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PRESS RELEASE

Chief Commissioner visits North Belfast Men's Shed on International Men's Day

"This is my first visit to a Men's Shed project and I am hugely impressed by the skills, the work and the camaraderie between the men in the shed. This is a valuable local asset for the men here, where they can stand side by side and support each other in their daily lives" said Dr Michael Wardlow, Chief Commissioner of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

Dr Wardlow was visiting North Belfast Men's Shed project to mark International Men's Day.

"International Men's Day provides us with an opportunity to highlight some enduring issues that impact on men's lives - issues which are too often overlooked, Dr. Wardlow said. "The Commission has called on government to adopt an approach to take account of men's lower life expectancy, higher suicide rates and greater health risks in relation to alcohol drug and substance abuse.

"One issue is that men access health services later – sometimes due to a reluctance to go to the doctor. This is also affected by more limited access during the opening times of health care facilities and fewer male specific services being available", continued Dr Wardlow.

"While at the Men's Shed I was also delighted to see the launch of a two potentially lifesaving pieces of kit – a new defibrillator and the launch of a new men's health website.

Dr Wardlow concluded: "It is important that we recognise the work being carried out in in this type of innovative community resource aimed specifically at men. The Men's Shed project can save lives through giving people a sense of belonging as well as somewhere to go on a daily basis."