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PRESS RELEASE

Off-licence undertaking on race discrimination

The owners of a Draperstown Off-licence, where a sign stating that “foreign nationals must produce ID” was displayed, have given an undertaking to the Equality Commission that they will not discriminate on grounds of race or nationality.

The Commission contacted the company following newspaper reports showing a sign displayed in the front door of Regional Wines in Draperstown, which stated : “Due to theft, Foreign nationals must produce ID.”

John and Breda McKenna, trading as Regional Wines, have now made a voluntary agreement with the Equality Commission under the terms of Article 62 of the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997. In the Agreement, they affirmed their commitment to equality of opportunity and have undertaken that they will not discriminate on racial grounds in the provision of goods facilities or services. They have undertaken to liaise with the Equality Commission in reviewing their policies.

Evelyn Collins, Chief Executive of the Equality Commission, said that the Commission welcomed the opportunity to work positively with Regional Wines.

“The Race Relations Order makes it quite clear that it is unlawful to discriminate on grounds of race or nationality in providing goods and services, and also unlawful to publish an advertisement indicating an intention to discriminate. The notice, which the newspaper reports show was displayed in these premises, could be read as indicating an intention to treat people differently on grounds of their national origin, and as such is likely to be contrary to the law. Under the Agreement we have concluded with Regional Wines the Commission and the firm will review all their policies and practices, make any

necessary changes and provide training to ensure that all customers are afforded equality of treatment as the law demands."

END

NOTE

- In the Agreement made with the Equality Commission Regional Wines have made the following undertakings :

Regional Wines affirms that in the conduct of its business as an Off Licence it is committed to the provision of equality of opportunity for all persons regardless of their race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins or Irish Traveller status.

Consequently, Regional Wines undertakes:

(a) not to discriminate against any person on racial grounds in the provision of goods, facilities or services contrary to Article 21 of the Race Relations (N) Order 1997;

(b) not to publish a discriminatory advertisement contrary to Article 29 of the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997;

(c) not to instruct any other person to unlawfully discriminate against another on racial grounds contrary to Article 30 of the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997;

(d) not to instruct or induce any person, to discriminate against another on racial grounds contrary to Article 31 of the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997;

(e) to review, within 3 months, all its policies, practices and procedures to ensure that they fully comply with the provisions of the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 and to implement any necessary changes;

(f) to liaise with the Equality Commission as part of the review process;

(g) to make all its management and staff aware through training of the relevant provisions of the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997.

- Under the Race Relations Order it is unlawful for anyone providing services or selling goods to discriminate on grounds of colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origins.

Discrimination may include a refusal to provide goods or services to a person of a particular nationality in the same manner and on the same terms as they would be provided to any other member of the public.

If someone believes they have been subjected to such discrimination they may take an action in the County Court and the Equality Commission can advise anyone in that situation.

- In addition the law makes it unlawful for anyone providing goods or services to operate a discriminatory practice or to publish an advertisement indicating an intention to discriminate.

Under Article 62 of the Order, where the Equality Commission is satisfied that a person has acted in contravention of the Order, they can seek to obtain an undertaking from them to prevent the commission of any further such acts.

If it appears to the Commission that a party to such an agreement has failed to comply with their undertaking, the Commission can bring the matter before the County Court for decision.