



Advice NI Response:

**The Executive Office Call
for Views on Racial
Equality**

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The Executive Office Call for Views on Racial Equality Response from Advice NI

1. What do you perceive to be the root cause of racism and racial inequalities here?

Advice NI welcomes that tackling disadvantage, racism and promoting equality of opportunity are core priorities for the Executive Office (TEO) and its arm's-length bodies. Specifically, support for minority ethnic people and groups, and co-ordination of the Executive's responsibilities for refugees and asylum seekers.

There is no single 'root cause' of racism and racial inequalities and to attempt to reduce a highly complex issue in this way risks failing to recognise the need for a multi-faceted strategy to address the impact of these problems on our society.

In the first instance, it is important to distinguish between racism and racial inequalities, because these are not equivalent. We believe it is instructive to distinguish between racism as a set of negative attitudes towards and beliefs about people from other backgrounds, particularly those from minority groups, and racial inequalities as the manifestation of racism in our institutions and social relations. This might suggest that racism is the cause of racial inequalities, but we would also emphasise that racial inequalities can also be produced by other factors, in particular socio-economic problems such as poverty.

Research on this issue as it relates to Northern Ireland is unfortunately limited, however the following issues have been raised by other commentators:

- Northern Ireland's special political status during the development of race relations policies in the rest of the UK, meaning that ethnic minorities were not given the same legal protections as their fellows elsewhere, or at a much slower pace. This was particularly reflected in the indifference of most Northern Ireland politicians to this issue until very recently.
- Increasing ethnic diversity in the Northern Ireland population, with the latest Census data showing that the number of people born outside the UK and Ireland has doubled in a decade. This has exposed more people to ethnic diversity, increasing attention to issues such as immigration and multiculturalism.
- Insular group identities created by Northern Ireland's sectarian social and political history, such as closed conceptions of British and Irish culture that prevent the integration of ethnic minority groups.
- Scapegoating of ethnic minorities and especially immigrants as the causes of socio-economic hardship. This has been particularly prevalent in the wake of economic downturns after the 2008 economic crash and the 2020 Covid pandemic.
- Failure of institutions, whether public or private, to respond effectively to manifestations of racism in the past, communicating to perpetrators of racism/facilitators of racial inequality that they will not face serious consequences for their actions.
- Limited extent of integration between different ethnic groups, with widespread examples of "ghettoisation" of certain ethnic minorities.
- Brexit as a potential 'trigger event' for increased racism as it has focused attention on issues such as national identity, immigration, and integration.

We would also draw attention to the impact of UK government immigration policy, in particular the "hostile environment" and recent focus on small boat crossings, which have legitimated negative attitudes towards migrants.

Advice NI strongly urges the government to review policies that cause poverty and the social and digital exclusion of minority ethnic and migrant families. We urge the government to enable access to language/digital support and independent advice including immigration advice to those who need it.

(Sources: Crangle, [‘Left to Fend for Themselves’: Immigration, Race Relations and the State in Twentieth Century Northern Ireland](#), Feb 2018; Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, [Racist Hate Crime: Human Rights and the Criminal Justice System in Northern Ireland](#), Nov 2021; Equality Commission & Pivotal, [Impact of Brexit on Minority Ethnic and Migrant People](#), Nov 2022; BBC, [Belfast's ethnic minorities face racism and poverty, report finds](#), Dec 2022; Canavan & Turkoglu, [Effect of group status and conflict on national identity: Evidence from the Brexit referendum in Northern Ireland](#), Dec 2022; Trademark Belfast, [Racism and Racist Attitudes in Northern Ireland](#))

2. What, in your view, are the key inequalities faced by minority ethnic people?

Access to justice – in particular, the parlous state of immigration advice in Northern Ireland, as outlined in our [evidence to the Committee for the Executive Office](#) at Stormont on [12 February 2025](#), in which we also raised concerns about the prevalence of back-street advisers and the extensive administrative burden suffered by immigrants. Front-line advice workers consistently emphasise the impact of delays in the immigration and asylum system and the difficulty in raising cases on behalf of clients, with knock-on effects on wider rights, including those of people living in the UK with fully legal status, such as access to benefits, housing and education.

Harassment and racist hatred – we are deeply concerned about the growing incidence of race hate crimes, as demonstrated by the [PSNI's published data](#). This demonstrates that there is a problem over and above specific flashpoints.

Economic hardship – Hardship and destitution are being endured by many migrants. Some do not have adequate resources to eat properly; some are reliant on crisis interventions such as foodbanks but sometimes foodbanks are unable to cater properly for the food and other requirements of these clients. In addition, those whose applications are turned down very often find themselves destitute and street homeless, whilst people whose applications are successful find themselves put out of accommodation, their National Asylum Support is terminated, they are forced towards temporary accommodation which has limited availability, children's schooling is disrupted and they have to endure the Universal Credit 5-week wait.

Detailed research in this area is limited, but the studies that have been undertaken (particularly by the [Jospeh Rowntree Foundation](#)) suggest that there are significant economic barriers to social mobility and inclusion for people from ethnic minority communities in Northern Ireland. [Evidence given](#) by the Migrant Centre NI to the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee in Westminster in 2021 emphasised the risk of exploitation in the labour market and the need for targeted welfare advice.

These problems are particularly acute for those minority ethnic people in Northern Ireland with limited access to social security due to being subject to the No Recourse to Public Funds provision. Indeed, in his [report](#) Sabir Zazai OBE highlighted that ‘there is no clarity on dealing with the impact of No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) within the Racial Equality strategy.’ At the same time, statutory provision is often inadequate, with applicants placed in sub-standard or poor quality accommodation for extended periods, with a significant impact on their health and wellbeing.

Lack of representation – ethnic minorities often lack access to political influence and are reliant on supporting agencies, particularly charities, to present the barriers they face to political decision makers. As charitable and voluntary organisations have limited resources and a number of competing priorities this means that support may be thinly spread or focused on local areas of greatest need.

Policy vacuum – JRF have previously [pointed out](#) that policy and legislation on racial equality in Northern Ireland have lagged behind that in the rest of the UK:

‘The Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order became law in 1997, 21 years after similar legislation in Great Britain. However, the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement 1998 requires public agencies to promote equality for ‘protected’ groups, ‘good relations’ – a term for cohesion encompassing religious and minority ethnic communities – and to monitor the effectiveness of organisations’ strategies. The first Racial Equality Strategy was published in 2005.

‘These steps have raised awareness of the issues, but monitoring of their effectiveness is considered weak. There are concerns that policy implementation and practice have not kept pace with the needs of new and existing minority ethnic communities. Furthermore, fresh policies on good relations and cohesion have stalled. Whatever the reasons for previous inaction, the implementation of race equality legislation and policies remains relatively new.’

3. What steps should be taken to address these inequalities?

Access to justice: we consider it absolutely essential that adequately resourced, co-ordinated and accessible immigration advice, including interpretation, at all levels of specialism must be made available to meet the emerging immigration advice needs in NI. This can only be achieved, in our view, by a stand-alone NI-based fund for immigration advice services.

In addition, an end to hostile environment in all its forms would go a long way to reducing the administrative burden preventing migrant communities from accessing their rights.

We would also support the Equality Commission’s [call](#) for harmonisation and strengthening of race equality legislation.

Harassment and racist hatred: a wide variety of lived experience research referenced elsewhere in our response shows the need for better support for reporting racist hate crime, stronger sanctions for racist violence and intimidation, and more proactive community-based policing to identify and address racial hatred as it develops.

We would also recommend the Executive Office work closely with civil society organisations to support integration – for example, by harnessing the power of the community and voluntary sector to engage communities.

In general, we support the [response of Patrick Corrigan](#), Amnesty International’s Northern Ireland Director, to this issue:

“Tackling racism and hate crime in Northern Ireland will require not just a more consistent response from the police but unambiguous political leadership and effective strategies from the Executive, something which has hitherto been lacking.”

Economic hardship: provide support and independent advice to immigrants and ethnic minorities so that they can overcome barriers to economic participation. An excellent example is provided by [our work alongside Forward South Partnership](#) and others to develop the Roma Support Hub, which provides wraparound support to members of the Roma community.

The [Zazai report](#) calls for 'a greater connection between the strategy and the Crisis Fund' to address the impact of the NRPF provision.

More proactive response to exploitation, particularly in housing sector, are needed, through community engagement and a supportive approach to help victims to access safe accommodation.

Lack of representation: promote greater ethnic diversity in institutions; support the development of ethnic minority organisations; encourage collaboration between ethnic minority organisations (see Zazai review on Minority Ethnic Development Fund), and with wider civil society.

The Equality Commission has urged the Executive to allocate targeted resources to its racial equality strategy and to consider the potential of equality budgeting processes in assisting Government to ensure that equality and good relations aspects are appropriately resourced to deliver targeted and relevant outcomes.

Back in 2014, the Commission [recommended](#) that the Executive, Departments and other key stakeholders take priority action in the following areas, including via the proposed Racial Equality Strategy (RES).

- Reform of the law, to address key shortfalls in legal protections
- Ensuring equality of opportunity in education, employment, accommodation, healthcare and access to social welfare
- Ensuring effective monitoring and evaluation, supported by robust data collection

Policy Vacuum: JRF has [several recommendations](#), to address the issues with policy in Northern Ireland. JRF states that changes in policy and practice are needed to better address poverty in Northern Ireland across different ethnic groups. These recommendations relate particularly to enhancing opportunities in the labour market, despite the difficult economic climate, and ensuring that safety nets are available and used. Actions should include the following:

- tackling underemployment to ensure that career progression is possible;
- pursuing opportunities to engage people with employment through vocational training, language courses or self employment;
- ensuring that people from minority ethnic groups are not disproportionately affected by benefit delays;
- examining how staff in Jobcentre Plus and benefits offices support unemployed people from minority ethnic communities back into work. In addition, primary race equality legislation could be strengthened and made more effective.
- Lastly, there are major knowledge gaps in understanding the lives of people from minority ethnic groups, particularly in respect of how they compare with others in Northern Ireland, Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland. Robust statistical data resources and quantitative analysis would be a solution.

4. What are the key barriers to integration and good relations between all communities?

Mutual understanding – i.e. us and them attitudes towards migrants

Recognition – e.g. lack of support for cultural diversity, limited respect for the rights of marginalised groups, apathy towards minorities.

Social atomisation – i.e. lack of connection between individuals, leading to social and cultural isolation, as well as the erosion of civil society.

5. What steps should be taken to address these barriers?

Mutual understanding: provide more resources and support within local communities to assist with the integration of refugees, asylum seekers and people from abroad to build better understanding and cohesion; better integration of Racial Equality and Good Relations strategies and initiatives to address the role of sectarianism in the history of racism in Northern Ireland.

Recognition: commitment across government to supporting access to justice – for example, providing information and personal data needed by the citizen in their interactions with government agencies (e.g. Home Office, health services), commercial organisations (e.g. banks, employers) and private individuals (e.g. landlords). We would advocate for putting advice at the heart of integration and point to the example provided by the Roma Support Hub we run in conjunction with Forward South Partnership, which provides a wraparound service to inform citizens about their rights, safely and securely refer people to other support services and develop local connections to regional policy and information sources.

We also support the promotion of shared culture through the development of inter-cultural participation and engagement – this provides an opportunity to coordinate with the Good Relations strategy.

Social atomisation: incorporating racial equality into other government policies, such as anti-poverty and community policing, and utilising robust monitoring to require responsible departments to report back to the Executive and the wider public on progress.

Focus on development of public discourse in relation to ethnic diversity and racial equality. An important starting point to achieve this goal would be to commission more research on racial inequality and its interaction with other social problems, and to commit to developing the racial equality strategy on the basis of this enhanced understanding.

6. Are you aware of the Racial Equality Strategy 2015-2025?

Yes

7. If yes, to what extent do you agree the Strategy has been successful?

The Racial Equality Strategy (RES) 2015 - 2025 was launched to promote racial equality and eliminate discrimination in Northern Ireland. Advice NI believe the Strategy has laudable principles and aims and has contributed to greater attention to racial discrimination within institutions but it has failed to deliver lasting outcomes with respect to community cohesion.

Multiple reports indicate that its implementation has been slow and inconsistent ([Independent Review of Progress on Implementation, December 2024](#); [NI Racial Equality Indicators Report 2014-2022](#); [Equality Commission for NI blog post, February 2025](#); [NI Human Rights Commission \(NIHRC\) Submission to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, June 2024](#))

Successes:

- Some progress in policy commitments and funding for minority ethnic support projects.
- Development of racial equality indicators to track progress in key areas such as service provision, hate crime reduction, and representation.
- Greater public awareness of racial issues and increased engagement with civil society.

Challenges:

- Lack of robust legislative backing, leading to weak enforcement.
- Delayed implementation of key actions, including the establishment of a Racial Equality Champion.
- Insufficient accountability mechanisms to ensure commitments translate into real change.
- Racial disparities persist in areas such as employment, healthcare, education, and housing.

Overall, while the strategy has raised awareness and initiated some positive steps, the lack of urgency and measurable outcomes has limited its success. In his 2024 review, The 2024 Racial Equality Indicators Report notes that in 2022, 27% of respondents reported that they were prejudiced against people from minority ethnic communities. This is a concerning figure which certainly indicates that more work needs to be done to improve good relations.

We are concerned by evidence from the Equality Commission in its report on the impact of Brexit that ethnic minorities in Northern Ireland encounter racism on a daily basis. We are also concerned that the lack of accessible immigration advice in Northern Ireland is contributing to increased hardship and vulnerability for individuals, while also reinforcing negative perceptions and exacerbating challenges related to racism and racial inequality.

Paul Noonan, Senior Policy Office for the Commission, argues that a collaborative approach is needed for lasting change:

‘The Equality Commission is committed to playing a key role in shaping the future of racial equality in Northern Ireland, but we know we cannot do it alone. We will continue to press for involvement which includes community leaders, wider stakeholders, and policymakers to create a strategy that reflects the real needs of people.’

8. Which actions do you believe to have been the most effective in the current Strategy?

Among the actions taken under the RES, Advice NI think the most effective have been those that:

- Engage directly with minority ethnic communities: Initiatives that involve grassroots organisations, such as the Minority Ethnic Development Fund, have been valuable in supporting community-led solutions.
- Address hate crime and discrimination: There have been increased efforts to monitor hate crime, though enforcement remains inconsistent. Some campaigns promoting awareness and reporting mechanisms have seen success.
- Improve representation in public life: Some efforts have been made to increase diversity in public sector appointments and encourage participation in decision-making.

However, these efforts have not been comprehensive, and gaps remain in implementation and long-term funding.

9. What do you feel could have been improved in the current Strategy?

Key areas where the strategy falls short include:

- Lack of enforcement: Many commitments are not backed by legal frameworks, leading to weak accountability.
- Delays in implementation: A recurring issue, with major initiatives often stalled due to lack of funding or political will.
- Insufficient focus on structural inequalities: The strategy does not adequately address systemic barriers faced by minority ethnic communities in employment, housing, education, and healthcare.
- Weak support for migrants and asylum seekers: While the strategy acknowledges their challenges, there are few targeted actions to improve their integration and access to services.

Zazai review particularly emphasised the lack of monitoring in the existing strategy. This means that responses to racial inequalities are reactive rather than proactive. A renewed strategy needs to:

- establish mechanisms for monitoring and for the development of evidence-based policy across government
- have legally binding commitments, better funding allocation, and a clearer timeline for implementation
- have clearer accountability systems to ensure that civil servants act in line with the strategy when developing policy, even in the event of political deadlock or budgetary constraints.

The lack of movement is explored in the review by the following example:

‘Once this strategy had been signed off by Ministers, there was then no subsequent action or delivery plan and associated budget developed. Furthermore, for five of the eight years of the current strategy, there has been no functioning Government and no

Assembly convening to hold the Government accountable for the implementation of the strategy. However, I understand in terms of staff resources TEO did allocate around 30-40 staff to work on race, asylum seekers and refugees.

'The absence of such an action and delivery plan undoubtedly made things more difficult for the Racial Equality Subgroup to monitor actions or focus efforts and resources on areas that were not progressing.'

10. As stated in our current Racial Equality Strategy, “The action needed to stamp out racism is not just for Government - it is for everyone in our society. We hope, therefore, that all sections of society can sign up to the vision and aims set out in this strategy and work to achieve them”. How do we ensure buy in from all communities in achieving racial equality moving forward?

Community buy-in is crucial for the success of any racial equality strategy. A key issue with the RES is that it has often been perceived as a government-led initiative rather than a collaborative effort.

Genuine participation in and promotion of the strategy by political leaders – Advice NI expressed concern that the latest [draft Programme for Government](#) included just 2 sentences in the 87-page document stating that “these are matters reserved to the UK Government” and “we are committed to bringing forward actions to address the issues of integration and racism”.

Ways to improve buy-in:

- Engage minority ethnic groups, grassroots organisations, and individuals with lived experience in shaping policies.
- Increase transparency and accountability - clearly define how communities can hold the government accountable for delivery; have clear and achievable goals that allow citizens and civil society organisations to participate.
- Enhance local-level engagement - provide funding and support for local councils and community organisations to lead initiatives tailored to specific areas.
- Ensure principles are consistent with wider values to ensure that the Racial Equality Strategy is not undermined by competing agendas.

Advice NI believes a more participatory and inclusive approach will ensure that the next strategy reflects the needs and aspirations of all communities.

In his review, Dr Zazai noted that there was a mid-term stock take of the progress on this strategy undertaken by TEO in October 2021. As a result of this stock take, three priorities were identified:

- Deliver training and development across government.
- Public sector monitoring to provide the data and enable analysis of inequalities.
- Development of the legislative framework.

The Executive Office cannot expect the public to immediately accept and ‘buy in’ to social cohesion, and elimination of racial inequality (just 2 of the 7 shared aims of the RES), while the government itself appears to be slow to implement policy and legislative development

from the top down. The NI government needs to lead by example, and be more proactive in order for the Strategy to achieve greater success.

11. The current strategy's vision is "A society which is strengthened by its ethnic diversity, where we can live together free from racism, racial inequality and unlawful racial discrimination, where we share a common sense of belonging and where human rights and equality are enjoyed by all." To what extent do you agree with this vision?

Is the vision too general and utopian in formulation? It is broad and aspirational, aiming for a society free from racial discrimination where everyone has equal opportunities. However, it lacks specific, measurable targets.

Recommended amendments:

- Set clear, time-bound goals: Instead of vague commitments, outline specific milestones (e.g., reducing racial disparities in employment by X% by 2030).
- Integrate a rights-based approach: Ensure that racial equality is framed as a legal and human rights issue, not just a policy preference.
- Emphasise economic and social justice: Recognise that racial inequalities are deeply tied to economic disparities and ensure policies address issues like wage gaps and access to housing.

12. Do you have any suggestions for improvement?

Any new vision would require extensive consultation. One to consider might be:

'A Northern Ireland where diversity strengthens us, human rights and racial equality are upheld, and every person lives free from racism with equal opportunities and a shared sense of belonging'

The urgent progression of proposed Hate Crime legislation. Advice NI supports the suggestion [from Judge Marrinan](#) for an expansive, stand-alone Hate Crime Bill, however this appears not to be possible, given a reduced mandate. However, in September 2024, [Minister Long stated](#):

'I am determined that foundational new hate crime legislative provisions will be in place by the end of this mandate ... I propose to bring forward the statutory aggravation offence model for hate crime in a forthcoming Sentencing Bill which is planned to be introduced next year.

'The model will become the core method of prosecuting hate crimes in Northern Ireland, allowing all existing criminal offences to be aggravated by hostility based on membership or perceived membership of a protected group. Current protected groups / characteristics will be retained in legislation. It is also my intention to legislate to allow new protected groups to be added by regulation in the future, if evidence shows that it is required, allowing us to respond more dynamically to emerging trends.'

Arguably the only way human rights can be 'enjoyed by all', is if the legislation exists to support this vision.

13. The current groups in place involved in implementing the Strategy are the Racial Equality Subgroup, the Travellers and Roma Thematic Groups and their Strategic Planning Group, and the Racial Equality Champions. Are you aware of these groups?

Yes, and would like further information.

14. If yes, do you think they are effective?

Several groups and advisory bodies have been involved in implementing the RES, including The Executive Office's Racial Equality Subgroup. However, there have been concerns about their effectiveness. We understand they have limited decision-making power. Their role could be strengthened by giving them more influence over policy decisions and the authority to enforce change. Groups would benefit from continuous engagement and structured feedback loops with affected communities and those working with them. Finally, providing funding to sustain long-term participation from members from minority ethnic backgrounds and/or those working with them.

In a sense, these groups were somewhat hamstrung by the absence of an action and delivery plan, which Dr Zazai points out:

'undoubtedly made things more difficult for the Racial Equality Subgroup to monitor actions or focus efforts and resources on areas that were not progressing. And this absence also failed to offer the Racial Equality Champions a real focus for action in each of their departments.

There was a view repeatedly expressed to me that little impact had been made by Government Departments. There was a need for an overall action plan and then for individual departmental delivery plans with a budget, which could then be promoted by the Champions. There was a lack of clarity on the role of the Champions...and this problem was compounded by the change in personnel over the lifetime of this strategy'¹

To be effective, a more direct and focussed action plan could be developed by the Executive Office, to facilitate more effective monitoring by the groups and R.E. champions. It is important to involve such groups with the implementation of the Strategy, but they must also be given the tools to do so.

Advice NI has previously called for more to be done to support certain vulnerable groups, such as ethnic minority victims of domestic and sexual violence. As a voluntary, community sector organisation that works with and provides services to minority ethnic communities Advice NI is keen to explore the potential for representation on relevant groups.

¹ <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-12/independent-review-of-the-progress-on-the-implementation-of-the-racial.PDF>

15. We acknowledge that lived experience is crucial in informing our strategic work. How can we ensure that a wide range of lived experience is considered?

Advice NI agree that it is crucial that RES policies are designed with sufficient input from those directly affected. There are different ways to ensure that a wide range of lived experience is considered including;

- Ensuring that people with lived experience are involved in decision-making, not just consulted at the end of the process.
- Supporting minority ethnic individuals to take on leadership roles in public services and advisory bodies.
- Using participatory research methods; Engaging communities in data collection and policy evaluation to ensure that real-life experiences shape decisions.

Advice NI believes the existing Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey could be utilised to monitor attitudes on the issues raised in the strategy and investigate ways in which this type of research can be expanded – for example, research with community and voluntary organisations working in this space. We also believe there would be benefits to expanding the role of Racial Equality Champions into communities – as champions for the strategy in communities and as champions for their communities in relation to the development of the strategy and its policy implications.

16. We feel that a new strategic approach to racial equality should be developed in collaboration with key stakeholders. How do we best access those views and opinions?

Officials and subgroups need to conduct more extensive engagement within communities, and not just ethnic minority communities.

As a community and voluntary sector organisation Advice NI engage with government in a variety of ways and would encourage the Executive Office to continue this type of activity under the new strategy.

This includes both general engagement, such as the present call for views, and targeted activity, such as in-person and virtual roundtable events. There is also benefit in both large and small-scale engagement, whether in terms of the numbers of respondents/participants or the elements of the strategic plan being considered.

Government consultations often fail to reach the most marginalised groups. It is therefore important that any engagement is genuine and those with lived experience are adequately supported to engage – i.e. they have the same level of input as others and access to necessary resources to do so. Ways to improve engagement could include:

- Using multiple channels for consultation: Online surveys, community workshops, public forums and social media outreach can help gather diverse perspectives.
- Engaging trusted community organisations: Working with local groups that already have strong connections to ethnic minority communities.
- Ensuring accessibility: Providing translation services, childcare support, digital support and accessible venues to remove barriers to participation.
- Following up with tangible actions: Communities need to see that their input leads to real change, not just reports.

17. As part of the development process, we are currently examining other strategic approaches to racial equality and other societal issues (for example, Executive's Tackling Paramilitarism, Criminality and Organised Crime Programme and Ending Violence Against Women and Girls). What do you feel we could learn from these and other strategic approaches, including ways in which to measure success?

Several other strategic approaches, such as efforts to tackle paramilitarism, organised crime, and violence against women and girls, offer useful lessons:

Key takeaways:

- Clear performance indicators: Strategies with measurable success criteria (e.g., reduction in hate crimes, increase in employment rates for ethnic minorities) are more effective.
- Sustained funding: Short-term or pilot initiatives often fail to create long-lasting change. Racial equality work needs multi-year investment.
- Whole-of-government approach: Collaboration across different departments ensures that racial equality is not treated as a standalone issue but integrated into education, health, employment, and policing.
- Community-led interventions: Successful strategies often empower communities to take the lead in designing and implementing solutions.

Trauma-informed policy development and practical support for those affected by racism [such as robust Hate Crime legislation] would be practical strategic approaches towards implementing a successful Strategy.

The Public Prosecution Service of NI notes that:

'the impact [of Hate Crimes] on victims is different for each individual, but many experience similar problems. They can feel isolated, unsafe in their own homes, afraid to go out or of staying at home, withdrawn and suspicious of strangers. Their mental and physical health may suffer. These consequences can resonate within the racial or religious group in the wider community, and that community can feel victimised and under attack.'²

Digital empowerment and support can play an important role, particularly for the next generation. As part of the Delivery Plan for Ending Violence Against Women and Girls, a digital 'My Justice Journey' will be provided [in partnership with the DoJ] to improve access to information and support.³ Advice NI suggests that a similar portal be developed for those who experience Hate Crime, to provide more help and support, and truly promote racial equality.

EVAWG also plans to implement an extensive media campaign, which could also be used to tackle racism. Few people openly admit to holding racist beliefs but many psychologists claim most of us are nonetheless unintentionally racist. We hold, what are called "implicit biases".⁴ Social awareness through a media campaign could help contribute to educating the public on how to play an active role to prevent racism.

² <https://www.ppsni.gov.uk/files/ppsni/publications/PPS%20Hate%20Crime%20Policy.pdf>

³ <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/execoffice/action-plan.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-40124781>



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