



14 September 2020

PRESS RELEASE

Now is the time for Racial Equality

“We will only succeed in tackling racism and achieve racial equality in Northern Ireland if we have high level commitment and leadership from government and we need it now”, said Geraldine McGahey, Chief Commissioner of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, speaking ahead of a Northern Ireland Assembly debate on racial equality.

The Private Members’ Motion to be debated on Monday 14 September, asks the Assembly to acknowledge that the Racial Equality Strategy 2015-25 has not been fully implemented and is already out of date.

Ms. McGahey said: “There is no doubt that the Black Lives Matter movement and the stark impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on ethnic minority communities has brought the need for racial equality to the fore. I have met with people from ethnic minority communities living here and listened to their stories and experiences; many are harrowing. There is real concern about the lack of progress towards racial equality, we need to see real and meaningful action by Government now.”

“We have called on the First Minister and deputy First Minister to ensure that the Executive and all departments complete the actions outlined in the existing Racial Equality Strategy, and develop them further to eliminate racism and racial discrimination, tackle prejudicial attitudes and institutional racism and reform the law so that people here have at least the same level of protection as their peers elsewhere in the UK.”

“Surely we all want to live in a society where everyone feels safe and valued. We all have a role to play whether that is professionally or personally. By working together to eliminate racial discrimination we can ensure that people from all races and ethnic backgrounds are treated with dignity and respect. There is much work to be done and it must start now”, concluded Ms McGahey.

Related information

- [Policy Priorities and Recommendations for Racial Equality](#) (*website section*)