ECNI draft response to:

‘A Sense of Belonging’ – the draft Racial Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland
Content

• Background
• Positive Elements of draft Strategy
• Key Concerns
• Comments on specific chapters
• Your views on ECNI draft
Background

• ECNI development of draft racial equality policy priorities (pre-consultation)
• Engagement with sector on policy position including case for legal reform
• Final policy position
• Approach OFMdFM to join Racial Equality Panel
• Respond to pre-consultation on RES
• Engagement on draft response to RES
• Common Platform
Positive elements of draft RES

ECNI welcomes:

• Ref to ECNI recommendations on legal reform;
• Recommendation that Dept action plans should draw on ECNI racial equality policy paper;
• Commitment to ethnic monitoring;
• Commitment to develop programmes of work to address challenges faced by vulnerable groups e.g. Travellers and Roma
Key concerns

• Limited assessment of racial inequalities
• No commitment to law reform
• No action plan
• No new resources
• Lack of high level commitment/accountability
• Proposal to extend strategy to non-Christian faiths?
• Inadequate equality assessment
ECNI recommendations

- Comprehensive baseline assessment;
- Focus on racial inequalities (incl. Multiple Identities);
- Action Plan with timetable and indicators;
- Mainstreaming and Racial Equality Champions;
ECNI recommendations (cont.)

• Timetabled commitment to legal reform;
• Funding programme linked to outcomes and completion of goals;
• Involvement of BME groups in action planning process;
• Dedicated Traveller & Roma and Refugee Integration Strategies.
• EQIA of RES
Chapter 1: Introduction and background

• Review Strategy every 3-4 years

• Action planning aligned with PfG and allocation of Dept budgets

• Based on full range of Human Rights standards
Chapter 2: Racism and Racial Inequalities: the scale of the challenge

• Cross cutting issues absent e.g. hate crime; gaps in legal protection; ethnic monitoring; role of the media; multiple identities

• Lack of baseline data

• No specific inequalities experienced by particular ethnic groups identified
Chapter 3: The purpose, vision and aims of Strategy

• Concern about approach to addressing inequalities experienced by followers of minority non-Christian faiths;

• Disconnect between vision and aims of Strategy;

• Need for aim concerning right to cultural identity
Chapter 4: Relationship with TBUC and DSC

- Multiple identities and multiple discrimination
- Clarity on relationship with Together Building a United Community and Delivering Social Change
- Governance arrangements for Racial Equality Panel
- Ethnic Monitoring
Chapter 6: The legislative framework

- Effective legal protection essential to achieve key aims of RES
- Necessary to comply with requirements of UN CERD

- ECNI reform proposals include:
  - increased protection against discrimination on the grounds of colour and nationality;
  - stronger protection against racial harassment incl. greater protection for employees against racial harassment by customers, clients etc;
  - increased protection against racial discrimination and harassment for agency workers;
  - introduction of protection against intersectional multiple discrimination.
Chapter 7: Immigration

• Immigration policy and laws should reflect local priorities and circumstances
• Need to develop evidence base for regional priorities
• Link between restrictive immigration policies and exploitation in the labour market
• Concerns about impact of the Immigration Act 2014
Chapter 8: Making it happen – implementing the RES

• Disconnect between accountability arrangements for T:BUC and RES
• Need for network of Racial Equality Champions
• Welcome focus on Racial Equality Panel but needs to have strong independent voice
• Absence of targets and action plans!
• Role for the Equality and Good Relations Commission?
Chapter 9: Resourcing implementation of the RES

• No new resources to implement RES!
• OHCHR: ‘the success of the National Action Plan Against Racism will depend to a considerable extent on the availability of resources...therefore, a financial strategy for the national action plan should be developed from the beginning’
• In current climate of austerity is conceivable that no funding will be available to implement RES!
• Political commitment?
Chapter 10: Monitoring and reviewing progress

• No details as to how RES nests within T:BUC
• Therefore best to keep separate indicators for RES
• ECNI will response to separate consultation on Racial Equality indicators
Annex A: Equality assessment

• Reference to positive action?
• Does not meet equality scheme commitments
• Lack of data?
• Effective screening or EQIA would be likely to highlight needs of groups who experience particular forms of disadvantage e.g.
  - Travellers & Roma
  - Refugees and Asylum Seekers
  - Multiple identity groups (incl. BME women, disabled members of BME communities, members of BME communities with different sexual orientation etc.)
Questions

• Do you agree that the issues the Commission has identified are policy priorities?

• Do you agree with the recommendations?

• Are there any issues regarding this area that should be addressed as a policy priority and if so, how?
Contact us

• **Paul Noonan** (Senior Policy Officer) – 02890 500570 or P.Noonan@equalityni.org

• **Claire McKeown** (Policy Officer) – 02890 890851 or CMcKeown@equalityni.org

• **Roisin Mallon** (Senior Policy Officer – Legal) 02890 500551 or R.Mallon@equalityni.org