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PRESS RELEASE

## **Traveller Focus Week 2010**

The Equality Commission and An Múna Tober will today launch this year's Traveller Focus Week with a traditional Pavee Ceilidh. The event will be hosted at St. George's Market and will celebrate Travellers' culture with performances by members of the Travelling Community from Northern Ireland.

This is the fourth year of 'Traveller Focus Week' which runs from 29 November – 3 December and a range of events has been organised to celebrate the week around Northern Ireland. The programme of activities will address some of the issues faced by the Travelling community including inequalities in education, health, employment and access to services.

"The Equality Commission is delighted to be a lead organiser of Traveller Focus Week. The campaign week provides a platform to highlight the positive contribution of Travellers to Northern Ireland life. Importantly, it also provides an opportunity to raise awareness of and consider some of the challenges that Travellers face on a daily basis. The diverse range of events organised will also be used to help dispel the negative stereotyping that is often associated with the Travelling Community" said Evelyn Collins CBE, Chief Executive of the Equality Commission.

"There is much work to be done in order to change attitudes towards Travellers within our society and to improve the lives of many of our fellow citizens from the Travelling Community. "Ms. Collins continued. "Many face discrimination on a daily basis, which is unlawful, just as it is unlawful against any other racial or ethnic group.

Unfortunately, Equality Commission research shows that prejudice against Travellers is higher than that against any other group. The Commission welcomes this week and hopes it will be successful in encouraging people to rethink old stereotypes and in raising issues that will make a positive difference to Travellers' lives in Northern Ireland."

The launch of Traveller Focus Week will include performances including music and singing from members of the Travelling Community. A number of organisations and statutory bodies will also attend and host information stands.

The full programme of events is available from the Commission's [website](#).

### **Highlights of Programme**

Monday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2010; 10.30pm

#### **Launch of Traveller Focus Week – Pavee Céilidh**

St. George's Market

An opening event which will celebrate Irish Traveller Culture and history. Along with music and performance, there will be a number of zones such as health, employment and education.

Monday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2010; 12noon

#### **Belfast "How we see it" – Traveller Youth**

Council Chamber, BelfastCity Hall

This event aims to raise an awareness of Traveller Youth issues, engage with local politicians and decision-makers, provide an opportunity for young people from across the city to meet Travellers and connect with their issues.

Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2010; 5pm

#### **Advancing Travellers' Human Rights through Litigation**

LanyonBuilding, Room G9, QUB

An Munia and Tober and the Human Rights Centre in the School of Law at QUB are hosting this seminar. Speakers will include lawyers involved in recent cases challenging abuses of Travellers' rights under domestic and international human rights law.

### **Changes and Choices**

Navan Centre, 81 Killylea Rd., Armagh

A discussion amongst Travellers, statutory organisations and others on progress made and further action needed to address Travellers inequalities. Southern Regional College will open this event through their Big Lottery Transforming Learning Communities project. It will also feature archive film from the 60s on Travellers in Britain and a recent DVD "My Child" launched by Toybox Early Years.

Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2010; 10.30am

### **All Ireland Traveller Health Study ....Next Steps**

Malone House, Belfast

In September the much anticipated All-Ireland Traveller Health Study was launched in Dublin. This event provides an opportunity for Travellers and key agencies to assess the study findings and discuss next steps towards implementing the report's recommendations.

Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2010; 11am

### **Building Relationships with Travellers and Police**

Equality House, ECNI, Belfast

A presentation by consultant Brigid Loughran, on her recent consultation with Travellers and the PSNI. The session will also hear from others working in the area of conflict and mediation and look at developing actions in this area for 2011 onwards.