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PRESS RELEASE

Gay People Entitled to Equality and Respect

The Equality Commission wishes everyone attending the 21st Belfast Pride festival parade a happy, safe and enjoyable day.

Chief Commissioner Bob Collins commented, "The Pride festival is a celebration of diversity, but we cannot ignore the fact that harassment and discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation is still a serious issue for many lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people."

In the year just past, the Equality Commission had 52 enquiries about sexual orientation discrimination. Of these, almost 80% were to do with treatment within the workplace.

"I want to take the opportunity afforded by this week of Pride events to remind all lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people that they have the right to challenge unfair treatment and that they can confidently assert their rights at work and in society.

"The law requires that people, in work or when they are accessing services, should be afforded equality of treatment and the respect due to every human being regardless of their sexual orientation. It is through the implementation of these laws that we can demonstrate our determination as a society to reject prejudice, hostility and unfair treatment of people."

The Equality Commission can give free and confidential advice to anyone who believes they have been subjected to unlawful discrimination and can be contacted through their advice line on 028 90 500 600