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PRESS RELEASE

Northern Ireland still awaits gender pay gap strategy and reporting regulations

Today's announcement of the resignation of BBC's high profile China editor, Carrie Gracie citing pay inequality with male international editors, has again shone the spotlight on the issue of equal pay.

Dr Michael Wardlow, Chief Commissioner said:

"The disparity in pay at the BBC has been a topic for public debate since last year when the corporation, like all employers across Great Britain with over 250 employees, had to publish their figures following the introduction of the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017.

"In Northern Ireland, The Employment Act (NI) 2016, which provides for the making of the Gender Pay Reporting Regulations, is yet to be enacted due to the lack of a functioning Executive here. It is imperative that these regulations are brought forward in Northern Ireland as a matter of urgency.

"As we have seen in Great Britain, this legislation will eventually lead to greater transparency by requiring employers in Northern Ireland to publish information showing whether pay disparities exist in their workforce and if they do, employers will be required to publish an action plan to eliminate any gender pay differences. This must be welcomed as a step towards ensuring more equal workplaces", he concluded.

In Northern Ireland, the 2016 Act also requires government to publish a gender pay strategy and action plan. An overarching gender pay strategy must ensure that action is taken to address structural factors both within society and within the workplace.