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PRESS RELEASE

Equality Commission Response to PSNI Hate Motivation Statistics

Responding to today's publication of 'Hate Motivation Statistics', Evelyn Collins, Chief Executive, Equality Commission for Northern Ireland said:

"Today's hate crime statistics, showing an increase across all types of hate crime, including an increase of 47% in race hate crimes and 42% in disability hate crimes, are shocking. They shame us as a society. These types of crimes and incidents normalise prejudice and increase fear and have an effect on all of us.

"We must all speak out against hate crime as saying nothing effectively condones it. It is clear that stronger measures are needed to tackle the persistent and growing problem of hate crime against a range of equality groups in Northern Ireland. This includes reform of the hate crime legislation.

"In December 2020, the Equality Commission welcomed the Marrinan Report on tackling hate crime which recommended that the hate crime legislation needs to be reformed. The Department of Justice published its response to the Marrinan Report in July 2021. Yet progress of reform of the law is desperately slow. These figures show that we need to push on with this vital work. We call again on the NI Executive, the Department for Justice and the criminal justice agencies to make progress.

"The legislation is only one aspect of what needs attention.

"We need our leaders to speak out to condemn these hate crimes. And we need a serious, prolonged effort to combat prejudice and promote equality and diversity so we can build an inclusive society here, one that we can all be proud of," concluded Dr Collins.