



Northern Ireland
**Council for
Racial Equality**

**A SUBMISSION TO THE
NORTHERN IRELAND HOUSING EXECUTIVE
ON
COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY
2020-2023
CONSULTATION**

FEB 2020

1. Introduction

1.1 The Northern Ireland Council for Racial Equality (NICRE) was officially set up on 27 February 2017 when the previous NICEM, the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities was under voluntary administration on 7 November 2017 due to cash-flow crisis. Ethnic minority groups strongly feel that the loss of NICEM is a setback on the policy work gained over the last two decades. After reflections and meetings, they are determined to continue the policy work previously by NICEM.

1.2 We welcome the publication of the consultation document “Community Safety Strategy 2020-2023” and at the same time we have serious concerns that prevention of anti-social behavior is the only cornerstone of the Community Safety Strategy 2020-2023. For the Department of Justice (DoJ) and the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), anti-social behavior is one of the many issues of the community safety. Their main focus is on reduce the hate crime across all affected groups, in particular sectarian, race and Islamophobia. Therefore, anti-social behavior is not equivalent to hate crime nor the only issue within the Northern Ireland Housing Executive’s Community Safety Strategy 2020-2023. We would like to request the NIHE to scoping issues that based on hate crime within the community, in particular those racial, sectarian and Islamophobia hate crime within the management and control of the NIHE.

1.3 Under the Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 and subsequent Regulations (RRO) the NIHE must make sure that their duty is discharged by taking action or actions to any third party who are both tenant and perpetrators of racial and religious discrimination, harassment and racist and sectarian attacks within their management and control. It also makes sure that the victim who is also the tenant to get support from NIHE to redress her/his alleged racial and religious discrimination, harassment and racist and sectarian attacks in order to discharge its duty under the RRO.

1.4 In viewing the current Independent Review of Hate Crime law in Northern Ireland which will shape up the current law that has less protection than in any part of the UK and the political hot-potato of sectarian hate crime during parade seasons and scoping the issues on hate crime as suggests in paragraph 1.2 for further consultation on its impacts towards our society.

1.5 We also suggest to put “hate crime and anti-social behavior” to replace “anti-social behavior” in the entire document of this consultation.

2. COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY 2020-2023

- 2.1 We endorse the approach in the 2020-2023 Strategy: “This Strategy focuses on the importance of working together to realise change and highlights the important role that the Community play. Ultimately the aim is to empower communities, build greater community confidence, raise community safety awareness and improve support to those who are vulnerable within our communities.” (p.4)
- 2.2 In order to empower black and minority ethnic (BME) community build greater community confidence, raise community awareness and improve support, we suggest as highlighted in our submission to the recent Customer Support and Tenancy Sustainment Strategy that the NIHE should consider set aside capacity building funding programme for BME groups which is led by local ethnic minority, not by the local white to build incremental from equal partnership working with local groups to tackle racial and religious discrimination, harassment, racist and sectarian attacks as well as anti-social behavior. Their role is to promote reporting of hate crime and anti-social behavior as well as support victims by sign-posting to the current victim support programme under PSNI that co-ordinated by Victim Support NI. Another aspect of capacity building is to build their capacity to bid project and work with local groups to tackle racism and anti-social behavior on the ground.

3. Legislative Authority & National Picture

- 3.1 As highlighted at Introduction on the current review of hate crime law in Northern Ireland, NIHE should consider what power do they need when remove flags, symbols, image, etc. in their housing estate or controlled areas. This should form part of the Action Plan in consultation with all tenants and key stakeholders, including vulnerable groups under Section 75 duty.
- 3.2 Under the Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 and subsequent Regulations (RRO) the NIHE must make sure that their duty is discharged by taking action or actions to any third party who are both tenant and perpetrators of racial and religious discrimination, harassment and racist and sectarian attacks within their management and control. It also makes sure that the victim who is also the tenant to get support from NIHE to redress her/his alleged racial and religious discrimination, harassment and racist and sectarian attacks in order to discharge its duty under the RRO.
- 3.3 Community Planning
We acknowledged the active roles play by NIHE in the entire Community Planning process with various agencies working in partnership to tackle education, health, community safety, etc. policy issues.

3.4 Race Relations

There is a typo on “The Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland 2015-2025”. It should be “**Racial Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland 2015-2025**”. The Strategy also have the following aims which are relevant for NIHE:

- Equality of Service Provision
- Participation
- Social Cohesion
- Capacity Building
- Cultural Identity

In the Summary of the Proposed Action under the Strategy, it includes review of the current Race Relations law, Review Fair Employment law, ethnic monitoring, etc. which are relevant to the NIHE.

At the **Conclusion Observations of the UN Committee on Racial Discrimination** in August 2016, “the Committee expresses concern that data are neither collected systematically in all fields where racial discrimination exists, nor uniformity across the State party’s jurisdiction, most notably in Northern Ireland.... It is also concerned at the lack of systematic and effective use of data to develop policies to tackle racial discrimination, and notes that initiatives such as “2020 Vision” are not based on objective baseline assessment. (para. 13, CERD/C/GBR/CO/21-23). The Committee further recommended that

“Given the importance of collecting accurate and updated disaggregated data to develop effective policies to combat racial discrimination and to monitor the impact of measures taken, the Committee recommends that the State party ensure that the governments of Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, the British Overseas Territories and the Crown dependencies systematically collect and publish disaggregated data on the enjoyment of rights by members of ethnic minorities in all fields of life, and to include such information in the next periodic report. The Committee also recommends that the State party:

- a) Carefully review the impact of existing policies and programmes aimed at promoting integration so as to ensure that they do not constitute indirect discrimination;
- b) Consider adopting a detailed action plan with concrete targets, monitoring mechanism and sufficient resources, including temporary special measures, to secure adequate advancement of certain ethnic groups to ensure that persons belonging to such groups are able to enjoy their rights on its equal footing, taking into account the Committee’s general recommendation NO. 32 (2009) on the meaning and scope of special measures in the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.” (paragraph 14, CERD/C/GBR/CO/21-23)

3.5 WE suggest the NIHE use the Committee's recommendations in paragraph 14, benchmark the baseline work of NIHE through data collection, review the impact of proposed Community Safety Strategy and other Strategies, policies and programmes that related with integration as well as adopted special measures for Travellers, Gypsies and Roma; asylum seekers and refugees, special funding programme on capacity building for BME communities, etc.

4. APPRAOCH AND KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

4.1 We endorsed the approaches of NIHE and key achievements from the previous Strategy "Safer Together". The bigger challenge is how to engage and get representations from BME groups to participate in various fora through a meaningful capacity building programme. Without their involvement and participation, the programmes, strategies and policies of NIHE will not work, in particular those vulnerable groups such as Travellers, Gypsies and Roma, Asylum Seekers and Refugees.

5. STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2023

5.1 The Strategic Plan has clear framework with built-in aims of Building Community Confidence; Ensuring Local Solutions and Working Together. It will be useful, if NIHE has a separate framework with the above built-in aims scoping for the BME communities on one hand, use the UN Committee's recommendations in paragraph 14 benchmark the baseline work of NIHE through data collection, review the impact of proposed Community Safety Strategy and other Strategies, policies and programmes that related with integration as well as adopted special measures for Travellers, Gypsies and Roma; asylum seekers and refugees, special funding programme on capacity building for BME communities, etc.

If you have any query about this submission, you could contact Patrick Yu, Secretary of NICRE at patrick@nicre.org or write to us at 7 Rugby Road, Belfast BT7 1PS.