

Voices for Change



Mapping the views of black and minority ethnic people on
integration and their sense of belonging in Northern Ireland

Sheila Rogers and Geraldine Scullion

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Any mistakes or omissions are the sole responsibility of the authors.

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by Sheila Rogers and Geraldine Scullion

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is a report of a mapping exercise which was conducted in April and May 2014 which obtained the views of members of Northern Ireland's BME communities on the extent of their integration into Northern Ireland society. Based on EU indicators, integration was measured by their answers to questions relating to:

- employment
- education
- social inclusion
- active citizenship
- welcoming society

The views of BME individuals were obtained by means of an online survey questionnaire, supplemented by consultation events in Craigavon, L/Derry, Belfast and Lurgan, plus a focus group with free lance and CONNECT NICEM interpreters and informal discussions with two groups of Roma individuals.

The report separately analyses the questionnaire and consultation/focus group responses from Belfast, the North West, and Mid-Ulster and Down. The findings and recommendations for each region are presented separately; and there are also overall conclusions and recommendations directed at Northern Ireland's policy makers.

Participants in the mapping exercise were also asked to identify their priorities for improving their sense of integration and belonging. The most important priorities for change include:

- Engendering positive attitudes to foreign nationals, including widespread circulation of positive messages about BME communities and the benefits migrant workers bring to Northern Ireland society;
- The provision of information for newcomers, in particular in relation to the impact of the segregated nature of Northern Ireland society, how systems work in Northern Ireland and how to access education, employment, healthcare and social care, housing and other services;
- Greater equality and inclusion;
- Improved English language proficiency and access to English language tuition;
- Improvements in the system for recognising qualifications gained abroad;
- Action to challenge poor employment practices;
- Affordable, accessible and flexible childcare;
- Improvements in accessing education, addressing the needs of BME pupils and eliminating racial bullying in schools;
- Improvements in access to interpreting services, particularly in health care;
- Action to end racism, prejudice and discrimination;
- Improved engagement between politicians and BME communities.

The mapping report summarises the current political and policy climate and refers to the European context and the Northern Ireland Executive strategies, including the draft Racial Equality Strategy 2014-2024, which have, or will potentially have, a direct impact on the lives of BME people.

It also refers to recent research on issues affecting BME communities such as on the extent of social integration in Britain, or on the link between poverty and ethnicity.

The report summarises information contained in NICEM's UN submissions, its June 2014 benchmarking report plus recent research. These set out the main issues for BME individuals across all the indicators and are mirrored by the conclusions of the mapping report.

The conclusions of this research (in common with the earlier research referred to) highlight the failure of government to meet its national and international obligations to protect, respect and fulfil the human rights of BME individuals living in Northern Ireland – a failure which impacts on their sense of integration and belonging to society here.

The report concludes with recommendations on the five indicators which are targeted at statutory and other organisations including government departments and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) to ensure that action is taken without further delay to redress the inequalities and discrimination faced by members of the BME communities and overcome the barriers which hinder them from playing their full part in Northern Ireland society.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The aim of the project was to conduct a mapping exercise to complement and build on NICEM's work by exploring how individuals and communities from a range of different nationalities view their integration into Northern Ireland society, the factors that facilitate this and the barriers that work against integration and a '*sense of belonging*'. Its findings will help to inform NICEM's lobbying and community development activities and assist it to effectively target its resources. The recommendations will support government agencies to respond more effectively to the evidenced need of the BME community in the future

This mapping report reflects the diversity of black and minority ethnic (BME)¹ communities and the increasing range of people of different nationalities and ethnicities living in Northern Ireland where the proportion of the usually resident population belonging to BME groups has more than doubled from 0.8% in 2001 to 1.8% (32,400) in 2011.² The results of the mapping exercise with Irish Travellers are reported in a separate publication *Traveller Voices for Change*.

The 2011 census also shows that the proportion of the usually resident population born outside Northern Ireland rose significantly from 9% in 2001 to 11% in 2011. This change was largely as a result of inward migration by people born in the 12 countries which have joined the European Union (EU) since 2004. These EU accession countries accounted for 2 per cent (35,700) of people usually resident in Northern Ireland on Census Day 2011.

The different languages spoken by Northern Ireland residents indicates the range of countries from which many recent migrants have come. English was not the main language for 3% of residents aged 3 years and over. The most prevalent main language other than English was Polish (17,700 people); the other main languages spoken included: Lithuanian (6,300 people); Portuguese (2,300), Slovak (2,300), Chinese (2,200), Tagalog/Filipino (1,900), Latvian (1,300), Russian (1,200), Malayalam (1,200) and Hungarian (1,000).

This mapping exercise begins to develop a picture of the experiences of some of the 32,400³ BME people and 35,700 people from EU accession countries living in Northern Ireland and the recommendations that follow aim to identify ways in which communities, government, agencies and others can begin to find solutions to the many barriers and difficulties that participants have identified. However, for each of the areas discussed in the report – employment, education, social inclusion, active citizenship and a welcoming society – there is a need to learn more. Only through detailed and focused work that explores particular issues in depth can there be a better understanding of the complexity of the barriers people face and the longer term and sustainable solutions that are needed.

1. In this document 'BME' refers to Black and Minority Ethnic communities and individuals. The term has an inclusive meaning to unite all minority communities. It refers to settled ethnic minorities (including Irish Travellers, Roma and Gypsies), settled religious minorities, migrants (EU and non-EU), asylum seekers, refugees and people of other immigration status. The results of the mapping exercise with Irish Travellers are reported separately in *Traveller Voices for Change*.

2. See summary of Census 2011 statistics: http://www.nisra.gov.uk/Census/key_stats_bulletin_2011.pdf

3. 2011 Census

2.0 METHODOLOGY

The indicators to measure integration and a sense of belonging used in this mapping exercise are those agreed by EU ministers responsible for integration and approved by the EU's Justice and Home Affairs Council in 2010 (the Zaragoza Declaration); they are discussed in more detail below.

The researchers developed a questionnaire around these indicators to explore in more detail BME respondents' own experience of their integration and sense of belonging to Northern Ireland society. The draft questionnaire was piloted by NICEM staff and volunteers and amended accordingly; a copy of the questionnaire questions is at Appendix 1. The questionnaire, which was available in hard copy and on SurveyMonkey in English, Polish, Mandarin and Lithuanian, was widely advertised and distributed by NICEM staff and volunteers via NICEM's membership, other individual and community group contacts plus via a range of retail and other outlets used by BME individuals.

The information gathered in the questionnaire was supplemented by a number of engagement events; these included focus groups in Craigavon, L/Derry and Belfast, one in Lurgan conducted in Polish for members of that community, a meeting with NICEM CONNECT and free lance interpreters, and other less formal activities to suit the needs of participants such as a conversation with interpretation with Hungarian Roma families and a Romanian Roma women's group.

A consideration of these and other policy or strategy documents and research made up the desk research component of the mapping project.

Three regional reports with recommendations form part of this composite mapping report. The appendices set out the questionnaire questions, the integration indicators, and the equality profile of questionnaire respondents by age, employment status, country of birth and gender.⁴

4. For more detailed information on the survey responses and the respondents, contact NICEM www.nicem.org.uk.

3.0 THE POLITICAL AND POLICY CONTEXT

In order to inform the content and structure of the mapping exercise's questionnaire and consultation events, a review was undertaken of current thinking at EU level around integration indicators. This was supplemented by consideration of the key Northern Ireland policy and strategy documents relevant to the subject, recent findings on integration in Great Britain and an overview of NICEM's policy and research work.

3.1 The European context

3.1.1 European Integration Indicators⁵

In 2011 Eurostat undertook a pilot study which arose from the Zaragoza Declaration by EU Ministers responsible for integration in April 2010. The aim was, in part, to examine proposals for common integration indicators with a view to assessing the quality and availability of data across member states in support of monitoring *'the situation of immigrants and the outcome of integration policies'*.

The pilot study identified the key policy areas against which integration indicators could be identified as:

- employment
- education
- social inclusion
- active citizenship

The Zaragoza Declaration had also highlighted the following integration indicators that most member states agreed on:

- employees who are overqualified for the jobs they are doing
- self-employment
- language skills
- experiences of discrimination
- trust in public institutions
- voter turnout by those who are entitled to vote
- a sense of belonging

3.1.2. Using EU indicators of Immigrant Integration⁶ (EUI report)

The EUI report builds on the Eurostat pilot and Zaragoza Declaration and identifies eight key areas that *'matter'* when it comes to integration.

- Time of residence – the longer someone is in a country the better the outcomes which, the report notes, *'also improve generally with age'*;
- Gender – women and mothers are the most vulnerable groups for all indicators, particularly those from outside the EU;
- Country of origin – those who come from non-EU or less developed countries experience greater challenges in terms of employment, education, housing, poverty and issues around qualifications;
- Quality – the report found that *'integration is more than having a job, housing and basic education'* and highlights the less secure nature of work undertaken by many immigrants, the poor quality of housing many live in and the fact that international qualifications may not be recognised;

5. Based on Eurostat Indicators of Immigrant Integration; a pilot study, 2011

6. European Services Network and Migration Policy Group *Using EU Indicators of Immigrant Integration: a final report for the Directorate-General for Home Affairs*, Brussels, 2013

- Discrimination – integration is hampered when individuals are discriminated against in employment or education;
- Context – this finding highlights the differences across the EU in terms of access to and the sufficiency of welfare systems that can protect people from poverty. If the general population is doing well then *'immigrants tend to have better labour market outcomes, perform better in schools and participate more...'*;
- Policy – this finding acknowledges the need for a better understanding of the impact of policies, for example on welfare and integration.

The EUI report goes on to examine the Zaragoza integration policy areas and makes a number of observations.

In employment, integration would be enhanced by better processes for recognising international qualifications and equivalencies as well as targeted action to help increase the representation of immigrants in public sector jobs. There is also a need to address discrimination in the labour market through training and the use of anti-discrimination legislation.

Early years education is important and can have a long-term positive impact as can other educational support for young people, language training for everyone, access to life-long learning for adults, assistance to improve qualifications, recognising existing qualifications and addressing discrimination in schools through training for teachers. There is a recognition that targeted action may be needed to address under-achievement in particular communities. Since *'education outcomes still largely depend on the parents' social background'*, initiatives such as *'decreasing socio-economic segregation in schools'* and improving quality are needed.

In terms of social integration, the EUI report points out that *'social inclusion indicators are rarely part of the debate on migrant integration'* yet these indicators are fundamental to how individuals and communities live – covering issues such as health, housing, income, poverty etc. In particular, there is mention of housing policy and its effect on integration, as well as the poverty of immigrant women in large households and the need to review how gender equality legislation is being implemented.

The EUI report discusses active citizenship which includes areas such as voting, volunteering, memberships, running for political office and citizenship, the latter described as *'a societal outcome indicator, a policy indicator and a measure of openness of receiving societies...'* It concludes that those who become naturalised will have better integration outcomes and proposes initiatives such as help with naturalisation fees, other administrative improvements and allowing dual citizenship.

The Zaragoza indicators are confirmed as still relevant and additional indicators are proposed. The EUI report talks about adding a *'closing the gap scenario'* as a means of measuring immigrant outcomes against those of the total population, for example what steps should be taken to close the gap between immigrant academic achievement or employment rates. This is essentially a statistical exercise of less relevance to this project.

Finally, the EUI report proposed a new set of indicators on a *'welcoming society'* together with further indicators for the four Zaragoza policy areas. These are found in Appendix 2.

3.2 The Northern Ireland context

3.2.1 Racial Equality Strategy 2014-2024⁷ (RES)

The RES is described as a framework for action by government departments and agencies to tackle racial inequalities and open up opportunity for all, eradicate racism and hate crime, and (along with *Together: Building a United Community*) promote good race relations and social cohesion for Irish Travellers, minority ethnic people whose families have been here a number of generations or who have recently arrived, migrant workers and asylum seekers.

The draft RES has six/or seven⁸ shared aims all of which, if achieved, would improve the lives of Northern Ireland's BME communities. In particular it refers to the need to:

- increase participation, representation and a sense of belonging and '*strengthen social relations, interactions and ties*'
- take positive action in order to bring about change, placing a strong emphasis on ethnic monitoring which is seen as the key to bringing about racial equality

The draft RES acknowledges that an individual's immigration status can be a significant barrier to their integration into Northern Ireland society or their sense of belonging and it talks of the need to work to achieve an approach to immigration policy that recognises the particular circumstances of Northern Ireland and the desire to create a society that reflects a commitment to cohesion and integration. It also notes that there is a '*strong case*' to be made for a separate Refugee Integration Strategy.

Finally, the draft RES talks about the need for a separate set of racial equality and good relations indicators that will help in monitoring the outcomes it delivers. The collection of disaggregated data in accordance with EU standards to measure the impact of the RES will be critical in ensuring that it is effective in making an impact in addressing these multiple disadvantages.

The draft RES contains no specific strategic objectives to deliver on the Executive's national and international obligations to protect and fulfil the human rights of BME individuals. It lacks clear actions to address the racial inequalities experienced by BME people in relation to inequality or disadvantage or to address the specific recommendations of the UN treaty monitoring bodies mentioned in Section 4. It is hoped that these deficiencies will be remedied in the final strategy.

3.2.2 Other Northern Ireland Executive strategies

Relevant strategies of the Northern Ireland Executive include *Together: Building a United Community* (TBUC) (which aims to improve community relations and build a united and shared society) and *Delivering Social Change* (DSC) (the Executive's framework for tackling poverty and social exclusion), both of which are seen as complementary to the RES. The draft RES acknowledges that the policies and mechanisms for implementing TBUC apply equally to tackling racism and promoting good race relations. There is no detail in the draft RES on how the strategies will interact in practice.

7. 'A Sense of Belonging: Delivering social change through a Racial Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland 2014 -2024' OFMDFM. The draft RES was published for consultation on June 20, 2014; the consultation closed on October 10, 2014.

8. Elimination of racial equality; combating racism and hate crime; equality of service provision; participation; social cohesion; capacity building; and a possible 7th – the right to maintain one's cultural identity.

It will be important to ensure that the RES, TBUC and DSC as well as other strategies, such as those on poverty, particularly child poverty⁹, childcare¹⁰, the *Gender Equality Strategy 2006-2016*¹¹ and *A Strategy to improve the lives of people with disabilities 2012 – 2015* take cognizance of the particular experiences and needs of BME communities. As noted, the strategies detail no specific actions to address these particular needs and experiences. These strategies and the emerging strategies on Sexual Orientation¹², Active Ageing, and Delivering Social Change for Children and Young People need to be implemented in an integrated rather than parallel fashion so that the opportunities they present to address multiple discrimination, in particular, and to bring about effective cross-departmental, joined-up working, are realised.

3.2.3 The Economic and Social Mobility of Ethnic Minority Communities in Northern Ireland¹³ (the JRF report)

The JRF report, based on the 2011 Census and fieldwork, seeks to increase understanding of the links between poverty and ethnicity in Northern Ireland. Noting that routes out of poverty are *'based on labour market participation and progression'* the report found that Census data highlighted different outcomes for BME groups with recent Eastern European arrivals having the highest rate of economic activity, although mainly in low paid sectors, and with Indian and Filipino individuals being employed in higher paying professions. The barriers faced by individuals included a lack of networks, being unfamiliar with the types of recruitment processes used in Northern Ireland and employment agencies placing workers in lower paid jobs or with poorer hours of work. The JRF report found that BME communities were at a *'particular risk of in-work poverty'*.

Employers felt that workers did not put themselves forward for opportunities due to a lack of confidence and poor proficiency in English. The JRF report recommends that employers should provide language training and internal mentors as well as ensure that workers are aware of their employment rights.

Government policy and action were seen as the *'largest influencer on rates of poverty'* and the new Race Equality Strategy was welcomed as an underpinning framework to address challenges. Recommendations for government include a greater focus on self-employment opportunities, ensuring that the Careers Service offers suitable role models for BME communities and equipping those who advise BME people on employment issues with the skills and knowledge to do so in line with best practice. The provision of flexible childcare and addressing the issue of qualifications obtained outside Northern Ireland through the promotion to employers of the Qualifications Equivalency Service were also seen as important; and the report noted the need for future longitudinal research, particularly in light of on-going welfare reform.

9. *Improving Children's Life Chances, The Child Poverty Strategy 2011* acknowledges 'Data from GB indicates that ethnic minorities are at high risk of poverty. There is no comparable NI data. Irish Traveller households have high levels of disadvantage in for example employment, economic activity, and accommodation'. It details no specific action to address these risks or disadvantages.

10. *Bright Start* – refers to *'the diversity of childcare needs'* indicating that the Strategy will incorporate different types of provision catering for particular constituencies of need – such as those of ethnic minority families and the Traveller community. However, to date there is no specific mention of how evidenced differential needs of BME families and the Traveller community will be addressed.

11. The Gender Equality Strategy refers to the need to consider how policies etc. impact on women's experience of inequality including that experienced by minority ethnic women.

12. The consultations on the Development of a Sexual Orientation strategy, the Active Aging Strategy 2014-2020, Delivering Social Change for Children and Young people all refer to the need to recognise multiple identities including ethnic origin.

13. Joseph Rowntree Trust, May 2014 <http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/mobility-of-ethnic-minority-communities-in-northern-ireland>

3.3 The Great Britain context

3.3.1 How Integrated is Modern Britain¹⁴ (the Modern Britain report)

This report, the first of three by the Social Integration Commission, was published in Spring 2014 and sought to gain an understanding of social integration in Britain with a particular focus on social grade, ethnicity and age. Social integration is defined as *'the extent to which people in Britain interact with others who are different to themselves ...'* Despite referring to the conduct of a *'nationwide survey'* the report covers England, Scotland and Wales only. It noted that there is no clear understanding of current levels of social integration yet Britain is becoming increasingly diverse by social grade, ethnicity and age. It also noted that structural and institutional segregation appears to be on the increase.

Overall the research found there were fewer social interactions between people from different social grades, ethnicities and ages concluding that *'the average Briton is 14 per cent less integrated by social grade, 48 per cent less integrated by ethnicity and 42 per cent less integrated by age than would be expected if there was no social segregation.'*

The Modern Britain report reached five key conclusions:

- Highly diverse areas are not necessarily integrated;
- Integration issues apply to everyone, not just to ethnic minorities;
- Levels of integration are structured around institutions that we use and value;
- Young people are segregated by ethnicity;
- There is a disconnect between employers and those looking for work or seeking to progress in their careers.

Despite including Scotland and Wales, whose findings might have had some resonance for Northern Ireland, the report does not discuss the particular situation in these nations opting instead to focus on integration within London versus the *'rest of Britain'*.

14. Social Integration Commission, 2014 <http://socialintegrationcommission.org.uk/index.php>

4.0 NICEM'S EVIDENCE BASE

In recent years NICEM has been involved in a range of initiatives, in partnership with BME communities, which have resulted in the development of an evidence base on the incidence of racial discrimination as well as issues of concern to individuals and communities.

4.1 The 2nd Annual Human Rights and Racial Equality Benchmarking Report 2013/14¹⁵ (the benchmarking report)

This major report was published in June 2014. It supports and underpins NICEM's work to monitor and promote compliance with binding international and domestic human rights and racial equality standards emanating from the United Nations, European Union, Council of Europe and UK national laws. The report draws on UN Concluding Observations and the government's Departmental Audits of Inequality and Action Plans in order to benchmark the advancement of racial equality and highlight inaction in Northern Ireland.

Much of the evidence contained in the benchmarking report is described in the other NICEM reports discussed below; therefore this section highlights only key observations and recommendations for the way forward.

The benchmarking report notes the importance of mainstreaming human rights and racial equality into law, policy and practice as a priority *'given the intensity of racial discrimination, ... inequalities and entrenched community divisions within Northern Ireland as a post conflict society'*. It recognises the diversity of Northern Ireland and particular issues such as the lack of targeted measures to address, for example, older people's healthcare, female genital mutilation and the intersectional discrimination faced by BME women. It cites research on incidents of adult and child trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation, domestic servitude and forced labour and expresses grave concern about the prevalence of racist attacks, violence and intimidation. That concern extends to the apparent *'synergy that appears to exist between Loyalism and racism'*, something that has also been acknowledged by the Police Service for Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee. Such attitudes may be fuelled by what is described as *'misplaced resentment towards migrants'* and *'the prevalence of anti-immigration rhetoric in the mainstream media...'* together with increasing support for far right political parties.

In the area of employment concern is expressed about forced labour, poor working conditions and discrimination in the workplace with migrant workers often low paid and placed in low skilled and undesirable jobs. Indeed, the ECNI reported that 75% of its enquiries about harassment at work over the past five years related to racial harassment. Particular mention is made of the position of Polish nationals and Filipino agency workers and the discrimination and harassment they face.

Not knowing one's employment rights, little proficiency in English and a lack of access to justice are some of the reasons why very poor working conditions and exploitation are a feature of life for many migrant workers. This is compounded by some agency and temporary workers being unable to claim for unfair dismissal and, generally, misconceptions about the actual contribution migrant workers make to Northern Ireland's economy and labour market.

15. <http://nicem.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Final-Benchmarking-Full-Report-NICEM-web.pdf>

NICEM's benchmarking report expresses concern about recent and on-going welfare reforms and notions about '*benefit tourism*' which '*seek to stigmatise European Union migrants and promote xenophobia*'. The Universal Credit system is identified as likely to introduce a range of barriers for BME people in Northern Ireland.

A number of issues arise in relation to housing. These include a '*heightened risk of destitution and homelessness on the basis of irregular immigration status*'; racial profiling by landlords resulting from the requirements of the Immigration Act 2014; racist hate crime; and discrimination and exploitation by employers who supply accommodation to workers. There is a need for the Northern Ireland Housing Executive's Homelessness Strategy to take on board the particular issues faced by vulnerable migrants and for change within the private rental sector where poor conditions and low standards can have an adverse effect on tenants' health and there is evidence that landlords are not renting to migrants for fear of falling foul of the Immigration Act requirements.

The benchmarking report discusses the audit of inequalities on health and the many issues that affect BME communities. For some, access to primary care is dependent on being '*ordinarily resident*' in Northern Ireland which can lead to those of '*uncertain status*' being denied primary care. Other issues range from the prevalence of certain health conditions, insufficient cultural or religious sensitivity, documented racism and problems accessing interpreting and translation services that can result in everything from missed appointments to worries about misdiagnosis, consent to treatment or instructions about medication. Specific barriers arise in relation to accessing mental health services and dementia care.

In relation to education, the benchmarking report talks about '*prejudice and intolerance across schools in Northern Ireland*' with racist bullying a particular and significant problem. It calls for central guidance on addressing this issue in order to bring about consistency and help ensure that schools respond in an appropriate manner together with adequate responses to meet the other needs of BME children such as dietary requirements and the right to opt out of religious education. A reliance on free school meals take-up as an indicator of social need is seen as inappropriate for many and '*may carry exclusionary implications for observers of Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Baha'ism, Rastafarianism and Sikhism*'. Steps to monitor the ethnic makeup of school governors and encourage more participation from BME parents would be welcomed.

Finally, the situation of Roma in Northern Ireland is highlighted – a community that faces significant disadvantage in relation to health, negative stereotyping, a lack of culturally appropriate housing and translation services – all of which are contributing to the on-going isolation and exclusion of the community.

4.2 Submission to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)¹⁶ (the CERD submission)

NICEM's CERD submission, published in July 2011 in response to the 18th and 19th Periodic Reports on Great Britain and Northern Ireland, was endorsed by 26 BME groups in Northern Ireland. It sets out a number of recommendations and includes, in the evidence appendix, the experiences of a range of individuals who have experienced discrimination or disadvantage. Recommendations that are relevant to integration are set out in the table below.

INTEGRATION POLICY AREA	NICEM CERD RECOMMENDATIONS
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Measures to prevent the exploitation of agency workers and ensure employers are jointly liable with agencies outside the UK for breaches of rights o Measures to improve the accessibility of justice for vulnerable migrant workers
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The introduction of a religious education curriculum more representative of the beliefs in Northern Ireland o Measures to tackle racial and religious bullying and improve the educational attainment of BME pupils o Measures to support and promote the language and cultural identity of ethnic minorities
Social inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The removal of discriminatory practices towards migrants in accessing services such as health and social welfare o Measures to ensure that ethnic minorities who are entitled receive health care services in line with international human rights legislation o Measures to alleviate poverty and prevent exploitation of migrant communities o A crisis fund for migrants who find themselves destitute o Resources to address the social disadvantage, social exclusion and low life expectancy of Irish Travellers, Roma and Gypsies o Measures to increase the capacity of these vulnerable communities o Measures to tackle social deprivation in areas with a high frequency of racist attacks o A strategy to tackle violence against BME women including victims of trafficking
Welcoming society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Measures to improve the prosecution rates for racist hate crime and restore confidence in the police o An independent regulatory regime to tackle media prejudice and measures in place to tackle cyber hate crime o Measures to monitor and prevent the rise of xenophobic right wing nationalism o Provisions in place to govern the conduct of elected representatives whose conduct may amount to incitement o A review of current immigration detention policy and arrangements for detainees o An integrated policy approach to tackle multiple, gender and race discrimination

16. <http://nicem.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Submission-to-CERD-2011.pdf>

4.3 Submission to United Nations Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in response to the UK's Seventh Periodic Report¹⁷ (the CEDAW submission)

The preparation of this submission to the UN CEDAW Committee in June 2013 was informed by a survey of BME women in Northern Ireland.¹⁸ It noted that in the 2011 Census 25,703 women declared a national identity different from British, Irish, Northern Irish, Scottish or Welsh in addition to those from BME backgrounds who do identify as British or Irish. The CEDAW submission points to the need for more effective data collection in relation to BME communities generally across all government departments but particularly to address multiple discrimination and to support the development of law and policy to advance the rights of BME women in Northern Ireland. Research is also needed on the impact the economic recession and austerity measures are having on women.

Government's failure to introduce a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland was seen as a missed opportunity to advance women's rights, as was the lack of movement on reviewing and enhancing equality legislation and the need to specifically link the race and gender equality strategies, implementing actions in relation to the latter and incorporating protection for vulnerable groups with multiple identities.

In the area of violence against BME women and girls the CEDAW submission highlights NICEM's ground-breaking research¹⁹, undertaken in 2013, which drew attention to the barriers victims face in accessing criminal justice and benefits systems due to non-citizen status or unfamiliarity with the English language. It recommended that a strategy should be developed targeted at addressing violence against BME women and girls and underpinned by further research and steps taken by the Director of the Public Prosecution Service to ensure that ethnicity data was collected for perpetrators and victims of domestic and sexual violence related offences. It also proposed that *'applying a human rights perspective to domestic violence would help to create momentum for breaking the silence around this violence in Northern Ireland... a life free of intimate partner violence should be increasingly accepted as an entitlement rather than merely a humanitarian concern, but the reluctance to come forward shows that there is some way to go yet before this entitlement is internalised by BME women themselves.'*

Women, as the most likely victims of human trafficking crimes, lack access to rehabilitation and respite care and immigration advice. Unlike the rest of the UK, Northern Ireland does not have prosecution guidelines in relation to trafficking and there is a need for consolidated legislation to deal adequately with the complex nature of the crime as well as the full implementation of the Department of Justice's action plan on human trafficking with appropriate monitoring mechanisms in place. The CEDAW submission also recommends that Women's Aid should be designated as a first responder in the National Referral Mechanism for reporting trafficking.

In terms of public participation, Northern Ireland is *'at the bottom of the leader board'* when it comes to the number of women in politics, with only one BME woman (at the time of writing) an elected representative. Despite 61.7% of women being aware that they had the right to vote, fully 72.3% of them said they did not vote in the last election and only 2.6% of NICEM's survey respondents were members of a political party. Women are under-represented among public appointees and on governing bodies, with BME women particularly invisible. Isolation and the challenge of being alone in a new country without family are seen as key barriers to participation in public and community life. NICEM's CEDAW submission urges the NI Executive

17. <http://nicem.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/CEDAW-Summary-of-Submission-1.pdf>

18. NICEM *The experience of ethnic minority women in Northern Ireland*; Sarah Isal, June 2013

19. McWilliams and Yarnell *The protection and rights of black and minority ethnic women experiencing domestic violence in Northern Ireland*, June 2013

to ensure that dedicated resources are available to build the capacity of the BME women's sector to empower women to tackle issues within their own communities, and to prioritise the participation of BME women in public life.

In the spheres of education and employment NICEM's survey found that 82% of BME women in Northern Ireland hold qualifications gained abroad, more than half of these at degree level and 20% at post-graduate or PhD level. However, over half of respondents said that their jobs did not match their qualifications. Two-thirds of women said their English was excellent, very good or good but English classes for those who wanted them were expensive with Northern Ireland authorities failing to provide free tuition. For BME girls the segregated nature of the education system presents challenges for integration. There is a need to address poorer educational outcomes and to engage and facilitate the participation of marginalised BME children, particularly girls. Importantly, the Department of Education needs to ensure there is a targeted policy response to racist bullying and a zero tolerance approach in schools.

Only 42% of BME women in NICEM's survey were in employment with difficulties in finding work, the inability to match a job with qualifications and access to childcare cited as key barriers. The CEDAW submission highlights the importance of CEDAW's recommendation on the responsibilities of the country of destination to ensure non-discrimination and equal rights for women migrant workers. The UK's '*right to reside*' test which applies mainly to social security has a particular impact on migrant women who may need help at the outset to support their families while they look for or settle into a new job. BME women need to be supported through positive measures to actively participate at all levels of the labour market.

As discussed in Section 4.5, access to affordable childcare is a major issue for BME women with many workers having to work shift patterns outside normal office hours. Some, depending on their immigration status, are ineligible for state support to help with childcare costs and, overall, the inaccessibility of childcare impacts upon a BME woman's ability to participate in the labour market and access further education and training. A commitment and action to ensure that access to affordable childcare will be available to women irrespective of their immigration status are required.

Most people report that they have very good, good or satisfactory access to GP and hospital services although BME women's access to maternity services has been identified as a key inequality in the Department of Health, Social Security and Public Safety Equality Action Plan. However, the so-called overseas visitors' access to healthcare proposals, which would require payment for health services, could have what NICEM says is a '*devastating impact*' on BME communities and, in NICEM's opinion, some restrictions may be contrary to the European Convention on Human Rights. Other barriers in the healthcare field include a lack of access to interpreting services and the need for culturally appropriate services such as access to women doctors for Muslim women. Mental ill health issues have also been highlighted and there can be significant problems arising from the need to use an interpreter in such situations or where a woman who is the victim of domestic violence is accompanied by the alleged perpetrator or a member of his family. Thought needs to be given to how bespoke services can be provided for women in such situations.

Nearly all of the respondents to NICEM's survey receive some type of social benefit – the majority child benefit and one in five housing support. Concerns have been expressed about how migrant claimants are treated by benefit office staff and perceptions that they are 'benefit tourists' rather than job seekers and workers. These staff should undertake equality and anti-discrimination training to ensure that people are given access to the benefits to which they are entitled.

For some women their status is linked to that of their partner which makes them reliant on him to access benefits. When a relationship breaks down this can have severe consequences for women and children at a time when they most need help and support. There is concern that on-going welfare reforms will have a disproportionate impact on women generally and migrant women in particular.

Particularly vulnerable are women asylum seekers who may be subjected to multiple forms of discrimination – in education, health, employment and social participation. NICEM has recommended that the UK government urgently review its asylum and immigration policy to ensure that it is compliant with international human rights obligations.

4.4 The BME Parliament

In 2012-2013 NICEM organised four sessions for members of the BME community to put questions directly to their MLAs on issues that matter to them. Following a widely distributed open invitation to members of the BME community, 'Questions that Matter' were addressed to panels of cross-party MLAs in Stormont, Craigavon, L/Derry and Ballymena. This exercise formed the background to preparation for the BME Parliament held on April 30, 2014. Preparation also included a study visit to Stormont for all participants who expressed an interest in questioning their representatives on issues of concern. The study visit was held in January 2014 and the regional, participant-led thematic workshops in February and March in L/Derry, Craigavon and Belfast identified key issues and drafted parliamentary questions. The Parliament provided an opportunity to highlight the importance of ensuring that the voices of BME people are heard and that politicians listen and respond to their concerns on issues that impact on their lives.

The barriers to access to employment and learning for BME people were the focus of the questions for the Minister for Employment and Learning, Stephen Farry. These include English language; overrepresentation in atypical and insecure work; and racial discrimination in the workplace, particularly for women who are further marginalised when it comes to finding adequate childcare provision. Specific issues for the Minister included:

- Support for speakers of other languages to learn or improve their proficiency in the English language;
- Full recognition of foreign qualifications;²⁰
- The extent of discrimination in employment and the effectiveness of current legislation, inspection and enforcement regimes;
- The need to address barriers to employment, improve ethnic monitoring of employees and applicants and encourage cultural diversity in the workforce through specific integration measures in the workplace, including the support of lawful positive action;
- Uptake of work placement schemes, such as Steps to Work and the Graduate Acceleration Programme, by BME individuals and the extension of such opportunities to asylum seekers;
- Addressing employees' childcare needs, particularly for agency workers and employees on zero-hours contracts.

The importance of tackling rising hate crime through, among other approaches, outreach, education, prevention and effective prosecution was stressed in the question and answer session with Minister of Justice, David Ford. The issues for BME people which gave rise to questions for the Minister of Justice included the following:

20. The UK National Academic Recognition Information Centre provides information and advice to employees and employers; not all employers or migrant workers know about it; there is a cost for English language certification. NICEM reports that NARIC does not translate overseas qualifications at a directly equivalent level, particularly technical and professional qualifications; this can create a negative perception among employers which is difficult to challenge. DEL and the European Employment Service supply a qualification equivalency indicating how European migrants' qualifications compare with those in the UK.

- Meeting the recruitment target for BME police officers through a process which is open and accountable to the BME community;
- Tackling institutional racism in the criminal justice system;
- Ensuring open and transparent action to address racism;
- Regular training for all Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) front line staff on [dealing with] race hate crimes;
- Addressing the recent upsurge in violence targeted at BME individuals;
- Ensuring that the victims of hate crimes can report offences without fear of repercussions.

4.5 Believe in Childcare?²¹ (BiC)

This research conducted in partnership by NICEM and Barnardo's NI looked at the childcare needs of BME families in the Southern Health and Social Care Trust area. Participants in the research came from 25 countries and between them had 610 children. A range of formal and informal childcare arrangements are used by families and the findings highlighted the difficulties they face when no informal network for childcare is available to them or they work atypical hours or on zero-hours contract agreements that do not align with the traditional operating hours of providers.

Other findings included the sense of isolation felt and the lack of information available to those who have limited English and little awareness of the financial and broader range of social support that may be available.

A strategic framework for childcare in Northern Ireland – '*Bright Start*' – has been published but it does not specifically address the needs of BME families. A full Northern Ireland Childcare Strategy is awaited and the research points to the need for it to take account of the differential needs of these families including the particular challenges they face in accessing appropriate care for their children.

In addition, the BiC research recommends:

- Provision of flexible and affordable childcare for parents who work atypical hours or zero-hours contracts;
- Accessible awareness raising and public information campaigns on issues such as accessing information and financial support and the right to request flexible working hours;
- Opening up opportunities for members of BME communities to become registered child-minders;
- Cultural competency training for professionals coming into contact with BME families;
- An emphasis on greater collaboration between community/voluntary, statutory agencies and employers in providing information, training and English classes to employees from BME backgrounds.

21. Barnardo's NI and NICEM *Believe in Childcare: an investigation into the childcare needs of ethnic minority communities in Northern Ireland*, March 2014

4.6 Promoting Racial Equality in Northern Ireland's Post-Primary Schools²² (the post-primary report)

This research produced a set of recommendations covering a broad range of issues in the post-primary education setting. These included the:

- Need for ethnic monitoring, targets and research in relation to attainment levels for BME pupils;
- An inquiry into access to grammar schools;
- A re-examination of admissions criteria to over-subscribed schools;
- Exploring the potential for accreditation in languages other than English.

The post-primary report also addressed racial bullying, suggested ways to address it and proposed a new committee to review the current religious education curriculum in light of Northern Ireland's growing diversity.

4.7 The Next Stephen Lawrence: Criminal justice and racial violence in Northern Ireland²³

The aim of this paper was to '*use the experiences and perspectives of the victims/survivors of racist attacks in Northern Ireland to inform the strategies of NICEM and other organisations in addressing the needs of those affected by racial violence*'.

It examined in detail people's experience based on their testimonies about racial violence and made a number of recommendations for the criminal justice system covering issues such as the recording of incidents, a change in the definition of a '*racial incident*' to the one coined by McPherson, a review of the PSNI response to racial violence and police training. The research proposed the establishment of a racial violence monitoring group in Northern Ireland and action by public bodies such as the ECNI, the NI Human Rights Commission, the Police Ombudsman and Northern Ireland Housing Executive to develop policy and practice on addressing racial violence.

4.8 Race and Criminal Justice in Northern Ireland: toward a blueprint for the eradication of racism²⁴

The publication of this research was preceded by the Stephen Lawrence research outlined above and a subsequent scoping study for NICEM on racial violence carried out in 2010. It begins with the observation that Northern Ireland remains in a pre-McPherson situation and concludes with four broad recommendations:

- The adoption of a McPherson style blueprint to eradicate racism;
- The implementation of ethnic monitoring across the criminal justice system;
- The establishment of a criminal justice race unit within the Department of Justice to drive change;
- Other wider reforms across the criminal justice system such as the establishment of Hate Crime Scrutiny Panels.

22. Rooney and Fitzpatrick *Promoting racial equality in Northern Ireland's post-primary schools*, NICEM June 2011

23. Dr Robbie McVeigh *The Next Stephen Lawrence: Criminal justice and racial violence in Northern Ireland*, NICEM 2006

24. Dr Robbie McVeigh *Race and Criminal Justice in Northern Ireland: toward a blueprint for the eradication of racism*, NICEM January 2013

4.9 The Impact of the Economic Downturn on the Black and Minority Ethnic People in the North West of Northern Ireland²⁵ (the Economic Downturn research)

The Economic Downturn research examined how BME people in the North West had been affected by the economic downturn since 2009. It looked at economic activity, family lives and experiences of racism. The fieldwork generated 220 responses. Eighty-seven per cent of respondents said the downturn had had an effect on them with eight out of ten saying they had to reduce spending because of the recession. Looking for work was the key reason for coming to Northern Ireland and the majority of respondents were in work, with 28% having a second job. However, forty-one per cent said the recession had made them worry about losing their job and a quarter felt that their hours of work had been reduced as a result. The unemployment rate amongst respondents was 34% with most having been out of work for less than a year. The main challenge they were facing was the lack of job opportunities. The Economic Downturn research noted the importance of ensuring that families and individuals have access to services and entitlements such as affordable childcare, free school meals and the Education Maintenance Allowance. It also noted the importance of ensuring that people are aware of and access work credits in difficult economic times in order to avoid poverty, including in-work poverty.

The research showed that 38% of respondents felt that the downturn had led to an increase in racist comments and attitudes which, some noted, would lead them to consider leaving Northern Ireland. The research highlighted the importance of central and local government comprehensively challenging this increase in racist attitudes and the criminal justice system – PSNI and the Department of Justice – ensuring that racial harassment and attacks are effectively investigated and addressed.

25. NICEM *The Impact of the Economic Downturn on the Black and Minority Ethnic People in the North West of Northern Ireland*; Chris McAfee June 2014

5.0 THE VIEWS OF BLACK AND MINORITY ETHNIC PEOPLE

5.1 Introduction

This section sets out the views of the members of Northern Ireland's BME communities who participated in the project mapping their views in relation to integration and a sense of belonging.

The mapping project captured the views of 650 individuals through their responses to the online survey questionnaire which asked them questions based around the EU indicators of integration – covering employment, education, social inclusion, active citizenship and a welcoming society. (These included 151 questionnaire responses from Irish Travellers which are described and analysed in a separate report – *Traveller Voices for Change*.) The questionnaire asked respondents to also add their comments and the report includes a number of these providing an inside into and reflecting the personal experiences of respondents.

In addition to the questionnaire, the mapping project undertook a number of consultation activities which reached out to BME people and engaged them in smaller focus groups and informal meetings. These activities facilitated deeper conversations about the integration indicators and enabled participants to expand on their personal experiences of integration and their sense of belonging in Northern Ireland. Their comments and experiences give a reflective quality to the mapping report.

The consultation meetings in Craigavon, L/Derry, Belfast and Lurgan were attended by a total of 62 people representing over 15 different nationalities. There was also an informal meeting with four Hungarian Roma in a local community centre in east Belfast and a meeting with six Romanian Roma women attending a mother and toddler group in the premises of the Romanian Roma Community Association of Northern Ireland; making a total of 72 individuals who participated in the consultation events.

The questionnaire and focus group responses from Belfast, the North West, Mid-Ulster and Down are analysed separately, and these follow. For each, the key integration indicators and people's views on them are set out and considered in turn. As some respondents did not complete the questionnaire question on which region they lived in, they could not be included in the following regional findings. The profile of questionnaire respondents by age, employment status, country of birth and gender is at Appendix 2.

5.2 Belfast

The mapping exercise in Belfast was informed by 221 responses²⁶ to the survey questionnaire – including 119 responses in English, 89 in Polish, 7 in Mandarin and 6 in Lithuanian.

This information was supplemented by two focus groups and two informal discussions; the focus groups took place on May 2, 2014 with 8 interpreters, including free lance and CONNECT NICEM interpreters, and on May 7th with 7 people from a range of nationalities such as Sri Lankan, Indian, Nigerian, Jamaican and Brazilian. Two informal discussions also took place with 6 Romanian Roma women on May 1st and 4 Hungarian Roma on May 2, 2014.

26. Not all respondents answered each of the questions; therefore the percentages cited throughout the report reflect the numbers of people who gave their views on a particular question.

5.2.1 Employment

Sixty-seven per cent of questionnaire respondents had been able to secure a job that gives them and their families sufficient money to live on and cover expenses; however, only 50% of these individuals said they had a job that used their qualifications, skills and experience. One hundred and two people (49%) said they had experienced discrimination or less favourable treatment at work because they were perceived to be a 'foreigner' or a member of a BME community.

When asked what they would do if they lost their job²⁷, a large majority of people (85%) said they would find another one. Sixty-one (28%) would turn to social security or benefits and eighteen people indicated they would rely on family or friends. Fifteen (7%) would return to their home country. Two people would turn to self-employment and one would take courses to enhance qualifications; five said they would move elsewhere.

Focus group participants shared many views and experiences about the world of work. Employment was seen as a way of being involved in society whereas unemployment left people 'on the margins'.

In line with the JRF research, the failure of employers to recognise qualifications gained in other countries was seen as a barrier to obtaining suitable employment. Some workers, in particular overseas trained nurses, faced additional training costs before being able to work in their profession resulting in qualified nurses only able to find employment as care assistants. This, it was suggested, could amount to exploitation.

A number of other barriers to employment were identified; these included:

- Work experience with overseas employers being discounted;
- Voluntary work abroad not being taken into consideration as 'experience';
- Opportunities influenced by where you live in Belfast;
- The importance placed on references by Northern Ireland employers;
- The need for better English language ability;
- The reliance on job application forms – which is something that many people are unused to;
- Difficulties with employment agencies that have no capacity to translate documentation needed to support applications.

Consultees said they experienced discrimination when trying to find work. *'I felt so sad. I was told after two days that they didn't need me. It was because I was ...a foreigner. I still remember this. It was a scar for me.'*

Once in work consultees faced a range of issues. In terms of progression a 'glass ceiling' was identified which prevented BME people from moving into more senior roles in the workplace. As one person put it *'there are no ethnic minorities in management and few opportunities for promotion'*. People felt that the use of positive action could help to address this whilst programmes to encourage entrepreneurship amongst migrants could enable them to make their own opportunities. A view was expressed that the barriers faced by BME workers are there to *'frustrate migrants so they...go home.'*

A widely held view was that there were a number of 'consistently bad' employers whose practices had yet to be tackled; they and others must face sanctions if they fail to uphold employment rights, particularly in the current climate where it has become too expensive to pursue a case in the Industrial or Fair Employment Tribunals. There was concern that trade unions were not able to deal with issues facing workers. As one person said *'I would refer people*

²⁷. Some respondents selected more than one option for this question.

to trade unions but the problems were with the same employers time after time and after all these years fighting for the rights of people the support system is not there.' Training for trade union representatives was seen as an important requirement.

Respondents agreed that government has a key role to play in ensuring employment situations are fair and there is support for new migrants to make them feel welcome; employers must be informed of their responsibilities and expected to play a part in facilitating integration. As confirmed in the JRF research, lack of knowledge of employment rights is a serious issue for vulnerable workers which inhibits their full integration into the workplace. There is a need for better access to legal support and information and guidance for workers and job applicants to help them challenge bad practice and access their rights. As one consultee said *'the main problem is that when you are rejected for a job you don't know where to go ... [and] the language barrier is prohibitive'*.

Since the ECNI only takes a limited number of cases this leaves individuals without recourse to support to take discrimination cases. In the interpreter focus group session it also came across very strongly that the ECNI's strategic approach is not helpful and, because employers are aware of this, it facilitated continued exploitation. Many people stressed the real need for a migrant's centre *'because they don't turn people away'*.

5.2.2 Education

Of the 115 questionnaire respondents who answered the question²⁸, 83 (72%) were satisfied that the education their children were receiving met the standards they expected. One hundred and twenty-one (55%) questionnaire respondents reported that they participated in some form of adult education.

Children who have little or no English were experiencing difficulties at school and, although there is supposed to be money to support them, this is often part of a general fund and is not sufficiently targeted on a child's or children's needs.

Parents expressed concerns about schools using children or staff (e.g. the school cleaner) inappropriately to translate for others. English language provision and support is inconsistent with some schools organising assistance such as partnering children, providing a mentor or 'welcome' book, and others failing to do so.

Racism and bullying in school was a serious issue for focus group participants. One family described their efforts, personally and through an interpreter, to get the school to act to prevent physical assaults on their two teenage children at school and on the school bus. This has resulted in them sending the children to school at a later time and requiring them to remain behind and take a different bus. Despite many attempts to resolve it, this unfortunate situation continues.

Consultees want to see schools not just teaching about diversity and addressing stereotypes but also *'cultural competence'* which includes values and respect for difference.

In relation to religious education, some parents had difficulty finding out how schools would accommodate their child's belief system; others were not happy about forcing children to undertake religious education at all, wanting to see a class in ethics as an alternative. As one consultee put it *'Even in the choice of schools here it is a very scary idea for me... education is segregated here. I am an Atheist and my child is not baptised... the religious aspect of schooling is difficult'*.

²⁸. 'Not applicable' responses were not counted.

There was a disconnect between standards expected by some parents educated in foreign national systems and those set in local schools. For example, one parent found a teacher unhelpful in response to her request for additional work which her daughter could be helped to do at home. She felt that the school was not keen to work with 'capable children' using their time to concentrate on those who were not doing so well.

The importance of the Careers Service was also stressed. Although this is a service that many newcomers are not used to in their home countries, it was seen as a potentially helpful vehicle to support BME children and efforts need to be made to reach out to these children and their families.

Overall, there was a sense from the focus group attendees that newcomer families need more information about the Northern Ireland education system. Migrants often find themselves 'caught between two dominant cultures' and have to ask friends if they are linked into a social or community network; otherwise, they are left without any understanding of the system. 'It is even more difficult than finding out information on employment. There is a gap'. Leaflets and other resources such as information sessions at Saturday schools before the school year begins would help since many do not know where to go for advice. There is also confusion around how to choose a school given the segregated nature of education provision in Northern Ireland. One consultee's comment on the impact of the segregated education system was typical: 'I had no choice what school my daughter went to – her school uniform drew attention to her given the area we lived in'.

5.2.3 Social inclusion

This indicator covers issues such as poverty and the adequacy of people's income, healthcare and housing. Reflecting the fact that the majority of respondents were in work, one hundred and forty-two (65%) respondents said their income was sufficient to meet basic needs and 92% said they were able to access the healthcare they needed for themselves and their family. There was also a high level of satisfaction (86%) in response to a question about having a home that is safe and adequate for the respondent and their family's needs.

Despite the high levels of satisfaction with healthcare provision, concerns remain about how to access a GP or specialist given the Northern Ireland system of GP referrals. Without sufficient information people wait until a problem turns into an emergency and then have to go to A&E.

A serious issue in relation to language and access to interpretation services in the health and social care sector arose in the consultations. Consultees talked about being discouraged from using these services, particularly by some health centre receptionists who were described as 'judgmental' and acting as 'gate keepers'. In one case an individual waited months to see a consultant only to discover that no interpreter had been booked. As one person put it 'it is worse now; they are trying to save money. ... receptionists are being asked to make judgments – How long have you lived here? Why haven't you learned English?' And another commented 'if you are not from here you will be ignored, the last to be seen and you will be asked to come back'. The importance of interpreting services in mental ill health and counselling situations was also highlighted. A similar issue also applies to individuals with limited English language skills who are receiving social care in their homes provided by carers who speak only English.

Also highlighted was the need for Northern Ireland services to change to reflect the needs of a multi-cultural society, for example to tackle female genital mutilation – this was an area where community leaders were considered as having an important educational and challenge role to play.

Finally, access to suitable health care was seen as crucial for asylum seekers who are unable to work and often remain in the home unaware of the services that are available to them.

In housing, the requirement to have deposits and guarantors can be problematic. As one person put it *'if you don't have these ... you are asked by private landlords for up to a triple deposit'*. Others were concerned about being taken advantage of by tradespeople when repairs were needed and of not knowing how to complain if work is not up to standard. The plight of asylum seekers in managed accommodation was highlighted where the use of utilities was controlled, their support was inadequate and they were forced to live in poverty. An example of discrimination was given by one consultee who, when she phoned about a property, was told that it was gone; when her friend with a different accent phoned she was told it was available. She said *'it was quite humiliating but I wouldn't know who to report it to or what to do about it'*.

The segregated nature of part of the city of Belfast posed challenges for some people new to the area. Where you live means you become *'labelled'* as either Catholic or Protestant. Others felt it was not possible to generalise or classify an area as *'good'* or *'bad'* and in one case an individual was advised by his estate agent about which areas to avoid.

Consultees talked about concerns for their personal safety; some had had property damaged, others knew of assaults. *'I've had car windows broken twice, my child assaulted in front of her school, tyres slashed ... why does this not happen next door, always me?'* The impact of hate crime is significant as it is *'targeted at your identity... and the fear is greater than [with] other crime'*.

It appeared from the consultations that the situation is worsening. *'Lately with the increased number of racist attacks I have been thinking more each time I leave the house'; 'you can really feel an increase in anxiety'; 'it has come to the stage where something has to be done'*. The loss of dedicated PSNI Ethnic Minority Liaison Officers was highlighted; these were seen as people who could be called on to help when needed and had some understanding of the lives of BME communities. Now the police response is to suggest that people move to a different area, problematic for families who own their homes. As one consultee in this situation put it *'if you are racially intimidated, what do you do?'*

5.2.4 Active citizenship

The two issues covered under active citizenship are participation through voting and involvement in community and other organisations.

Considering only those who said they were registered voters, questionnaire responses indicated that 52% would vote in Northern Ireland Assembly elections but this dropped to 42% for the Westminster elections. Higher numbers of people would vote in the local council elections (59%) and for the European Parliament (57%), the latter significantly higher than for the general population.

When asked about other forms of participation, 82 people (48%) said they attend a place of worship; 42% per cent use a gym or local leisure centre, 28% associated themselves with a community organisation linked to their nationality or ethnic group and 27% attended English language schools. Eighteen per cent were involved with a community centre and 38 people were linked to a special interest group. Nineteen were part of a parents' group.

One hundred and eighty-six (84%) participants said that they knew and mixed with people from backgrounds other than their own which suggests a willing engagement within and between diverse communities.

Politics in Northern Ireland was described as *'very polarised'*. Some politicians were thought to be elected on the basis of *'saying hatred about minorities'* and the media was seen as helping to fuel this hatred and represent minorities poorly so that they were not seen as voters whose views counted. Eight respondents commented that they did not know who to vote for; another commented that *'no party represents my interest'* and several referred to the failure of politicians

to address the need for change and their sense of frustration at the lack of progress in dealing with issues other than constitutional issues. As one person put it: *'Policies such as a Shared Future are being put aside because we need to talk about the flag issue.'*

Participation and involvement were seen as ways to build individual capacity which should be encouraged. The BME Parliament, held on April 30, 2014, was cited as a very positive example of this. On the other hand it was pointed out that people who are living in fear cannot be expected to get involved and attending community meetings where the tone was one of *'our people need help, not the foreigners'* which deterred BME individuals from participating.

5.2.5 Welcoming society

Fifty per cent (110) of questionnaire respondents thought Northern Ireland was a welcoming society with 98 individuals (44%) describing it as *'partly welcoming'*. People talked about having friends and being made to feel very welcome at work. As one consultee put it *'people are friendly here in general ... they are helping improve our skills (and) offering an interpreter if we need it. I can't imagine this would happen in my own country'*.

However, there was agreement that there had been a recent change with Northern Ireland people being less friendly to others than they were in the past – *'It was a welcoming society 15 years ago (but) not any longer.'*

Thirteen respondents said they did not feel welcome or *'tolerated'* and the segregated nature of Northern Ireland was highlighted – *'I was asked was I an Albanian Catholic or Protestant almost before I left the airport'*. Sectarianism was described as *'entrenched'* and *'a big issue'* and the Northern Ireland community as *'closed'*, *'narrow minded'* and *'suspicious'* with an unwillingness on the part of many people to accept diversity or those who are seen to be *'noticeably different'*. As one respondent commented *'some (people) appear (to) dislike you on their face when you (are) walking on the street or shopping ... they judge people by what they look like...which makes me feel that I am not welcome and this is not my second home.'*²⁹ All of this, consultees felt, made it harder for those from another country to integrate although it was acknowledged that integration had to be a two-way process. Government was seen to have a duty to engage with this agenda and address *'the lies'* being told about migrants and new arrivals. The point needed to be made that without migrant workers some factories would close and the question was asked *'If BME professionals were to stop working for a week, what would happen to this place?'*

There was some support for the contention that politicians and/or public officials could be trusted to provide racial equality with 18% of people answering *'yes'* to this question and a further 45% saying they *'partly trusted'* them.

However, 81 individuals, or 36% of respondents, had no such trust for politicians and officials. Consultees expressed the view that political parties did not represent the needs of ethnic minorities and did not want them in the country, believing migrants *'were stealing jobs from local people'*. Concern was expressed that the far right is playing on people's fears and there is no opposition that can produce the facts necessary to counter these fears. Officials were described as not interested in BME issues, *'not fully aware of the situation of migrants in Northern Ireland'*, not caring *'about black problems'*, and politicians as not *'interested in improving the life of migrant people or caring about anything beyond orange and green'*.

29. The impact of the NI conflict on BME and migrant communities was explored in 2009 by the South Tyrone Empowerment Programme; the research examined the implications of this legacy on their equitable integration into society in Northern Ireland setting out how the conflict has configured social, administrative and political structures and behaviours in Northern Ireland and how new populations have to adjust in order to negotiate these phenomena. See <http://www.migrationni.org/DataEditorUploads/STEP%20Report%20Migrants%20and%20the%20Conflict.pdf>

In contrast, respondents were more positive about the PSNI with 66% of respondents saying they would trust them to help if they were a victim of a crime.

Thirty-nine per cent of questionnaire respondents had experienced verbal or physical attacks on the street and 27% had been harassed or humiliated at work. Twenty-four per cent had had verbal or physical attacks at home and 21% knew of racial bullying at school. Forty-five per cent reported they had experienced different treatment on the basis of their ethnicity, colour or religion and nearly one quarter (24%) less favourable treatment when shopping or accessing public services. When asked if they had reported any of this, only 24%, 46 people, said they had.

Consultees talked about the prevalence of hate crime and abuse in Northern Ireland. This included *'immigrants out'* graffiti, verbal abuse, including from children, and physical assaults. One consultee said *'sometimes on the street people curse and shout at me and tell me to go home'*; another person's daughter was beaten up but she was disbelieved by her teachers. A Roma respondent described her treatment by a local bus driver who *'swears at me and says I'm a disgrace or he does not stop when I flag down the bus'*. She went on to recall how the same driver had put her off the bus on one occasion and threatened to hit her when she remonstrated with him. Some people reported incidents, some did not. The reasons for not reporting incidents were varied. They included a lack of trust that help would be forthcoming or that they would be believed, the inability to speak English, being afraid, worries about losing a job or being targeted again as a result. One person said things became worse after an incident had been reported to the police and another would not report in the future as nothing happened as a result of an earlier complaint. As one person put it *'I do not believe my report would make any difference. People including the local authorities (and) police...are ignorant toward foreign nationals. I believe my complaint would make my situation worse'*. There was a similar sense of resignation from others such as the consultee who would *'just accept it and get used to it'* and another who said *'it happens all the time. I don't fuss about it anymore. I deal with the situation myself ... if I can'*.

There was a belief that *'criminals are more powerful than the police'* and a suggestion that money was being made in areas where there were racist attacks with, for example, organisations attracting European Union funding to run *'intercultural events'*. There was strong criticism of a superficial view of culture – *'it is not just dance and food'* – and the lack of understanding of *'cultural competence'*: *'Values, respect for the complexity of different cultures is missing'*. Consultees stressed the importance of addressing stereotypes at school and a serious whole-school approach to teaching diversity as part of the school curricula – rather than having one-off, cultural celebrations.

There was a need for community dialogue on racist incidents and education to address anti-social behaviour and *'oral abuse'* by young people which, it was felt, would not be prosecuted by the police. As one person commented *'their parents are responsible for their children's behaviour towards foreigners like myself'*.

5.2.6 Priority areas for action

The main priorities in Belfast were English language proficiency, the need for a job, access to cheaper childcare and the recognition of qualifications. Also important was the need to tackle prejudice and racism and promote acceptance together with access to education, housing, safety, health, secular schooling and achieving a work/life balance.

Finally respondents were asked what they would like to see change for the better as a result of having experienced difficulties in relation to any of the integration indicators - employment, education, social inclusion, active citizenship, or a welcoming society. There was a broad range of individual responses but change in one area was highlighted more than any other - people want to see improvements in the attitudes of people in Northern Ireland to foreign nationals, and greater equality and inclusion.

5.2.7 Summary of the Belfast findings

Employment

People in Belfast are eager to work rather than depend on social security benefits but the lack of recognition of their qualifications, skills and experience is seen as a barrier as are Northern Ireland's rather formal job application processes and what is described as a '*glass ceiling*' which prevents BME workers from progressing. This can be addressed through positive action measures and employers who operate poor and unlawful employment practices must face sanctions.

The trade union movement has a role to play in assisting BME workers as has government which should take some responsibility for ensuring fair employment practices are operating. More generally, new migrants require information and support, including on opportunities for entrepreneurship.

Education

More and consistent English language support is required for BME children and racism and bullying in schools has to be tackled. The Careers Service has an important role to play to support BME children and should reach out more to communities. Some families would welcome alternatives to religious education for their children referring to the need for secular education or after-school activities as a priority. Overall, newcomer families require more information about Northern Ireland's education system, in particular where they find themselves caught between the '*two dominant cultures*' and cultural competence, not just diversity awareness, needs to be taught in schools.

Social inclusion

Whilst people were generally positive about levels of income, healthcare and housing, concerns and difficulties persist. In health this relates to accessing GP and specialist services and, in particular, interpreting services with some healthcare staff described as '*judgemental*' and acting as gatekeepers. There is a particular need for appropriate interpreting services for those suffering mental ill health or requiring counselling services as well as better healthcare for failed asylum seekers living in Northern Ireland. In housing, people are facing difficulties around deposits and guarantors and there is inadequate support for asylum seekers in managed accommodation. The segregated nature of parts of Belfast pose challenges for newcomers who do not wish to be labelled as belonging to one or other of the two dominant communities. People worry about their personal safety and the impact of hate crime is significant.

Active citizenship

Many BME individuals vote in local elections and are accepting of the role they can play as part of Northern Ireland society. But there is a largely critical perception of politicians and public officials; politics is seen as polarised and the media is accused of fuelling hatred of those who appear to be different. Participation and involvement need to be encouraged as ways to build individual capacity.

Welcoming society

Hate crime and abuse are prevalent in Belfast and large numbers of people have been subjected to verbal or physical abuse, harassment or humiliation, in public, at their home, at work or in school. Generally, however, people feel that the police can be trusted to help if an individual is a victim of a crime; at the same time, people will tend not to report hate crime and abuse – whether at work or to the police – because they fear reprisals or do not believe anything will happen as a result of their complaint. There is a need for community dialogue and education around racist incidents. Overall, Northern Ireland was seen as a welcoming society but a concern exists that this is changing and people no longer appear to be as friendly as in the past. Integration is a two-way process but not being made to feel welcome makes this harder

to achieve. There was mixed support for the contention that politicians and officials could be trusted to ensure racial equality; political parties do not represent the needs of ethnic minorities and many officials seem disinterested in the issues. Government has a duty to engage with this agenda, address negative stereotyping and highlight the positive contribution migrants make to society.

Priorities

English language tuition, access to education and employment, childcare, recognising qualifications and the cost of living were all identified as priorities. So, too, was the need to tackle racism; however, most of all, people wanted to see improvements in the attitudes of people in Northern Ireland to foreign nationals along with greater equality and inclusion.

5.3 The North West

In the North-West the mapping exercise generated a total of 67 questionnaire responses – 44 responses in English and 23 in Polish. These responses were supplemented by a consultation held on April 25, 2014 in NICEM's North West office, L/Derry attended by 11 people with a range of nationalities including Uzbekistani, Iranian, Malaysian, Filipino, Brazilian and Indian.

5.3.1 Employment

Sixty-seven per cent of questionnaire respondents have been able to secure a job that gives them and their family sufficient money to live on and cover expenses; however, only 45% of these individuals said they had a job that used their qualifications, skills and experience. Only 4 of the 23 Polish language respondents said their qualifications were being utilised. Thirty-two people (48%) said they had experienced discrimination or less favourable treatment at work because they were perceived to be a *'foreigner'* or a member of a BME community.

When asked what they would do if they lost their job the majority of people (93%) said they would try to find another one. Fifteen would turn to social security or benefits and a handful indicated they would either rely on family or friends or return to their home country.

In the focus group people felt that some employers had no awareness of the potential the skills and qualities of migrant workers could offer for the economic benefit of a business; examples were given of engineers, medically trained people and those with media expertise not being able to use their qualifications to the full. The cost of gaining additional qualifications because their own, obtained in their home country, were not recognised was a difficulty.

The experience of being a migrant worker included being *'expected [to do] the dirty, nasty, ugly jobs at work'*; or being *'escorted off the premises'* having received a hostile reception to a business idea because an individual was thought to be Romanian and his business idea a scam. Participants felt that some employers abuse migrant workers' strong work ethic by paying only the minimum wage and expecting them to work harder than others while keeping them in lower level jobs and failing to offer training opportunities. One contributor was told, after challenging her employer for not sending her on a training course – *'British jobs for British workers – why should I send you on training?'* It was proposed that more must be done to inform employers about their responsibilities and hold them to account for bad practice.

The fear of losing their job inhibited some workers from complaining – *'we are fearful to stand up for our rights...employers just smile at you when you threaten to go to the Tribunal. They say – 'go ahead.'*

Some trade union representatives were criticised for not providing effective support for workers. In one instance a representative defended an employee who had used racist language; in another, an individual was asked by the representative to prove that he had been racially assaulted rather than initiate an investigation. The ECNI's strategic approach to supporting individuals was also criticised: *'they say they will help you but then say your case is not good enough.'*

5.3.2 Education

Of the 31 questionnaire respondents who answered the question, 23 (74%) were satisfied that the education their children were receiving met the standards they expected. However, when given the opportunity to talk about their experience, focus group members talked about children having to face racist remarks and bullying from other pupils and a lack of consistency in addressing this. Some teachers dealt with the behaviour, others did not; one bullying incident reported by a parent was dealt with appropriately, on another occasion nothing at all was done. It was pointed out that sometimes it is the victim who is *'cautioned'* about behaviour rather than the perpetrator. One consultee talked about how his son gave a presentation on anti-racism and how to tackle bullying in an effort to raise awareness in his school. However, despite being well received and winning an award for this, it was felt that any progress that had been made in addressing the issue long-term within the school was short-lived.

As well as providing a proper support structure to help BME pupils, consultees want to see schools teaching diversity and cultural competency, not just cultural awareness or the organisation of *'token'* cultural days. Schools should also implement anti-bullying policies and equality good practice guidance with the Department of Education leading the way and ensuring that a consistent approach is adopted across all schools. The option of integrated education was welcomed.

Thirty-four (51%) of questionnaire respondents reported that they participated in some form of adult education.

5.3.3 Social inclusion

This indicator covered issues such as poverty and the adequacy of people's income, healthcare and housing. Sixty-four per cent of respondents said their income was sufficient to meet basic needs and all but 7 individuals (90%) were able to access the healthcare they needed for themselves and their family. There was a similarly high level of satisfaction (84%) with having a home that is safe and adequate for the respondent and their family's needs.

During the focus group there was general agreement that there are many positives about life in Northern Ireland, such as the healthcare system and the ability of some to access good quality childcare. However, these were overshadowed by negative aspects of life such as a fear of paramilitaries *'as they run things in Northern Ireland'* and the fact that *'the sectarian division affects us too'*. Consultees' experience was that people are suspicious of migrants and try to work out which side they support and as a consequence they are isolated by one side or excluded by both. The sectarian division has created a society which doesn't work and people said they don't know how to fit in or integrate into society here.

It was felt that social inclusion could be improved if there was more education and multi-cultural events and a better understanding of the issues by politicians and the media with the latter being singled out as having the potential to create positive messages about BME communities and the benefits brought by migrant workers.

5.3.4 Active citizenship

The two issues covered under active citizenship were participation through voting and involvement in community and other organisations.

Considering only those who said they were registered voters, questionnaire responses indicated that 41% would vote in both Northern Ireland Assembly and Westminster elections. This rose to 56% for local councils and 59% for the European Parliament. Questionnaire comments and the views of consultees were fairly negative about politicians. Some people said they didn't believe in politicians, others that they were not relevant or *'don't do anything'* and it was difficult to see who in politics would address issues in a constructive way. There was a view expressed that society needed to change but this *'is hard... when political representatives are stuck in the past'*; political candidates just assumed BME people were not entitled to vote and so didn't canvass them. Forging more links with politicians to raise concerns was suggested as a way forward.

Consultees highlighted how their first encounter with barriers to accessing Northern Ireland's public services on an equal basis with others, is often their first meeting with a public official, for example, the receptionist at the surgery, the person at the office counter to register a birth or apply for a benefit. The attitude of that person is critical to their ability to access a service or have a positive engagement with the service provider.

When asked about other forms of participation 47% of people said they use a gym or local leisure centre and 36% were involved in groups associated with their nationality or ethnic group. Thirty-three per cent of people attended a mosque, church or other place of worship and slightly fewer were engaged in English language schools. Other means of participation included special interest groups (27%) and community centres (25%).

Fifty-three people (79%) said that they knew and mixed with people from backgrounds other than their own which suggests a willing engagement within and between diverse communities.

5.3.5 Welcoming society

Generally there was a positive response to this question with fifty-four per cent of questionnaire respondents describing Northern Ireland as welcoming and a further 39% describing it as *'partly welcoming'*. However, in the focus group it was suggested that things had changed with the recession and newcomers were now being seen as a threat to jobs for local people. As one person put it *'there has been a transition, we are not treated the same ... discrimination is more obvious now, people are more vocal and are expressing their views more.'* Older people were said to be more friendly and younger people more likely to behave in a discriminatory way.

There was qualified support for the contention that politicians and officials could be trusted to provide racial equality with 57% of people saying they *'partly trusted'* them but nearly a third said there was no trust. As indicated above there was a suggestion that local politicians show very little interest in BME issues – *'everything is still Catholic and Protestant'; 'it is all about power, money and self-interest'*.

People were more positive about the PSNI with 75% of respondents saying they would trust them to help if they were a victim of a crime.

However, over a quarter of questionnaire respondents (28%) had experienced verbal or physical attacks on the street or harassment or humiliation (37%) at work. Nineteen per cent had experienced verbal or physical attacks at home and 26% knew of racial bullying at school. Nearly one half said they had experienced different treatment on the basis of their ethnicity, colour or religion and nearly one third (31%) less favourable treatment when shopping or accessing public services.

When asked if they had reported any of this, only 18 people (29%) said they had. The reasons given for not doing so included a fear of not being taken seriously or of being humiliated, not wanting to draw attention to oneself; and concern at work that reporting issues to the human resources department would be 'risky'. Others did not know how to go about reporting this type of behaviour.

5.3.6 Priority areas for action

English language provision and proficiency was the most common issue mentioned followed closely by the need for recognition of qualifications from outside Northern Ireland, jobs and income and access to educational opportunities. Other people expressed concern about racism and a lack of cultural understanding, the need for childcare and financial difficulties.

A number of people highlighted work as the area where they would like to see change. There should be more acceptance of different nationalities in the workplace and more understanding amongst employers of family issues that may impact upon people at work. An acceptance of education and qualifications from outside Northern Ireland was needed as was access to training relevant to those qualifications. Employers should be held to account for poor or unlawful practices in the workplace.

People need support, advice and information and for organisations that provide such services to be sustained and not shut down. Education was also mentioned as an area for change, not just in terms of information and support for multi-culturalism but, importantly, addressing bullying in schools and safer streets for children after school.

5.2.7 Summary of the North West findings

Employment

Demonstrating a strong work ethic, a high percentage of people in the North West are in work; however many are not fully utilising their skills, qualifications or experience. Once in work people are subjected to discrimination and poor employment practices yet are fearful of complaining. Employers need to be held to account and trade unions should play a positive role in improving the working lives of migrants. Employers need to understand the potential migrant workers can bring to their business with awareness raising generally about how a failure to capitalise on people's skills represents a waste to the local economy and has a negative impact on the quality of people's lives. People need better access to legal support and information about their rights at work and what they can do in the face of discriminatory behaviour or practices.

Education

People in the North West are motivated to participate in adult education opportunities with English language proficiency highlighted along with generally positive views about educational provision for children. However, this is tempered by serious concerns about racist bullying in schools and action is required to address this in a consistent and effective manner and make schools, and the streets after school, safer for children. Education provision would improve if BME pupils were provided with adequate and appropriate support structures, if there was a stronger multi-cultural ethos in schools and if school staff received enhanced cultural competency training.

Social inclusion

Generally there were positive responses about levels of income, housing and, in particular, healthcare but these were balanced by people's negative experiences of living in a post-conflict society, still divided by religious and political differences. Concerns include a fear of paramilitaries and a lack of understanding about where indigenous and new minorities are meant to fit in. This situation is not helped by negative reporting on immigration and BME

communities in the media; this needs to be challenged and countered by information on the positive contribution ethnic minorities make. Better levels of awareness amongst politicians would enable them to lead the way and help change attitudes.

Active citizenship

In the North West people acknowledge the role they can play as part of Northern Ireland society and many exercise their right to vote, particularly in local authority and European Union elections. But negative attitudes to politicians persist and, unless this changes, Northern Ireland politicians will lose out on the opportunity to widen their support base. The need to forge links between BME communities and political parties is seen as important.

Welcoming society

Northern Ireland is viewed as welcoming or 'partly' welcoming by most people but there is concern that this is changing with people feeling less welcome than before. In particular, the attitudes of young people need to be addressed and challenged in schools and through mainstreaming multi-cultural events and awareness raising.

Priorities

English language provision is a priority in the North West as is the recognition of qualifications from outside Northern Ireland, childcare, access to education and, more generally, the need for advice, support and information on workplace and a wide range of social issues. There are concerns about racism and the lack of cultural understanding or acceptance of people of different backgrounds or nationalities.

5.4 Mid-Ulster and Down

In Mid-Ulster and Down the mapping exercise generated 156 questionnaire responses including 105 responses in English, 40 in Polish, 10 in Lithuanian and 1 response in Mandarin.

This information was supplemented by the views of 27 BME individuals via two focus groups held on April 15, 2014; the first was with members of the Polish community in Lurgan and the second in Craigavon with people from a range of nationalities including Guinea Bissau, Filipino, Polish, East Timorese and Romanian Roma.

5.4.1. Employment

Sixty-seven per cent of questionnaire respondents have been able to secure a job that gives them and their family sufficient money to live on and cover expenses; however, only 37% of these individuals said they had a job that used their qualifications, skills and experience. Seventy-seven people (49%) said they had experienced discrimination or less favourable treatment at work because they were perceived to be a 'foreigner' or a member of a BME community.

When asked what they would do if they lost their job the majority of people (89%) said they would find another one. Forty-six (29%) would turn to social security or benefits and twenty-one (13%) indicated they would either rely on family or friends; seven (4%) would return to their home country.

In the focus group, consultees highlighted difficulties in being able to find work that enabled them to use their qualifications, skills and experience. One, a beautician and a second who had childcare qualifications, could not find work in these areas. Others talked about a pilot, an engineer and an economist with experience in their own countries who are working as cleaners or in the meat packing industry. As one consultee commented '*the priority is to take whatever job is available to put food onto the table.*'

Other barriers identified included a lack of opportunities for work experience, poor proficiency in English, employers failing to respond to numerous applications submitted for jobs, the limited number of jobs available, the problem of getting work being '*down to who you know*', and perceptions of discrimination. One person believed that failing to get a job at two supermarkets was because '*I ticked the Black African monitoring box on the application*'. Whatever the reason, it was noted, these problems have '*a severe impact on self-esteem*'.

Those who obtained employment through agencies cited a lack of protection and the sense that migrant workers could be sacked for slight misdemeanours while local workers '*can do anything*'. They wanted agency staff to focus on a worker's qualifications and experience rather than providing people with opportunities simply because they knew or had a friendship with a person. There was also an issue with agency practices such as in the case of one agency failing to pay tax to HMRC and then changing its name and escaping liability. This led to workers being penalised, losing holiday entitlement and then having to pay tax and national insurance from their own pockets.

There were disturbing reports of workers being forced to work in areas for which they did not have the necessary qualifications or experience or being pressurised into undertaking potentially dangerous work practices. When accidents did happen in such situations, workers would be told that what they had been doing was '*not in your job description*'. Others talked about having to work extremely lengthy shifts – '*I wasn't asked if I wanted to do it. To keep my job I had no choice but to work these hours*'. Instances of bad practice included working weekends at a basic rate of pay with no overtime; or, on returning from a period of illness, being told that the worker could not be sick for the next six months; or, despite working for years through an agency, not being offered a permanent contract when it became available.

A number of consultees said they worked in an environment of intimidation but there was no trade union support. '*They only want us for our membership and the fees – not to support us*'; '*(they) just want our voice, our vote but they don't try to help us*'. There was a concern that other workers did not have the option to join trade unions as employers opposed this.

5.4.2 Education

Of the 94 questionnaire respondents who answered the question, 74 (79%) were satisfied that the education their children were receiving met the standards they expected. However, it was pointed out in the focus group that children, particularly older ones, who have little or no English are experiencing difficulties at school and, while some schools provide extra support, others do not. One young man reported '*I came here 8 months ago at the age of 17 but had no help to learn English and I was very scared as I am Roma*'.

Seventy-four (47%) questionnaire respondents reported that they participated in some form of adult education but focus group members highlighted particular issues in relation to English language provision. Some people lack the confidence to attend classes or are too tired after a full day at work or have family commitments; others may have low levels of literacy in their mother tongue or are unaware of opportunities to learn the language. English provision can also be at too low a level – one consultee reported that she had completed the basic level but was unable to progress to a higher level as there were not enough students to justify running a more advanced class. She was told to take the basic level again. For others, the offer of just two evening classes per week is not enough to help them gain proficiency in the language and more opportunities to practice spoken English are required. Finally, the need for people to be able to access technical English language tuition aligned to their field of expertise, for example accountancy, is a gap that needs to be filled.

5.4.3 Social inclusion

Ninety-seven (62%) of respondents said their income was sufficient to meet basic needs and 85% were able to access the healthcare they needed for themselves and their family. There was a similarly high level of satisfaction (81%) with having a home that is safe and adequate for the respondent and their family's needs.

The focus groups highlighted the need for an accessible information and advice service. In the absence of this, people turn to others from their own country for information but what they are told may not be accurate. Consultees talked about a lack of information about social benefits they may be entitled to and being turned away from an advice centre or having to find their own interpreter in order to access advice. One example illustrated the general experience: after waiting for a long time to be served at a Jobs and Benefits Office, the claimant was told '*chop chop, you have just 5 minutes*' when they were finally seen.

For some, their working patterns mean they cannot find the time to learn about possible benefits, and becoming ill brought additional problems. In one case an employer would not complete a Statutory Sick Pay form, preventing a couple from accessing help; in another an individual, on sick leave for 18 months, had no entitlement to any benefits. Losing employment means that people struggle to manage and consultees talked about now being reliant on food banks or accepting food parcels around Christmas time.

The lack of information was again identified as a barrier when it came to health care. People felt that this information should be available when they arrive for the first time in Northern Ireland. A second important issue was access to interpreting services. Contributors talked about being told by health centre reception staff that they had to book and wait for an interpreter. One individual was told the wait would be two weeks and she should take her child to accident and emergency instead; another said no interpreter was provided when this was requested at A&E. Frontline health service staff, in particular receptionists, seem to be unaware of the availability of telephone interpreting services.

Focus group participants had found it hard to register for housing with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive; application forms were handed over with no information or advice on how to complete them and people were left on their own to chase up how their application was progressing. There was also a suggestion that local people tended to get more help with maintenance and upkeep from NIHE than did new arrivals.

In the private sector, references, deposits and guarantors were seen as barriers to obtaining accommodation although one person pointed out that, even when they had money, some private landlords will still refuse to rent them a property.

5.4.4 Active citizenship

The two issues covered under active citizenship are participation through voting and involvement in community and other organisations.

Considering only those who said they were registered voters, questionnaire responses indicated that 54% would vote in local government elections and 48% for the Northern Ireland Assembly; this dropped to only 28% for the Westminster elections. Higher numbers of people would vote for the European Parliament (58%). Questionnaire comments and the views of consultees were fairly negative about politicians. People cited a lack of information about political parties and candidates and not knowing who to vote for. Providing this information in other languages would be helpful. The views of others, however, were reflected in the comment of one consultee who said '*politicians just want our vote but they don't try to help us*'.

In response to the question about other forms of participation, 43 people (39%) said they attend a place of worship and use a gym or local leisure centre. Forty-two individuals (38%) associated themselves with a community organisation linked to their nationality or ethnic group with slightly fewer (32%) involved with a community centre and 32% attending English language schools. Eighteen people were involved with a special interest group and thirteen with a parents' group. In terms of social participation, one person reported that, despite having the necessary licences and permission to fish and presenting his permit, *'I am still asked to leave by officials'*.

One hundred and seventeen people (75%) said that they knew and mixed with people from backgrounds other than their own which suggests a willing engagement within and between diverse communities.

5.4.5 Welcoming society

Forty per cent of questionnaire respondents thought Northern Ireland was welcoming but a higher number – 74 people (47%) described it as only *'partly welcoming'*.

Some consultees felt that *'people are nice'* and *'when it is quiet everything is fine'* but once again the lack of information was cited as a major gap in helping individuals to become part of Northern Ireland society. Government, it was said, *'should prioritise integration and have a programme to disseminate information and address the lack of integration'*. This would help people understand *'things such as the use of Derry and Londonderry'*. Local people as well as newcomers need to know that they are entitled to healthcare and education and to understand how the Northern Ireland systems work.

People from BME backgrounds born in Northern Ireland also face difficulties; these include how to retain links to their heritage and dilemmas about what identity their children will have. As one woman said *'if you are of a different ethnic origin but born in Northern Ireland you can't feel part of your own culture but you will never integrate'*.

Negative attitudes and behaviour from service providers were highlighted. One consultee, trying to pursue an investigation into a lengthy wait for an ambulance which, he believes, contributed to his wife's death, said that *'at each level of investigation I was reminded that I am European, I am not from here'*. Another was told she could not get an iPad contract as *'I wasn't from here'* whilst a third, in A&E with her daughter, was asked who her social worker was. *'Why would they assume I have a social worker?'* she asked. A young African woman reported that her tutor told the class in her presence that *'the worst place to go as a tourist is Africa'*, and another added that *'we are reminded every day that we are second class citizens'*.

Raising awareness among children about diversity was seen as important in helping make Northern Ireland a welcoming society. Prejudice needs to be tackled when children are young, in schools and youth clubs. This needs to be mainstreamed into everyday studies and events rather than the occasional one-off *'multi-cultural day'*. Integrated education was also seen as a positive vehicle for contributing to this.

There was some support for the contention that politicians and officials could be trusted to provide racial equality with 17% of people answering *'yes'* to this question and a further 43% saying they *'partly trusted'* them. However, 63 individuals, or 40%, had no trust that politicians and officials would deliver racial equality.

People were more positive about the PSNI with 74% of respondents saying they would trust them to help if they were a victim of a crime.

However, a quarter of questionnaire respondents had experienced verbal or physical attacks on the street and 31% had been harassed or humiliated at work. Nineteen per cent had experienced verbal or physical attacks at home and 22% knew of racial bullying in schools. Over one half (54%) said they had experienced different treatment on the basis of their ethnicity, colour or religion and nearly one third (32%) less favourable treatment when shopping or accessing public services.

When asked if they had reported any of this, only 24%, 35 individuals, said they had. People cited the language barrier and being afraid that speaking up would result in them losing their job as reasons for not doing so. Others felt that nothing would change as a result of making a report or that they could deal with problems on their own.

5.4.6 Priority areas for action

The three main issues affecting individuals and their families' lives in Mid-Ulster and Down were English language proficiency, the recognition of qualifications gained outside Northern Ireland and access to cheaper childcare. Others included the need for better wages and employment opportunities, the cost of living and secular education, together with improved access to education, healthcare and the need for family support. People also prioritised action to tackle racist attacks, abuse, anti-social behaviour and the need to address ignorance about diverse communities.

Finally respondents were asked if, as a result of having experienced difficulties in relation to any of the indicators, what they would like to see change for the better. There was a broad range of individual responses but change in one area was highlighted more than any other. People want to see improvements in the attitudes of people in Northern Ireland to foreign nationals with more education and awareness raising to assist this.

5.4.7 Summary of the Mid-Ulster and Down findings

Employment

As with the other regions, people in Mid-Ulster and Down are keen to work rather than depend on social security; however, they, too, have found it difficult to find work that matches their qualifications, skills and experience. The availability of work experience opportunities would assist by giving people the chance to gain experience within the Northern Ireland context as would better proficiency in English. There was frustration that, despite making efforts to find work, many applications for employment went unacknowledged by employers. Some sectors that employ large numbers of migrant workers appear to operate a '*who you know*' culture and agency staff are thought not always to operate in the best interests of jobseekers. Poor working conditions, intimidation and the lack of employment protection or trade union support, are features of the working lives of some migrant workers.

Education

For Mid-Ulster and Down respondents attaining proficiency in English is their most pressing educational need – both for children and adults. The inability to access suitable tuition can be influenced by a lack of confidence, because of tiredness after work, irregular shift patterns or the requirement to do overtime. The inadequacy and inflexibility of provision generally was highlighted including the need for more advanced classes for those who are ready to progress.

Social inclusion

Although the majority of people manage to support themselves and their families, others, particularly those who have lost a job, face difficulties and are increasingly becoming reliant on food banks. People in Mid-Ulster and Down stressed the need for more information across a range of areas including healthcare, housing and benefits. This would be particularly useful when people first arrive in Northern Ireland. As elsewhere, greater access to appropriate interpreting services is needed as are improvements in the help received from and the attitudes

of front line healthcare staff. Better levels of service from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive would help those who struggle to complete housing applications and advice on how to address barriers in the private rented sector, such as references, guarantors, deposits and outright refusals to rent premises, would be welcome.

Active citizenship

As elsewhere, there are high levels of voting in Mid-Ulster and Down, particularly in local and European Union elections. Yet attitudes toward politics and politicians are quite negative. As with other spheres of life, information about the Northern Ireland political system and its political parties is lacking.

Welcoming society

Although the majority of people felt that Northern Ireland is, or is partly, a welcoming society this was offset by the everyday experiences of verbal or physical abuse or harassment or humiliation at work or bullying at school. A large number of people had experienced different treatment, negative attitudes and behaviours when accessing services. Despite attitudes toward the police being generally positive, there was also a sense that there was little point in complaining as little could or would be done to challenge these types of behaviours. Poor proficiency in English appears also to be a barrier to reporting. Government should prioritise integration and fill information gaps so that migrants and newcomers are able better to understand the society they are joining. Mainstreaming education for children about the realities and benefits of diversity should also help, not forgetting those from a BME background born in Northern Ireland who wish to learn about and maintain links with their heritage and background.

Priorities

Pressing priorities are English proficiency, recognising qualifications, childcare, healthcare and jobs, but most importantly people want to see improvements in Northern Ireland's attitudes to people who come to live here from elsewhere.

6.0 OVERALL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This mapping project provides a qualitative and reflective insight into the challenges faced by many BME people in Northern Ireland. The questionnaire responses and the contributions of individuals at the consultation events help us to understand their daily-lived experiences, both positive and negative.

These experiences mirror what other research has found, some of which is summarised in Section 4. While respondents shared positive views on their lives in Northern Ireland, the fact that people continue to suffer racism and racist attacks, lack access to interpreting services, experience poor working conditions and fail to have their qualifications recognised, among other challenges, points to an urgent need to move from research to action so that these issues are finally addressed.

It is time to take focused and targeted action and the timely publication of the draft Racial Equality Strategy 2014-2024 provides the opportunity and framework within which to take this work forward.

6.1 Employment

Qualifications and experience:

Of concern to many people is the failure of employers to recognise the qualifications, skills, knowledge and experience of migrant workers and the potential they have to offer in the workplace, including in more senior positions tackling what some believe is a '*glass ceiling*'. This potential is lost when workers are forced to accept jobs that under-utilise their skills. For individuals this is frustrating and de-motivating and leads to them becoming de-skilled as time passes since they last used their expertise. There is also a general frustration that the positive contribution that migrant workers make to the Northern Ireland economy is not acknowledged or celebrated.³⁰

English language proficiency

There is an urgent need to address the dearth and quality of affordable and accessible English language tuition. It is short-sighted for Northern Ireland to fail to offer such provision whether this is done through local authorities, central government, employers or the voluntary and community sectors. An understanding of the language of work paired with access to jobs that uses the skills people have can only have a positive impact on the Northern Ireland economy.

Accessing work

For many new to Northern Ireland the rather formal ways in which people are expected to apply for jobs is unfamiliar. Application forms, competency based approaches, proof of qualifications (if suitable translation services are unavailable), and equality monitoring can appear quite daunting. There is also a need for more opportunities for work experience which will help people prepare for the world of work here as well as access to flexible, affordable childcare that fits with the reality of workers' atypical and shift work patterns. For those who access work through employment agencies there can be particular difficulties addressing issues like favouritism or a lack of information which can lead to fewer opportunities being on offer.

30. *The Economic, Labour Market and Skills Impacts of Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland*: Oxford Economics, DEL, 2009: research found that migrant workers have had a net beneficial impact on the Northern Ireland labour market, contributing almost 40,000 jobs and £1.2bn in 2008.

The experience of work

The number of individuals who described fear and intimidation at work, discrimination, a lack of employment rights and poor and sometimes unsafe working conditions highlights the need for immediate action to be taken to help and protect migrant workers from exploitation and abuse. Many are unable to speak up whether due to fear of losing their job, negative reactions or a lack of English language skills. Employers and trade unions need to be alert to what is happening within some workplaces and commit to ensuring that such unacceptable conditions come to an end.

Protection and support

It is apparent that migrant workers and others new to Northern Ireland need information, guidance, advice and support. People need to know where they can go for help and help needs to be there when it is asked for. There was concern about the lack of community-based resources where people felt they would be listened to and interpreting could be provided if needed. For those who wanted to pursue a complaint there was anxiety about the lack of support from the ECNI due to operating a strategic litigation strategy but without alternative help being available. This leaves many people without a remedy or access to justice. There is clearly a greater role to be played by trade unions. Many respondents expressed a sense that organisations that should provide support were inaccessible or ineffective; there needs to be greater grass roots engagement by the ECNI, trade unions and the advice sector to find better ways to support BME/migrant workers.

Recommendations on employment:

- 6.1.1** The Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) should:
 - 6.1.1.1 Highlight and update its research on the economic, labour market and skills impacts of migrant workers in Northern Ireland;³¹
 - 6.1.1.2 Undertake research to map how the current level of skills and qualifications among BME/migrant workers meets the requirements of industry and the Northern Ireland economy;
 - 6.1.1.3 Undertake research, in partnership with the ECNI, to identify the barriers to and opportunities for progression and promotion of BME/migrant workers in the Northern Ireland workforce;
 - 6.1.1.4 Work with private and public employers to improve technical work-related English language skills;
 - 6.1.1.5 Work with industry and the community and voluntary sector to provide flexible, accessible English language tuition which meets the needs of atypical workers and supports low skilled BME/migrant workers into employment;
 - 6.1.1.6 Use a range of media to promote apprenticeship schemes and encourage uptake by BME/migrant workers;
 - 6.1.1.7 Ensure that the Jobs and Benefits Office promotes awareness of the National Academic Recognition Information Centre's (NARIC) services to translate qualification certificates and verify and confirm their UK equivalence;
 - 6.1.1.8 Consider initiating a system whereby non-Irish/ British nationals who apply for welfare benefits have their qualifications automatically translated and their UK equivalence confirmed by NARIC;

31. *The Economic, Labour Market and Skills Impacts of Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland*: Oxford Economics, DEL, 2009 referred to above.

- 6.1.1.9 Work with professional and technical bodies to enhance and promote an understanding of how qualifications gained abroad can be accepted as equivalent to those in the UK;
- 6.1.1.10 Using the opportunities presented by the United Youth programme, work with Volunteer Now and the BME sector to encourage employers to see volunteering, including voluntary experience gained abroad, as a vehicle for providing job applicants with valuable competencies and skills;
- 6.1.1.11 As part of the review of employment law, address how the employment rights of vulnerable BME/migrant workers can be better protected;
- 6.1.1.12 Ensure that the EU Freedom of Movement Directive – *Directive 2014/54/EU on measures facilitating the exercise of rights conferred on workers in the context of freedom of movement for workers*³² is fully implemented including at grass roots level to empower and inform workers of their rights.
- 6.1.2** The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Industry should work in partnership with Invest NI, the universities and the BME sector to identify and implement ways to support BME/migrant workers to develop and utilise entrepreneurship skills.
- 6.1.3** The Department of Education for Northern Ireland should ensure that the Careers Service undertakes outreach and awareness raising activities with BME communities and young people on apprenticeships and vocational training opportunities.
- 6.1.4** The *Bright Start* Strategic Framework/Ni Childcare Strategy should specifically address the needs of BME families for flexible, affordable care that takes account of atypical work patterns and considers workplace provision.³³
- 6.1.5** The ECNI should:
- 6.1.5.1 Develop campaigns and programmes of work to encourage employers to use positive action to maximise the contribution of their BME workforce and remove barriers to career progression;
- 6.1.5.2 In partnership with DEL, work with bodies such as the Confederation of British Industries, the Federation of Small Business, Invest NI, and others to inform and support employers to meet their legal obligations in relation to fair selection and recruitment procedures and the avoidance of discrimination, in particular in their assessment of applicants with qualifications gained abroad;
- 6.1.5.3 In partnership with the Labour Relations Agency, mount a publicity campaign to raise awareness of current legal protection in the field of employment and training, and sources of advice and help.
- 6.1.6** The Irish Congress of Trade Unions Northern Ireland Committee should develop and implement a programme of work and actively engage with the BME sector to encourage and strengthen trade union involvement with and support for BME workers, including training for union representatives as appropriate.

32. Directive 2014/54/EU requires member states to ensure a) one or more bodies at national level will provide support and legal assistance to EU migrant workers with the enforcement of their rights, including their right not to be discriminated against on grounds of nationality; and b) easily accessible information in more than one EU language on the rights enjoyed by EU migrant workers and jobseekers.

33. See recommendations from the NICEM and Barnardo NI's 'Believe in Childcare?' investigation; <http://nicem.org.uk/files?category=Children%20and%20Young%20People>

- 6.1.7** NICEM to work with Volunteer Now on piloting tools to assist BME/migrant workers to identify and articulate how skills and competencies gained through voluntary experience, including voluntary experience gained abroad, can improve their employability.

6.2 Education

Racist bullying

The racist bullying and harassment suffered by BME children in and around school is unacceptable and must be addressed as a matter of urgency. Children must have learning environments where they can thrive and learn free from abuse and discrimination. It is important that schools and educational establishments at all levels take an active role in tackling such behaviour in a consistent manner across Northern Ireland. Teacher training colleges, teachers and head teachers, non-teaching staff, Board of Governors, education and library boards, school advisory panels and voluntary sector advisory groups such as the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools should act now to address racism in schools.

Language provision

Both adults and children must have access to the support they need to become proficient in English. The experience of children and young people having to attend classes and socialise with others when they do not understand the language must be daunting. Consistent and appropriate English language support should be available to every child who requires it. As noted above, adults also require language support not just to access jobs and function and progress in the workplace but also so that they can confidently play their full part in Northern Ireland society; a lack of language proficiency, particularly for many women who are not in employment, can lead to isolation and loneliness.

Information

A common theme running through this mapping exercise was the need for more information to enable newcomers and those who have been in Northern Ireland for some time fully to understand the society in which they are living. This lack of information was highlighted in relation to education. People need to understand Northern Ireland's educational environment, how to select an appropriate school for their children, the 'divided' nature of the school system, what to do if they do not want their children to attend religious education classes and how they might get involved with the school, for example as a school governor.

Recommendations on education

- 6.2.1** The Department of Education for Northern Ireland (DE) should:
- 6.2.1.1 Together with the Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum implement a system to monitor and tackle racial bullying in Northern Ireland's schools and support schools and teachers to fulfil their statutory duties and ensure a consistent and coordinated approach to anti-bullying policy and practice consistently across all schools;
 - 6.2.1.2 Ensure the Northern Ireland curriculum includes education that contributes to cultural competence and values and respect for difference consistent with international human rights obligations and standards;
 - 6.2.1.3 Implement the recommendations of the Independent Review of the Common Funding Scheme (January 2013) to ensure that ring fenced funding is used to meet the needs of ethnic minority children including additional and consistent English language support;³⁴

34. <http://www.deni.gov.uk/de-position-on-recommendations-11-june-2013.pdf>

- 6.2.1.4 Ensure that religious education provision offers alternatives that appropriately reflect the diversity of religious and other beliefs, including non-belief, consistent with international human rights standards and that schools proactively inform parents about choice;
- 6.2.1.5 Ensure the current arrangements of the Inclusion and Diversity Service to strengthen and improve support to newcomer children, young people and their parents, are effective and applied and outcomes monitored and reported on consistently across all education and library boards.
- 6.2.2** The Education and Training Inspectorate should as part of its inspection regime assess how Northern Ireland schools are addressing and monitoring racial and other forms of bullying.
- 6.2.3** The ECNI should:
- 6.2.3.1 Review and report on the extent to which the provisions of its good practice guide on Racial Equality in Education³⁵ are being implemented consistently across schools and make recommendations for ways to enhance adherence to good practice;
- 6.2.3.2 Urge government to implement its recommendations³⁶ on equality legislation in relation to education provision including strengthening the enforcement mechanisms for complaints and extending the Section 75 equality duties to schools.
- 6.2.4** The Northern Ireland Children and Young People's Commission should, in partnership with DE and others across the sector including teacher training providers, develop and promote models of good practice on intercultural and inclusive teaching provision drawing on lessons from across the UK and elsewhere.

6.3 Social inclusion

Health

As with education, better and more accessible information on the health and social care system is needed, particularly on arrival in Northern Ireland. Access to general practitioners and specialists needs to be improved and support in the form of interpreting services readily available when needed, especially for those with mental ill health or requiring counselling or living with domestic violence. It would also appear that work is needed to tackle inappropriate and insensitive attitudes often displayed by front-line staff in health centres.

Housing

Finding an adequate and safe place to live is a priority for everyone and newcomers and those in many BME communities face barriers in doing so. Asylum seekers who live in managed accommodation may lack adequate support while others encounter discrimination or difficulties in the private rental sector meeting requirements for references, deposits or guarantors. The Northern Ireland Housing Executive can offer a supportive service in helping individuals and families to access accommodation; however, this support was not always forthcoming and people are left alone to fathom the paperwork and application process.

Living in a post-conflict society

Those who have lived in Northern Ireland for some time are aware of the past conflict and the current state of community relations. For those new to the country, however, this understanding is lacking and the segregated nature of some parts of Northern Ireland poses challenges

35. <http://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/RaceEqualityinEducationGoodpracticeguide2001.pdf>

36. ECNI Racial Equality Policy. Priorities and Recommendations, May 2014

for some who do not want to be labelled as *'belonging'* to one or other of the two dominant communities. People do not know where they fit and some fear paramilitaries and have concern for their personal safety which has a negative impact on their lives.

Policing

Generally BME individuals and communities have a positive attitude towards the PSNI; however, the loss of PSNI Ethnic Minority Liaison Officers was seen as unfortunate as they offered support and advice from people who understood minority communities and the issues they face. Overall, there is concern about the upsurge of racist attacks, especially in Belfast.

Information

Again the lack of information was seen as a barrier to social inclusion. If efforts were increased to ensure that accessible information was available on housing, health, social security and other support this would enhance the lives of many newcomers and other BME individuals. It would enable them to play a greater part in Northern Ireland life and access to services to which they are entitled but which they may often miss out on. The need for accessible information to fully ensure the EU goal of free movement of workers has been recognised by the adoption of Directive 2014/54/EU. Although the UK government appears to assume that it needs to take no further action to implement this Directive, it is clear from the mapping that this is a critical issue which needs to be addressed in Northern Ireland.

Recommendations on social inclusion:

- 6.3.1** As part of and to complement recommendation 6.5.3, BBC, UTV, local radio and other media channels should build knowledge among the public of the contribution made by BME communities/migrant workers to Northern Ireland society.
- 6.3.2** The Office of the First and Deputy First Ministers should ensure that, in implementing the *Together: Building a United Community*³⁷ strategy, specific action to tackle racism is taken, monitored and reported on.
- 6.3.3** NICEM should:
 - 6.3.3.1** Work with the Electoral Commission and the BME sector to identify and implement ways to encourage the registration of BME voters;
 - 6.3.3.2** Continue to find ways to increase participation and encourage involvement in order to build capacity among BME individuals and communities to engage with their public institutions and political representatives and hold them to account;
 - 6.3.3.3** In partnership with the ECNI, seek funding to pilot schemes such as peer support or community development schemes which use rights-based approaches to empowering BME individuals to disseminate information at grass roots level.
- 6.3.4** The Department of Health, Social Services and Personal Safety should develop, in partnership with the BME sector, a campaign to ensure that failed asylum seekers who are residing in Northern Ireland while they await action on their immigration status have access to primary health care.
- 6.3.5** The Business Services Organisation should:
 - 6.3.5.1** Publicise among BME communities their right to free interpreting services on request in health and social care settings in particular for those suffering mental ill health or requiring counselling services;

³⁷ Together: Building a United Community, OFMDFM, para 1.2

- 6.3.5.2 Develop an education programme in partnership with the health sector trade unions to educate frontline reception staff, including anti-racist/awareness training, good practice for social workers and others in working with interpreters, and encourage people from BME communities to consider social work as a career.
- 6.3.6 All new district councils should ensure that the needs and interests of BME communities are integral to the development and implementation of their community planning function.

6.4 Active citizenship

Politics and the media

Although numbers of people do vote, the polarised nature of politics in Northern Ireland acts as a disincentive to many BME voters or potential voters who express the view that there is little point in doing so as politicians do not care about the issues that concern them. It appears that Northern Ireland politicians have much work to do before they will understand BME communities' needs and the contribution they can and do make to society.

In terms of leadership, political parties, representatives and candidates need to make greater efforts to represent all communities in Northern Ireland including those who participated in this project but who feel their views are ignored. Similarly, the media has a significant leadership role to play. People believe that some reporting fuels racism and hate crime with little done to tell a balanced story about the diversity of communities across Northern Ireland. The media storm over Islamophobic and xenophobic comments made by public officials during the consultation period for this research highlighted the need for clear guidance with respect to the conduct of elected representatives in the public sphere; this is reflected in the findings and comments.

Participation

Many BME people are involved in a range of community activities – from church, mosque or other religious organisations, to leisure activities and engagement with schools. Levels of participation in civil society appear to be high and provide potential upon which to further develop engagement and integration.

Recommendations on active citizenship:

- 6.4.1 The All Party Group on Ethnic Minority Communities should consider the findings of this report and work with the NI Assembly's outreach programme to assist them to develop opportunities for politicians to meaningfully engage with their BME electorate, and encourage lobbying, debate and participation of BME individuals in public and political life.
- 6.4.2 The Local Government Staff Commission for Northern Ireland should consider how its equality and diversity work could raise the profile of BME individuals and communities within district councils.
- 6.4.3 All Northern Ireland political parties should make public, as part of their manifestos and policy papers, their commitment to addressing racial discrimination and proactively take steps to determine and address issues of concern to BME communities.
- 6.4.4 The PSNI should implement a programme of engagement and outreach across Northern Ireland to build on and develop positive relationships and challenge and address reasons for distrust within some communities.

- 6.4.5** The Northern Ireland Assembly should ensure that its Code of Conduct and Guide to the Rules Relating to the Conduct of Members sets the highest standards for members in line with the requirements of national and international human rights and equality law.

6.5 Welcoming society

Racism and abuse

Unfortunately many people from BME communities have been subjected to abuse, physical or verbal attacks or less favourable treatment at home, on the street, at work, in the shops or when accessing services, including from children. There is concern that the attitudes of indigenous Northern Ireland people are changing with some becoming less welcoming in their attitudes perhaps due to the recession and concern for jobs and opportunities. Negative media reporting or attitudes and behaviours from service providers add to this. Northern Ireland society needs to acknowledge and take seriously the fact that racism is a reality of many people's daily lives.

Information

The reason for the lack of reporting on hate crime and abuse – whether at work or elsewhere – includes lack of awareness of supportive organisations which could help to protect people or tackle the causes of such crimes. People who lack language skills or are not aware of their rights too often do not come forward for fear of reprisals or a belief that nothing will change. Information on human rights, a widespread knowledge and acceptance that hate crime is unlawful, and knowledge of the existence of institutions such as the ECNI or the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission as well as a range of NGOs willing to engage with such issues is needed to build confidence and encourage reporting. Politicians or public officials, who are seen not to be interested in the concerns of the BME community, have a leadership role to take here.

As noted above, information on the nature of NI society, its divided past and how it impacts on housing, education and politics would be helpful in assisting newcomers to integrate.

Recommendations on a welcoming society:

- 6.5.1** OFMDFM should, as part of its oversight role in promoting racial equality in Northern Ireland:
- 6.5.1.1 Ensure through the RES that government departments and agencies adopt and implement the recommendations in this mapping report;
 - 6.5.1.2 Reconvene the Racial Equality Panel and ensure that it has an overarching role and develops clear terms of reference, an agreed action plan, and mechanisms to measure targets and monitor outcomes across all Executive departments;
 - 6.5.1.3 Ensure that the RES and the strategies referred to in paragraph 3.2.2 above take account of BME and multiple identity needs and issues;
 - 6.5.1.4 Ensure that there is synergy between the RES and TBUC so that, together, they can deliver racial equality in Northern Ireland.
- 6.5.2** The PSNI, the Public Prosecution Service and the Department of Justice should prioritise the reduction and elimination of racial violence including the identification of a range of effective actions to improve reporting and how racist hate crimes are addressed; and to reduce and prevent racist violence (including re-offending).

- 6.5.3** The Independent Press Standards Organisation should work with the BME sector to raise awareness of its role, its Code and standards and how BME communities can report issues of concern.

- 6.5.4** Service providers and agencies working with BME communities should actively address the need for more information about all aspects of life in Northern Ireland, including a review of the effectiveness of translated written information as a tool of communication; this is particularly important to ensure better information for newcomer families, in particular where they find themselves caught between the *'two dominant cultures'*.

Appendix 1: Mapping questionnaire

SECTION A: Integration Themes

1. EMPLOYMENT

1.1 Have you been able to get a job that pays enough for you to live on and covers your expenses?

Yes No

1.2 Have you been able to get a job that uses your qualifications, skills and experience?

Yes No

1.3 Do you feel or have you felt that you experienced discrimination/less favourable treatment in your workplace because you are perceived as a 'foreigner', or a member of an ethnic minority group?

Yes No

1.4 If you lost your job, what would you do? *(Please tick all that apply)*

Find another job

Apply for social security/help from the state

Return to my country of origin

Rely on family or friends

Other, please specify: _____

2. EDUCATION

2.1 If you have children in school, is their education meeting the standards you expect?

Yes No Not applicable

2.2 Do you participate in adult education? (e.g. attend evening classes, English language classes or schools or other educational activities)

Yes No

3. SOCIAL INCLUSION

3.1 Is your income sufficient to meet your family's basic needs? Yes No

3.2 Are you able to access the healthcare you need for yourself and your family? Yes No

3.3 Is your home safe and adequate for you and your family's needs? Yes No

4. ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

4.1 If you are registered to vote, do you vote in any of the following elections?

Local district council elections Yes No

NI Assembly elections Yes No

UK Westminster elections Yes No

European Parliament election Yes No

I am not registered to vote Yes No

I do not know if I am registered to vote Yes No

Not applicable Yes

If you are registered but do not vote, why not? _____

SECTION A: Integration Themes continued

4.2 Are you actively involved in any of the following (*please tick all that apply*):

- a. Local church/mosque/temple/place of worship?
- b. Local community centre
- c. Community group associated with your nationality
- d. Special interest group or club (e.g. women's group, angling club)
- e. English language school
- f. Parents' group
- g. Local gym or leisure centre

4.3 Do you know and mix with people from backgrounds different from your own?

Yes No

5. WELCOMING SOCIETY

5.1 Do you perceive Northern Ireland as a welcoming society?

Yes No Partly

Explain or add your comments, if any: _____

5.2 Do you trust your politicians/ public officials to promote racial equality and to do their best to make your life better? [For example, do they understand your needs; do they represent your interests, etc.?

Yes No Partly

Explain or add your comments, if any: _____

5.3 Do you trust that the police will help you if you are the victim of a crime? Yes No

5.4 Have you ever experienced any of the following?: (tick all that apply)

Verbal or physical attack at **your home**? Yes No

Verbal or physical abuse on **the street**? Yes No

Humiliation/harassment by a client or colleague in **your workplace**? Yes No

Racially motivated bullying of your **child or children in school**? Yes No

Different treatment because of your **ethnicity, country of origin, colour or religion**? Yes No

Less favourable treatment when you are **shopping or using public services**? Yes No

If you have experienced any of the above, did you report it to the authorities?
(i.e. the police, the Equality Commission for NI, the school head teacher etc.) Yes No

If not, why not: _____

6. YOUR ISSUES AND CONCERNS

What are the 3 main issues affecting your life and your family? [For example, cheaper childcare, recognition of your qualifications, secular schools, access to education/language skills etc.]

1. _____

SECTION A: Integration Themes continued

2. _____

3. _____

If you have experienced any problems or difficulties in relation to employment, education, social inclusion, or a 'welcoming society', tell us more about what you would like to change for the better:

SECTION B: About you

To ensure we understand the context of your answers to the questions, please tell us more about your background and characteristics as follows:

1. **What is your gender?** (*tick one box only*) Male Female

2. **In which of the following regions do you live?** (*tick one box only*)

Belfast or the North East

Mid Ulster or Down

North West

3. **What age are you?** (*tick one box only*)

Under 19 45 – 49

20 – 24 50 – 54

25 – 29 55 – 59

30 – 34 60 – 64

35 – 39 65 – 69

40 – 44 70 +

4. **What qualifications do you have?** (*tick all the boxes which apply*)

- Primary school education
- Secondary school education or equivalent in another country
(e.g. O + A Levels/CSE/GCSEs, Diplomas, NVQs, BTEC, City and Guilds etc.)
- Third level qualifications (e.g. BA, BSc, MA, PhD, PGCE etc.)
- Professional qualifications (e.g. teaching, nursing, accountancy)
- Other qualifications (e.g. vocational/work-related qualifications)
- Other qualifications gained outside the UK

5. **How long have you been resident in NI?** (*tick one box only*)

Less than 3 months 5 - 10 years

3 months – 1 year Over 10 years

1 - 2 years All my life

3 - 4 years

6. **What is your country of birth?**

China

Hong Kong

Hungary

India

Ireland

Kenya

Latvia

Lithuania

Nigeria

Northern Ireland

Pakistan

Philippines

Poland

Portugal

Romania

Slovakia

South Africa

United Kingdom (other)

Zimbabwe

Other (*please specify*):

SECTION B: about you continued

7. What is your ethnic group?

- | | | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Chinese | <input type="checkbox"/> | Bangladeshi | <input type="checkbox"/> | Mixed | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Irish Traveller | <input type="checkbox"/> | Asian (other) | <input type="checkbox"/> | White | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Roma | <input type="checkbox"/> | Black Caribbean | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (please specify): | |
| Indian | <input type="checkbox"/> | Black African | <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ | |
| Pakistani | <input type="checkbox"/> | Black (other) | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

8. What is your immigration status? (Please tick one box only)

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| UK national/British citizen | <input type="checkbox"/> | Visitors Visa | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Asylum seeker | <input type="checkbox"/> | Student Visa | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Refugee | <input type="checkbox"/> | Work permit | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| European Union citizen | <input type="checkbox"/> | Spouse/dependent visa | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Spouse of European Union citizen | <input type="checkbox"/> | Overstayed visa | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Spouse of non-EU national | <input type="checkbox"/> | No immigration status | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Indefinite leave to remain | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (please specify): | _____ |

9. Language

How well would you rate your own English language ability in the following areas? (Please tick one box for each skill.)

- | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| a. Reading Ability | None <input type="checkbox"/> | Poor <input type="checkbox"/> | Fair <input type="checkbox"/> | Good <input type="checkbox"/> | Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Writing Ability | None <input type="checkbox"/> | Poor <input type="checkbox"/> | Fair <input type="checkbox"/> | Good <input type="checkbox"/> | Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Speaking Ability | None <input type="checkbox"/> | Poor <input type="checkbox"/> | Fair <input type="checkbox"/> | Good <input type="checkbox"/> | Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Understanding Ability | None <input type="checkbox"/> | Poor <input type="checkbox"/> | Fair <input type="checkbox"/> | Good <input type="checkbox"/> | Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> |

10. Employment status

Are you:

Employed Not in employment Self-employed Seeking work

If employed, are you a member of a Trade Union? Yes No

What type of job do you do?

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Administrative services (e.g. receptionist) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Food Services (e.g. meat processing) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Business Owner | <input type="checkbox"/> | Hotel and Catering (e.g. waiter, chef) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Childcare and Social Work | <input type="checkbox"/> | IT (e.g. computer technician) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Cleaner/Domestic help | <input type="checkbox"/> | Manufacturing and Production | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Construction (e.g. builder, joiner) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Medical and Healthcare (e.g. nurse) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Customer services and Call centre | <input type="checkbox"/> | Professional and scientific (e.g. lawyer) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Education and Training (e.g. teacher) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Retail Trade (e.g. supermarket cashier) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Finance and Insurance (e.g. bank worker) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Agriculture (e.g. mushroom picker) | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Other (please specify): _____

Appendix 2: EU Integration indicators

POLICY AREA	INDICATORS
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Employment rate o Unemployment rate o Activity rate o Self employment o Over qualification
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Highest educational attainment (share of population with tertiary, secondary and primary or less than primary education) o Share of low-achieving 15 year olds in reading, mathematics and science o Share of 30 – 40 year olds with tertiary education attainment o Share of early leavers from education and training o Language skills of non-native speakers
Social inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Median net income (of the immigrant population as a proportion of the median net income of the total population) o At risk of poverty rate (share of population with net disposable income of less than 60% of the national median) o The share of population perceiving their health status as good or poor o Ratio of property owners to non-property owners among immigrants and the total population
Active citizenship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The share of immigrants that have acquired citizenship o The share of immigrants holding permanent or long-term residence permits o The share of immigrants among elected representatives o Voter turnout

Source: the Zaragoza Declaration

POLICY AREA	ADDITIONAL INDICATORS
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Public sector employment o Temporary employment o Part-time employment o Long-term unemployment o Share of foreign diplomas recognised o Retention of international students
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Participation in early childhood education o Participation in life-long learning o Not in education, employment or training o Concentration in low-performing schools
Social inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Child poverty o Self-reported unmet need for medical care o Life expectancy o Healthy life years o Housing cost over-burden o Overcrowding o In-work poverty risk o Persistent poverty risk
Active citizenship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Participation in voluntary organisations o Membership in trade unions o Membership in political parties o Political activity
Welcoming society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Perceived experience of discrimination o Trust in public institutions o Sense of belonging o Public perception of racial discrimination o Public attitudes to political leaders with ethnic minority backgrounds

Appendix 3: Profile of respondents to the mapping project questionnaire

AGE – total 445		
AGE GROUP	NUMBER	Percentage of total
Under 24	36	8%
25 – 34	168	38%
35-44	170	38%
45-54	51	11%
55-64	18	4%
Over 65	2	0.4%

SEX – total 441			
MALE		FEMALE	
Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
152	34%	289	66%

COUNTRY OF BIRTH - total (based on 451 responses)		
Country of birth	Number	Percentage of total
China	8	1.8
Hong Kong	6	1.3
Hungary	17	3.8
India	0	0
Ireland	1	0.2
Kenya	3	0.7
Latvia	3	0.7
Lithuania	28	6.2
Nigeria	4	0.9
Northern Ireland	7	1.6
Pakistan	5	1.1
Philippines	17	3.8
Poland	200	44.3
Portugal	8	1.8
Romania	31	6.9
Slovakia	4	0.9
South Africa	2	0.4
United Kingdom (Other)	4	0.9
Zimbabwe	3	0.7

EMPLOYMENT STATUS – total 444		
STATUS	NUMBER	Percentage of total
Employed	273	61%
Self-employed	68	15%
Not employed	55	12%
Looking for work	48	11%

OTHER COUNTRIES OF BIRTH:			
Country of birth	Number	Country of birth	Number
Belarus	2 (0.4)	Singapore	2 (0.4)
Germany	2 (0.4)	Palestine	2 (0.4)
Czech Republic	3 (0.7)	Mexico	6 (1.3)
Iran	1 (0.2)	Cuba	1 (0.2)
Italy	3 (0.7)	East Timor	1 (0.2)
USSR	2 (0.4)	France	1 (0.2)
Ghana	1 (0.2)	Angola	1 (0.2)
Russia	7 (1.6)	Israel	1 (0.2)
Colombia	1 (0.2)	Uzbekistan	1 (0.2)
Bulgaria	19 (4.2)	Kazakhstan	3 (0.7)
Basque Country	2 (0.4)	Ivory Coast	2 (0.4)
Spain	4 (0.9)	Moldova	2 (0.4)
USA	5 (1.1)	Morocco	6 (1.3)
Ukraine	2 (0.4)	Brazil	3 (0.7)
Wales	1 (0.2)	Caribbean	1 (0.2)
Bangladesh	1 (0.2)	Estonia	1 (0.2)
Guinea-Bissau	2 (0.4)	Argentina	1 (0.2)
Sudan	4 (0.9)	Malaysia	3 (0.7)

