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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Travellers facing persistent inequalities**

“The reality of life for members of the Traveller community in Northern Ireland is that they still face discrimination and persistent inequality on a daily basis,” Chief Commissioner, Equality Commission for Northern Ireland told a meeting in Craigavon yesterday.

The event, in Lough Neagh Discovery Centre, focused on key inequalities affecting the Traveller community. “In areas such as education and employment the discrimination and prejudice they face because of their race have an impact on the lives of all members of the Traveller community, young and old, men and women”, Dr. Wardlow said.

“The Commission recognises that Travellers are a marginalised group with particular needs and we are here today to listen to them and engage with them. Working together with the community and their support workers we can help tackle and reduce these inequalities over the coming years” he continued.

There was a large attendance of members of the Traveller community at the event. Speakers included Martin Collins, Director, Pavee Point who spoke about the achieving the 'National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy' in the Republic of Ireland and Bernadette McAliskey, STEP NI who outlined the issues being regularly brought to them by members of the Traveller community.

Dr. Wardlow thanked all those who attended and the speakers for their presence and valuable input. “Achieving real change will take time but we are committed to this work,” he said. “To succeed the Traveller community, their support networks and the relevant statutory agencies must work together collectively, and we hope we are with we are helping to lay the foundations of that that partnership today”, concluded Dr Wardlow.

A panel discussion, led by members of the Traveller community, covered a range of equality issues including tackling discrimination. Members of a range of government departments and other agencies also attended.

Following the event Dr Wardlow visited the Legahory Craigavon Traveller site where he met with a group of Traveller men and visited young children attending the After Schools project.