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PRESS RELEASE

Commission Clarifies Race Law in Relation to Housing

Following media reports that a house to let in Belfast was being advertised as “not available to any foreigners”, the Equality Commission has clarified the legal position - that racial discrimination in letting or selling premises is unlawful.

Bob Collins, Chief Commissioner of the Equality Commission said,

“The law as regards racial discrimination in selling or letting houses or any other premises is quite clear.

Under the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 it is unlawful to discriminate on racial grounds in selling or letting any premises through the services of an estate agent or where an advertisement is published. Anyone who has been subject to such discrimination may take an action in the County Court and the Commission can advise anyone who believes they have been subject to such discrimination.

The Order also makes it unlawful to publish an advertisement indicating an intention to discriminate on racial grounds. The Equality Commission has the power to bring proceedings to the County Court where it appears to the Commission that a person has committed such an unlawful act.”

ENDS