

A Shared Future and Racial Equality Strategy: Good Relations Indicators Baseline Report

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In January 2007, the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) published a report providing baseline information on a set of indicators to measure the state of good relations (and aspects of racial equality) in Northern Ireland. These indicators will help to monitor the success of 'A Shared Future: The policy and strategic framework for good relations in Northern Ireland', published by OFMDFM in March 2005. The overall aim of this policy is:

A Shared Future

'to establish, over time, a shared society defined by a culture of tolerance: a normal, civic society in which all individuals are considered as equals, where differences are resolved through dialogue in the public sphere and where all individuals are treated impartially. A society where there is equity, respect for diversity and recognition of our independence.'

The Racial Equality Strategy was published in July 2005 and this is complementary to A Shared Future. Together the strategies will initiate actions to promote good relations and good race relations. The Racial Equality strategy sets out a long term, high level vision for society:

Racial Equality Strategy

'a society in which racial diversity is supported, understood, valued and respected, where racism in any of its forms is not tolerated and where we live together as a society and enjoy equality of opportunity and equal protection.'

Improving relationships between and within communities in Northern Ireland is a long term goal for Government. The need to monitor the impact of the policy and strategic framework of good relations over the long term was recognised within A Shared Future. In line with a commitment outlined in the policy document, OFMDFM established a 'Good Relations Indicators Working Group' with representatives from relevant Departments, other organisations and external stakeholders. The purpose of this group was to identify and develop a set of high level, outcome focussed indicators to reflect the state of good relations in Northern Ireland and through these indicators to monitor change over time. Good relations indicators relevant to both A Shared Future and the Racial Equality Strategy have been developed by the group.

The baseline report published in January, provides the latest picture of good relations (and aspects of racial equality) in Northern Ireland. Historic data has also been included, where available, to show trends in recent years. The indicators will be refined and developed on an ongoing basis, monitored annually and fed into the Annual Report on progress to Ministers and the NI Assembly.

A draft set of the indicators was published in the A Shared Future and Racial Equality Strategy Triennial Action Plans in 2006. The indicators will provide an important source of evidence that will feed into the development of subsequent action plans.

The high level monitoring achieved through the good relations indicators will complement the work of the Community Relations Council. The Council is committed, through A Shared Future, to providing an assessment of the health of good relations in Northern Ireland. This is likely to be carried out at a local level, incorporating an assessment of the impact of specific programmes and projects on good relations.

Methodology

The indicators underpin a set of high level priority outcomes. This outcome focussed approach has been adopted by a number of organisations recently. At an international level, the US State of Vermont has played a leading role in the use of outcome measures.¹ The approach is based on an agreement to work collectively to achieve progress towards a number of simply expressed high level outcomes statements. Progress towards the common outcomes is measured by a range of 'feeder' indicators drawn from each contributing agency.²

This approach has been adopted recently by Children's Services Planners in Northern Ireland and by OFMDFM in the development of strategic indicators for the Children and Young People's Strategy, published in June 2006.

For the purpose of monitoring the success of A Shared Future and the Racial Equality Strategy, eleven high level priority outcomes have been identified which illustrate the impact of success. These outcomes link to the aims and objectives of both strategies. Therefore, progress made towards achieving these outcomes will ensure that progress is being made towards the achievement of the aims and objectives in both A Shared Future and the Racial Equality Strategy.

A set of indicators has been developed which underpin each of the priority outcomes. These indicators measure the progress being made towards achieving each priority outcome (and hence achieving the aims and objectives of the two strategies). This will facilitate the identification of specific areas where progress is not being made and action can then be taken to address this through the Triennial Action Plan rolling process.

Members of the working group were asked to identify suitable indicators under each priority outcome. The final indicator set was developed using a set of agreed criteria to determine the most meaningful indicators. These criteria were:

- 1. Relevance:** The indicator should be relevant to A Shared Future and Racial Equality Strategy aims and objectives (the indicator should be linked to one or more of the priorities outcomes).
- 2. Outcome focussed:** The indicator should not be an action, or represent low level monitoring.
- 3. Measurable:** A data source should be available that will enable future monitoring of the indicator.

At present, the indicators rely on data that are currently available and are measured using a range of qualitative and quantitative data sources. The statistics presented are the most recently available at the time of writing this report. Therefore, data for the majority of indicators are based on the financial year 2005/06 or the calendar year 2005. In some cases, the date of the most recently available data is before this, for example from a survey conducted in 2003 or from the 2001 Census of Population. Therefore it is not possible through these indicators to assess the impact A Shared Future and the Racial

Equality Strategy have had at this stage given both were published in 2005. However, the inclusion of historic data for each indicator (where available) shows general trends and this will provide useful information for future planning. Where a survey has been used as the data source for an indicator, any significant differences have been calculated at the 5% level of probability.

The working group will develop suitable data sources to facilitate the measurement of high level indicators where gaps in information have been identified as missing (in conjunction with Government Departments and other organisations). In addition, indicators will be developed over time to monitor new issues arising from the implementation of A Shared Future and the Racial Equality Strategy. Therefore the indicator set should be considered as fluid.

Monitoring and evaluation extends beyond the indicators framework to include the commissioning of specific research projects. For example, a piece of research was commissioned in June 2006 by OFMDFM to monitor the display of flags and other emblems during July 2006. The survey was repeated in September 2006 to determine if flags had been taken down at the end of the marching season. This information has been collated in a database and will be used to assist in the future monitoring of flag flying and the display of other symbols. The researchers, Dr Dominic Bryan and Dr Clifford Stevenson, produced a report detailing the findings in January 2007.³

Baseline Information

A summary of the baseline data for the majority of the indicators is presented below. It has not been feasible to include all of the detailed information including historic trends within this short paper but this can be found in the full report.⁴

Priority outcome 1: Northern Ireland society is free from racism, sectarianism and prejudice

- There were 1,470 sectarian and 746 racist hate crimes in Northern Ireland during 2005/06 (Indicator 1.1).
- The number of attacks on churches/chapels and schools and orange halls was greater in 2005 than in 2004 (Indicator 1.2).
- The number of Northern Ireland Housing Executive clients presenting as homeless due to intimidation has decreased over recent years from 1,530 in 2002/03 to 888 in 2005/06 (Indicator 1.3).

- More than two thirds of people believe there is more racial prejudice than there was five years ago (Indicator 1.5).
- One percent of people are ‘very prejudiced’ and 24% of people say they are ‘a little prejudiced’ against people from minority ethnic communities (Indicator 1.7).

Priority outcome 2: All places are shared, safe, inclusive and welcoming for everyone

- A quarter of people felt intimidated by loyalist symbols in 2005. There was no significant difference in the proportion who were intimidated by republican symbols (23%) (Indicator 2.2a).
- One third of people think loyalist flag flying happens more than it did five years ago and almost a quarter think republican flag flying happens more (Indicator 2.3).
- The proportion of parades that were contentious has changed very little in recent years (from 6% in 2002/03 to 7% in 2004/05) (Indicator 2.4)
- The number of holiday visitors to Northern Ireland has increased in recent years to 405,000 in 2004 (Indicator 2.6).
- A high proportion of people (86%) consider their main shopping area to be a ‘neutral space’ (Indicator 2.8).
- Three quarters of the population are welcoming of the fact that other EU citizens are free to live and work in Northern Ireland (Indicator 2.9)

Priority outcome 3: Positive and harmonious relationships exist between communities at interface areas

- The number of deaths due to the security situation has decreased from 55 in 1998 to 5 in 2005 (Indicator 3.1).
- The number of casualties as a result of paramilitary style shootings has decreased from 186 casualties in 2001 to 85 in 2005. Eighty-seven percent of casualties were as a result of loyalist paramilitary style shootings (Indicators 3.2).
- The number of casualties as a result of paramilitary style assaults has decreased from 302 casualties in 1996 to 89 in 2005. Sixty-seven percent of casualties were as a result of loyalist paramilitary style assaults (Indicators 3.3).
- The numbers of shooting and bombing incidents have decreased between 2001 and 2005 from 355 to 167 shootings and from 349 to 83 bombings (Indicator 3.4).

- Almost two thirds of criminal damage offences with a hate motivation recorded in 2005/06 had a sectarian motivation (61%). Racial offences increased from 322 in 2004/05 to 351 in 2005/06 (Indicator 3.5)
- A total of 37 peacelines have been erected in Northern Ireland since 1969 (Indicator 3.7).

Priority outcome 4: Increased sharing in education

- The community background composition of schools has remained steady in recent years, with less than one percent of pupils enrolled in Catholic managed schools being Protestants and less than five percent of pupils enrolled in controlled schools being Catholics. The proportion of pupils enrolled in integrated schools was 5.5% in 2005/06 (Indicators 4.1 - 4.3).
- Almost two thirds of people say they would prefer to send their children to a mixed school (2005). The proportion of first preference applications to post-primary integrated schools that do not result in admission has decreased in recent years, from 26% in 2003/04 to 16% in 2005/06 (Indicators 4.4 & 4.5).
- There are very small numbers of minority ethnic pupils and pupils with English as an additional language (1.6% and 0.8% of all pupils in 2005/06 respectively) (Indicators 4.8 and 4.9).

Priority outcome 5: Northern Ireland is a place where people of all backgrounds work, live, learn and play together

- Over a third of Census Output Areas in Northern Ireland are segregated (that is, 90% or more people are from one community background). Thirty percent of Protestants live in mainly Protestant areas and 44% of Catholics live in mainly Catholic areas (Indicator 5.1).
- The number of homes purchased by the NIHE because of sectarian intimidation of the occupants under the SPED scheme has decreased from 385 in 2003/04 to 69 in 2005/06 (Indicator 5.3).
- Forty-three percent of young people aged 16 and 52% of adults believe that relations between Protestants and Catholics are better than they were five years ago (Indicators 5.5 and 5.6).
- The vast majority of people (79%) would prefer to live in a mixed community background neighbourhood and 83% would accept minority ethnic people as residents in their area (Indicators 5.7 & 5.8).
- Over 70% of people would describe their neighbourhood and their local shops as a 'neutral space' (Indicators 5.9 & 5.10)

- According to the 2001 Census of Population, 5.6% of marriages were mixed (Protestant/Catholic). Three quarters of people would not mind a close relative marrying someone from a different community background or ethnic origin. Two thirds of people think other people would mind if a close relative married someone of a different religion (Indicators 5.12 – 5.14).
- More than half of the population (55%) believe that better relations will come about through more mixing. (Indicator 5.16).

Priority outcome 6: All workplaces are safe and shared

- The number of industrial tribunal complaints registered on the grounds of disability has decreased in recent years, from 209 in 2002/03 to 153 in 2004/05 (Indicator 6.1).
- The number of industrial tribunal complaints registered on the grounds of racial discrimination decreased from 137 in 2003/04 to 88 in 2004/05 (Indicator 6.1).
- The number of applications made to the Fair Employment Tribunal has decreased by a third between 2001/02 (562) and 2004/05 (375). (Indicator 6.1)
- The proportion of employees in the PSNI who are Catholics has increased over recent years to 12% in 2004 and the proportion who are Protestants decreased to 88% in 2006. Excluding full and part-time reserves, the community background composition in 2006 was 19.5% Catholic and 80.5% Protestant. Less than 0.3% of employees in the PSNI were minority ethnic people in 2006. (Indicator 6.2)
- The vast majority of people (88%) would prefer to work in a mixed workplace and would accept a minority ethnic person as a work colleague. Almost two thirds would define their workplace as a neutral space (Indicators 6.3, 6.4 and 6.7).
- Just over a third (36%) of Protestants would avoid work in a mainly Catholic area and similarly over a third of Catholics (37%) would avoid work in a mainly Protestant area (Indicators 6.5 and 6.6).

Priority outcome 7: Minority ethnic people participate in public, political and economic life

- Research commissioned by the Electoral Commission showed that 40% of minority ethnic people are registered to vote compared to 90% of the total population in Northern Ireland (Indicator 7.1).

- A very small proportion of applications and subsequent public appointments are from or made to minority ethnic people (0.5% and 0.4% in 2005/06 respectively) (Indicator 7.2).
- Three quarters of people believe organisations and leaders in public life should encourage minority ethnic people to participate in public life. (Indicator 7.4)
- A higher proportion of minority ethnic pupils (53%) left school with two or more A levels than all pupils (44%) in 2004/05. Similarly, a higher proportion of minority ethnic pupils (69%) left school with five or more GCSEs A*-C than all pupils (63%). A slightly higher proportion of minority ethnic pupils (6.4%) left school with no GCSEs compared to all pupils (5%) (Indicator 7.5).
- Thirty-eight percent of Irish Travellers are economically active compared to almost two thirds of other minority ethnic people (64%) and 70% of the total population. Over a quarter of Irish Travellers (27%) are unemployed compared to less than 7% of other minority ethnic people and less than 7% of the total population (Indicators 7.6 and 7.7).
- Sixty-three percent of Irish Travellers are economically inactive, compared to 30% of all people and 36% of other minority ethnic people (Indicator 7.8)
- The proportion of minority ethnic people (50%) in managerial or professional occupations is higher than the proportion of the total population (26%) and of Irish Travellers (17%). (Indicator 7.9)
- A higher proportion of minority ethnic pupils (76%) go into higher or further education than all pupils leaving school (66%) (Indicator 7.10).

Priority outcome 8: Minority ethnic people will benefit from equality in health and welfare

- The standardised illness rate for Irish Travellers reporting a limiting long standing illness is 63% higher than for the general population. The rate for other minority ethnic people is 22% lower than the general population (Indicator 8.1).
The standardised illness rate for Irish Travellers reporting good general health is 19% lower than the total population. The rate for other minority ethnic people is the same as the general population (Indicator 8.2).

Priority outcome 9: Northern Ireland is a place where cultural diversity is embraced, respected and valued

- The vast majority of Protestants report that they understand (82%) and respect (87%) the Catholic community's culture and traditions (Indicators 9.1 & 9.3).
- Similarly, the vast majority of Catholics understand (82%) and respect (92%) the Protestant community's culture and traditions (Indicators 9.2 & 9.4).
- The majority of people believe that schools are not yet fully effective at preparing pupils for life in a diverse society or at encouraging understanding of the complexity of our history (Indicators 9.5 & 9.6).
- Only 17% of people agree they know quite a bit about the culture of some minority ethnic communities living in Northern Ireland (Indicator 9.7)
- Half of the population believe minority ethnic communities are less respected than they once were (Indicator 9.8).
- Twelve percent of the population believe the culture of Irish Travellers is less respected than it once was (Indicator 9.9).

Future Work

Indicators have been developed under each of the priority outcomes with the following exceptions:

- The identification of indicators for the outcome '*Victims/survivors have a voice*' has been put on hold until the Victims and Survivors Strategy has been developed. This will ensure the indicators link to objectives within the new strategy. In formulating the strategy, consideration will be given to the recommendations in the Office of the Interim Victim's Commissioner report published earlier in 2007.
- Indicators for the outcome '*Public service delivery in Northern Ireland provides value for money on a shared, inclusive and equal basis*' will be developed when research on the costs of division in Northern Ireland has been completed. This research was commissioned by OFMDFM in March 2006 and is due to be completed in April 2007. The Government committed to conducting this research in A Shared Future in order to identify the costs of delivering public services in a divided society.

- It has been recognised that little data exists in relation to minority ethnic people. This is particularly evident for the priority outcome '*Minority ethnic people benefit from equality in health and welfare*'. The Census of Population is currently the main data source but this is not useful for annual monitoring. Obtaining information on this small but increasingly diverse group of the population in Northern Ireland is difficult. There are problems in using general population sample surveys to obtain information on minority ethnic people because it is difficult to achieve a sufficient sample size to ensure statistically robust comparisons. Enhancing administrative data systems to collect robust information on minority ethnic people would enhance the breadth of information available. However, guidance on definitions and classifications of minority ethnic groups and new migrants are required to ensure a standardised approach is adopted across all organisations. The Section 75 monitoring guidance that the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland has been consulting on will provide an opportunity and basis for developmental work in this area.

Summary

The baseline report provides the most recent picture of the state of good relations in Northern Ireland. This is a broad and complex issue to quantify simply and the current existing set of indicators will grow and develop as and when new information becomes available. Since its publication, the content of the initial indicator set has received positive feedback from organizations and individuals both inside and outside government and the working group will take cognizance of the comments and suggestions received in its future developmental work.

Notes

1. Hogan & Murphey, 2002
2. McTernan & Godfrey, 2006
3. Bryan and Stevenson, 2007
4. OFMDFM, 2007. <http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/good-relations-report.pdf>

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