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PRESS RELEASE

£15,000 Settlement for former political party worker

A former employee of Sinn Féin, Anne McGuinness, has received £15,000 in settlement of a claim she brought against the party, with the support of the Equality Commission, alleging discrimination on the grounds of age and gender.

Ms McGuinness was made redundant from a position based in Sinn Féin's Westminster office in November 2007.

She alleged that two posts for which she felt she was appropriately skilled and experienced had subsequently been filled without her being given an opportunity to apply for them. The posts were both filled by males, both younger than her.

Ms. McGuinness said that she had been disappointed to feel that she was being treated unfairly after many years working for Sinn Féin. "I am happy that this matter has now been resolved and particularly pleased that, as a result of this case, the party will now work with the Equality Commission to ensure that its policies and procedures deliver the highest standards of equality of opportunity."

Sinn Féin has agreed to pay Ms McGuinness £15,000 without admission of liability.

Eileen Lavery, Head of Strategic Enforcement in the Equality Commission, said, "When employers are engaged in restructuring exercises which involve recruitment, it is important that they consider carefully whether their policies and procedures, and the implementation of them, could be impacting adversely on staff or applicants because of

such factors as age and gender. The Commission welcomes the opportunity to work with Sinn Féin in reviewing its policies to ensure this is achieved.”

Sinn Féin also said that it regretted any perception Ms. McGuinness may have had that arrangements made in relation to appointments by the organisation in April 2008 operated to her disadvantage.

In reaching the settlement, the party has undertaken to meet with the Equality Commission to review its equal opportunities and recruitment and selection policies, practices and procedures to ensure that they are effective and conform with the law. It has also affirmed its commitment to the principle of equality of opportunity in employment and to ensuring that it complies in all respects with national and European Union equality law, particularly the Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976 and the related Code of Practice and the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (NI) 2006.