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PRESS RELEASE

Equality Commission welcomes Fawcett Society Sex Discrimination Law Review

A [review of sex discrimination law](#) published today by the Fawcett Society highlights that the law protecting women from discrimination in Northern Ireland is '*significantly behind the rest of the UK*', echoing the Equality Commission's concerns.

The Fawcett Review says: "*There is no reason in principle why women in Northern Ireland should enjoy different protection from discrimination depending on which part of the UK they find themselves in.*"

Dr Evelyn Collins CBE, Chief Executive of the Equality Commission, said:

"Responsibility for the law governing equality between women and men is a devolved matter. We welcome this report from the Fawcett Society, which endorses many of our recommendations for reform of the sex discrimination laws here - we have consistently identified the gaps in legislative protection between here and Britain as a cause for real concern and as a matter that needs to be addressed urgently. The gaps include, for example, no protection here against sex discrimination by public bodies, when carrying out their public functions, or by private clubs/ associations. There is also no protection against 'pay secrecy clauses'."

The Fawcett Review also recommended that government ensures Brexit does not result in the dilution of existing equality and human rights laws in the UK.

Dr Collins said: "This echoes the Commission's call for no regression from existing equality laws in Northern Ireland after the UK leaves the EU and for future equality enhancing protections to be implemented here."

She concluded: "Even the most cursory glance at the news tells you how much more still needs to be done to secure gender equality – sexual harassment, equal pay and violence against women are hitting the headlines almost every day. Every year, complaints of sexual discrimination are consistently the second most reported type of discrimination to our advice team. It is clear that equality between men and women is still some way off."