

Race Relations Policy

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Executive Summary

Executive Summary

This race relations policy draws together the key responsibilities of the Housing Executive which individually contribute in some way to the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations between people of different ethnic backgrounds in Northern Ireland.

As Northern Ireland's strategic housing authority we recognise our changing role in delivering quality housing services to an increasingly diverse community.

We aim to continually improve and we hope that the collation of these issues in one document will point the way to doing things better or identify new things that need to be done.

We have based this policy around a broad aim, key objectives and five themes which are set out on the following pages.

Aim of the Policy

The aim of the Housing Executive's Race Relations Policy is:

“To ensure that all Black and Minority Ethnic People in Northern Ireland can enjoy full and fair access to housing services and employment opportunities within the Housing Executive. It aims to support the promotion of good relations between and within ethnic groups and communities.”

The Objectives are:

- **The prevention of discrimination and the promotion of the right to live peacefully without being harassed on racial grounds.**
- **The mainstreaming of black, minority ethnic and Traveller issues in housing policy and planning.**
- **The integration of race equality into housing services in line with “fairness and equality” as incorporated in the Targeting Social Need and Promoting Social Inclusion initiatives.**
- **The provision of culturally sensitive services which reflect the needs of black and minority ethnic communities, including the Traveller Community.**
- **To ensure compliance with legislation, and the promotion of best practice, in respect of delivering our services to a diverse customer base.**
- **To set the standards of good business practice in areas such as developing partnerships and consultation processes with black, minority ethnic and Traveller community organisations.**
- **To continue developing the Housing Executive’s ethnic monitoring system and to carry out research to inform future policies and practices with regard to housing and community needs.**
- **To promote a diverse workforce, and provide positive action initiatives where appropriate.**
- **To raise the capacity of staff to deal with diversity, through awareness and skills training.**
- **To provide support for new arrivals to Northern Ireland, e.g. Migrant Workers, Refugees, and Asylum Seekers.**

The main policy proposals are set across the following pages against the main themes.

Mainstreaming black and minority ethnic issues in policy development

The Housing Executive will:

- Produce a written statement of our commitment to the provision of appropriate, professional services which meets our responsibilities towards the black and minority ethnic community in Northern Ireland.
- Adopt the definition of a racist incident as defined by the McPherson report.
- Engage with communities to identify issues relevant to housing in respect of the culture of the minority ethnic community or faith group.
- Engage with representative groups to ensure adequate consideration of Cultural/Diversity Awareness and any implications for Business Planning.
- Give full consideration to the implications and housing policy in the longer term, conduct appropriate research into the dynamics of the Private Rented Sector and engage key stakeholders to improve the management standards of the Private Rented Sector in a changing economic environment.
- In partnership with key stakeholders investigate alternative housing solutions for Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland.
- Continue to develop monitoring systems in line with Equality Commission guidance and provide reports on the operation of key housing services in respect of minority ethnic groups.
- Continue our contractual relationship with the National Asylum Support Service with regard to providing housing support for Asylum Seekers.

Racial Harassment and Intimidation

The Housing Executive will:

- Work with the Race Forum and others to establish where necessary a multi-agency approach to racist incidents.
- Appoint Race Relations Officers to be placed in the Community Cohesion Unit to develop effective delivery of services to minority ethnic communities.
- Work with others to establish an understanding of Community Safety in respect of minority ethnic communities.
- Work with key stakeholders to develop cohesive and consistent reporting and monitoring mechanisms.
- Work with key stakeholders including Social Services, PSNI and the Immigration authorities to develop clear protocols in providing services for victims of racist incidents including issues around the provision of temporary accommodation.
- Develop in liaison with key stakeholders, procedures for staff in the Homeless Unit and at District level in dealing with racist incidents.
- Provide support for victims of racist incidents including the securing of dwellings and the provision of temporary accommodation. In addition we will explore opportunities for the provision of funding under Supporting People for victims of race and other hate orientated attacks.
- Produce clear housing advice/support packs for minority ethnic households drawing on advice from community representatives as required.
- Provide support groups with clear guidance for victims to allow them to advise on procedures.
- Identify and utilise the full range of remedies available to take action against perpetrators of racist incidents including the use of mediation, ASBO's and injunctions.

Promoting Black and Minority Ethnic Social Inclusion

The Housing Executive will:

- Strengthen the direct links between the Personnel Department, minority ethnic and Traveller representative groups to continue to promote the Housing Executive as an employment option for minority ethnic people.
 - Continue with Race Awareness and Section 75 training for all staff.
 - Develop skills based or targeted training to complement any policy initiatives in relation to this policy.
 - Ensure a wide range of interpretation and translation support services for Districts and other outlets to ensure quality services for black and minority ethnic customers.
 - Maintain the Language Line telephone based interpretation service at all outlets subject to annual review and 3 year evaluation.
- Work with the Race Forum to develop language interpretation mechanisms across the public sector.
 - Aim to provide high quality information and advice services.
 - Implement the recommendations of the EQIA into information following consultation with key stakeholders.
 - Consider involvement with multi-agency public awareness campaigns against racist incidents. We will ensure that our literature portrays a positive image, using minority ethnic people in publications, and advertising campaigns.

Community Participation and Development

The Housing Executive will:

- Cooperate with others on external research and incorporate race issues within our own research programme.
- Develop improved approaches in relation to language and communication in consultation with the community sector
- Build on relationships with community based groups
- Establish better links between minority ethnic community based organisations and the Housing Community Network

Migrant Worker Issues

The Housing Executive will:

- Conduct directly, or in partnership with others, research into the housing impacts of Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland.
- Work with the Race Forum to ensure policies adequately reflect the housing needs of incoming workers and their families.
- Work with groups at a local level and province-wide to remove barriers to housing services and promote the services of the Housing Executive.

Equality and Diversity

The Housing Executive's Equality Scheme commits the organisation to the development and implementation of a Race Relations Policy.

This policy is integral to the Equality Scheme and fundamental in addressing the "good relations" aspect with regard to people of different racial groups. A Race Relations policy is also indicative that the Housing Executive supports the right of black and minority ethnic people, including members of the Traveller Community, to be different, and values this diversity. It also recognises that some customers and in some cases, employees, experience disadvantage, and that in the Housing Executive, we acknowledge our duties under the Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 and Section 75, to reduce that disadvantage and to promote equality of opportunity.

We have developed this Race Relations Policy to sit alongside the Community Relations Strategy which was published in 2004. In developing this policy we have had the benefit of feedback through the Consultative Forum and with a wide range of organisations involved in minority ethnic issues and have incorporated many of the comments expressed during this consultation. We have ensured that this policy is aligned with Government's Race Equality Strategy and would emphasise the point that this policy is aimed at **all** people in Northern Ireland - from majority and minority communities. We recognise also that, where appropriate, it extends to include issues of faith where these are significant to the culture of a community.

Equality and Good Relations

Under Section 75 and the Race Relations Order (N.I.) 1997 public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to promote

equality of opportunity between people from different racial groups and to have regard to the desirability of good relations. These duties can be broken down into three distinct but clearly interrelated strands: to eliminate discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity, and to promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

In the past, the term 'good race relations' has been widely understood as synonymous with 'racial harmony'. Equality has tended to be seen as a separate issue. The definition of good race relations as suggested above sets out an integral vision that is broader in scope than either harmony or equality alone. Equality, however, still remains a cornerstone of 'good race relations'. Harmony, respect, security, and cooperation may be features of relations between people of different racial groups, but without equality between racial groups 'good race relations' cannot be said to exist.

Given this relationship between equality and relationships, this policy will encompass both and identify policy instruments to address both the promotion of equality and good relations in a coordinated way.

Government Policy

We have developed this policy in consultation with OFMDFM and have aligned this policy with Government's Race Equality policy which was launched in August 2005.

Legislative Requirements

A brief summary of the relevant legislation considered in the development of this policy is set out in Appendix 2.

The Traveller Community

The Housing Executive established a dedicated Traveller Project Team in 1999 to address accommodation issues specific to Traveller families in Northern Ireland.

The Project Team has developed a range of initiatives in respect of the accommodation needs of the Traveller Community including:

- The development of pilot Group Housing Schemes.
- Research on Traveller accommodation needs.
- Development of a five year programme of accommodation provision.
- Appointment of a Traveller Liaison Officer.
- Cultural Awareness training.

Minority Ethnic Communities in Northern Ireland

Appendix 3 sets out various categories of minority ethnic people in Northern Ireland.

In spite of numerous research projects into minority ethnic communities in Northern Ireland, no valid statistics or numbers exist. Estimates can vary substantially. In 2000 the Multi-Cultural Resource Centre provided an estimate of numbers in various minority ethnic communities. In Appendix 4 these figures are compared with numbers as returned by the NI Census of Population 2001.

In 2003 the Multi Cultural Resource Centre published a detailed report on minority ethnic languages spoken in Northern Ireland and the location of the main ethnic groups throughout the province.

Key findings included:

More than 70 languages are spoken in Northern Ireland. (See Appendix 4).

Many of the minority ethnic communities are multi-lingual.

Research into Minority Ethnic Communities in Northern Ireland

- Considerable research has been conducted on minority ethnic communities in Northern Ireland including the Traveller Community.
- Appendix 5 contains a summary of the more recent research and the recommendations relating to housing in Northern Ireland.

Policy Proposals

Our work in developing this policy, has led us to the conclusion that the situation in Northern Ireland is sufficiently different from other areas in Great Britain to require an approach which is tailored to take account of the Northern Ireland context.

We have aimed to make the policy sufficiently flexible to take account of the changing nature of race issues in Northern Ireland and have built in measurement and review processes.

This policy recognises that identities are complex with regard to all people in Northern Ireland, and can be made up of several factors in addition to ethnicity, such as gender, age, religion/faith, disability and sexual orientation. This policy aims to take account of these multiple identities and pay due regard to the issues of exclusion and multiple discrimination.

We also note the need to maintain a clear link to **all** housing policies that contribute to the promotion of equality of opportunity and/or the promotion of good relations, and to Government policies and strategies in this field.

Aim of the Policy

The agreed aim of the Housing Executives Race Relations Policy is:

“To ensure that Black and Minority Ethnic People in Northern Ireland can enjoy full and fair access to housing services and employment opportunities within the Housing Executive. It aims to support the promotion of good relations between and within ethnic groups and communities.”

The Objectives have been agreed as follows:

- The prevention of discrimination and the promotion of the right to live peacefully without being harassed on racial grounds.
- The mainstreaming of black and minority ethnic issues in housing policy and planning.
- The integration of race equality into housing services in line with “fairness and equality” as incorporated in the Targeting Social Need and Promoting Social Inclusion initiatives.
- The provision of culturally sensitive services which reflect the needs of black and minority ethnic communities, including the Traveller Community.
- To ensure compliance with legislation, and the promotion of best practice, in respect of delivering our services to a diverse customer base.

- To set the standards of good business practice in areas such as developing partnerships and consultation processes with black and minority ethnic community organisations.
- To continue developing the Housing Executive's ethnic monitoring system and to carry out research to inform future policies and practices with regard to housing and community needs.
- To promote a diverse workforce, and provide positive action initiatives where appropriate.
- To raise the capacity of staff to deal with diversity, through awareness and skills training.
- To provide support for new arrivals to Northern Ireland, e.g. Migrant Workers, Refugees, and Asylum Seekers.

Main Policy Themes

The main Race Relations policy themes can be summarised as follows:

- Mainstreaming black and minority ethnic issues in policy development and planning.
- Racial harassment and intimidation.
- Promoting black and minority ethnic social inclusion.
- Community participation and development.
- Migrant Worker issues.

These are broad and in some cases cross cutting policy areas that will in many cases require working in partnership with other public and non governmental bodies. These topics are addressed below.

Appendix 1 sets out the key actions identified under each theme.

Mainstreaming Black and Minority Ethnic Issues

Mainstreaming Black and Minority Ethnic Issues

Commitment

The Housing Executive will produce a written statement of its commitment to the provision of appropriate, professional services which meets its responsibilities towards the black and minority ethnic community in Northern Ireland.

This will be made available in appropriate languages and communicated to groups and individuals using a range of media and consultative mechanisms.

This commitment will be explicitly incorporated in the Corporate and Business Plan and Annual Report.

Tackling Racism

Inherent in all work associated with this policy will be the underlying objective of tackling racism. For the purposes of this policy the definition will reflect the UNESCO and UN declarations on racism which are:

UNESCO (1978)

“Any theory involving the claim that racial or ethnic groups are inherently superior or inferior, thus implying that some would be entitled to dominate or eliminate others who would be inferior; or which places a value judgement on racial differentiation, has no scientific foundation and is contrary to the moral and ethical principles of humanity”

UN International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (1969)

“Any distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference, based on colour, descent, national or ethnic origin, which has the purpose of modifying or impairing the recognition, the enjoyment or exercise on an equal footing of human rights and fundamental freedom in the political, economic, social, cultural, or any other field of public life constitutes racial discrimination.”

We recognise also that for the purposes of this policy, racism can manifest itself in four main ways (although these are often interlinked and overlapping):

- Racist behaviour (including assaults, racist graffiti, threatening behaviour, and incitement)
- Discrimination
- Stereotyping
- Systemic (or institutional) racism

The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry - Tackling Institutional Racism

The concept of Institutional Racism was highlighted in the report of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry by Sir William McPherson, published in February 1999.

The report defines Institutional Racism as:

“The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance,

thoughtlessness and racial stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people” (McPherson, paragraph 6.34,1999).

The Inquiry recommended that a new definition of a racist incident should be accepted by relevant agencies:

“A racist incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or by any other person” (McPherson, 1999).

The Housing Executive has implemented procedures for screening policies and for conducting equality impact assessments. It is considered that this approach addresses the requirements of the McPherson report in terms of appropriate review of policy to eradicate Institutional Racism. Additional actions relating to commitment, training and incident reporting are set out in separate sections.

- **The Housing Executive will adopt the definition of a racist incident as defined by the McPherson report.**

Cultural Sensitivity

Housing services and how they are delivered must reflect the growing diversity of our customer base. Understanding the needs of minority ethnic communities is vital and can to some extent be achieved through consultation, research and community participation in the planning process.

In the delivery of housing services consideration must be given to accountability, the targeting of marginalised or excluded communities, addressing community problems, and the utilisation of existing services, materials and resources, including community groups, to ensure that equal access is promoted. Working with existing community groups can short-circuit the link between service provision and use. This is being developed further with the Community and Voluntary sector.

To address this, the Housing Executive will:

- **Engage with communities to identify issues relevant to housing in respect of the culture of the minority ethnic community or faith group.**
- **Engage with representative groups to ensure adequate consideration of Cultural/Diversity Awareness and any implications for Business Planning**

Racial Equality Codes of Practice

The current Racial Equality Codes of Practice in Rented/Non-Rented Housing (1991) only relates to England, Scotland and Wales. However, the Housing Executive has worked in partnership with the Equality Commission to produce a 'Racial Equality Housing and Accommodation Code for Northern Ireland' although publication has been delayed.

Private Rented Sector

The private rented sector in Northern Ireland provides homes for a diverse range of households and is becoming an increasingly important source of housing for minority ethnic people, particularly Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland.

The Housing Executive has developed a strategic framework for dealing with the legislative, strategic and operational issues which will influence the sector in the future and which will be implemented in partnership with others.

Some recent media reports and research have shown links between Migrant and Unauthorised Workers and accommodation in the Private Rented Sector that is inappropriate to the needs of the residents. The Housing Executive response has been to carry out inspections of those properties which have been identified

as housing Migrant Workers and liaising with representative groups where appropriate.

With a growing reliance on migrant labour in some areas and the transient nature of this labour force, there is a clear implication for housing policy.

The Housing Executive will:

- **Give full consideration to the implications and housing policy in the longer term, conduct appropriate research into the dynamics of the Private Rented Sector and engage key holders to improve the management standards of the Private Rented Sector in a changing economic environment.**
- **Investigate, in partnership with key stakeholders, alternative housing solutions for Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland.**

Ethnic Record Keeping and Monitoring

Monitoring is an essential tool for ensuring that the impact of policies is measured. The Commission for Racial Equality's formal investigation into race and housing in the London Borough of Hackney (1984) strongly advised the keeping and monitoring of ethnic records, as a necessity.

Effective records help measure performance, the quality of that performance, and may indicate problem areas. These records could indicate the extent of equality of opportunity being achieved and the extent of the elimination of discrimination. They could also be used to show who is/is not using services and the reasons for this, and could indicate how services may need to be adapted.

The Housing Executive is currently developing its own equality monitoring strategy with ethnic origin as one of nine categories being targeted.

Preliminary findings in relation to the Housing Selection Scheme indicate that minority ethnic groups account for less than 2% of waiting lists and allocations. This broadly reflects their representation in the general population.

Effective monitoring will not only help to measure performance in key service areas but will also contribute to assessment of policies designed to reduce social and economic inequalities in Northern Ireland society.

- **We will continue to develop monitoring systems in line with Equality Commission guidance and provide reports on the operation of key housing services in respect of minority ethnic groups.**

- **The Housing Executive will continue our contractual relationship with the National Asylum Support Service with regard to providing housing support for Asylum Seekers.**

Asylum Seekers

The Housing Executive has a contractual relationship with the Immigration and Nationality Directorate, (Home Office), to provide and make available a range of accommodation which will meet the essential living needs of eligible Asylum Seekers.

The Asylum Development Officer (ADO) arranges for suitable temporary accommodation to be made available for Asylum Seekers during the period of their application for asylum.

The accommodation is a mixture of Private Sector and Housing Association property and the ADO also deals with complaints, disputes, repairs etc. and carries out monthly inspections of the properties to ensure that they are maintained at an acceptable standard.

Racial Harassment and Intimidation

Racial harassment and intimidation is clearly a high priority for the Housing Executive however it is recognised that this can only be tackled in partnership with other bodies.

Race hate crime is currently a high priority for Government and the Housing Executive will work closely with the Race Forum and key organisations in vigorously tackling this problem.

The statistics for racial incidents show that reports of these incidents and racially motivated crime in Northern Ireland have increased significantly. These figures (available from PSNI) represent a very real substantial increase in the number of reported racial incidents and racist attacks in Northern Ireland.

Moreover, behind the figures lies a higher pro rata level of racial incidents per head than for most districts of England and Wales. The Northern Ireland 2001 Census numbers the minority ethnic population at 14,279, approximately 0.85% of the total population.¹ The rate of racial incidents in Northern Ireland in 2001/02 equates to 12.9 per 1000 minority ethnic population, compared with 6.7 for the same period in England and Wales.

A detailed analysis of the 881 racial incidents recorded by the police between 1996 and 2001² showed that while incidents had been recorded in 67 towns and villages across Northern Ireland, 49% of all incidents were recorded in Belfast.

1 However, organisations in the sector estimate the minority ethnic population of NI at 2%. They attribute this disparity to several communities not having completed the census.

2 Racist Harassment in Northern Ireland by Neil Jarman and Rachael Monaghan of the Institute for Conflict Research.

Action to tackle Racial Harassment

We will aim to address racial intimidation and harassment in partnership with other key bodies and feeding into Government's key policy instruments, namely:

- Community Cohesion
- Community Development
- Community Safety
- Neighbourhood Renewal
- Victim Support/Mediation
- Hate Crime policy and Anti Social Behaviour

In addition, the Homelessness policy is an important instrument in addressing, quickly and sensitively, the immediate needs of victims of racist incidents. Given the dynamic nature of racial harassment and crime and its underlying reasons, it is important that the Homelessness policy, associated guidelines and staff training reflect this.

Depending on the status of the individual (victim), responsibilities between the Housing Executive, Social Services, PSNI and the Immigration Service may vary.

This is complicated further by the enlargement of the European Union and the ambiguity around the status of individuals from the A8 countries who have also recently become targets for racial attack.

Clearly public service response to racist incidents should be seamless and this again will be a priority for the Race Relations policy where we can achieve this with others.

Coordination of Action to tackle Racial Harassment will encapsulate a number of factors.

The Housing Executive will:

- **Work with the Race Forum and others to establish where necessary a multi-agency approach to racist incidents.**
- **Appoint Race Relations Officers to be placed in the Community Cohesion Unit to develop effective delivery of services to minority ethnic communities.**
- **Work with others to establish an understanding of Community Safety in respect of minority ethnic communities.**
- **Work with key stakeholders to develop cohesive and consistent reporting and monitoring mechanisms.**
- **Work with key stakeholders including Social Services, PSNI and the Immigration authorities to develop clear protocols in providing services for victims of racist incidents including issues around the provision of temporary accommodation.**
- **In liaison with key stakeholders, develop procedures for staff in the Homeless Unit and at District level to deal effectively with racist incidents.**
- **Provide support for victims of racist incidents including the securing dwellings and the provision of temporary accommodation. In addition we will explore opportunities for the provision of funding under Supporting People for victims of race and other hate orientated attacks.**
- **Produce clear housing advice/support packs for minority ethnic households drawing on advice from community representatives as required.**
- **Provide support groups with clear guidance for victims to allow them to advise on procedures.**
- **Identify and utilise the full range of remedies available to take action against perpetrators of racist incidents including the use of mediation, ASBO's and injunctions.**

Promoting black and Minority Ethnic Social Inclusion

Consultation

Minority ethnic communities and economic migrants are forming an increasing proportion of the population.

We recognise that conventional approaches to consultation and the existing consultative frameworks may not be adequate to meet the needs of these groups and accordingly we have encouraged their representative organisations to become involved in the Consultative Forum. We will further discuss with those organisations ways in which we might usefully develop new arrangements for consultation and how they might work more closely with and through the Housing Community Network.

To improve our consultation mechanisms with minority ethnic people and communities, the Housing Executive will give consideration to include the following when consulting on key issues:

- Groups that are new to this country, such as refugees and asylum-seekers.
- Groups that have often been excluded by public authorities, such as Gypsies & Travellers.
- Women from minority ethnic communities.
- Young or older people from minority ethnic communities.
- People from minority ethnic communities with disabilities, and their carers.
- Migrant Worker representative groups.

Staff Training/Recruitment

The Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 permits some positive action measures, e.g. where people of a particular racial group are under-represented in an employment situation.

The recent action plan arising from the Appointments and Promotions EQIA will establish outreach measures to promote the Housing Executive as an employment option for minority ethnic people.

In addition, the Housing Executive could, in certain circumstances, make available positive action training to employees from minority ethnic communities e.g. management or supervisory skills training, or English as a second language training. An issue regularly raised in relation to recruitment is the value of qualifications gained abroad. Clear guidance is needed in this area to ensure the minimisation of barriers to employment.

Staff training in Race Relations and cultural sensitivity, to promote awareness of prejudice and stereotypical attitudes will continue.

Training as part of our Race Relations strategy will be a continuous process, which is evaluated, monitored and revised as required. We will endeavour to ensure that it is relevant and meaningful, and includes awareness of responsibilities and challenges attitudes. It will be provided to all staff including Neighbourhood Wardens. We will discuss training members of Housing Community Networks on equality awareness and race relations to introduce the Race Relations Policy to tenants and communities.

All staff, including temporary staff, should receive training of an appropriate nature; this is especially important where staff are involved in staff supervision, recruitment or disciplinary procedures. An induction pack will be developed to ensure that new employees are aware of their responsibilities regarding

the Race Relations Policy (and other equality policies). The Equality Unit is currently preparing a cultural diversity handbook for all staff to develop an understanding of diversity and to avoid causing offence inadvertently.

More effective systems and structures for dealing with racist incidents are being developed by Housing and Regeneration and training will be provided to cover these.

The Housing Executive will:

- **Strengthen the direct links between the Personnel Department and minority ethnic representative groups through the Consultative Forum on Equality to continue to promote the Housing Executive as an employment option for minority ethnic people.**
- **Continue with Race Awareness and Section 75 training for all staff.**
- **Develop skills based or targeted training to complement any policy initiatives in relation to this policy.**

Language

English is not the first language of some people in Northern Ireland and it is important, in an increasingly diverse country, to enable effective communication. This issue is complicated further by the increasing numbers and changing patterns of Migrant Workers from across the world, including Europe, Africa and the south Pacific. Our most recent analysis of the use of Language Line indicated high demands for Portuguese and Mandarin, however we have experienced demand for a vast range of languages including Russian, Polish and Tetum.

The Language Line service is available at all outlets across the organisation and has become more widely used since the re-launch in September 2002. Training in the use of Language Line is provided on an annual basis.

The Housing Executive is also a member of the newly formed Race Forum thematic group on language.

The Housing Executive will:

- **Work with the Race Forum to develop interpretation mechanisms across the public sector.**
- **Ensure a wide range of interpretation and translation support services for Districts and other outlets to ensure quality services for black and minority ethnic customers.**
- **Maintain a telephone based interpretation service at all outlets subject to annual review and 3 year evaluation.**

Access to and use of Information

We will work to ensure that all who use our services can obtain advice and information in ways which are appropriate to each individual's needs. We have already made progress in providing information in a number of languages and different formats.

The provision of information and publications is currently subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (2006). Some consultation has already taken place and formal consultation on this issue will be conducted in the early part of 2006. We will use what we learn from this Impact Assessment to make further improvements in the ways in which people can access our advice and information services.

One of the common recommendations from research on minority ethnic groups in Northern Ireland is the need for greater access to information and services. We understand the need for information to be presented in a way that is understood by the target group both linguistically and culturally. These issues will be central to the EQIA.

Lemos and Crane (RaceActionNet) evidenced the benefit of using information to inform and support potential victims of racial harassment and to deter perpetrators. In a 1996 study conducted for the Department of the Environment the positive effects of publicity were recorded as:

- Some perpetrators are deterred.
- Victims and potential victims feel reassured that something is being done.
- The incidence of harassment falls.
- Reported incidents rise (as more victims are willing to come forward).
- Landlords (Housing Executive, Housing Associations, private rental) are able to demonstrate their commitment in writing to the community and its representatives.

The Housing Executive will:

- **Implement the recommendations of the EQIA into information following consultation with key stakeholders**
- **Consider involvement with any multi-agency public awareness campaigns against racist incidents**
- **Ensure that we portray a positive image, using representatives from minority ethnic communities in publications and advertising campaigns.**

Community Participation and Development

Involving Communities

Good Race Relations cannot be promoted effectively in isolation but in cooperation with all groups affected by housing services.

The Housing Executive already has a number of links with voluntary organisations such as the NI Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM), the Chinese Welfare Association, and the Multi-Cultural Resource Centre. We will maintain and build on these links and foster relationships with other organisations, as appropriate.

Working in partnership will become increasingly important for all concerned. Development of existing partnerships with locally based organisations will be continued to gain greater knowledge of the housing and community needs of that area.

It should be noted that some minority ethnic communities are not geographically grouped but engage as a community despite being dispersed across Northern Ireland.

Key areas the Housing Executive will consider are

- **Researching, with others, information about black and minority ethnic communities, their inter-relationships and minorities within minorities.**
- **Incorporating race issues within our research programme.**
- **Improving language and communication with the community sector.**
- **Establishing better relationships with Community based groups.**
- **Establishing better links between minority ethnic community based organisations and the Housing Community Network.**

Migrant Worker Issues

Migrant Worker Issues

The last few years have seen unprecedented numbers of workers coming from other countries into Northern Ireland.

The immediate housing impact of increasing economic reliance on Migrant Workers has been related to social housing need and the pressure to complete inspections of multiple occupancy houses. As the number of Migrant Workers grows we expect that we will need to direct our attention to matters such as homelessness, housing market economics and local area social cohesion.

In our initial response we have engaged with local groups to improve on addressing the housing needs of the Migrant Workers in a more coordinated way. Discussion with these groups and Districts has led to consideration of novel housing solutions such as the option of utilising under-used stock as short term lettings.

The Housing Executive will:

- **Conduct directly, or in partnership with others, research into the housing impacts of Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland.**
- **Work at a strategic level with the Race Forum to ensure policies adequately reflect the housing needs of incoming workers and their families.**
- **Work with groups at a local level and province-wide to remove barriers to housing services and promote the services of the Housing Executive.**

Community Solidarity

The Housing Executive's Race Relations policy is fully aligned with Government's Race Equality Strategy launched by the Minister in August 2005. At the time of completing this policy Government has set out its plans for Departments and relevant agencies to develop action plans in relation to the Strategy. In terms of the Housing Executive's policy, we have identified an Action Plan which is set out in detail in Appendix 1.

We do however recognise the need to be flexible and where subsequent actions are identified or where current actions require amendment we will consult appropriately on these changes.

We also note the Government's initial timescale of five years in relation to the Race Equality Strategy. Although the Housing Executive has not put a final timescale on the Race Relations policy, we have committed to the production of regular progress reports which will be presented to the Chief Executive's Business Committee and to our statutory consultees. We will also review the policy in full at the end of five years to coincide with Government's timetable.

We have sought to develop the policy with a view to addressing the need for change in the organisation's culture and staff attitudes, in a way which is clear, easily understood and simple to implement at all levels within the organisation.

We will use our best efforts, in partnership with others, to address the increase in racist attacks and racial incidents in Northern Ireland and work with others to put in place common procedures for the recording of racist incidents.

We will promote the principles of the Race Relations policy in our relationships with other organisations and third party contractors or agents with whom we have contact. In addition we will seek to adapt our own processes and work with the Housing Community Network to ensure a greater inclusiveness.

We will develop our monitoring and record keeping further to measure the success of the policy for minority ethnic groups with regard to their participation in the organisation's services, recognising that it may take a number of years to build up sufficient amounts of data

The aim of this Race Relations Policy by the Housing Executive is to ensure a fair and equal service to **all** our customers and to the promotion of equality of opportunity for black and minority ethnic communities in Northern Ireland.

Finally we would like to thank all those who contributed to the policy. In particular we would like to thank the members of the Consultative Forum on Equality and its Steering Group who made considerable efforts to ensure effective participation in the development of this policy.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 Race Relations Policy: Action Plan
- Appendix 2 Race Relations Policy: Relevant Legislation
- Appendix 3 Race Categories: Black & Minority Ethnic Communities
- Appendix 4 Minority Ethnic Communities in Northern Ireland
- Appendix 5 Research into Minority Ethnic Communities in Northern Ireland
- Appendix 6 Recommendations of the Commission for Racial Equality for tackling Institutional Racism

Appendix 1 Race Relations Policy Action Plan

No.	Recommendation	Key Tasks	Expected Outcome	Timetable	Links
THEME 1: Mainstreaming Black and Minority (BME) Issues					
1	The Housing Executive will adopt the McPherson definition of a racist incident	Review existing housing management systems, policies, and procedures to identify any implications of adopting the McPherson definition of a racist incident and prepare an action plan to address these. Implement resultant action plan	Implications identified and action plan developed (including involvement of Modernising Services) Regular incident reports of racist incidents from Community Safety Team and Homeless Unit.	March 2006 Begin April 2006 Regularly	Racial Harassment and Intimidation
2	The Housing Executive will engage with communities and individuals to identify issues relevant to housing in respect of the culture of the black and minority ethnic (BME) community.	To utilise the Consultative Forum, Housing Community Network and Inter Community Network to enhance engagement with BME communities and to identify service delivery gaps in the provision of a culturally sensitive housing service.	BME communities will have enhanced opportunities to contribute to future housing strategies and to identify service delivery gaps Proposals developed to address gaps identified.	Ongoing	Community Participation and Development and Promoting Social Inclusion.
3	The Housing Executive will engage with representative BME groups and individuals to ensure adequate consideration of Cultural/Diversity Awareness and any implications for Business Planning.	At a strategic level BME representative groups on the Consultative Forum will be consulted on the Corporate and Business Plan. At a local level work in partnership with Districts to engage with local BME representatives and individuals to highlight key issues	Inclusive and enhanced business planning process.	Ongoing Annual Conference Ongoing	Community Participation and Development And Promoting Social Inclusion
4	The Housing Executive will give full consideration to private rented sector impacts and housing policy in the longer term, conduct appropriate research into the dynamics of the Private Rented Sector and engage key stakeholders to improve the management standards of the Private Rented Sector in a changing economic environment.	A pilot housing market profile will be undertaken in the Dungannon area to help measure the impact of Migrant Worker dynamics on the housing market, including the private rented sector. A review of the information currently available at District Offices and an assessment of the knowledge level of staff on issues around the private rented sector will identify the most effective method of providing relevant and targeted information.	Better information to guide our local housing strategies with respect to housing demand and supply and affordability. The development of appropriate information leaflets (translated into key languages) on the rights and responsibilities of both landlords and tenants which will address the needs of the increasingly diverse group for whom private rental is the tenure of choice		Migrant Workers

5	The Housing Executive will investigate, in partnership with key stakeholders, the need for alternative housing solutions for Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland.	Key Districts (initially Dungannon) will engage with Habitat for Humanity and other similar organisations to investigate the need for alternative housing solutions.	Housing needs of Migrant workers identified Proposals for a way forward developed	March 2006 Ongoing	Migrant Workers
6	The Housing Executive will continue to develop monitoring systems in line with Equality Commission guidance and provide reports on the operation of key housing services in respect of BME households.	The Equality Unit will continue to develop reports on housing services for BME households.	Regular monitoring reports on main service areas including Waiting Lists and Allocations and Grants.	Ongoing	
7	Continue to provide support for Asylum Seekers	The Executive will continue our contractual relationship with the National Asylum Support Service with regard to Asylum Seekers	Compliance with contractual agreements	Ongoing	

Theme 2: Racial Harassment and Intimidation

1	Work with the Race Forum and others to establish, where necessary, a multi-agency approach to racist incidents.	Representatives from the Equality Unit and Community Cohesion Unit will represent the Housing Executive at the Race Forum and feed back to the Chief Executive's Business Committee and where appropriate, the Board.	Clear information on the function of the Race Forum, Government's Race Equality Strategy and their role in combating racial harassment.	Forum timetable	Racial harassment and intimidation
2	Appoint Race Relations Officers to be placed in the Community Cohesion Unit to develop effective delivery of services to BME communities.	Recruit 2 Race Relation Officers to the Community Cohesion Unit to develop effective delivery and coordinate services to BME communities	Officers in post and providing a focused approach to the delivery of the Housing Executive's Race Relations Policy	April and August 2005	
3	Work with others to establish an understanding of Community Safety in respect of black and minority ethnic communities.	Collate information already available to establish the issues of Community Safety in respect of black and minority ethnic communities Develop a Hate Crime Practical Measures pilot scheme for the victims of Hate Crime in South Belfast in partnership with NIO, Community Safety Unit (CSU) and PSNI	Clear understanding of the issues pertaining to the safety of BME communities and assist, through housing services, in developing safer neighbourhoods Additional home protection provided for victims in South Belfast Evaluate pilot and plan next stage	Ongoing NIO/PSNI timetable NIO/PSNI timetable	

4	Work with key stakeholders to develop cohesive and consistent reporting and monitoring mechanisms.	CCU and CST represented on the Hate Incidents Working Group South Belfast Pilot scheme to establish a Central Hate Crime Reporting Scheme (in partnership with NIO- CSU, PSNI, Victim Support etc) for the victims of racial and hate incidents	Pilot protocol developed for the recording and monitoring of hate crime incidents in Northern Ireland	CSU timetable Explore potential to roll scheme out throughout NI.	Mainstreaming
5	Work with key stakeholders including Social Services, PSNI and the Immigration authorities to develop clear protocols in providing services for victims of racist incidents including issues around the provision of temporary accommodation.	Develop draft protocols for providing services for victims of racist incidents including issues around the provision of temporary accommodation.	Draft protocols available	Ongoing - key stakeholders involved	
6	Develop in liaison with key stakeholders, procedures for staff in the Homeless Unit and at District level dealing with racist incidents.	Housing Policy Unit & Community Cohesion Unit develop an awareness package for staff dealing with the victims of racist incidents. Explore training needs	An effective, efficient holistic service for the victims of racist incidents	Ongoing - key stakeholders involved	
7	Provide support for victims of racist incidents including, where appropriate, the securing of a dwelling and the provision of temporary accommodation. In addition we will explore opportunities for the provision of funding under Supporting People for victims of race and other hate orientated attacks.	Assess the temporary accommodation needs of victims and outline range of solutions available including the provision of advice and information. Identify with other organisations additional support required for those who fall outside the Housing Executive's statutory remit.	Clarification of range of support available for victims and identification of gaps in provision. Contribute to plan to bridge gaps identified	March 2006 Ongoing	
8	Produce clear housing advice/support packs for black and minority ethnic households drawing on advice from community representatives as required	The Community Cohesion Unit & Community Safety Team will review existing information available and compile or develop advice/support packs for BME households and victims of Hate Crime Incidents	Housing Advice/Support packs available and distributed Review and evaluation of housing advice /support available and packs	March 2006 Ongoing	Mainstreaming
9	The Housing Executive will provide support groups with clear guidance for victims to allow them to advise them on procedures.	Develop clear guidance for support groups / organisations in providing advice to victims on procedures and protocols.	Guidance and procedures developed and distributed	Ongoing	

10	Utilise our legal powers to take action against perpetrators of racist incidents including the use of ASBO's and injunctions where appropriate.	Raise awareness of the legislative powers available within the context of the Housing Order 2003 & the Anti-Social Behaviour Order 2004	To fully test all existing remedies to resolve racist cases of anti-social behaviour.	As required /ongoing	
THEME 3: Promoting Black and Minority Ethnic Social Inclusion					
1	<p>To improve our consultation mechanisms with BME individuals and communities the Housing Executive will give consideration to including the following when consulting on key issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups that are new to this country, such as Refugees and Asylum-Seekers • Groups that have often been excluded by public authorities, such as Gypsies & Travellers • Women from ethnic minorities • Young or older people from ethnic minorities • People from ethnic minorities with disabilities, and their carers • Migrant representative groups. 	<p>Maintain representation of BME groups on the Consultative Forum and its steering group.</p> <p>Utilise key representative and community based BME groups and Migrant Worker Fora when conducting consultation exercises to ensure adequate outreach.</p> <p>Investigate innovative methods of involving BME groups</p>	<p>Building and maintaining relationships with key groups.</p> <p>Greater participation by minority ethnic groups in consultation exercises.</p>	<p>As consultation programme requires</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	Main-streaming
2	The Housing Executive will: strengthen the direct links between the Personnel Department and BME representative groups through the Consultative Forum on Equality to continue to promote the Housing Executive as an employment option for potential BME applicants.	Offer representatives of minority ethnic groups associated with the Consultative Forum and others subsequently identified, the opportunity to meet, with a view to the development of outreach race strategies	Better relationship established with minority ethnic group representatives	March 2006 and ongoing	Community Participation

3	Continue with Race Awareness and Section 75 training for all staff.	Complete the roundup of all staff in the current training programme.	All staff made aware of Race Relations legislation, concepts of discrimination and the range and diversity of ethnic groups including Travellers in Northern Ireland.	Ongoing	
4	Develop skills based or targeted training to complement any policy initiatives in relation to this policy.	PETF applications for training in foreign modern languages will be given due consideration in areas of high demand (subject to available resources). Cultural awareness programmes and race relations training will be developed to provide staff with information on the provision of culturally appropriate services. Detailed guidance to enable District Office staff to determine the eligibility of persons from abroad generally, but including Migrant Workers in particular, will be issued shortly to be followed by training targeted at specific staff	A broadening base of language skills across our Districts. Staff more aware of the issues specific to particular BME groups, Migrant Workers and Traveller community. Better and quicker decision making by staff and clearer information for persons from abroad in relation to their housing options.	Ongoing Beginning September 2005	Racial Harassment
5	Work with the Race Forum to develop interpretation mechanisms across the public sector.	Maintain membership of the Race Forum thematic group on Language interpretation	Development of inter Departmental partnering arrangements in the provision of interpreting services.	Ongoing	
6	Ensure a wide range of interpretation and translation support services for Districts and other outlets to ensure quality services for BME customers	Development of face to face interpretation services and direct access to translation services Maintain current arrangements with NICEM, STEP etc. Annual evaluation reports to Chief Executive's Business committee with quarterly updates in the Equality Unit progress report.	Opportunities for Districts to use face to face accredited interpreter's where necessary. In addition direct access to translation services to ensure fast turnaround of documents received in a foreign language.	Annually	
7	Maintain a telephone based interpretation service at all outlets subject to annual review and 3 year evaluation.	Maintain the Language Line service at all outlets	Effective telephone interpretation services at District and other outlets. Efficient translation services for Districts and other outlets.	Annually	
8	Implement the recommendations of the EQIA into information following consultation with key stakeholders	Draft EQIA to be circulated for formal consultation.	Improved procedures for the provision of information, publications and leaflets to a diverse customer base.		
9	Consider involvement with any multi-agency public awareness campaigns against racist incidents	Raise awareness of relevant multi-agency public campaigns against racist incidents	Demonstration of a clear commitment to tackling race issues	Ongoing	

10	Ensure that we portray a positive image by involving BME individuals and groups in publications, and advertising campaigns.	Promotion of BME participation and involvement in the production of publications and advertising campaigns	Visibility of involvement of BME people in publications and advertising campaigns	Ongoing	Community participation and inclusion
THEME 4: Community Participation and Development					
1	Researching, with others, information about black and minority ethnic communities, their inter-relationship and minorities within minorities.	A methodology is currently being finalised to facilitate a detailed BME and Migrant Worker population profile across Northern Ireland, to include the associated housing impacts. District Office data as well as input from employers, support groups and private landlords will be used to complete the profile.	A clearer understanding of the numbers and spread of BME groups in Northern Ireland. A clearer understanding of the spread and numbers of Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland.	Ongoing	Main-streaming
2	Incorporating race issues within our research programme	The addition of ethnicity questions in all research reports and tailored research where appropriate.	Compilation of statistical and other qualitative data on various BME groups within our customer base.	Research timetable	
3	Improve Language and Communication with the community sector	Translation of key communiqués e.g. Newsletters. Use of interpreters where appropriate for community meetings/ consultations. A number of leaflets and forms have already been translated into different languages. A more detailed consideration of needs in this regard, for example the translation of tenancy conditions, will be undertaken.	Enhancing communication resulting in better understanding of services and the improvement of relationships with the community. Information in language of need. Translated documents to ensure mutual understanding of any contractual arrangements between tenant and the Housing Executive.	Ongoing March 2006	Social Inclusion
4	Establish better relationships with Community based groups	Raise awareness of the role of the Race Relations Officers and develop links with Community Based Groups and individuals	Improved engagement and consultation with BME groups and individuals	Ongoing	Main-streaming and Social Inclusion
5	Establishing better links between BME community based organisations and the Housing Community Network	Assist in the implementation of the NIHE Race Relations Policy through the Inter-Community Network Identify needs for capacity building within BME communities and prepare a proposal to address these	Improved Race Relations disseminated through the Housing Community Network Integrate/develop BME communities within Residents Associations Evaluation of representation of BME Community on the Inter-Community Network	Begin September 2005 Inter-community network 2006/2007 and ongoing	Main-streaming and Social Inclusion

THEME 5: Migrant Worker Issues					
1	Conduct directly or in partnership with others research into the housing impacts of Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland.	<p>Pilot Housing Market study in the Dungannon area.</p> <p>Work with OFM/DFM on current research projects including the "Migrant Worker comparative study"</p> <p>As part of the ongoing implementation of the Homelessness Strategy a needs analysis will be undertaken to determine whether additional temporary accommodation is required for those homeless Migrant Workers who are eligible for assistance.</p>	<p>Direct information on housing market economics to inform the Housing Executive's business planning process.</p> <p>Information to inform local housing strategies.</p>		Main-streaming
2	Work at a strategic level with the Race Forum to ensure housing policies adequately reflect the housing needs of incoming workers and their families.	Utilise membership of the Race Forum to ensure appropriate interpretation of Government's Race Equality strategy.	Direct links with Government policy makers in relation to Migrant Workers. More responsive Business Planning. Direct access to immigration policy changes.	Race Forum Timetable	Main-streaming
3	Work with groups at a local level and province-wide to remove barriers to housing services and promote the services of the Housing Executive.	<p>Strengthen relationship with STEP and other representative groups including Migrant Worker Fora at Dungannon, Cookstown, and Ballymena.</p> <p>Liaise with local employers through Business in the Community to promote social housing services.</p> <p>Develop links with new groups as they emerge and groups identified through the Mapping exercise.</p> <p>Discussions are taking place with a voluntary organisation to explore the potential for temporary accommodation provision for those who, although facing a housing crisis, are ineligible for housing assistance under current legislation</p> <p>Proposals are currently being developed for the provision of floating support services for Migrant Workers, by STEP to cover the Dungannon, Cookstown and Craigavon areas and by NICEM to cover the Northern Health and Social Services Board area (where the recent high profile case of a Ukrainian Migrant Worker occurred). These proposals will be submitted to the Board as part of the Supporting People Strategy.</p>	<p>Raise awareness with employers of NIHE role.</p> <p>Potential for widening the safety net for homeless people not eligible for housing assistance.</p> <p>Additional support for BME families.</p>	March 2006	<p>Main-streaming</p> <p>Racial Harassment</p>

Appendix 2

Race Relations Policy: Relevant Legislation

- The Race Relations (NI) Order (1997) made it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of race. Anyone who considers that they may have been discriminated against on the grounds of colour, nationality (including citizenship), or ethnic or national origin, has the right to seek justice in the courts or an industrial tribunal, and seek initial advice from the N.I. Equality Commission. Definitions for Direct and Indirect Discrimination, and Victimisation are given within the Order which includes housing and the provision of goods and services. Irish Travellers are identified as a racial group. Race relations law, however, does not cover specific religious or faith groups (for example Muslim) other than Sikhs and Jews.
- The Race Relations Order (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2003 introduced a range of measures affecting the 1997 order including the extending of the definition of racial discrimination, harassment, genuine and determining occupational requirements, the burden of proof, and the abolition of statutory provisions which are contrary to the principle of equal treatment.
- The Northern Ireland Act (1998) requires public bodies, in carrying out functions, to have due regard to the **need** to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different ethnic origins; and to have regard to the **desirability** to promote good relations between people of different racial groups.
- The Human Rights Act (1998) Article 14 prohibits discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status. Under the Act "**It is unlawful for a public authority to act in a way that is incompatible with a Convention Right**" (Ss6-8). The Human Rights Act has implications for the Housing Executive as an employer and as a landlord. This includes contractors, principals, or agents.
- European Union Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29/6/00 refers to implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin. The compliance date for this Directive was 19 July 2003.
- Housing Order 2003: The Housing Executive (NIHE) was recently granted enhanced powers to address the perpetrators of race motivated crimes through injunction irrespective of their tenure; redress had previously only been available against tenants.
- Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) 2004 Order Government recently published proposals to update the law on "hate crime" to enhance the seriousness of an offence, if the offence is aggravated by race, sexual orientation, religion (faith) or disability issues. Housing Executive policy is likely to interface where Anti-social behaviour is sufficiently serious and is regarded as hate motivated.

Appendix 3

Race Categories: Black & Minority Ethnic Communities

The term 'black' has often been used to describe 'visible minorities' which include people of African, Caribbean, South Asian, Chinese, South East Asian origin etc. The use of this single term was adopted by race equality activists in the '70's and '80's to refer to people who experienced racism because of their skin colour. However, in recent years numerous individuals and groups have objected to the term 'black' as the only term being applied to them, as they argue that it does not adequately convey the ethnic diversity that exists within minority ethnic groups.

All human beings have ethnicity and therefore belong to an ethnic group. The term ethnic minority or minority ethnic refers to people whose ethnic group is smaller in number than that of a society's majority ethnic population. There is a growing tendency to use minority ethnic rather than ethnic minority as the emphasis is placed on the minority status rather than ethnicity, which is something shared by everyone.

(Source 'Mind Your Language', diversity matters)

Most of the minority ethnic people who live in the UK were born there. In Northern Ireland minority ethnic communities comprise:

- The Chinese Community - the largest minority ethnic community, first arrived in Northern Ireland in the 1960's, and includes people from Vietnam who arrived in the 1970's and later.
- The Indian Community - first arrived in Northern Ireland in the 1930's. There has also been a small Sikh Community since the 1920's.
- The Pakistani Community - the majority lived in Britain before coming to Northern Ireland 10 -15 years ago.
- The Traveller Community - most were born in Northern Ireland.
- The Bangladeshi Community - have lived in Northern Ireland for 10 -15 years, mostly came from Britain.
- The Portuguese Community - Portuguese Migrant Workers have been living and working in Northern Ireland for 2 - 3 years.
- There are also small Jewish, African, Latino American, Central/Eastern European and other

European Union communities in Northern Ireland, as well as people from mixed ethnic backgrounds.

Refugees:

The UN Convention states that a Refugee is a person who "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country". Most refugees are located in 3rd World countries, with neighbouring countries bearing the burden of receiving those fleeing from war, persecution or hunger.

Asylum Seekers:

Asylum Seekers apply to live in the UK under the 1951 UN Convention on Refugees claiming they are fleeing persecution at home. "Whilst someone is waiting for their application for refugee status to be considered by the government they are known as an 'asylum seeker"*.

(*Source: 'Mind Your Language', diversity matters)

Migrant Workers:

Nationals of the European Economic Area:

- Nationals of existing (i.e. pre-1st May 2004) EU member states, Cyprus, Malta, and the European Free Trade Area Countries (Norway, Iceland & Lichtenstein) have a right to enter, reside and work in the UK without permission from any authority.
- Family members (even if not citizens) are also free to work in the UK.
- EA citizens may be restricted in employment in certain public sector jobs involving decision-making on the rights of UK citizens.
- EEA nationals working in the UK have the right to apply for all social security and welfare benefits.

A8 Countries*:

- The Government introduced a worker's registration scheme for nationals of A8 countries (accession countries excluding Cyprus & Malta) from 1st May 2004, for a period of 5 years. Under this scheme A8 nationals who want to work in the UK are required to apply to register with the Home Office as soon as they take up employment. Once legally working in the UK,

without interruption, for 12 months, they cease to require to be registered. It is possible to change jobs during this period, but the individual must be legally working for 12 months, and periods of self-employment do not count. At the end of 12 months, A8 workers have full Community rights as Migrant Workers.

- A8 workers who had been legally working in the UK for 12 months (without interruption) prior to 1st May 2004, were treated as existing EEA workers.
- Self-employed people from A8 states are not required to register with the Home Office and have the same rights as current self-employed citizens. However, if an A8 national ceases to be self-employed they no longer have a right to reside in the UK unless they are self-sufficient or become registered under the worker's registration scheme.
- The right to reside of A8 nationals, who arrive in the UK to seek work, but without a job to take up, will be subject to their being self-sufficient.
- Family members of A8 nationals who are legally working in the UK or are self-sufficient will have the right to reside with the worker.
- Entitlement to income-related benefits will depend on meeting conditions apart from being habitually resident and having a right to reside. A8 nationals who are registered as workers with the Home Office will be entitled to in-work benefits such as Child Benefits and tax credits, those seeking work will not, until employment is gained. Those who become unemployed will only be entitled to income-related benefits if they have been registered and worked in the UK for a period of at least 12 months. The right to reside will be subject to their being self-sufficient. A8 nationals who cannot or do not intend to work will generally have no access to income-related benefits and their right to reside in the UK may depend on not being an unreasonable burden on the state.

(*Source: Social Security Advisory Committee - The Social Security (Habitual Residence) Amendment Regulations 2004)

Work Permits:

- These are granted to those who are not nationals of the EEA or entitled to work freely in the UK.
- Applications must be made by the prospective employer before the employee leaves their

home country, and the permit is issued to them. In order to apply an employer must make clear why they have not been able to fill the post with a resident worker or EEA national.

- Work permits are issued by the Home Office Immigration Service, and the worker must remain in employment with the specified employer and category of work, and can only change if a new employer has also applied for a work permit.
- "First Permission" permits are also issued and are the same as the above except that the holder is already in the UK when the application is made. A stipulation is made that pay and other conditions should be at least equal to those normally given to a resident worker doing similar work for the same employer.
- A work permit has a maximum duration of 5 years. If it is granted for less than 4 years an application can be made for an extension, and after 4 years the permit holder can apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) when most employment restrictions are lifted. However, employer support is required along with confirmation that employment will continue.
- Dependants can apply for a visa and work in the UK during the time of the partner's work permit.
- Work permit holders have no recourse to public funds when in the UK.

Types of work permits:

- Business & Commercial;
- Sports & Entertainment;
- Training or work experience schemes;
- Internships;
- GATS (General Agreement on Trade in Services);
- Sector Based Schemes - employers unable to get national workers;
- Highly Skilled Migrant Programme - permits highly skilled individuals to migrate to the UK, based on a points system.

Permit-Free:

- These workers do not require a work permit but must obtain entry clearance.
- Applies to citizens of Switzerland & British Overseas Territories; representatives of overseas media; representatives of overseas

firms with no branches in the UK; private staff of diplomatic households; religious representatives; and airport-based operational ground staff of overseas airlines.

Commonwealth Working Holidaymakers:

- Commonwealth citizens aged 17-30 can apply for a period of 2 years.
- Holders are not permitted to work in professions (in general) or to follow a career, and working can only account for 50% of time spent in the UK.
- A new scheme was introduced in 2003 whereby holders can work in any sector, move freely between employers and switch to work permit employment after 1 year.
- There is no recourse to public funds.

Seasonal Agricultural Worker's Scheme (SAWS):

- Introduced to provide farmers with additional labour during peak seasons.
- Holders must be full-time students aged 18-25, and can work for up to 6 months between 1st May - 30th November.
- 'Operators' recruit workers but the contract is between the farmer and the worker.
- In Northern Ireland holders must be paid according to the standards laid down by the Agricultural Workers Board, and accommodation must be provided on site or close to by the employer.
- A new Scheme SAWS 2 was introduced in January 2004 which permits two separate 6 month periods, January - June & July - December.
- Many SAWS workers come from A8 and EU applicant countries.

Teachers & Language Assistants:

- A British Council scheme whereby teachers and assistants from outside the UK can work for 1 year in education in Northern Ireland.
- Most come from EEA countries, but also from Canada, Mexico & Colombia.
- The British Council also run a Fullbright Teacher Exchange Programme with the USA for 1 year exchanges.

Students:

- Students from EEA countries do not need permission to work in the UK.
- Non-EEA students can work up to 20 hours per week during term-time, and full time during vacation.
- Spouses of students with permission to stay 12+ months can also work.
- Graduates can switch to a work permit without returning home first, and employers can apply for a work permit while the student is still in the UK. This was changed in 2003 after which Graduates were permitted to work for 1 year post graduation without a permit.

Unauthorised Workers:

- Individuals who are working in the UK without a legal right to do so, i.e. those who come from outside the EEA and do not have any work permit.
- According to Immigration Service records, undocumented workers in Northern Ireland have come from - Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Latvia, Lithuania, Malaysia, Nigeria, Romania, Ukraine and Zimbabwe.
- There have been smaller numbers from Canada, Morocco, Nepal, South Africa, Turkey and the USA.
- In the majority of cases workers have entered the UK legally but have become unauthorised when they have breached their conditions of entry e.g. entering with a visitor's visa and taking up work; work permit holders whose permit has not been renewed; working holidaymakers who overstay the terms of their permit; or students remaining after their student visa has expired.
- It was anticipated that the enlargement of the EU in May 2004 would regularise the status of national from the 10 accession countries who are unauthorised - this is now in question with the new regulations for A8 nationals.
- Other unauthorised workers enter the UK illegally - possibly smuggled by criminals or human traffickers who make profit from exploitation.
- Some migrants may have been coerced by threat, abduction or deception; and exploitation includes prostitution, forced labour and slavery.

Appendix 4

Minority Ethnic Communities in Northern Ireland

Community	Estimated Numbers August 2000 ³	Census 2001 Numbers
Chinese	8,000	4,145
Indian	1,500	1,567
African	1,500	494
Irish Travellers	1,500	1,710
North American	1,500	
Pakistani	1,000	666
Jewish Community	500	
Bangladeshi	450	252
Central/Eastern Europe	300	
European Union	000s?	
Other		5,445
Total	16,250+	14,279

Main minority ethnic groupings are:

- Chinese and other south Asian-Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Malaysian and Thai.
- South Asian - Indian, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Sikh and Sri Lankan.
- Arabic Speaking - North African and Middle Eastern- Algerian, Moroccan, Libyan, Egyptian, Jordanian, Saudi Arabian and Iraqi.
- African - Kenyan, Ugandan, Nigerian, Zimbabwean and South African.
- Central Asian - Iranian, Turkish, Afghanistan.
- European - Portuguese, French, Dutch, Romanian, Polish, Italian, German, Scandinavian, Serb, Croatian, Bosnian, Hungarian, Greek, Czech, Slovakian, and Bulgarian.
- South American - Brazilian, Chilean, Paraguayan, Peruvian, Ecuadorian, Mexican, Cuban and Venezuelan

³ Figures are based on research conducted by the Multi-Cultural Resource Centre.

Appendix 5

Research into Minority Ethnic Communities in Northern Ireland

A number of research recommendations have been targeted specifically at the Housing Executive and other public service providers. These include:

Race and Racism in Northern Ireland: Paul Connolly and Michaela Keenan UU

- Overcrowding - needs to be research into nature and causes in minority ethnic households and how NIHE could help reduce overcrowding.
- Sheltered accommodation - need for a strategy for older members of minority ethnic populations.
- Traveller sites: provision of serviced sites, strategic and province-wide approach to the planning and development of sites and accommodation, more co-ordinated approach.
- Additional recommendations related to:
 - Ethnic monitoring
 - Procedures & Strategies
 - Dissemination of information
 - Clear comprehensive strategies for racist harassment and discrimination
 - Research where there is little existing knowledge

Opportunities for All: Paul Connolly and Michaela Keenan UU

- All Government departments, public bodies, Agencies etc. to develop clear programmes of racial equality training including senior managers & policy-makers.
- All Government departments, public bodies, Agencies etc. to develop Awareness & understanding of racism and its effects.
- All Government departments, public bodies, Agencies etc. to develop Appreciation of the particular needs and problems of minority ethnic peoples.
- All Government departments, public bodies, Agencies etc. to develop Understanding of current legislation, case-law, government initiatives, and responsibilities as staff.

The Hidden Truth (Racial Harassment): Paul Connolly and Michaela Keenan UU

- All employers and service providers should develop clear and explicit strategy for dealing with incidents of racist harassment that occur within their areas of responsibility.

- Strategy/policy should be publicised, definition of what constitutes racist harassment and what defines unacceptable behaviour.
- The consequences for those who engage in racist harassment should be spelt out.
- Mechanisms for offering guidance and support to those subject to harassment.
- Strategy should be aimed at reducing racial prejudice and promoting good relations especially with the Traveller Community.
- The Government should establish an Inter-Agency Forum and the NIHE should take part.

Tackling Inequalities in Northern Ireland: Paul Connolly and Michaela Keenan UU

- Development of Ethnic monitoring
- Establishment of Partnership with Minority Ethnic community groups
- Establishment of Minority Ethnic Liaison Officers
- Development of Consultation/consultative committees including reps from Minority Ethnic communities.
- Research into the particular needs of Minority Ethnic communities
- Involvement in design & development by Minority Ethnic people
- Addressing problems of racist harassment in & around the home, promotion of better race relations among tenants, in partnership with the Minority Ethnic community.
- Investment in expertise, skills and resources.
- Establishment of Inter-Agency Forum
- Race Relations Training
- NIHE & District Councils should:
 - Facilitate & co-ordinate specific initiatives to promote race relations among tenants.
 - Partnership working between minority ethnic representatives and local residents groups
 - Mediation as strategy, partnership working with Community Relations Council

Racist Harassment in Northern Ireland: Neil Jarman Institute of Conflict Research.

This research report is quoted: "The Housing Executive, in association with District Councils, should facilitate and co-ordinate specific initiatives with the objective of improving race relations among its tenants. These could involve the organisation and facilitation of regular meetings between minority ethnic representatives and

local resident's groups to share experiences, discuss and resolve specific issues and problems, and help to develop trust and mutual respect between the groups".

The Report also suggests the use of mediation as a particular strategy and recommends drawing on the experience of other relevant organisations in this area such as the Community Relations Council. (Connolly and Keenan, 2002).

Further research by the Institute of Conflict Research (Jarman and Monaghan, forthcoming) has detailed the extent of racist harassment and violence in Northern Ireland. Although not yet published it is understood that a specific recommendation will be made requiring that the Housing Executive "ensures that all of the relevant staff are appropriately trained to address and respond to problems of racist harassment of its tenants".

It further urges that responses to racist harassment and violence should include:

- working in partnership with other relevant agencies in developing appropriate and standardised recording and monitoring mechanisms;
- establishing internal systems that will enable measurement of the scale of the problem of racism in their sector; and
- the documentation of strategies for responding to racist harassment.

Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland: Kathryn Bell, Neil Jarman and Thomas Lefebvre, June 2004

The aim of this research commissioned by OFMDFM was to provide base line information, to identify gaps in knowledge, social problems, personal needs and experiences among Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland.

Within Section 7 entitled "Housing Options" key housing issues faced by Migrant Workers are highlighted. One of the main findings in terms of housing is the fact that the majority of Migrant Workers responding within the survey live in private rented housing.

Of the 176 respondents to the survey 54% lived in private rented accommodation, 22% of respondents lived in accommodation rented from their employer, 18% owned their own accommodation and 6% lived in Housing Executive accommodation.

A number of concerns among Migrant Workers include overcrowding, the absence of tenancy agreements in employment agency housing and the potential eviction from employment agency housing if dismissed by their employer. In some

cases Migrant Workers have found it difficult to secure private rented accommodation because of the requirement for deposits and one month's rent in advance.

Within the report it is recognised that the Housing Executive is proactively addressing issues faced by Migrant Workers including, the inspection of HMO's, the provision of social housing, and the establishment of links with other agencies and the voluntary and community sector.

"In Other Words - Mapping Minority Ethnic Languages in NI", Daniel Holder, MCRC, 2002.

Research carried out by the Multi-Cultural Resource Centre (MCRC) provides information on the location and numbers of the main Minority Ethnic communities in Northern Ireland and the range of languages spoken.

The broad groupings used in the research identified communities and languages from the following geographical areas:

Chinese and other South East Asian - Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Malaysian, Thai (languages spoken include Cantonese; Mandarin; Hakka; Fujianese; Japanese; Korean; Thai; languages of the Philippines such as Tagalog, Visayan/Cebuano & Sibunno; Vietnamese, Malayo, Tamil).

South Asian - Indian, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Sikh, Sri Lankan (languages include Sylheti, Bengali, Punjabi, Urdu, Hindi).

Arabic Speaking Communities - from the 22 North African and Middle Eastern countries such as Algeria, Morocco Libya, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Iraq (Arabic - Eastern and Western).

African - central and southern African countries such as Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, Zimbabwe and South Africa (languages such as Swahili, Yoruba, Xhosa, Sotho). Most people from Africa are multi-lingual and speak either English, French or Portuguese in addition to the language of their country of origin.

Central Asian - Iran, Turkey and Afghanistan (languages include Farsi, Turkish Southern Pushtu and Dari).

European - Portugal, France, The Netherlands, Romania, Poland, Italy, Germany, Scandinavian countries, Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia, Hungary, Greece, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Bulgaria.

South American - Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Peru, Ecuador, Mexico, Cuba and Venezuela.

The research highlights the fact that proficiency in English varies considerably within and between minority ethnic groups.

Appendix 6

Recommendations of the Commission for Racial Equality for tackling Institutional Racism

The McPherson Report and guidelines from the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) recommended the following in relation to public service organisations:

- Accepting the definition of Institutional Racism as defined in the report.
- Accepting unequivocally that institutional racism is likely to exist within every organisation. Such acceptance would enable organisations to honestly review their services.
- Monitoring and publishing recorded racist incidents, as defined in the report (as opposed to recording racial incidents).
- Answering the basic questions raised by the Commission for Racial Equality regarding the provision of services.
- Ensuring that effective and proper systems and structures are in place as recommended by the Commission for Racial Equality;
- The setting of unambiguous standards of service expected of all employees and service users, with the provision of appropriate support and guidance in relation to these standards. All staff should understand and reflect the values and principles of the organisation.
- Whenever necessary, appropriate action should be taken to ensure that the standards set by the organisation are maintained in practice.

**Housing
Executive**

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The Regional Strategic Housing Authority

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