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## PRESS RELEASE

### **NI discrimination cases digest published**

The Equality Commission has published its 2008-2009 Decisions and Settlements Review which gives summaries of the 64 cases supported by the Commission and resolved during the year.

Of the 64 cases resolved 54 were settled prior to hearing at tribunal or court. Compensation totalling £515,981 was paid out to 59 assisted complainants in employment and goods facilities and services cases. This year also saw a number of assisted cases in the area of education, where compensation is not applicable, but reasonable adjustments were made for disabled students.

The year in review also had a significant number of cases where important clarifications in the law have been made, including two decisions, by the House of Lords and the Northern Ireland Court of Appeal, relating to political opinion and disability.

Eileen Lavery, Head of Strategic Enforcement for the Equality Commission, said “The Commission supports cases on a strategic basis and one of the key reasons is to clarify aspects of the law where there is some uncertainty. A number of the cases included in the review which ran to hearing were significant in adding to our understanding of the law.

“Just last month we saw the conclusion of a case, which ran in the review period in the Northern Ireland Court of Appeal. This case resulted in a decision, subsequently upheld by the House of Lords, which refined the interpretation of disability, increasing

protection from discrimination to people with a range of health conditions where symptoms can be managed or may fluctuate. (*Boyle -v- SCA Packaging. Page 7*).

“Some of the cases are highly technical and can take some time to resolve. However, the majority of cases are now resolved within a year of proceedings being lodged. I’d like to pay tribute to all of those individuals who have brought us their cases which have been of great help to thousands of others in similar circumstances.”

The Review summarises the outcomes achieved for complainants by the Commission by way of settlement or case decision in all cases supported by the Commission during the year. It illustrates the ongoing experience of discrimination in Northern Ireland and the different types of discrimination faced by people in the workplace, in education and in accessing services.

The largest number of cases (23) was on grounds of disability discrimination. Ten cases were on grounds of sex discrimination, eight on grounds of religious/political belief, eight on grounds of race, and four on grounds of sexual orientation. There were no cases on grounds of age in the year in question. Eleven cases were taken on more than one discrimination ground.

The Decisions and Settlements Review can be accessed from the Commission website.