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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Equality Commission supporting Belfast Pride 2020 online**

“The Equality Commission is proud to announce its continued support of Pride for the 18th consecutive year and we are delighted that the festival is going ahead, with all events and celebrations moved online” said Geraldine McGahey, Chief Commissioner, Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

This year’s Belfast Pride is running from 24 July until 2 August.

“Pride is an important annual event that provides a platform to celebrate and reflect just how far our family, friends and colleagues in the LGBT community have come over the years. It also provides a dedicated space in our busy calendars to promote and protect the rights that have been hard won for this community.”

Ms. McGahey continued: “Society in Northern Ireland is changing and there has been positive progress in relation to rights, while our most recent equality awareness survey showed attitudes towards our LGBT community are more tolerant. This is to be welcomed and we will continue to work with statutory bodies, government departments and other partners to make Northern Ireland a better place for everyone.”

“However PSNI statistics show a significant increase in homophobic hate incidents and homophobic crime over the last decade, so we know discrimination and prejudice continues to exist. We are committed to continuing the work to challenge this behaviour wherever it happens. Those who feel that they have been treated less favourably because of their sexual orientation or gender should contact the Commission for confidential advice and support about their rights.”

“There is no doubt that this has been a year like no other! We welcome the can do attitude of the Pride organisers and their creativity to ensure that the show will go on – albeit online! As the newly appointed Chief Commissioner of the Equality Commission I’d like to personally wish you all a happy, safe and fun Pride 2020”, concluded Ms. McGahey.