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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Equality Commission welcomes publication of the Equalities Bill in Great Britain**

The Equality Commission welcomes today the publication of a single Equalities Bill in Great Britain, which is designed to harmonise and strengthen discrimination law.

The proposed changes in Great Britain, the majority of which are due to come into force in October 2010, highlight the urgent need for the reform of Northern Ireland equality law.

Chief Executive Evelyn Collins said, "We believe that legislative changes are urgently required in order to help address the key inequalities which exist in Northern Ireland society, as highlighted by the Commission in its Statement on Key Inequalities in Northern Ireland. In addition, changes are needed to make Northern Ireland equality law easier to access, understand and implement.

"We will be considering the detail of what is proposed today and watching the progress of the Bill with great interest."

The Equality Commission continues to call for the introduction in Northern Ireland, of legislation prohibiting age discrimination when providing services or carrying out public functions. This is in light of growing evidence that many people, particularly older people, are being subjected to unjustifiable discrimination on grounds of age.

It seeks changes to the disability discrimination legislation in order to secure greater protection for disabled people against discrimination when accessing employment, education, goods and services, public transport, and housing.

The Commission's recommendations also range over the fair employment, race and sex discrimination legislation.