that fall within the housing sector, both public and private, and is intended to be a resource for housing and accommodation providers as well as for people who need to know and understand their rights under the race relations legislation.

The Code is currently at the formal approval stage and the Commission aims to launch it later in the Autumn in Belfast. Further information will be available on the Commission's website after its launch.

Launch of Guidance on Sexual Orientation Goods, Facilities and Services

Following extensive consultation, the Commission will be launching new guidance "Eliminating sexual orientation discrimination in Northern Ireland: a guide on the provision of goods, facilities, services and premises" on 8 October. The guide will explain the provisions of the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006. To request a copy, please contact our Enquiry line - 028 90 890 890.

Women into Councils Initiative

An event supported by the ECNI on 1st October in Belfast will mark the launch of a document outlining progress of the 'Women into Councils' initiative.

This initiative seeks to promote greater sex equality in the local government sector. Firstly, it aims to attract more women overall into the sector and to encourage and help them reach for more senior positions. Secondly, it acknowledges the increasingly significant political role played by local councils in Northern Ireland and seeks to address the under-representation of women in local politics. Both these strands are vital to the increased involvement of women in our central governmental structures.

Local councils have already done sterling work in promoting this initiative and mainstreaming its principles within their operational and strategic work.

The Commission's Employment Development division is always pleased to work with

any council, through the Local Government Staff Commission, to continue and progress the excellent work already carried out by 'Women into Councils'.

If you are interested in attending, please contact Paul Oakes in the Commission's Employment Development Division on 028 9050 0694 or at poakes@equalityni.org

Disability Conciliation Service



Evelyn Collins, Chief Executive of the Equality Commission, with Ann Collins, Director of Shopmobility at the launch of the Disability Conciliation Service.

The Equality Commission has launched a conciliation service for disabled people in Northern Ireland. The service covers complaints about goods, facilities, services or premises and also complaints about education.

The service enables a disabled person and a service provider to find a solution that satisfies both parties. Experience elsewhere shows that a majority of conciliation cases result in full and final settlements of complaints. If, however, the conciliation process does not produce a satisfactory outcome for the disabled person, they will still have the right to pursue their complaint through the courts.

Disputes settled through discussion and negotiation can lead to organisations making lasting changes for disabled people rather than going to court or making compensatory payments.

For more detail, [click here](#) to read the press release.

Board settles disabled schoolgirl case

In August, the ECNI was pleased to announce success in the case of Michaela Hollywood v the South Eastern Education and Library Board. The settlement was made under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Order 2005, which makes it unlawful for education bodies to discriminate against disabled pupils and prospective pupils, or treat the disabled less favourably because of their disability. [Click here](#) to read the press release.



Annual conference - a date for your diary

This year, the Commission's annual conference will take place on 12 November at the Hilton Hotel, Belfast. The conference, 'Every child an equal child - the challenge for education', will focus on opportunities for promoting equality and good relations in schools. It will also look at how key inequalities in education can be addressed. Further information and registration details will be available on our website later in September or can be requested by emailing cshaw@equalityni.org. For more

Have your say... Section 75 Consultation



Following the recent Effectiveness Review of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Equality Commission has revised its Guide to the Section 75 Statutory Duties. The [revised Guide](#) reflects the findings of the review and recommendations made to enhance the effectiveness of the legislation. We are holding a series of consultation events on the revised Guide across Northern Ireland in the coming months and your participation is welcomed.

To access copies of the consultation documents and for further information on the consultation events, please click below.

- Section 75 Consultation - [cover letter](#)
- Section 75 Consultation - [registration form](#)
- Section 75 Consultation - [revised draft guidance](#)
- Section 75 Consultation - [questionnaire](#)

Public Authorities meeting: Thursday 18 September 2008, 10am - 12.30pm. The McWilliam Suite, Wellington Park Hotel, Belfast BT9 6RU.

Voluntary/Community sector: Thursday 25 September 2008, 10am - 12.30pm. The Adair Suite, Glenavon Hotel, Cookstown BT80 8JQ.

Voluntary /Community sector: Wednesday 1 October 2008, 10am - 12.30pm. Training Room, Equality House, Belfast BT2 7DP.

Please post or fax the registration form (above) or e-mail sgray@equalityni.org to let us know you're coming, and let us know in advance of any special dietary or other requirements you may have. **The closing date for responses to this consultation is Friday 7 November 2008.**

Calendar of Events

- October 1** Women into Councils event
- October 8** Launch of Sexual Orientation, Goods, Facilities and Services Guide
- November 3-7** Anti-Racist Workplace Week
- November 11** Launch of Disability Support Pack for employers
- November 12** ECNI Annual Conference, Hilton Hotel, Belfast
- November 20** Racial Equality in Housing event, Belfast
- December 1-5** Traveller Focus Week

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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