



23 July 2021

Statement on commentary relating to Asylum Seekers

Geraldine McGahey, Chief Commissioner, Equality Commission for Northern Ireland said: “The divisive commentary around the group of asylum seekers staying in Carrickfergus shows the importance of addressing myths around asylum seekers and refugees, and of challenging those who foster fear and prejudice. I am heartened by the local community response to this commentary.

“Refugee integration is a two-way process, placing demands on us and on the refugees themselves. There are complex challenges facing refugees and asylum seekers, who may have experienced trauma and other serious stresses before coming to Northern Ireland. It’s about supporting and empowering them to live full lives and giving them an equal chance to participate in Northern Ireland’s society.

There needs to be co-ordinated strategic policy response to meeting the needs of all asylum seekers and refugees in Northern Ireland. The Executive has already made a commitment to a Refugee Integration Strategy and this needs to be progressed. Difference needs to be embraced and we need long-term measures to eliminate racial discrimination and to tackle prejudicial attitudes, so everyone in our society feels safe and valued” concluded Ms McGahey.