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PRESS RELEASE

Equality Commission publishes its annual Fair Employment Monitoring Report

The Equality Commission has today published its annual summary of Fair Employment monitoring - the 27th Fair Employment Monitoring Report, covering the period 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2016.

Over this year, the total monitored workforce was 534,502, which is around two thirds of the total Northern Ireland workforce. This is an increase in the monitored workforce of 0.9% from 2015. Private sector employment increased by 3.5%, while public sector employment decreased by 3.6%. The monitored workforce covers private and public employers, with 11 or more employees working 16 hours or more, who are required to monitor the composition of their workforce in terms of community background and sex.

When only employees from Protestant and Roman Catholic community backgrounds were considered, the breakdown shows that Protestants constituted just over half (51.6%) of the monitored workforce with Roman Catholics making up 48.4%. In 2016, the female share of the workforce remained relatively unchanged at 52.3%.

“These statistics are drawn from data received from 3,688 employers in Northern Ireland on the composition of their individual workforces in 2016,” Dr. Michael Wardlow, Chief Commissioner of the Equality Commission said. “Employers compile the details of the composition of their workforce annually and the Equality Commission could not produce this comprehensive picture of the totalled monitored workforce without their efforts.”

“The annual monitoring exercise, together with the three yearly reviews which fair employment legislation provides for, help employers to focus on the composition of their own workforce and on whether there are any issues which may be affecting fair participation by members of the Protestant or Roman Catholic communities,” Dr. Wardlow said.

In terms of applications and appointments to jobs in 2016, Roman Catholics made up just over half of applicants (53.2%) and appointees (53.8%), while Protestants constituted 46.8% of applicants and 46.2% of appointees. This continues a broad trend from 2001 of an increasing Roman Catholic share of both applicants and appointees. Over time, the increase in the Roman Catholic share of the monitored workforce has been close to the estimates of Roman Catholics available for work as measured through the Labour Force Survey (LFS).

Dr Wardlow said that “We note that the LFS recorded an increase in the availability of Roman Catholics to work during 2016, which was not reflected in the monitored workforce figures. The monitored workforce figures were 4.9% lower for Roman Catholics than those in the LFS. While at this stage, the LFS figures may or may not reflect a real difference, we have taken note of the figures and will keep the matter under review with a view to reporting on this further in our next annual monitoring report.”

“The continuing and vital work carried out under the Fair Employment legislation – in annual monitoring, three yearly reviews and, where necessary, affirmative action measures, have played an important part in helping make workplaces fairer, more diverse and less contentious throughout very difficult decades of inter-communal tension and beyond. These active duties continue to play an important part in ensuring fair participation” Dr. Wardlow concluded.

Further information:

- [Monitoring Report: Annual Summary of Monitoring Returns, 2016](#) (pdf, 944kb)
- Full information including technical tables, trend charts and company data is available online: www.equalityni.org/femonrep27