

12/05/2011

PRESS RELEASE

Commission welcomes equal treatment for agency workers

Bob Collins, Chief Commissioner, Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, welcomed the introduction today of new legislation providing for equal basic working and employment conditions for agency workers.

“These new rights will be of particular importance to migrant workers. Our formal investigation, ‘The Role of the Recruitment Sector in the Employment of Migrant Workers’, published in June 2010, found that more than half of the migrant workers we spoke to used agencies to find work and that many of the issues raised by migrant workers were linked to the nature of temporary agency work. Inequalities in terms and conditions and rates of pay between agency workers and employees were evident,” Mr. Collins said.

The Equality Commission welcomes the increased protection for agency workers and would wish to see these rights available to all those hired through agencies. The Commission remains concerned, however, about the gaps in the legal protection for workers registered with agencies and seeking work with other employers, which were identified by recent legal decisions, including in the Northern Ireland Court of Appeal.”

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