Racist Harassment in Northern Ireland

Neil Jarman & Rachel Monaghan
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Contents

Executive Summary

This report reviews the scale and nature of racist harassment and violence in Northern Ireland as evidenced by a review and analysis of all the racist incidents recorded by the police between 1996 and 2001. The report also reviews a range of policy and practice initiatives within the statutory, voluntary and community sectors that have been initiated to respond to the problem of racist harassment and violence.

The framework for the research was on one hand the Stephen Lawrence Report published in 1999 and which made a series of recommendation in relation to reporting, recording and responding to racist violence. And on the other hand it was a response to the growing recognition of scale of the problem of racist harassment in Northern Ireland at a time when minority ethnic communities and organisations were growing in size and visibility.

Minority Ethnic Population

The report draws on material in the 2001 Census in relation to the size of the minority ethnic communities in Northern Ireland. It notes that the census data quantifies the size of minority ethnic communities as 14,279, and while the size of many of the communities is similar to predictions, there remains a dispute over the size of the Chinese community in Northern Ireland. The census also identifies a new ethnic category the 'mixed' group, a category which had not previously been used and about which we know little.

The 2001 Census also provides data on religious communities and on people not born in the UK or Republic of Ireland and who thus raise the potential non-indigenous population to around 40,000 people. The Census thus provides some considerable data on the minority ethnic population of Northern Ireland, but also raises a number of questions about the true scale and size of the various ethnic, religious and national communities.

Racist Incidents

The police have been recording racist incidents since 1996 when 41 such incidents were recorded. By 1998 the figure had risen to 106 and it increased again in each of the next two years with 285 incidents being recorded in 2000. The figure dropped to 222 in 2001. Although these numbers are relatively small, Northern Ireland has a high ratio of racist incidents for the size of the minority ethnic population compared with England and Wales.

It is suggested that there are a number of reasons for the increase in figures.
1. There has been a real increase in the number of racist incidents;
2. There has been an increase in the number of people being prepared to report incidents to the police;
3. There have been improvements in the police systems of recording incidents that are reported to them;

4. The publicity about racist harassment and the interest generated by the Stephen Lawrence Report has been a further factor encouraging reporting and recording.

While the police have made steps to increase reporting and to improve the recording of racist incidents, there are still a number of factors that reduce the willingness of people to report incidents to the police. It is worth noting that the police have begun to receive reports of racist incidents from Travellers.

There are however a number of gaps where racist incidents have not been noted, for example there are no recorded incidents of racist incidents in the health service and few school related incident, while research in England and Wales suggests both of these are areas where members of minority ethnic communities experience racism.

Furthermore there has still been little progress on establishing a multi-agency system of recording and reporting racist incidents, one of the key recommendations of the Stephen Lawrence Report.

Part Two of the report provides a detailed analysis of the 881 racist incidents recorded by the police between 1996 and 2001. This reveals that while incidents have been recorded in 67 towns and villages across Northern Ireland, 49% of all incidents have been recorded in Belfast and a further 20% have been recorded in County Antrim.

The largest number of incidents in Belfast were recorded in the south of the city which accounted for 198 incidents or 47% of the total. East Belfast and North Belfast accounted for a further 19% and 18% respectively. Most of the incidents in Belfast were recorded in Protestant working class areas.

Outside of Belfast a growing number of incidents have been recorded in the Greater Belfast area including Bangor, Carrickfergus and Glengormley. Elsewhere Derry Londonderry, and locations within the triangle of Armagh, Dungannon and Lurgan had the highest number of incidents.

The most numerous forms of racist harassment were abuse and attacks on property, however 24% of the incidents involved a form of physical assault. Nearly 53% of incidents occurred in or near the victim's home, with 21% occurring in the street and a similar percentage occurring at a place of work.

In 32% of cases the perpetrator was unknown but in contrast in 26% of cases the perpetrator was someone identified as a neighbour or who lived near to the victim. The stereotypical perpetrator was a young adult white male acting with other young adult white males. Females were involved in 15% of reported cases of racist harassment.

Responding to Racist Harassment

One area of concern to members of minority ethnic communities is that they receive little information about police responses to complaints. In many cases the police can do little but note the complaint as not all reports are in relation to criminal activity. However, the current system of recording and tracking data does make it difficult to

determine the responses made by the police and the wider criminal justice system and the current report forms indicate responses for 400 incidents and in 282 cases no further action was taken.

The PSNI have however developed a number of initiatives in response to the growing numbers of racist incidents and have frequently been the lead agency in developing multi-agency initiative in response to racist harassment and violence.

There has been a number of consultation and other documents released in recent years in relation to issues of racism. These include advice on dealing with racism in the workplace, a good practice guide to racial equality in education, consultations on racial equality in housing and health, on hate crime legislation and on a race equality strategy. The report also notes that a number of other agencies, including the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, various education bodies, Victim Support and numerous voluntary and community organisations have begun to work together to respond to racism. This is all very positive however, to date much of this work remains in its early stages and there is a need to increase the level of joined up working.

Recommendations

The report includes a number of recommendations, which aim to improve the level of responses to racism and racist harassment and violence in Northern Ireland. These include:

1. Reviewing the current approaches to recording racist incidents to establish a standardised and integrated multi-agency method that allows for reporting in varied location 24 hours a day.

2. The police should continue the positive work they have done in responding to racist incidents, but could improve current methods or recording incidents, tracking responses and dealing with perpetrators of minor incidents. The police should also do more to recruit minority ethnic police officers.

3. Other agencies, particularly bodies responsible for health and education should do more to determine the scale of racist harassment within the health service and the education sector. In particular we know very little about the scale of racist bullying in schools.

4. There could be value in looking in more detail at the type and scale of responses that have been developed in other countries in response to issues of racist harassment and violence and in exploring the scope for a campaign that promotes awareness and pride in the growing ethnic and cultural diversity in Northern Ireland.

Introduction

Over the past few years there has been an increasing recognition of the growing ethnic and cultural diversity in Northern Ireland. Greater acknowledgement has been paid to the longstanding presence of a range of minority ethnic groups, of a growing refugee and asylum seeker community, of internal migration within the United Kingdom and of the arrival of foreign nationals seeking to work in Northern Ireland. This increasing diversity brings with it challenges as well as the evident benefits of developing into a society of greater cultural and social variety and complexity.

The challenges have been acknowledged, in part, by the introduction of the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order in 1997, the creation of the Commission for Racial Equality and a growing number of consultation documents on promoting racial equality and addressing racial discrimination. However, there is a persistent and growing problem in terms of racist harassment and violence towards members of the minority ethnic communities, which police data suggests has increased significantly in recent years.

Responding to such evident racist hostility has traditionally been viewed as the responsibility of the police. However, the findings of the Patten Report, the Criminal Justice Review and the Report of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry and the recommendations in the Race Equality Strategy all point to the need to develop a broader approach and to increase the involvement of a wide range of statutory, voluntary and community organizations, including in particular those responsible for Education, Housing, Health and Social Services. Such arguments are underpinned by Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 which requires all statutory bodies to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between (among others) different racial groups.

This report offers an overview of the problem of racist harassment in Northern Ireland. It summarises research and data on the nature and scale of minority communities here; provides a detailed analysis of all the incidents of racist harassment and violence recorded by the police from 1996 to 2001; it places the problem of racism in Northern Ireland within a broader United Kingdom context; and looks at the range of practical and policy responses that have been and are being made by statutory, voluntary and community based organisations. As such, the study builds on and extends the work of an earlier report entitled, *Overview Analysis of Racist Incidents Recorded in Northern Ireland by the RUC 1996-1999* (Jarman 2002), which provided a preliminary analysis of a much smaller number of incidents.

This report has been prepared as part of a wider research project on racist, homophobic and sectarian violence, which is funded by the Equality Directorate Research Branch of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister. The research project will provide separate reports which detail and analyse the range and scale of each category of incidents across Northern Ireland; will evaluate current policy and practice in relation to issues of violence and harassment by relevant agencies and departments; and will compare effective policies and practices of the relevant agencies and departments in relation to issues of violence and harassment. The project will produce

policy recommendations aimed at improving institutional working practices, inter-agency partnerships and relationships between statutory and community based organisations.

All the recent published research on minority ethnic communities in Northern Ireland has acknowledged the ongoing presence of racist harassment in the lives of members of the minority communities (Connolly and Keenan 2000a, 2000b; Irwin and Dunn 1997; Hainsworth 1998; Mann-Kler 1997). However, with the exception of Jarman (2002), there has been no detailed analysis of the form, scale and nature of such harassment. This report builds on the earlier work to provide an overview of the scale and nature of racist harassment in Northern Ireland by analysing the 881 racist incidents recorded between 1996 and 2001. It looks at, among other things, the ethnic grouping, the age and the gender of those reporting harassment; the towns and cities in which harassment has occurred; whether the harassment took place at work, at home or in the street; the nature of the harassment and it provides some details of the perpetrators of racist harassment.

The data reveals that reports of incidents of racist harassment have been increasing each year since 1996; that racist harassment is a factor affecting all the various minority communities across a broad range of towns in Northern Ireland; that harassment affects children as well as senior citizens, women as well as men; that for many people the harassment is experienced in their own home, while for others harassment occurs at their place of work; and that for many people harassment is a repetitive and persistent fact of life, in which the harassers are people they recognise or who live locally.

The report also includes some broad comparison between the situation in Northern Ireland and the situation in England and Wales, where a significantly larger amount of data has been gathered by different police forces over a number of years. These suggest that members of minority communities in Northern Ireland report a relatively high level of cases of harassment in relation to the size of the population here.

This report also looks at the range of responses to this problem that have been developed by relevant statutory, voluntary and community based organisations working with the minority communities. It summarises the variety of initiatives that they have put in place to advise, inform and support the victims of racist harassment and crime. It also reviews a number of recent consultation and guideline documents that have been published by government departments in conjunction with the Equality Commission.

The research reveals that while many agencies and organisations have begun to respond to the problem of racist harassment, or at least have begun to think about how they might respond to the problem, there has been little concrete activity that effectively responds to the recommendations made in the Stephen Lawrence Report (published in 1999). But, as was noted in a report recently published by the Equality Commission (McGill and Oliver 2002), there has been a slow response by organisations in all sectors of social, political and economic life in Northern Ireland to issues of racism, institutional racism and racist harassment.

This report only addresses a few of the issues raised in the Stephen Lawrence Report. It does not, for example, review internal police changes relating to the investigation of racist crimes, to anti-racism and cultural awareness training, nor to procedures for prosecuting racist crimes. It was not intended as a review of responses to the Stephen Lawrence Report.

However, the research does show that responses to the recommendations related to the need to improve the capacity to report racist incidents, to improve the quality of data on racist incidents and most importantly to develop co-ordinated and effective inter-agency working on this issue, has not really developed very far in the four years since the report was published.

We still have a limited knowledge of the overall scale, range and nature of racist harassment experienced by the minority ethnic communities, besides that recorded by the police. In many cases the data on racist incidents is subsumed within broader categories of harassment and intimidation. Much of the data is not publicly available. Some key agencies have made little attempt to gather data on racist incidents.

There is no formal multi-agency body addressing this issue, although there are moves to constitute such a body, and most agencies and organisations are developing individual strategies and approaches (where they are developing any strategy at all) rather than being involved in preparing a co-ordinated approach. In some cases this is because the subject of racist harassment is regarded as low on the list of priorities. In others it seems more a matter of organisations preferring not to work together, defending self-interests or pursuing independent agendas.

Apart from the police, and more recently the Equality Commission, no public bodies have taken a strong lead to develop an effective and unified approach to racist harassment. It is interesting therefore that at a seminar on developing a multi-agency response to racism held in Belfast in June 2002, one of the guest speakers argued that the English experience indicated that the most effective multi-agency initiatives were those that were led by civil society organisations, rather than those that were left to the statutory sector to develop. Although the local NGOs have been playing a prominent role in responding to the increase in racist harassment, they have not yet taken the lead in the way that appears to have happened in parts of England.

This report aims to be a contribution to the process of recognising the significance of the problem of racist harassment in Northern Ireland, to provide an evaluation of the work that has been done around this issue and to make constructive recommendations about what still needs to be done.

Part One

Background and Overview

The first part of this report provides an overview of four key elements of the topic: a definition of a racist incident; the size and diversity of minority ethnic communities in Northern Ireland; the number of racist incidents recorded by the police and other agencies and the significance of racist harassment for the minority communities here.

1.1   Defining Racist Incidents

Racism and the racist harassment of minority ethnic communities became publicly acknowledged as a problem in Northern Ireland in the mid 1990s. Although issues related to racism and racist harassment had long been recognised as a significant problem in other parts of the United Kingdom (Bowling 1998; Gilroy 1987; Panayi 1996) it look much longer for people to accept the growing diversity of Northern Irish society and to recognise the increasingly hostile responses to such changes. However, following extensive lobbying by minority ethnic organisations and human rights groups recognition was given to the need to respond to the growing ethnic diversity and racism in Northern Ireland through a variety of legislative changes and practical initiatives.

In 1995 the police began to keep records of 'racially motivated incidents'. In 1997 the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order was passed bringing Northern Ireland belatedly into line with the rest of the United Kingdom. The 1997 Order also provided for the creation of the Commission for Racial Equality for Northern Ireland, although under the 1998 Northern Ireland Act the Commission became incorporated into the newly established Equality Commission. Furthermore, Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act also made it a statutory duty for public authorities to have due regard in carrying out their functions to 'the need to promote equality of opportunity' between (among others) persons of different racial groups (Section 75.1) and 'to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group' (Section 75.2). Finally the police and other bodies have also been expected to respond to the recommendations set down in the Stephen Lawrence Report with regard to responding to racism and racist harassment.

The Stephen Lawrence Report

The background to the Stephen Lawrence Report was the persistent and recurrent tensions between the police and the black and minority ethnic communities throughout the seventies and eighties, which frequently erupted in violence and disorder (Cashmore and McLaughlin 1991; Keith 1993; Scarman 1981). These tensions were often related to accusations and perceptions of discrimination and harassment in the policing of the black community, in particular, the policing of young black males. These came to a head in the mid 1990s as increasing concerns were voiced at the way the Metropolitan Police investigated the murder of 18-year-old Stephen Lawrence in Eltham, south London on 22 April 1993.

After years of criticism of the police the Home Secretary announced an Inquiry 'into matters arising from the death of Stephen Lawrence' to be chaired by Sir William Macpherson in 1997. The report published in 1999 (hereafter the Stephen Lawrence Report) produced an extensive list of 70 recommendations on practice and procedures in relation to policing the black and minority ethnic communities. These were designed to address problems of institutional racism, to improve training and awareness and to improve reporting, recording and responses to racist incidents and crimes.

Among the many changes, the Stephen Lawrence Report recommended that a new and simplified definition of a racist incident should be adopted by all police services and other relevant agencies. Recommendations 12-14 stated:

12. That the definition should be: 'A racist incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person'.

13. That the term 'racist incident' must be understood to include crimes and non-crimes in policing terms. Both must be reported, recorded and investigated with equal commitment.

14. That this definition should be universally adopted by the Police, local government and other relevant agencies.

The simplified definition of a racist incident involved a significant shift in emphasis in how such incidents were to be understood. The earlier police definition had referred to a 'racially motivated incident' rather than a 'racist incident' and a racially motivated incident was defined as: *Any incident in which it appears to the reporting or investigating officer that the complaint involves an element of racial motivation, or any incidents which include an allegation of racial motivation made by any person.* The change from a 'racially motivated incident' to a 'racist incident' involved a significant change of emphasis from the motivation of the perpetrator, towards prioritising the perception of the victim (HMIC 2001:40). The revised definition thus gives importance to the impact of such incidents on the victim rather than focusing primarily on the intention of the perpetrator. The change also removes the power of the police officer to determine whether an incident should be considered racist or not. It explicitly requires the police to record an incident as racist, if the victim or a third party insist that they perceive it to be racist.

While many people have welcomed the revised definition and it has been broadly accepted by the UK Government it has not been without criticism. Some police officers for example have said that the new definition is open to abuse. They have claimed that under the new definition they have recorded incidents as racist, which they have felt were not racist and that should have been recorded within the normal crime statistics. Others have countered by arguing that the new definition is an important small step in encouraging people to report those cases of harassment that have hitherto gone unreported or which had been reported but not recorded as racist by police officers.

These recommendations have been accepted by the Home Secretary and adopted into a wider *Code of Practice on reporting and recording racist incidents*. This definition has now been universally adopted by the police service *'and amongst other partner agencies'* in England and Wales (ACPO 2000; HMIC 2001; Home Office 2000). The new revised definition of a racist incident was also adopted by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and forms the basis for their policing of incidents where there is a perception of racism.

Another significant factor in the Stephen Lawrence Report was the acknowledgement that responding to racism was not just relevant to the police but was also the responsibility of 'local government and other relevant agencies'. Recommendation 14 demanded a co-ordinated response from a variety of relevant agencies and bodies in the future and the report included the following recommendations on reporting and recording racist incidents and crimes:

15. That Codes of Practice be established by the Home Office, in consultation with Police Services, local Government and relevant agencies, to create a comprehensive system of reporting and recording all racist incidents and crimes.

16. That all possible steps should be taken by Police Services at local level in consultation with local Government and other agencies and local communities to encourage the reporting of racist incidents and crimes. These should include:
   - *the ability to report at locations other than police stations: and*
   - *the ability to report 24 hours a day.*

17. That there should be close co-operation between the Police Service and local government and other agencies, including in particular Housing and Education Departments, to ensure that all information as to racist incidents and crimes is shared and is readily available to all agencies.

These recommendations were incorporated into the Home Office *Code of Practice on reporting and recording racist incidents*. This document further states 'there are many "players" who may have a role in dealing with racist incidents' and as well as those mentioned by the Stephen Lawrence Report it added: social services, Victim Support, race equality councils, multi-agency panels, religious organisations, Citizens Advice Bureaux, tenant's associations and other community groups (Section 1.6).

The *Code of Practice* recommends that multi-agency panels should operate in an organised way *'to provide information about racist incidents within an area that can be useful for prevention as well as investigation'* (Section 4.1). Part of the multi-agency working should be to facilitate ease of reporting racist incidents for those people who do not want to report directly to the police. It notes that in some areas arrangements have been made to allow incidents to be reported in such diverse locations as mosques, churches, shops, libraries, schools, community centres, leisure centres, social services, hospitals and doctors surgeries (Section 4.4).

The Lawrence Report includes a range of other recommendations. Some of these were specifically targeted at the Metropolitan Police but have been accepted as good practice for all police forces and other public bodies. They include a series of

recommendations related to the capacity and ability of the police to respond effectively, efficiently and sympathetically to the victims of racist harassment through the availability of trained police family liaison officers (Recommendations 23-28), through work with Victim Support (29-31), through the prosecution of racist crimes (32-44), through better police training in first aid (45-47), and through racism awareness and cultural diversity training (48-54). The report also recommends that there should be an independent system of investigating complaints against police officers (58), and that targets should be set for the recruitment of members of minority ethnic communities into the police (64-66). Finally the report makes a number of recommendations on the potential of the education system and the national curriculum to counter and challenge racism and racist attitudes (67-70).

Stephen Lawrence and Northern Ireland

A number of positive initiatives have been taken which address recommendations in the Stephen Lawrence Report. These include the following, many of which will be addressed in more detail in Part 3 below.

- The PSNI have adopted the revised definition of a racist incident and have been working with many of the minority ethnic organisations to improve the quality of service for the minority communities.
- There is also an ongoing debate between the police and such organisations about the quality and content of the current race awareness and anti-racism training.
- There is liaison between Victim Support and the minority community organisations to improve the level of service to victims of racist harassment.
- The Policing Board currently contains one representative of the minority communities within its membership.
- The PSNI have begun to monitor the number of minority ethnic officers within its ranks, although it has no formal targets for such officers.
- The Police Ombudsman has received a number of complaints of acts of racism by police officers and it investigates all such matters as an independent body.
- The NIO has issued a consultation paper on introducing legislation to make racist motivation an aggravating factor for criminal prosecutions.

Despite this range of initiatives, many agencies in Northern Ireland have been slow to respond to the recommendations of the Stephen Lawrence Report and to the rise in racism more generally in Northern Ireland. A recent report entitled *A Wake Up Call on Race* commissioned by the Equality Commission noted that in relation to racism in general and institutional racism in particular: *'It is clear ... that racism has not been a prominent item of concern in Northern Ireland up to now. It follows that little has been done to introduce anti-racist policies and programmes, particularly by employers and the social partners'* (McGill and Oliver 2002:15).

It is perhaps significant that many of the initiatives outlined above have come from within the police or the criminal justice sector rather than any of the other agencies identified in the Stephen Lawrence Report as having a responsibility to become involved in this issue.

An initial step in attempting to widen involvement occurred in June 2002 when the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the Equality Commission and the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities hosted a half-day seminar entitled *Tackling Racist Incidents*. The aim of the seminar was defined as: *to establish an inter-agency initiative for Northern Ireland in order to deal with racist incidents as one part of a wider strategy on racial harassment.* Participants included representatives from statutory bodies including the Housing Executive and organisations such as Victim Support, as well as many of the community and voluntary groups representing the minority ethnic organisations. The seminar proposed the formation of a working group with the responsibility of establishing a multi-agency strategy for Northern Ireland. At the time of writing this work is ongoing.

1.2   Minority Communities in Northern Ireland

There has long been a diversity of minority ethnic communities resident in Northern Ireland, although too often the tensions and conflicts between the two dominant white communities obscured their presence. Despite a number of recent reports and studies that have brought greater recognition of the history and status of Northern Ireland's minority communities (Hainsworth 1998; Irwin and Dunn 1997; Kapur 1997; Mann-Kler 1997; McCann et al 1994; Rolston and Shannon 2002), large gaps still exist in our knowledge of the scale and composition of the minority ethnic communities in Northern Ireland. However, continuing research and the data produced by the 2001 Census (see below) are steadily contributing to a clearer picture of the diversity of Northern Irish society.

Previous studies have tended to focus on particular minority ethnic groups. For example, Irwin and Dunn's study concentrated on four communities: Chinese, Indian, Pakistani and Travellers, while Hainsworth's collection covered the same groups with the inclusion of the Jewish community, probably the oldest existing minority in Ireland (Goldstone 2002; Lentin 2002; Warm 1998). In addition, the Vietnamese/Chinese community were included in Mann-Kler's study. However, minority ethnic communities in Northern Ireland are much more diverse than these six groups.

Recent research and community activity reveals that the diversity of the minority communities in Northern Ireland is far greater than previously suggested. It is no longer adequate to focus attention on the larger, well-established groups such as the Chinese, Indian, Pakistani and Traveller communities (although these groups are still the most prominent). For example:

- Recent work by the Multi-Cultural Resource Centre has focused on the presence and growth of the Bangladeshi, Latin American and Portuguese-speaking communities as well as the diverse range of nationalities and language communities that are resident in across Northern Ireland (Holder 2001, 2003; Holder and Lanao 2001, 2002; Soares 2002).
- The Sikh community in Belfast has increasingly differentiated itself from the larger south Asian community. It has also established its own Gurdwara and community centre in the north of the city to complement the well-established Gurdwara in Derry / Londonderry.
- The Muslim community has become more prominent as a pan-national grouping, particularly after the attacks on New York on September 11 2001.
- Refugees and asylum seekers have become more visible in recent years as local activists have lobbied for greater recognition of their presence and of their particular needs (Harvey and Ward 2001; McVeigh 2001; Tennant 2000). A recent report estimates that there are some 2,000 refugees and asylum seekers in Northern Ireland (McVeigh 2002). Like the Muslim community, this is a diverse community of people, which draws upon nationalities from Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America.
- Finally, migrant workers represent the most recent collective minority community in Northern Ireland. Again, this is an extremely diverse group of people and

includes individuals who are here as both documented and undocumented workers. The largest community are Portuguese-speaking workers living in mid-Ulster (Soares 2002). In contrast, the discovery of the bodies of two Lithuanian men by the side of the road outside Warrenpoint in May 2002 drew attention to the presence of people from eastern Europe who are here illegally and who are thus vulnerable to diverse forms of pressure and discrimination.

Notwithstanding this increasing amount of research and interest in minority ethnic communities, there has been no clear picture of the numbers of people involved, the composition of the different communities or of their demographic status. Irwin and Dunn's study (1997) estimated that the overall population for the main communities (Chinese, Indian, Pakistani and Traveller) would be around 11,000 in 2001. However, their figures for the Chinese community, which they estimated as between 3-5,000 in 1997 and 5-7,000 by 2001, were criticised as being a severe underestimate (Watson and McKnight 1998), and total figures for all communities were estimated at between 15,000 (police figures) and 20,000 (McVeigh 1998) with a more detailed estimate by the Multi-Cultural Resource Centre (2002) falling between these two at around 17,000.

The published census data estimates that the total population of those identifying themselves outside of the broad 'white' category as 14,279 persons. The Census figures for the different ethnic categories are set down in Table 1, alongside the relevant estimates from Irwin and Dunn and from the Multi-Cultural Resource Centre.

Table 1: 2001 Census data on minority ethnic communities in Northern Ireland

Ethnic Category	2001 Census	Irwin and Dunn	MCRC
Chinese	4 145	3 000–7 000	7 000-8 000
Mixed	3 319		
Traveller	1 710	1 700	1 500
Indian	1 567	1 200	1 500
Other	1 290		
Pakistani	666	800	700-1 000
Black African	494		1 600 (African)
Other Black	387		
Black Caribbean	255		
Bangladeshi	252		450-500
Other Asian	194		

Some of the NGOs have expressed a concern that the Census figures would underestimate the size of the minority ethnic communities in Northern Ireland. They suggested that factors such as suspicion and mistrust of official forms, language and literacy difficulties, and a feeling that such forms are not relevant to them are likely to affect the number of people who chose not to complete the census forms.

In fact the Census figures suggest that the overall population of minority ethnic people is indeed smaller than had been estimated by groups working in this area, with the total population of 14,279 people being lower than all but Irwin and Dunn's estimates. However, the Census data and the estimates from Irwin and Dunn and MCRC reveal

some broad agreement on the numbers for Travellers, Indians and Pakistanis, with only the figures for the Chinese being very different.

The Census figure for Travellers is in line with Irwin and Dunn's estimates (1710 cf 1700) and higher than those of the MCRC (1500). Furthermore recent work by the Housing Executive identified 452 Traveller households across Northern Ireland with an average of 3.88 persons per household. This would give a total population of some 1753 persons and would thus be only slightly higher than the Census data (NIHE 2002). Similarly Census figures for the Indian community are higher than estimates (1567 cf 1500 from MCRC), while those for the Pakistani community are slightly lower (666 cf 700/800).

The major difference is between the Census figures for the Chinese community and those estimates given by MCRC and other NGOs. In this case the Census data appears to provide support for Irwin and Dunn's figures when they argued that the Chinese community was actually much smaller (between 3-5000 in 1997) than was being claimed.

The Census data also raises an issue by identifying a group of over 3,300 people who have chosen to identify themselves as 'Mixed'. This is the second largest category overall and one that does not appear in any of the earlier estimates. Similarly the fifth largest group who ticked the 'Other' box is also something of an unknown. In fact these two groups account for 32% of those identifying as belonging to a minority ethnic group, but the Census sheds little further light on these people.

Another perspective on the minority communities is revealed through the Census data on religious beliefs. These figures reveal that 1943 people identified themselves as Muslim, 825 as Hindu, 533 as Buddhists, 365 as Jews, 254 as Bahai'i, 219 as Sikhs, 41 as Taoist, 32 as following Chinese religions and 13 Rastafarians and Zoroastrians. This gives a total of 4,238 people. While many of these people would probably be accounted for within the wider ethnic categories most, if not all, of the Jewish community would not be included in the total for minority ethnic communities. It is worth noting that the size of the Jewish community, at 365 people, is more than 50% higher than estimated by the Multi-Cultural Resource Centre.

It is however important to acknowledge that there will be members of the minority communities who did not complete the Census form, and this may particularly apply to new arrivals, migrant workers, refugees and asylum seekers, who therefore will not be included in the figures. This will also apply to all those who designated themselves as 'white' but who are from other countries, such as the Portuguese-speaking and other migrant worker communities, who will not be identified as a distinct ethnic group but rather are subsumed within the assumed indigenous 'white' grouping.

One other way to look at the figures is to focus on the Census data on country of birth. These figures reveal that there are 6,355 people who were born in other European countries and 20,204 people who were born elsewhere. This indicates that there are a total of 26,559 people who were in Northern Ireland in 2001 who were born outside of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. While some of these may well be UK and Republic of Ireland nationals it is reasonable to assume that most are not.

Many of them will members of minority ethnic communities. (For more details on those individuals not born in the UK or RoI see Bell, Jarman and Lefebvre 2004)

If one accepts that the majority of those born outside of the UK and Republic of Ireland are members of minority ethnic or national communities and that these figures do not include all those who identified themselves by ethnic group, as many (the majority?) of those were born in the UK or Republic of Ireland, then the overall number of the minority or non-indigenous communities could be as high as 40,000 people. The parameters therefore are a minimum population for minority ethnic communities of 14,279 and a maximum population of 40,000 plus allowing for some who failed to complete the Census form.

Therefore while the Census does provide some hard figures for some minority ethnic groups, it also raises questions about the overall scale and diversity of the minority ethnic, faith and national communities in Northern Ireland. The new parameters of a minority population of between 15,000 and 40,000 people in fact does not advance our knowledge very far, nor does it provide much guidance for those attempting to develop policy and support services for members of minority communities. It does suggest that while on one hand the figures for the population of the traditionally defined minority ethnic communities is on the low side of recent estimates, the actual number of people not born in Britain or Ireland and not regarding themselves as part of the white indigenous majority is considerably higher than recent estimates.

Categorising the Minority Communities

The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) racist incident report form, which was introduced under force order 92/97, provides six distinct racial categories within which the victim would normally be classified. These are Black, Chinese, Indian Sub-Continent, Other, Traveller and White. These six groups are broadly based on the main communities in Northern Ireland, although they are much narrower than the range of ethnic categories available for self-classification with the 2001 Census.

The PSNI force order provides the following guidelines for officers when allocating victims to one of the six groups:

- **Black**: should include people from Central and Southern Africa and those of African descent living in other countries.
- **Chinese**: includes people from China, Hong Kong and people of Chinese descent from Malaysia and Singapore, but not Malays, Koreans, Japanese who are classified as 'Other'.
- **Indian Sub-Continent**: this group includes people from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.
- **Other**: people from North Africa, South America, South East Asia, Japanese, Koreans and anyone who does not fall into the other five categories.
- **Traveller**: those who consider themselves and are accepted by other Travellers as such.
- **White**: includes all Europeans and people of European descent.

Most of the six categories are extremely broad but the category of 'Other' covers a particularly diverse and varied group of nationalities and communities. Incidents recorded in recent years includes individuals who described themselves or were described on the report form as: Arab, Asian, Bengali, Iranian, Japanese, Jordanian, Korean, Middle Eastern, Muslim, Palestinian and Turkish.

If one categorises the Census data on minority ethnic communities into these groups by combining the three sub-groups of Black Caribbean, Black African and Other Black as a single entity, adding the Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi populations together and adding the 'Other Asian' category to 'Other', but leaving the 'Mixed' category as a separate group, the figures and percentages of all minority ethnic population would be as follows.

Table 2: Minority ethnic population for police ethnic categories

	Census Figures	%
Black	1 136	8
Chinese	4 145	29
Indian	2 485	17
Mixed	3 319	23
Other	1 484	10
Traveller	1 710	12
White	*	

Note: The Census does not provide figures for a white minority ethnic population.

Until recently each police force in England and Wales drew up their own racist incident monitoring forms and could similarly include ethnic or racial categories that best represented their area. Thus different police areas categorised individuals into a variety of sub-groups (Maynard and Read 1997). Following the Stephen Lawrence Report, the Home Office published a standardised Code of Practice for recording racist incidents for all statutory, voluntary and community groups in England and Wales. This Code recommends that victims be classified into one of a minimum of five groupings: Black, White, Asian, Other and Unknown (Home Office 2000).

Both approaches involve a broad degree of generalisation in categorising people. For example, the Northern Irish Indian category encompasses a broad range of nationalities and religions including Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Sri Lankans, Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims, while the Home Office categorisation includes Indians, Pakistanis, Chinese, Japanese and South East Asian people within a much wider Asian group. However, the new Home Office Code also permits the inclusion of data on the person's religion, which is not included on the PSNI form, and thus allows more subtle analysis of records.

Both forms also allow for self-classification or the refusal to be classified. The PSNI form states *'Victim's ethnic origin as given by him/herself'* and the Home Office Code states: *'Religion' and 'Ethnicity' details are sensitive personal data, and should only be recorded with the explicit consent of the victim.* While this is a principled statement, it is perhaps undermined to some extent by the inclusion of the category 'Unknown'. It

is unlikely that many people would wish to categorise their ethnic identity in this manner and it is possible that this category will be completed by the police in cases where the victim might not wish to be categorised.

Differences between the current Northern Ireland and the new Home Office approach are significant enough to make a direct comparison between data from different forces difficult. For example it would not be possible to compare harassment of the Chinese community in Northern Ireland with that in areas of England, nor cases of harassment of Travellers with comparable nomadic communities in England and Wales in any meaningful way given the differences in categorisation. Unlike the Home Office Code of Conduct, it is not possible to isolate harassment of the Muslim community from the PSNI form, unless the police officer specifically adds extra information. Thus it is not possible to determine if there was an increase in incidents on the Muslim community after the attack on New York on 11 September 2001 as occurred elsewhere and has been claimed for Northern Ireland from members of the Muslim community (*Sunday World* 4.8.2002).

Our review of the PSNI forms also reveals that a number of victims are not satisfied with the currently available limited range of categories. Many insist on appending either their religion or nationality to one of the six categories, for example White/Muslim; Other/Muslim; Other/Palestinian and Other/Korean. It is also clear that some police officers do not follow the PSNI guidelines when advising or informing people of the rationale for the categories. For example there were a number of instances where European nationals such as French and Portuguese were classified as 'Other' when they should have be included in the 'White' group.

While it is pertinent that the PSNI form reflects 'the different make-up of ethnic groups in Northern Ireland', for example the inclusion of the category of Travellers, it would seem to be beneficial to bring local practice into line with wider UK standards. This would allow a broader comparison of emerging trends when analysing the data. Practically, this would involve redesigning the PSNI form to accommodate the Home Office categories of ethnic origin while retaining the Traveller category. Any revised form could also include a section for people to indicate their religious background, thus increasing the scope for self-designation.

In fact as will become obvious from the analysis of the data from the racist incident forms there is an argument for the form to be completely revised, both to bring the form into line with other police forces in England and Wales and to ensure that all the relevant data are included on each form.

1.3 Monitoring Racism

The police have monitored racially motivated incidents in Northern Ireland from January 1995. However, the format for recording data changed in 1996 and therefore this report is based upon an analysis of all racist incidents recorded by the police since the beginning of 1996 until the end of 2001. The data is drawn directly from racist incident report forms or Race One forms. These are completed at the local station when a crime or incident is perceived to be racist. The information is forwarded to the Minority Liaison Officer in each District Command Unit who has responsibility for responding to all racist incidents. The forms are copied to the Community Safety Branch, Headquarters for monitoring purposes (see Section 3.1 for more details of this process).

The current system is a paper based recording and monitoring process. However, the police are currently working to develop the Integrated Crime Information System (ICIS), a computerised process for logging crimes and incidents, to include racist, homophobic, sectarian and domestic incidents which do not include offences. When it is fully operational the ICIS system should lead to a more accurate recording and improved analysis of racist incidents, but at present the PSNI monitoring of racist harassment remains dependent on the existing paper systems.

This report draws upon an analysis of the 881 racist incidents that have been recorded by the police over a six-year period. The figures are broken down on a year-by-year basis in the table below.

Table 3: Racist incidents recorded between 1996 and 2001

1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	Total
41	41	106	186	285	222	881

These figures differ slightly from those published in the previous report, which analysed the police data on racist harassment from 1996-1999 (Jarman 2002). This is because we have attempted to address differences and anomalies that were apparent between various published police data and the incidents recorded on official racist incident report forms. A re-reading of all the files has led to the inclusion in the overall figures of a number of incidents that had been recorded on other types of forms and notes within the filing system.

The revised figures involve minor increases in the number of incidents in the first three-year period of recording. Nevertheless, the data reveals a substantial increase in the number of reported incidents over this period. Overall there has been an increase of 444% in the number of incidents recorded by the police between 1996 and 2001. However, it is also interesting to note that there was a reduction in the number of incidents recorded in 2001 compared to the figures for 2000. This decline in incidents continued in 2002 when the PSNI recorded 198 racist incidents. The data for 2002 are not included in this study however. Table 4 shows the annual percentage change based on the data for the period under study.

Table 4: Percentage annual increase of racist incidents

1996-1997	1997-1998	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	1996-2001
0	159	75	53	-22	444

A number of reasons can be suggested to explain the overall increase in recorded incidents over the recording period:

1. There has been a real increase in the number of racist incidents that have occurred in Northern Ireland.
2. There has been a greater willingness of people to report incidents to the police.
3. There has been an increase in the willingness or the awareness of police officers to record incidents as racist incidents.
4. The impact of the Stephen Lawrence Report and the revised definition of a racist incident has focused more attention on racist harassment and encouraged greater reporting and recording.

It is difficult to be certain of the relative importance of each or any of these factors. Recent research in England and Wales suggests that the rise in the number of recorded racist incidents is probably due to increased confidence and awareness of the issue both among members of the communities and the police following publicity around the Stephen Lawrence Report, coupled with greater ease of recording because of the involvement of a wider range of agencies with this issue (Burney and Rose 2002:34). However, the Stephen Lawrence Report has probably had less impact here than in England and it is probable that all four factors have contributed to the increase in recorded incidents in Northern Ireland in different ways.

1.   Real Increase in Number of Incidents

There has been an increasing awareness of the presence and diversity of people of other nationalities and religions in recent years. All the recently published research on race and diversity in Northern Ireland (and Ireland more generally) indicates that racism is a real issue, with widespread historical roots, that this society is only beginning to recognise and acknowledge (Equality Commission 2002; Farrell and Watt 2001; Lentin and McVeigh 2002; Rolston and Shannon 2002). Combining these two facts – a growing number and diversity of minority ethnic and religious communities and relatively unchallenged racist attitudes – would suggest that incidents of racist harassment will increase for the foreseeable future or until effective strategies are developed to challenge such attitudes and behaviour.

One other factor that may serve to account for some element of the recent increase in the number of incidents is the peace process. Although this has led to a reduction in paramilitary activity, it is also clear that it has not led to an end to sectarian and inter-community violence. In fact since the declaration of ceasefire by the main paramilitary organisations in 1994 there has been an increase in a number of categories of crime and violence. Recorded cases of domestic violence for example have almost doubled since 1995. The persistence of low-level inter-communal violence and anti-social behaviour may also have had an impact on attacks on members of minority communities. As sectarian residential segregation has continued to increase it is likely

that some people have identified the minority communities as the new 'other' and turned their attentions from the Protestant or Catholic minority towards the Chinese and Indian minorities who are beginning to create new interfaces in some working class communities. This is not to argue that racism and sectarianism are exactly the same, but that they have common roots in a society which does not tolerate difference, which is focused in upon itself, is insecure and which accepts violence and abuse as a broadly legitimate form of expression (see for example Farrell and Watt 2001; Lentin and McVeigh 2002; Rolston and Shannon 2002 for further discussion of these issues).

2. Increasing Reporting of Incidents

The police have argued that the designation of minority liaison officers (MLOs) within community involvement teams has been a significant factor in the willingness of people to report incidents of racist harassment. This is linked to MLOs dual remit of building better relationships with minority communities and responding to their problems. Recent research in England and Wales suggests that there has been an increased willingness of members of minority ethnic groups to report incidents in the wake of the publicity given to the problem by the Stephen Lawrence Report. Thus the greater recognition of the problem amongst both the police and members of minority communities largely accounts for the 107% rise in recorded incidents in England and Wales between April 1999 and April 2000 (Home Office 2000; Rayner 2001).

Many minority communities in Northern Ireland enjoy a relatively good working relationship with the police (Jarman 1999). Evidence from our research suggests that in areas where the MLO takes a more active interest in this aspect of their work there is an increase in the reporting of racist incidents. However, analysis of the police report forms also indicate that many people are prepared to suffer numerous experiences of harassment before they decide to make an initial report to the police (see section on Repeat Harassment below). Furthermore, certain communities, particularly the Travellers, do not have good relations with the police, while our interviews with police officers indicate that some MLOs have a less active engagement with minority communities. Finally it is also questionable as to how broadly the significance of racism is recognised and accepted amongst police officers in general and therefore how sympathetically they respond to reports made to them.

3. Improved Recording by Police

Apart from the designation of MLOs, the police have also attempted to improve recognition among all officers of the significance of recording and responding to racist harassment. This has been done primarily through improvements in Student Officer training, Probationer Constable training and District training and through the issuing of a force order on racist harassment. However, some minority ethnic organisations remain critical of the current race and cultural diversity training and insist that there is considerable scope for improvement. There is an ongoing need for work in this area as personal experience suggests that some officers see racism as a relatively minor problem compared with other incidents that they have to deal with, while others claim there is no need for racism training because of the lack of any members of minority communities in their area. Furthermore, the findings of the British Crime Survey suggest that there is a significant difference between the number of incidents people

claim to have *reported to* the police and the number of incidents *recorded by* the police. There is still probably some considerable work to be done to ensure that police officers record all racist incidents as such.

4.   Revised Definition

The improvement in the police recording of racist incidents in England and Wales is thought to be, in part, related to the publicity given to the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry and Report. Research suggests that collectively the Inquiry, report and subsequent debate probably increased the sensitivity of police officers to this issue and encouraged minority ethnic victims to report more incidents (Clancy and Hough 2001:39), at least in the short term.

Whatever the reason(s) that help to account for the growing number of racist incidents there has clearly been a substantial increase in the number of incidents that have been reported to and recorded by the police. However, it is also certain that those incidents that have been reported and recorded represent only a proportion of the total number of such incidents. It is still difficult to determine what proportion of racist incidents are reported to, and recorded by the police, although a number of studies have tried to determine the proportion of people who do report such incidents.

A study in the early 1980s by the Policy Studies Institute estimated that 60% of victims did not report 'racially motivated incidents' to the police (Brown 1984). Research in Glasgow in 1986 estimated that 44% of incidents were not reported, while research in London in 1993 gave a similar figure and suggested that 43% of cases were not reported (Chahal and Julienne 1999). More recently the 1996 British Crime Survey (BCS) in England and Wales indicated that 'only 45% of racially motivated offences were reported to the police during 1995' (CRE 1999). Thus overall the research figures suggest that between 40% and 57% of victims did report the incidents to the police.

If the patterns of reporting in Northern Ireland are broadly comparable with that elsewhere in the UK then it is likely that most cases of physical assault and damage to property are more likely to be reported to the police than cases involving abuse alone. On that basis it is estimated that only between 30% and 40% of cases of racist harassment have been recorded by the police in Northern Ireland (see Section 2.5 for more details).

A lack of willingness to report racist incidents to the police is not the only factor that distorts the true figures. They are also dependent on the willingness of police officers to record incidents reported to them as racist incidents. The British Crime Survey in 2000 indicated that while almost 48,000 racist incidents were *recorded by the police*, it estimated that nearly 150,000 such incidents were *reported to the police* (Clancy and Hough 2001:40). Thus only one in three incidents that are reported make it into the official data on racist incidents. The official figures are thus undermined both by a lack of willingness to report incidents to the police and by a failure or reluctance on behalf of the police to record some incidents as racist. Thus it is generally accepted that the published figures for recorded racist incidents represent only a percentage of all such incidents.

Factors Limiting Reporting

To date, there has been no work undertaken of a comparable nature to the BCS in relation to experiences of racist harassment in Northern Ireland. Thus, it is therefore far from clear as to what percentage of racist incidents are reported to and recorded by the PSNI. There is a wide range of factors that reduce the willingness of someone to contact the police (see also Burney and Rose 2002: 36-37; Chahal and Julienne 1999: 2; Sampson and Phillips 1995:15-16). These include:

1. **A Fact of Life**: The term racist incident is a diverse catch-all that includes everything from a violent assault to an act of verbal abuse. Many people state that they have come to accept things such as verbal abuse as a fact of life and would not bother to report it. Others state that they would only report abuse if it became persistent, repetitive, or began to have a serious impact upon their life.
2. **Crimes Yes, Incidents No**: Many people feel that the police will not bother to respond to an 'incident', whether racist or otherwise, because there is little that the police can do to address basic low level racist harassment.
3. **Police Ignorance**: Some people have stated that even if they do report racist harassment, the complaint will not progress through the police system due to the dependence upon the attitudes of police officers to take action. The recommendation in the Stephen Lawrence Report to change the definition of a racist incident was in part aimed at reducing the power of a police officer to decide whether an incident was racist or not.
4. **Suspicion of the Police**: All of the above factors are underpinned by a mistrust of the attitudes of police officers when dealing with members of minority communities and with issues related to racism. In part this may be compounded by differing attitudes and interests of the section officers who respond to incidents and the MLOs who deal with minority communities on a day-to-day basis.
5. **Police Racism**: One specific factor of concern is the belief that some police officers are themselves racist and are unwilling to respond fairly and equitably to claims of racist harassment. A small number of complaints of racism have been made to the Police Ombudsman's office, and these are discussed below. The PSNI have adopted a pro-active response to building relations with the minority communities, although the perceived hostility towards Travellers within the police is a problem that has yet to be addressed in any significant manner.
6. **Lack of Feedback**: It has been noted that while the police publish details of the number of incidents reported to them, it is more difficult to obtain any details on police responses. For example, no data is published on the number of arrests, prosecutions or convictions for racist activity. This fosters an attitude of 'if the police can't do anything, why bother to report it?'
7. **Language and Cultural Barriers**: Language differences, limited access to translators and interpreters and cultural considerations may also all be factors that reduce the willingness of some members of minority ethnic communities to report incidents to the police.
8. **Fear of Repercussions**: Some people are concerned that reporting cases of harassment to the police will do little to deter the perpetrator and may lead to further trouble. This is particularly the case when the perpetrator is a neighbour or lives nearby and when the victim is isolated from other members of their

community. This factor takes on more significance with the presence of paramilitary organisations in many working class estates.

Dealing effectively with these concerns is clearly an important issue for the police and the level of confidence that members of minority communities have in their local police officers will probably be reflected in the documenting of racist incidents. However, such confidence will only be sustained if the reporting and recording of such incidents is also seen to generate an effective and consistent response.

The increase in the number of racist incidents being recorded by the police may in part indicate that there have been some moves towards creating greater confidence in the police within minority ethnic communities. This may be particularly the case in those areas which have seen a sudden emergence of racist incidents in recent years. In such cases our research suggests that the growth in figures may largely be due to the quality of the relationship between those minority ethnic members targeted by racist harassment and their local Community Involvement officer. However, while there has been a greater recognition of the requirement for the police to be more sensitive to the needs of the minority communities and of the importance of responding more effectively to problems of harassment and violence, there are still difficulties in some relationships.

Relationships between the police and Travellers, for example, remain problematic despite the efforts of some police officers in some areas in trying to improve these. There have been only 27 incidents of harassment reported by Travellers in the six-year period, accounting for only 3% of all such incidents. Such figures are a much smaller number than might be expected given the relative size of the community and the attitude of many within the majority communities to Travellers (Connolly and Keenan 2000a, 2000b, 2001; Mann-Kler 1997; Mongan 2001). The most recent work with Travellers, a survey of 316 Traveller households across Northern Ireland, revealed that 53 people (17% of the total) said that either they or a member of their family had experienced intimidation or harassment based on ethnicity, within the past year (Housing Executive 2002). Clearly only a small percentage of such incidents were being reported to and recorded by the police.

Obviously considerable work still has to be done in building confidence among the Travellers that it is worth their while reporting cases of harassment to the police. The first steps have however begun to be taken in the recommendations of the PSI Working Group on Travellers. This report has advocated a variety of approaches in order to try to begin to tackle this issue (New TSN 2001). The recently published government response (NIO 2003) provided a comprehensive response to the numerous recommendations and sets out clear timetables for action on those that they accepted.

Recording of Racist Harassment by Other Agencies

It is also important to acknowledge that it is not just the responsibility of the police to respond to instances of racist harassment, other agencies and in particular housing bodies, schools, education bodies and health trusts have a responsibility to monitor cases of racist harassment. Research from both Northern Ireland and more widely in the United Kingdom indicates that members of minority ethnic communities are

frequently subject to a variety of forms of harassment and bullying in public places such as schools and hospitals and by their neighbours (Connolly and Keenan 2001; Irwin and Dunne 1997; Lemos and Crane 2000). It is therefore significant that there are only six incidents of racist harassment in schools recorded by the police and only two instances of such harassment occurring in a hospital.

The Stephen Lawrence Report made a number of recommendations with regard to improving the documentation of racist incidents. It argued for a *'comprehensive system of reporting and recording all racist incidents and crimes'* (Recommendation 15) including *'the ability to report at locations other than police stations and the ability to report 24 hours a day.'* (Recommendation 16), and that *'There should be close co-operation between Police Services and local government and other agencies, including in particular Housing and Education Departments, to ensure that all information as to racist incidents and crimes is shared and is readily available to all agencies.'* (Recommendation 17).

Police report forms reveal 76 cases where the injured party had either moved house (31 cases), was planning to move house (31 cases) or had contacted the Housing Executive with the aim of seeking new accommodation (14 cases) as a result of the racist harassment they had endured. In 37, or 49%, of these cases the report form indicates that the victim had experienced previous incidents of racist harassment.

Information was requested from the Housing Executive on the numbers of persons who had applied for re-housing on the grounds of racist harassment, but they were unable to supply any figures as such data was not specifically isolated or collected. In the two years that the Executive has been monitoring anti-social behaviour by its tenants, no reports of racial abuse or attacks have appeared in their statistical returns.

Similarly, neither the Department of Education nor the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) could provide any data on racist bullying in schools in Northern Ireland. Such data would be held by schools themselves and would not necessarily be passed on to either the Department of Education or in the case of integrated schools to NICIE. Information on racist bullying would only come to light if a serious problem developed and this led to a child or children being suspended or expelled from school. But even in such cases the school is not required to identify the cause of the bullying. The Belfast Education and Library Board were able to say that they had no records of racial harassment or bullying directed at staff from school children and/or their parents or from other members of staff. Furthermore, they had only one record of alleged bullying and racial harassment involving two school children from one family. This allegation was made in 1999.

The Office of Industrial Tribunals and Fair Employment Tribunals (OITFET) also have a responsibility to respond to complaints of racial discrimination and harassment since the introduction of the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997. This made discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, nationality or ethnic and national origin unlawful and provides for the right to justice through an industrial tribunal. The OITFET do not publish separate figures for the number of cases they have received under the Race Relations Order but they were able to provide us with these figures.

Table 5: Number of complaints received by OITFET under Race Relations (NI) Order and total complaints received.
Source: The Office of Industrial Tribunals and Fair Employment Tribunals

	Race Relations Order	% Annual Increase	Total Complaints	Race complaints as % of total
1997	5		4190	
1998	66		4022	1.6
1999	67	1.5	5053	1.3
2000	92	37	5106	1.8
2001	142	54	6036	2.4

The figures include all cases brought under the Order which may include cases of discrimination, 'less favourable treatment', harassment, verbal abuse and victimisation. Unfortunately OITFET are not able to disaggregate these figures into the differing categories. The figures reveal that while complaints under the Race Relations (NI) Order are a small percentage of the overall number of complaints, they are rising each year, both in number and as a percentage of the total complaints. Excluding the figure for 1997, which was not a full years figures as the law was only introduced during the year, the overall percentage increase from 1998 to 2001 is 115%. Total complaints have increased by just over 50% over the same period.

Perhaps surprisingly, other agencies and organisations that deal with clients who had been the victims of racial harassment or abuse, such as the Citizens Advice Bureaux, the Housing Rights Service and the Law Centre, do not record or monitor the numbers involved. Victim Support does record the nature of any referrals they receive and they include a category for victims of racially motivated incidents. However, we have been unable to obtain any figures from them.

One organisation that does have figures for cases of racism and racist harassment is the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland, which deals with complaints against police officers. They had received 22 complaints of racism made against police officers by January 2003. These are discussed in Section 3.1.

Of the organisations or groups concerned directly with minority ethnic communities, only two recorded incidents of racist harassment. The Chinese Welfare Association (CWA) records racist incidents directed at members of the Chinese community. On average, the CWA has 30 incidents per year reported to them and has been monitoring such incidents over the past 10 years. In addition, NICEM are also monitoring racist harassment and have recently appointed a harassment worker for this purpose.

Information from the various agencies and bodies described above indicates that there are a number of potential sources of data which could be added to the police figures and thus provide a broader view of the scale and nature of racist harassment being experienced in Northern Ireland. It should not be difficult to initiate a standardised system for recording data among the organisations already identified and for compiling all the figures into a single database. It is also important that all groups and organisations working on this issue are invited to participate in the development of such a programme at as early a stage as possible.

1.4   Significance of Racist Harassment

Police data reveals that there has been a significant increase in the number of recorded racist incidents in recent years, from 41 in 1996 to 285 in the peak year, 2000. The overall number of incidents recorded each year is still relatively small, especially when compared with the published statistics for other offences and with figures for racist attacks in police areas in England and Wales. The significance of these figures is not simply in their increase but also in relation to the size of the communities being victimised.

The simple statement of the number of incidents gives an indication of the scale of the problem in terms of overall crime figures. But if one looks at the number in terms of the number of 'incidents per head of population', then the figures are made relative to the size of the communities that are being victimised. The number of incidents per head of population will reasonably be expected to relate to the impact that such incidents have on the attitudes, fears and perceptions of members of those communities. A small number of incidents will have a significantly larger impact on a small community.

The 2001 Census figures of 14,279 provide a base-line estimate of the non-white minority ethnic population of Northern Ireland. Although, as noted above, there is some degree of uncertainty of the accuracy, or inclusivity, of these figures, if we accept the figure of 14, 279 as the best current we can give an estimate of the rate of incidents per head of population for those communities. For this purpose we will take an average figure for the number of incidents over the past three years (1999-2001). This period includes the year with the highest number of incidents and the years either side of this. The rationale for this is to give a broader guide than simply using the figures for the last year or for the peak year. We will also exclude from our calculations the figures for incidents reported by the 'white' community as they are not included in the Census figures for the minority ethnic population.

There have been 647 incidents recorded between 1999 and 2001, giving an average of 216 racist incidents per year. Based on Census figure of 14,279 this works out at an average of 15.1 incidents per 1000 people per year. A Home Office study of racist incidents in England and Wales based on data from all 43 police forces revealed an average figure of 6.8 racist incidents per 1000 minority ethnic population across all areas (Maynard and Read 1997). A figure of 15.1 incidents per 1000 population would give Northern Ireland the joint third highest ratio of incidents (behind Northumbria and Cumbria and level with Cleveland). However it should be noted that the Census data has been questioned and it is claimed the minority ethnic population of Northern Ireland is higher than 14,279. A higher population would necessarily mean a lower ratio of incidents.

Thus although we are dealing with a relatively small number of incidents each year, the recorded level of racist incidents is a significant number given the relatively small size of the communities in Northern Ireland. The comparisons also indicate that racist harassment is more of a significant problem in Northern Ireland when compared with most parts of England and Wales.

Another way of looking at these figures is to represent the number of racist incidents as if they were comparable sectarian attacks occurring within the predominately Protestant and Catholic white population of Northern Ireland. Based on a population of 1.6 million people, the average figure of 216 incidents per year would be the equivalent of approximately 24,000 (at 15.1 per 1000 people) incidents of sectarian harassment annually. At present there are no police statistics on sectarian incidents, however it is unquestionable that instances of sectarian harassment on this scale would be considered a significant social problem and one demanding both a thorough investigation and an effective response.

While this comparison gives some indication of the relative scale of racist harassment of the minority ethnic communities, the fact that the minority communities are small in number, and in many locations are comprised of a few relatively isolated and potentially vulnerable families, means that the impact of such harassment will be different and may be felt more severely within the communities themselves. Persistent harassment of a small community may lead to increasing problems of victimisation and marginalisation and will require greater awareness of and sensitivity to the problem by both state and voluntary bodies.

Victimised Communities

It is also possible to disaggregate the number of incidents by each of the six ethnic categories and thus reveal the proportional victimisation of each group. Drawing on the current population estimates for each community we can also indicate the relative scale of harassment per head of population for the main groups. The table below sets out the number of incidents that have been recorded in each of the six years for each of the six racial categories.

Table 6: Number of recorded incidents for each of the six racial categories 1996-2001

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	Total	%
Black	3	3	10	17	46	26	105	12
Chinese	23	14	19	59	85	47	247	28
Indian	13	18	62	72	84	86	335	38
Other	2	5	12	18	42	37	116	13
Traveller				9	10	8	27	3
White		1	3	11	17	18	50	6
Unknown					1		1	
Total	41	41	106	186	285	222	881	100

The overall number of incidents relating to each of the six racial categories over the six-year period reveals a number of trends:

- The largest minority ethnic community in Northern Ireland are the Chinese. They initially reported the most incidents, but in recent years members of the Indian community have reported the most incidents.

- Incidents relating to the Indian community account for 38% of all incidents in the six-year period compared with 28% of incidents reported by the Chinese community.
- In contrast there are still only a very small number (and percentage) of incidents recorded involving the Traveller community, the third largest minority community in Northern Ireland.
- The two most recent years have also witnessed a growing number of incidents involving the 'black' and 'other' categories, which perhaps is evidence of the growing diversity of minority ethnic communities in Northern Ireland.

These differences are more revealing when one compares the numbers of incidents with the figures for incidents per 1000 population for each of the main communities for which there are figures from the 2001 Census: the Black, Chinese, Indian, Other and Traveller communities.

Table 7: Incidents per 000 population for main minority groups

	Population	% of total population	% of recorded incidents	Incidents per annum 1999-2001	Incidents per 000 population
Black/African	1 136	8	12	30	26
Chinese	4 145	29	28	64	15
Indian	2 485	17	38	81	33
Other	1 484	10	13	32	21
Traveller	1 710	12	3	9	5
Mixed	3 319	23	n/a	n/a	
Total	14 279	99	94	216	15.1

These figures suggest that the Indian, Black and to a lesser extent Other communities are reporting considerably more harassment per head of population than the Chinese and Travellers and a higher percentage of all incidents than their percentage of the estimated population. In contrast, the Chinese community has been reporting around the Northern Ireland average of 15 incidents per 1000 population and Traveller community has been reporting an average of 5 incidents per 1000 population, which is much closer to the England and Wales average figure of 6.8 incidents per 1000 than any of the other groups (Maynard and Read 1997).

One interpretation of this analysis of the figures would suggest that both the Indian and Black communities are experiencing much higher levels and rates of harassment than other minority communities. This would appear to contrast with the evidence reported by Irwin and Dunn (1997:100-1) who stated that *'the Chinese community is more likely to experience all forms of harassment than the other ethnic groups'*. The data suggests that the Chinese community are proportionately reporting lower levels of harassment than most others.

While these figures may well be a reasonable reflection of the relative number of incidents reported by each community to the police, they may also be a reflection of the differing attitudes towards, and relationships between, each of the communities and the police. It may well be the case that there is a better relationship between the

Indian community and the police than there is between the Chinese and/or Traveller community and the police. Or it may reflect a greater willingness on behalf of the Indian community to report incidents than for example members of the Chinese community. It is interesting therefore that recent research from England and Wales noted that: *'Everywhere it was acknowledged that there were certain ethnic groups – such as ... (the) Chinese ... with whom it was particularly hard to make police contact and who were unlikely to report any sort of crime unless really severe'* (Burney and Rose 2002: 37).

Thus, while some considerable work has been undertaken to improve the working relationship between the police and the Chinese community in many areas, it appears to be the case that *'fear and suspicion about the police will often prevent individuals approaching their local police station, choosing in preference to approach their own community association'* (Watson and McKnight 1999:149). The problematic (or perhaps 'distant' is a better term) relationship between the Chinese community and the police does not appear to be specific to Northern Ireland. But neither is it one that seems to have been identified by the PSNI. However, evidence of just such a 'distant' relationship does appear to be evident from an analysis of the recorded incidents.

In contrast most published research as well as anecdotal evidence, acknowledges that the relationship between Travellers and the police is extremely poor (Mann-Kler 1997; Connolly and Keenan 2001), and that anti-Traveller prejudice is widespread within the police (Jarman 1999). The recording of a small number of incidents against Travellers since 1999 suggests that some inroads have begun to be made in some areas with regard to this. However, the survey evidence of the experience of harassment (Housing Executive 2002) indicates that there is a long way to go. The PSI Working Group on Travellers noted that *'there exists a general lack of confidence and trust in the Police among the Traveller community. This, in turn, significantly inhibits Travellers approaching the police either to make a complaint against a specific officer or to report a crime'* (New TSN 2001). Their report made several recommendations that it hoped would begin to address this poor relationship. The government has accepted some of the recommendations and has agreed to facilitate further discussion on others (NIO 2003).

The use of terms such as 'racist incidents' and 'minority ethnic communities' is itself part of a process that subsumes differences between the various communities into an all encompassing term and serves to unite them by the fact that they are not part of one of the two white, sedentary, majority communities. This process ignores differences, tensions, and hostilities between the communities themselves as well as any differing attitudes within each of the minority communities towards either the majority groups or to the agencies of the state. Part of the process of understanding the emergence of a plural society is to disaggregate such terms and explore the diversity and complexity that will be revealed. The Police Service of Northern Ireland will thus not simply need to develop a policy to deal with racist incidents or attacks on the minority ethnic communities but will need to develop policies that help it engage in an appropriate manner to each community.

A willingness to report incidents to the police may also be dependent upon the degree of support, advice, assistance and/or encouragement that is available from a

representative organisation or a community group. Many of the smaller and newer communities are only beginning to constitute themselves as 'communities' as opposed to a looser network of families and friends, and are thus only beginning to assert themselves within the broader socio-political fabric of Northern Ireland. It is perhaps the case that the differing levels of reported harassment depend as much on the quality of police-community relations and on the level of community development, as much as they are a reflection of the reality of everyday life for members of minority ethnic communities.

If this is the case then increasing confidence and trust in the police and thence in people's willingness to report incidents will demand not only more sophisticated training for police officers (as was proposed by the PSI working group on Travellers and broadly accepted by the government response) in order that officers will be aware of the range of differences within the minority communities, but also greater support and resourcing for community development initiatives within the different minority communities. Such work will enable those religious, ethnic and national groups to develop as more effective communities and be better able to voice and represent their own concerns and interests on issues that are important to them.

Repeat Harassment

We have argued that racist harassment is a fact of life for many members of minority ethnic communities in Northern Ireland. It is also a persistent and recurrent problem for many people. In many of the cases recorded by the police the victims of racist harassment have reported previous or longstanding experience of such harassment. In 395 of the 881 recorded cases (45% of the total) the injured party reported that they had previous experience of racist harassment. In some cases the previous harassment had been reported to the police but in many instances the injured party had endured recurrent abuse and worse, before they finally turned to the police for a response.

The data indicates that the Indian community have reported the highest percentage of cases where the injured party had indicated they had suffered previous harassment, with over 50% of injured parties experiencing racist harassment previously. However, all of the racial category groups, except the Travellers, have reported significant levels, over 37%, of previous harassment.

Table 8: Number and percentage of cases where victim has previously experienced racist harassment

	Previously Reported	%
Black	39	37
Chinese	105	43
Indian	176	53
Other	47	41
Traveller	6	22
White	22	44
Total	395	45

These figures for repeat victimisation are high when compared to published data from England and Wales. The highest figure for repeat victimisation was in Cumbria where 38% of victims had previously been affected (an area which also had a high rate per 1000 people), while West Yorkshire reported 32% repeat victimisation (Maynard and Read 1997:5). Both of these cases are substantially below the Northern Ireland average of 45%, although more localised studies reveal higher rates in some inner city estates (Sampson and Phillips 1995).

These figures should also be treated as a minimum level of cases of previous harassment as on many forms the question of whether there had been a previous incident had been left blank by the police officer. Furthermore, the question demands only a yes or no answer and therefore does not take into account, or acknowledge cases of multiple or persistent harassment. It is thus difficult to get a clear picture of the true level of repeat harassment from the information provided.

Nevertheless, there is a small number of cases (n = 25, or 3%) where there is reference to previous, or repeated harassment over a period of time, sometimes years. In most cases this previous harassment had not been reported to the authorities. There are also a number of cases in several locations and over a number of years where individuals or families have finally taken the decision to report harassment to the police and then for other cases to follow with disturbing frequency. This suggests that persistent and repetitive racist harassment is a serious problem for a number of families and individuals.

Part Two

Analysis of Recorded Incidents

The second part of the report provides an analysis of the incidents reported to the police between 1996 and 2001. This section analyses the data from the perspectives of gender and age of victims; geographical location of incidents; the experiences of the six minority ethnic categories; harassment in relation to home, work, leisure and street; harassment by categories of assault, theft, attack on property and abuse; time of day and year of incidents and an analysis of the perpetrators of racist harassment.

2.1 Gender and Age of Victim

The report forms identify the person reporting a racist incident by gender and in many cases also include the age of the victim. However, the form does not require all persons who may feel themselves to be injured parties to be identified. Thus in the case of incidents at or near to a domestic property or a place of work only a single injured party need be identified even though many more people, whether members of a household or co-workers, may also be affected by the incident. The table below therefore indicates the gender and age of those reporting racist incidents and in the case of children, where they are the primary recipients of racist harassment.

Table 9: Gender and age group of victims of reported racist incidents

	Black	Chinese	Indian	Other	Traveller	White	Total
Males	69	145	231	85	15	22	567
Females	30	83	83	24	9	22	251
Both	5	18	19	5	3	6	56
Unknown	1	1	2	2			6
Total	105	247	335	116	27	50	880
Male Adult	53	111	196	69	7	12	448
Fem. Adult	17	70	69	15	5	15	191
M+F Adult	2	12	13	4	1	2	34
Male Youth	6	6	9	6	1	2	30
Fem. Youth	5	5	5	2	2	4	23
M+F Youth		1			1		2
Male Child	6	17	15	6	5	5	54
Fem. Child	7	4	6	3		1	21
M+F Child	1	1	1	1			4
Male U/K	4	10	9	4	2	3	32
Fem. U/K	1	3	3	2		2	11
M+F U/K		3	1		1	1	6
Ad't+Ch'ld	2	3	6	2	2	3	18

Note: Figures differ from other tables, as a small number of report forms do not include data on gender or age and some incidents include males and females.

The data indicates that 71% of those who reported racist incidents were males, while 34% of incidents included female victims (some cases involved male and female victims. In total 11% of incidents included children under the age of 16 and a further 7% involved 'youths'. In all communities except the 'White' group males reported between 64% and 77% of cases. In contrast, incidents relating to the 'White' group were reported equally by males and females.

Some of these reporting patterns might result from the different demographic profiles of the various communities; some might be due to varying cultural practices, while some might result from differentiated gender working patterns. However, the data on age and gender could also reasonably be assumed to be more of a reflection upon those members of the household or workplace with authority or with better command of English than with those who necessarily feel affected by an incident. One might speculate that males would report incidents more frequently than females where both are present and / or affected and similarly that the elderly might be less likely to report incidents in multi-generational households or workplaces.

Furthermore, it is not possible to identify the number of people resident in a property or the number of persons working in premises, which are subjected to racist harassment from the current data. Therefore, while the report forms suggest that most racist incidents have a single injured party this may be far from the truth. Attacks on family property or on family members may affect all members of the household and incidents in the work place may well have an effect on all people who work there. The number of people affected by racist incidents and racist harassment will therefore be considerably higher than the number of incidents that are recorded.

It is also reasonable to assume that the data drawn from the report forms will severely underestimate the number of children who experience some form of racist harassment unless they are the immediate victims. For example, 29 incidents are identified that involve a household – with children being identified as present when an incident occurred, but again this must be taken as the bare minimum of such incidents.

The attempt to analyse the age ranges and gender of victims is hampered by the quality of the data recorded on the report forms, which in turn is related to the type and range of questions that police officers are expected to ask. Improving the data on age and gender would be relatively simple to achieve. For example, the form could have a series of tick boxes to identify the age of victims, the number of victims and the gender of each victim. Better data would allow a clearer analysis of the problem and therefore better and more appropriate responses.

Incidents involving children and young people

The number of racist incidents involving children and young people as the primary target increased from 2 in 1996 to 66 in 2000 but dropped again to 35 in 2001. In a further 18 incidents a child was with an adult when the incident occurred and another 29 incidents can be identified where children were involved as part of the harassment of their household. Incidents involving children alone increased from 2 in 1996 to 36

in 2000 and then declined to 14 in 2001. These incidents included the harassment of children as young as 2 years of age.

Table 10: Incidents involving children and young people 1996-2001

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	Total
Child	2	1	6	21	36	14	79
Youth		1	1	2	30	21	55
Adult/ Child	1			3	4	10	18
Household	1	3	2	5	12	6	29
Total	4	5	9	31	82	51	181
%	10	12	8	17	29	23	21

Over the six-year period at least 21% of all incidents involved children and young people, with the annual percentage increasing from 10% in 1996 to 29% in 2000, and then dropping to 23% in 2001. In those cases where gender can be clearly identified, 88 involved male children and youths, while 48 involved females. The gender difference among children was larger than among those categorised as youths, male children out-numbered female children who were recorded as victims of racism by 54:21, while among youths the figures were 30:23. This ratio of males to females is virtually the same as for the entire sample; overall 70% of incidents involved males and 34% involved females, whereas 66% of incidents of children and youths involved males and 33% involved females.

The largest number of cases involving young people occurred in the street (n = 77/181 or 42% of incidents with young people) or other public place such as shops, fast food outlets or leisure venues (n = 25, 14%). This compares with the general figures whereby nearly 21% of incidents occurred in the street and less than 6% of incidents occurred to people in shops and leisure settings. Most of the other incidents (n = 70, 39%) occurred in or close to the home. In a majority of cases that occurred in the street or public place (60/102 incidents, 59%) there was more than one perpetrator involved in the harassment and in general the harassers were older than the victim. Again this compares unfavourably with the overall figure in which under 41% of cases involved more than one perpetrator.

In all these cases, the young person was subjected to racial abuse, most frequently from one or more child or young person, although a small number of incidents involved abuse by an adult. More significantly in 73 of the 181 cases (40%) the young person also reported physical as well as verbal abuse. This proportion of combined verbal abuse and physical assault towards children is much higher than in cases of harassment involving adults. In total in 24% of all cases of racist harassment the victim reported being subject to physical assault.

The figures for incidents involving children and young people should be considered a minimum number on at least three counts:

1. Police report forms do not have to record whether children were present when an incident occurred and given the number of incidents that occur in or near the

domestic arena, it is likely that children are far more exposed to the impact of racist harassment than these figures suggest.

2. Only a small number of incidents (n = 5) have been recorded that took place in schools. Research by Connolly and Keenan (2000b: 65) asserts that *'racist bullying and harassment is a serious problem for a significant proportion of minority ethnic children in schools'.* A further six of the incidents occurred on the way to or from school or can be linked to school in some way, but the fact that school based harassment is largely absent from the police figures highlights a key gap in the statistics.

3. In at least 76 of the 181 recorded incidents there is mention of previous incidents of a similar nature. This suggests that young people were prepared to endure ongoing problems with harassment before they decided to report the problem to the police. If all of the previous incidents were recorded then the scale of racist harassment of children would have been considerably higher.

The scale and impact of racist harassment on children and young people is probably severely underestimated, because of the lack of requirement on the police to document all those exposed to racist harassment, because of the high percentage of incidents that occur in the domestic arena (and thus affect all those living in a household), and because of the limited documentation of racist harassment in places such as schools and youth clubs in the police figures. This is one area where the relevant agencies clearly need to come together to determine the scale of the problem and to formulate an appropriate response. However, before this stage is reached it will be necessary for schools and other educational establishments to acknowledge the need to respond in a more explicit manner to the problem, or a potential problem of, racist bullying.

The Department of Education does acknowledge that bullying is a significant and persistent problem for many pupils and recently commissioned a major study of bullying across Northern Ireland (Collins, McAleavy and Adamson 2002). This study revealed that 12% of primary school pupils and 8% of post-primary pupils claimed to have been bullied 'with mean names about my race and colour' (pp 12 & 23). This would appear to be a high level compared with the estimated 2% of the population who come from minority ethnic communities. The authors state that the 'level of reports regarding bullying about race and colour was a surprise finding' and suggest that some children 'may have responded to this question with religion rather than race in mind' (p69). However, it is not clear on what evidence they base this suggestion. The findings may well indicate that racist bullying is a more severe problem for children from minority ethnic communities than has been formally acknowledged, even though it has been noted in research studies (Connolly and Keenan 200b; Irwin and Dunn 1997).

At present there are no statistics, aside from the recent report, that document the scale of racist bullying, nor is there any requirement on schools to record or report incidents of racist bullying. The Stephen Lawrence Report recommended that racist incidents in schools should be recorded and published (Recommendation 68) and the adoption of such a process would be one step towards identifying the significance of racist harassment within schools in Northern Ireland and quantifying the overall scale and number of cases of racist harassment that are being experienced by children and young people.

2.2　Geographical Location of Incidents

Racist incidents have been recorded in 67 towns or villages across all six counties of Northern Ireland. Table 11 identifies the number of locations and the number of incidents that have been recorded in each of the six counties plus Belfast.

Table 11: Incidents by county

	Locations	Incidents	% Incidents
Belfast	1	430	49
Antrim	21	172	20
Armagh	8	83	9
Down	14	78	9
Fermanagh	5	13	1.5
Londonderry	10	47	5
Tyrone	8	57	6
Total	67	880	99.5

Note:　The location of one incident is not specified on the report form.

The figures indicate that almost half of all recorded incidents occurred in Belfast and that 680 of the 881 incidents (77% of the total) occurred in Belfast and the two adjacent counties of Antrim and Down. The figures also reveal that the three western counties of Fermanagh, Derry Londonderry and Tyrone accounted for 117 incidents or 13% of the total.

The Census data gives the population of each of the minority ethnic communities in relation to a number of geographical boundaries: local government districts, social services boards, education and library boards, parliamentary constituencies and NUTS level III, but not by county, the means by which we are able to agglomerate the police data. It is possible to combine the two sets of figures to compare population figures with recorded incidents at a broader level: Belfast, Eastern NI and Western NI. Under this schema the Eastern area includes the three Antrim constituencies, North and South Down, Lagan Valley, Strangford and the Upper Bann, while the western area includes East Londonderry, Fermanagh and South Tyrone, Foyle, Mid-Ulster, Newry and Armagh and West Tyrone.

Table 12: Percentage minority ethnic population and racist incident by zone

	Number of persons	% Minority Population	Number of incidents	% Racist Incidents
Belfast	4 582	32	411	49
East NI	5 760	40	288	35
West NI	3 934	27	131	16
Total	14 276	99	830	100

Note:　Incidents recorded against 'whites' are excluded as they are not included in the Census figures for minority communities.

These figures suggest that there are a disproportionate number of racist incidents in Belfast where nearly half of all incidents are recorded but where less than one third of the minority ethnic population lives.

Incidents in Belfast

The location of incidents in Belfast can be further broken down into five relatively discrete zones: North, South, East, West and Centre. For the purposes of this report Crumlin Road serves as the boundary between North and West Belfast; the M1 motorway serves as the boundary between West and South Belfast and the Ormeau Road serves as the boundary between South and East Belfast. The central area is defined as the core commercial, entertainment and leisure area bounded by the River Lagan, York Street, Frederick Street, Carrick Hill, Millfield, College Square, Great Victoria Street, Dublin Road, Ormeau Avenue and Cromac Street and including Bradbury Place and Botanic Avenue.

Racist incidents were not evenly or randomly distributed across the city.
- Most incidents were recorded in the south of the city, with 198 incidents, or 47% of the total recorded in the six-year period under study.
- The second largest number was recorded in east Belfast, with 81 incidents and 19% of the total.
- North Belfast recorded the next highest number with 78 incidents over six years.
- There were 47 incidents recorded in the central Belfast area.
- In contrast, only 21 incidents, 6% of the total, were recorded in West Belfast (an area which encompasses both the Shankill and Falls) over the same period.

If these five zones of Belfast were treated as distinct urban areas they would rank as the first (South Belfast), second (East), third (North), fourth (Centre) and eleventh (West) most significant areas for racist incidents in Northern Ireland. South Belfast in fact accounts for over 22% of all racist incidents, while East Belfast recorded over 9% and nearly 9% of all incidents were recorded in North Belfast.

Table 13: Incidents in Belfast

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	Total	%
Centre			5	8	19	15	47	11
East	2	6	7	15	32	19	81	19
North	1	4	37	16	13	7	78	18
South	19	15	18	42	61	43	198	47
West			2	4	7	8	21	6
Total	22	25	69	85	132	92	425	101
% of total	53	61	65	46	48	42		

Note: In five cases not enough details are given to locate the address on a map.

There is little micro demographic data on any of the minority ethnic groups in Belfast. The 2001 Census provides information on the minority population in each of the four

Belfast parliamentary constituencies, this indicates that South Belfast has 2,513 people identifying in one of the 11 ethnic categories; 787 in East Belfast, 643 in North Belfast and 639 in West Belfast. Local knowledge indicates a sizeable Chinese community in South Belfast and a small Sikh community in North Belfast, and these are both areas with a high number of recorded racist incidents and both of these two small communities feature prominently in the number of recorded incidents.

In South Belfast the highest number of incidents, 119 out of 198 (or 60%), were recorded in the inner city and university area. This includes:

- 43 incidents in the Village area;
- 37 incidents in the Donegall Pass area;
- 20 incidents in the Lisburn Road area;
- 20 incidents in the University area.

Furthermore, another nine of the 13 incidents recorded in the Central Belfast area took place in the area between Dublin Road, Bradbury Place and Botanic Avenue, adjacent to the inner city south area. The inner South Belfast residential and leisure zone is thus the area with the most racist incidents in Northern Ireland. This area has recorded the most incidents in each year with the exception of 1998. The majority of these incidents affected the Chinese community living and working in the area.

The other areas of South Belfast where significant numbers of incidents were recorded were Finaghy/Taughmonagh (36 incidents) and the Ormeau Road (19 incidents).

In North Belfast, 58 of the 78 incidents (74%) were recorded in an area between Glandore Avenue and the Limestone Road. These were centred on Alexandra Park Avenue where 47 of the incidents occurred. The remaining incidents were scattered across the area. The majority of the incidents in North Belfast affected the small Sikh community resident in the area.

In contrast to South and North Belfast the incidents in East and West Belfast were spread broadly across the area with no significant clusters.

When one looks more closely at the micro geography of Belfast, it is evident that the majority of incidents have been recorded in predominately Protestant working class areas. This is a principle factor in South, North and East Belfast: in South Belfast 134 of the 198 incidents (67%), in North Belfast 58 out of 78 incidents (74%), and in East Belfast 65 out of 81 incidents (65%) were in predominately Protestant working class areas. In contrast, there have been far fewer incidents recorded in Catholic working class residential areas, but 22 of the 99 incidents (22%) in North and West Belfast have occurred in Catholic parts of the city.

It may well be that these figures indicate a greater level of racial prejudice among working class Protestants. Indeed, Connolly and Keenan (2000a: 26) note that Protestants were *'more likely to be racially prejudiced than Catholics'*. However, they also went on to state that such general comparisons *'represents a rather blunt instrument that is incapable of identifying and distinguishing between the many differences that exist ... within each community'* (p27). They conclude that a number of factors influence racial prejudice: sectarian attitudes, religion, educational

attainment, age and whether they have a friend from a minority community are key issues (p35), but that it is nevertheless a *'complex phenomenon, which can be found within any social group'*.

One factor that may be of some significance in this regard is that more members of minority ethnic communities live in 'Protestant' areas than live in 'Catholic' areas. In North and South Belfast, many Protestant inner city areas are seen as declining communities, often with large numbers of empty properties, while the Catholic community are demanding more houses in 'their' areas. It may well be the case that many members of minority communities have chosen to live in Protestant areas because that is where public housing is widely available and where the market prices are lower.

However, there is a widely accepted pattern of residential segregation of the two majority ethnic communities with widespread sectarian antagonism towards the 'Other'. This segregation has been increasing in recent years partly in response to the tensions of the 'marching season' (Northern Ireland Housing Executive 1999). Although there is no evidence of an increase in racist harassment as part of an increase in tension in July (see Section 2.6), hostility towards minority ethnic communities can be seen as another expression of the hostility towards the 'Other' that has been more commonly expressed towards the other majority ethnic community.

This is not to suggest that racist violence has increased during the peace process because other expressions of violent hostility have been subjected to more restraint or control, but rather that the widespread acceptance of sectarian difference and residential segregation as a fact of life in Northern Ireland feeds a suspicion of otherness which helps to underpin racist harassment.

Incidents Outside of Belfast

Those towns, villages or other areas, outside of Belfast and which have recorded five or more incidents over the six-year period are shown in Table 14 below. The year-by-year data for recorded incidents shows distinctly uneven patterns. Derry Londonderry and Portadown are the only towns to have recorded racist incidents in every one of the six years. In contrast, Bangor, the town with the highest aggregate number of incidents had no incidents recorded prior to 1999, and Carrickfergus, with the second highest number of incidents had recorded only two cases of harassment prior to 1999. Most incidents have been recorded in the larger towns in the province although Dollingstown is something of an exception as a result of the ten incidents recorded in the village in 2000.

This list reveals that a large proportion of those incidents occurring outside of Belfast have been recorded in towns and districts that make up the Greater Belfast area. We include in that area the towns that make up the contiguous urban area on the shores of Belfast Lough but exclude places such as Antrim, Templepatrick, Carryduff or Newtownards. The western Greater Belfast area includes south-east County Antrim from Carrickfergus, through Newtownabbey and Glengormley, to Dunmurry and Lisburn. This area accounts for 104 incidents. The eastern zone includes the north County Down towns of Bangor, Holywood and Dundonald and this area accounts for a

further 59 incidents. Thus 594 out of the 881 incidents, or 67% of the total, have been recorded in Belfast and the Greater Belfast area.

Table 14: Towns with five or more racist incidents since 1996

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	Total
Bangor	1			12	16	5	34
Carrick	1		1	6	10	12	30
Glengormley	4		6	10	4	5	29
Derry	1	3	7	1	13	4	29
Portadown	1	2	2	3	6	15	29
Ballymena	1		1	15	11		28
N'abbey	1		2	7	4	8	22
Holywood				3	9	6	18
Dungannon			4	1	3	8	16
Strabane				4	7	5	16
Lisburn				1	8	6	15
Armagh	4			4	3	3	14
Lurgan		1	3		6	4	14
Dollingstown				1	10	1	12
Antrim	1	1		2	2	5	11
Cookstown				2	3	4	9
Craigavon		1	4	2	1	1	9
Dunmurray				5	2	1	8
Coalisland				1	3	3	7
Enniskillen	1				3	3	7
Omagh		1	2	3		1	7
Dundonald		1	1	1		3	6
Ballymoney		1		1		3	5

The other principal area in which racist incidents have been recorded has been the mid-Ulster triangle bounded by Dollingstown/Lurgan in the east, Armagh in the south and Coalisland/Dungannon in the west within which 104 incidents (12% of the total) have been recorded. Apart from the Greater Belfast and mid-Ulster areas only Derry Londonderry, Ballymena and Strabane have recorded more than 10 incidents over the six-year period.

2.3   Relationships Between Place and Racism

This section reviews the relationship between the ethnic background of the victim and the location in which racist incidents occurred. The data from the 2001 Census reveals that the Belfast local government district has the largest population of each of the main minority ethnic communities. It also indicates that:

- The largest Chinese communities are in the Greater Belfast area and in particular Castlereagh, Newtownabbey, Lisburn and North Down local government districts. The largest communities elsewhere are in Craigavon and Coleraine.
- The Census indicates that the largest Traveller communities are in Newry and Mourne, Derry, Dungannon and Craigavon, while according to the recent Housing Executive survey (2002) 51% of the Traveller community lives in the area west of the Bann, 43% live East of the Bann and 6% were unspecified.
- The Indian community is fairly widely spread across all areas. The largest community outside of Belfast are in Derry, with other significant communities in Castlereagh, Coleraine, Craigavon, Lisburn and Newtownabbey.
- There is a large Pakistani community in Craigavon with other significant communities in North Down and Omagh.
- The Bangladeshi community is largely resident in Ards, North Down and Castlereagh.
- The Black communities are widely spread across the north with significant groups in Limavady, Castlereagh, Derry, Down and North Down.

The following table shows the number of incidents recorded by the police for each of the six racial categories in each of the six counties plus Belfast.

Table 15: Incidents by racial category and county

	Black	Chinese	Indian	Other	Traveller	White	Total
Belfast	51	141	147	63	9	19	430
Antrim	18	34	90	19		11	172
Armagh	2	19	41	13	4	4	83
Down	15	33	16	4	2	8	78
Fermanagh	6		2	3		2	13
Londonderry	8	12	19	3	2	3	47
Tyrone	5	8	20	11	10	3	57
Total	105	247	335	116	27	50	880

Note: The data for one incident is incomplete and cannot readily be classified by place.

As Belfast has the highest number of racist incidents overall, it is only to be expected that it has a higher number of incidents relating to each of the minority ethnic communities than any of the counties. The only exception being incidents relating to Travellers, where Tyrone has a slightly higher number.

While nearly 49% of all incidents were recorded in Belfast, these are not equally divided among the six different racial categories. Over 57% of incidents affecting the Chinese community occurred in the city and 54% of incidents affecting the 'Other' category, while only 33% of incidents affecting Travellers and 38% of those affecting Whites were recorded there. The figures also indicate that County Antrim is the county with the second highest proportion of incidents for all groups except Travellers.

It is also possible to disaggregate the figures further to reveal some of the minor variations within the broad figures for Belfast and for the towns with higher numbers of recorded incidents. The following tables illustrate the figures for the five sub-areas of Belfast, for the South East Antrim and North Down parts of the greater Belfast area and finally for the mid-Ulster region. As noted in the previous section these are the areas with the highest numbers of incidents and they account for nearly 80% of all incidents.

The figures for Belfast reveal quite distinct patterns of victimisation for the two largest minority communities - the Chinese and the Indian. Chinese people, for example, reported more extensive harassment in the south of the city than any other part: nearly 44% of all incidents in South Belfast were reported by the Chinese and 64% of incidents affecting the Chinese community in Belfast occurred in this area. A further 24% of incidents involving the Chinese were in East Belfast, where over 40% of incidents involved harassment of Chinese people. In contrast, only 4% of cases of harassment of Chinese people occurred in the North of the city where the Indian community was most victimised: 44% of incidents affecting the Indian community occurred in the north of the city, and in fact 83% of all incidents in North Belfast targeted the Indian population. Only 29% of incidents involving the Indian community occurred in South Belfast and 10% took place in the east of the city. Apart from the attacks on the Indian community, there have in fact been relatively few reported incidents in either North or West Belfast.

Table 16: Racist Harassment by group in all areas of Belfast

	Central	%	East	%	North	%	South	%	West	%	Total	%
Black	12	**24**	11	**22**	3	**6**	23	**46**	1	**2**	50	
Chinese	5	**3.5**	33	**24**	6	**4**	87	**64**	5	**3.5**	136	
Indian	19	**13**	15	**10**	65	**44**	43	**29**	5	**3**	147	
Other	8	**13**	14	**22**	3	**4**	32	**51**	6	**10**	63	
Traveller			2	**22**			4	**44**	3	**33**	9	
White	3	**16**	6	**32**	1	**5**	8	**42**	1	**5**	19	
Total	47		81		78		198		21		425	
%		**11**		**19**		**18**		**47**		**5**		**100**

Although one is dealing with smaller numbers, similar distinctive patterns emerge in the other locations recording relatively large numbers of racist incidents. In North Down, for example, attacks on the Chinese community account for over 44% of cases, with the Black community the next most numerically harassed (13 cases and 22% of the total) largely because of incidents that have been recorded in Holywood. These are the two largest minority ethnic communities in the North Down local government district.

Table 17: Racist Harassment by group in North Down

	Black	Chinese	Indian	Other	Traveller	White	Total
Bangor	5	18	4	1	2	4	34
Holywood	8	5	4			1	18
Dundonald		3		1		2	6
Helen's Bay			1				1
Total	13	26	9	2	2	7	59

In South East Antrim, in contrast, attacks on the Indian community account for nearly 54% of all cases, largely because of incidents reported in Carrickfergus, Glengormley and elsewhere in the borough of Newtownabbey. A much smaller number of incidents have been reported by the Chinese community although they are by far the largest community in the area.

Table 18: Racist Harassment by group in South East Antrim

	Black	Chinese	Indian	Other	Traveller	White	Total
Carrick	4	3	15	2		6	30
Glengormley		4	21	3		1	29
Newtownabbey	4	3	13	1		1	22
Lisburn	3	4	5	2		1	15
Dunmurray		3	4	1			8
Greenisland		2					2
Total	11	19	56	9		9	104

In mid-Ulster, the Indian community was again the most severely harassed and reported over 40% of all cases. Over 65% of incidents in Portadown affected the Indian community and 11 of the 12 cases in Dollingstown. Otherwise over 20% of cases were recorded by the disparate 'Other' grouping with 9 of the 16 incidents in Dungannon reported by 'Others'. Far fewer cases were reported by the Chinese community although they are at least as large a population as the Indian group.

Table 19: Racist Harassment by group in Mid-Ulster

	Black	Chinese	Indian	Other	Traveller	White	Total
Portadown	1	4	19	5			29
Dungannon	2	2	2	9	1		16
Armagh		5		4	4	1	14
Lurgan	1	3	6	4			14
Dollingstown		1	11				12
Craigavon		1	5			3	9
Coalisland	1			1	5		7
Richhill		3					3
Total	4	19	43	23	10	4	103

The breakdown into ethnic groups for incidents that have been recorded in other towns with more than five incidents are set out below. Distinctive patterns of harassment of

the Indian community are evident in the figures for Strabane, Ballymena and Derry Londonderry. In Derry Londonderry the Indian community is the largest minority ethnic group but Travellers are larger communities in both Strabane and Ballymena and the Chinese community is also larger than the Indian community in Ballymena.

Table 20: Racist Harassment by group in Other Locations

	Black	Chinese	Indian	Other	Traveller	White	Total
Derry	6	6	12	3	1	1	29
Ballymena	5	4	17	1		1	28
Strabane			15				15
Cookstown	1	4			1	3	9
Enniskillen	2		2	3			7
Omagh	1	1	2	1	2		7
Ballymoney		3	2				5

By disaggregating the gross figures for each location into the six racial categories it is possible to observe a number of distinctive patterns emerging, particularly in relation to the spatially distinctive patterns of reporting of attacks on the Chinese and Indian communities. The police records also confirm the growing diversity of many, if not all, towns in Northern Ireland. The fact that cases of racist harassment were reported to the police for example in Omagh by Blacks, Chinese, Indians, Travellers and Others; in Enniskillen by Blacks, Indians and Others and in Ballymena by Blacks, Chinese, Indians, Others and Whites in itself reveals something of the variety of communities well beyond the core communities in Belfast.

The clear pattern of racist harassment that emerges from the data is of a problem that is concentrated in the urban core of Greater Belfast. This is perhaps only to be expected as all the evidence suggests that the vast majority of members of the minority ethnic communities live in this area. A similar pattern on a much larger scale has been identified in England and Wales, with the vast majority of incidents recorded in the capital, London. However the data for England and Wales also indicates that racist harassment is a problem for minority communities throughout the country and that it is perhaps proportionately more of a problem in rural areas where small minority communities experience relatively more problems (Dhalech 1999; Garland and Chakraborti 2002, Maynard and Read 1997). This problem can be made worse by the lack of local support or interest, the distance from minority ethnic organisations and lower levels of awareness of such issues among police officers in rural areas.

The evidence for Northern Ireland indicates that racism exists in all areas of Northern Ireland. Incidents have been recorded in small towns and villages in all six counties including Ballymoney and Islandmagee in Antrim; Crossmaglen and Markethill in Armagh; Moira and Warrenpoint in Down; Eglington and Tobermore in Derry Londonderry; Bellanaleck, Belleek and Derrygonnelly in Fermanagh and in Castlederg and Dromore in Tyrone. Responding to the problem of racism is thus clearly a problem for all police district command units and for statutory bodies in each of the six counties.

2.4　Location of Racist Incidents

This section deals with the nature of the location in which many racist incidents took place. These have been grouped into four relatively discrete areas: in or near the home, in the street or other public place, at work and in a social or leisure setting. This last category includes incidents that occurred at pubs, clubs, restaurants or fast food outlets and at leisure centres where the injured party was a customer rather than in their working environment. In most cases the category of the location is clear cut but there are occasional instances where boundaries are, or maybe, blurred, for example where the perpetrators of harassment are in the street and the injured party in the domestic arena; or where a car was damaged outside a home, but these are a relatively small number of cases.

Of the racist incidents recorded between 1996 and 2001:
- 462 or 53% took place at or involved attacks on the home.
- 183 or 21% took place in the street.
- 180 or 21% took place at the victim's place of work.
- 51 or 6% occurred at places of leisure.

There were also 92 incidents (10% of the total) which involved an attack on a motor vehicle, these are also included in the above figures in relation to the location of the car at the time of the attack, the majority of which (86/92) took place in the vicinity of the home.

Table 21: Number of recorded incidents in each of four categories for each racial group

	Home	Street	Work	Leisure	Total
Black	38	39	15	12	104
Chinese	143	38	62	3	246
Indian	185	67	70	10	332
Other	55	21	24	16	116
Traveller	11	8	1	7	27
White	29	10	8	3	50
Unknown	1				1
Total	462	183	180	51	876*
%	52.7	20.8	20.5	5.8	99.8

Note:　In the case of 5 incidents the location was not recorded.

This table shows that 40% of incidents in the home were reported by members of the Indian community and 31% by the Chinese community, while 41% of incidents at work were reported by the Indian community and 34% by members of the Chinese community. The Indian community reported 37% of incidents that occurred in the street while members of the Chinese and Black communities each reported 21% of such incidents.

However, if these figures are viewed as a percentage of incidents per ethnic group a different pattern emerges as can be seen in the table below. The percentage of incidents that occurred in the home is similar for the Chinese, Indian and White communities and all have a higher than average percentage of incidents at or near their home. In contrast, the percentage figures for the Black and Traveller groups fall well out of this range.

Table 22: Percentage figures for each location category per ethnic group

	Home	Street	Work	Leisure
Black	37	38	15	12
Chinese	58	15	25	1
Indian	56	20	21	3
Other	47	18	21	14
Traveller	41	30	4	26
White	58	20	16	6
Average %	52	21	20	6

This pattern is almost exactly reversed with regard to incidents in the street. A far higher percentage of incidents occurring in the street have been reported by the Black and Traveller communities than by any other groups. Blacks are in fact more than twice as likely to report being harassed in the street than members of the Chinese and Other communities. The likelihood of being harassed at work shows a similar pattern to home based incidents. The Chinese community are likely to be the victims of harassment at work with over one in four incidents they report occurring in the workplace, in contrast Travellers have reported only a small number of incidents relating to place of work.

Finally, Travellers report a higher percentage of incidents occurring in a leisure or social setting (albeit the total number of incidents is small), although a higher than average percentage of incidents in a social setting are also reported by both the Other and Black communities. Both the Chinese and Indian communities have reported only a small percentage of incidents occurring at leisure venues. A majority (29/51) of the incidents in leisure or social settings occurred in a pub or club, while another 10 took place at a shop, fast food outlet or restaurant.

These figures raise issues about the randomness of racist incidents: how far are the targets specifically or individually chosen and how far are they chosen by chance and are thus targeted more as a representative victim of an ethnic community than as an individual. The relatively high percentage of figures for incidents that occur in or near the domestic arena suggests that in many cases the victims are known to the perpetrators in some way. They are not random victims of racist attacks but individually chosen as part of a systematic practice. The fact that in many cases the victim recognises or even knows the perpetrator (Section 2.7) and/or that the victim is subject to repeat harassment (Section 1.4) helps to confirm this.

In contrast, many of the attacks and incidents that occur in the street or in leisure settings may be considered more likely to be random attacks or a chance opportunity to express hatred and racist attitudes. For example, in one incident a motorist stopped

to help another driver whose car had broken down and was verbally abused and physically assaulted for his pains. In another case a man sitting at traffic lights in his car was assaulted by two men who opened the car door and began to punch him. These seem to be cases of random racist assault.

Incidents that occur in the workplace may fall somewhere between these two poles. A high proportion of such incidents (116 out of 180 or 64% of such incidents) were reported at restaurants or food outlets of some kind. Some 54 of these were Chinese restaurants, 31 were Indian restaurants and 31 were fast food outlets. A further 23 incidents occurred at a shop, with 16 of these affecting the Indian community and 3 the Chinese. These are environments where perpetrators know they will encounter the minority ethnic 'other' although they will not necessarily know who a particular individual will be. Such attacks may thus incorporate elements of random representativeness and personal harassment of a local individual. Similarly, while cases of abuse or discrimination in a pub or club may be part of a pattern of systematic discrimination or harassment against members of minority communities, they are not likely to target specific minority ethnic individuals. They may therefore be considered as both random and systematic events.

Consideration of the form and the nature of the attack may appear relatively abstract in these circumstances but it may be relevant to whether an individual feels the need to report it – will it do any good, is it likely to happen again? – and also in formulating an appropriate response – persistent or repetitious attacks are more amenable to problem solving methods than random attacks.

2.5 Nature of Incidents

The nature of the incidents of racist harassment experienced by members of minority ethnic communities is extremely diverse, but nevertheless they can be usefully grouped into four main categories of harassment: physical assault, abuse, damage to property and theft. However, each of the incidents recorded by the police may include one or more of these forms of harassment, for example in an extreme case an individual may be verbally harassed, physically attacked, have their car damaged and be robbed as part of a single event.

The figures in Table 23 below refer to the principal or more serious incident being recorded. Assaults are considered most serious, then theft, damage to property and finally abuse. Thus if a victim reports assault and abuse, the incident is described here as an assault, if the report includes damage to property and theft it is categorised as a theft. The first total therefore includes only the most serious incident, while the 'all cases' figure refers to the total number of each type of incident. The 'total main incident' figure therefore adds up to 881 incidents, whereas the 'all cases' figure is far greater than the total number of incidents.

Table 23: Number of incidents in each of four main categories per racial group

	Assault	Theft	Property	Abuse	Total Incidents
Black	35	1	20	49	105
Chinese	51	30	113	53	247
Indian	67	8	143	117	335
Other	32	2	40	42	116
Traveller	9	0	3	15	27
White	15	4	9	22	50
Total Main Incident	209	45	329	298	881
All Cases	209	60	360	497	1126

The figures indicate that in nearly 24% of cases assault was the principal incident, in 37% of cases it was an attack on property, 5% of cases involved theft and in 34% of cases the principle problem was some form of abuse. A study in England and Wales of 300,000 incidents suggests that 7% of these involved assault, 14% attacks on property and 80% were abuse (Virdee 1997). The difference between the two sets of figures suggests either Northern Ireland is experiencing a very high level of assaults and attacks on property or that fewer cases of abuse are being reported. It is reasonable to assume that people are more likely to report more serious incidents, such as assault and attacks on property, to the police rather than cases of abuse. Therefore if one assumes that the figure for assault represents around 7% of the total, then the total number of incidents over the period 1996-2001 would be approximately 2900. This would also indicate that only about 30% of incidents are being recorded by the police, and that the majority of unrecorded incidents involve abuse of some form.

Physical Assault

The data reveals that nearly 24% of all recorded incidents involved some form of physical assault. Most incidents involved punching, hitting or kicking but this category also includes 23 cases where a weapon was involved, a further seven where stones were thrown and 14 cases where the victim required hospital treatment. In 14 of the 23 cases where weapons were used, the attacks were upon members of the Chinese community, while nine of these 14 cases also involved theft.

In spite of the largest numbers of incidents of physical assault occurring in attacks against members of the Chinese and Indian community, assault is proportionally more significant in incidents recorded against the Black, Traveller and White groups. Assault is a factor in between 30% and 33% of incidents, whereas assaults account for around 20% of incidents against the Chinese and Indian community. It may well be that the higher proportion of incidents involving the Black and Traveller communities that occur in the street is a factor in the higher percentage of incidents involving assault. However, there is no correlation between street based harassment and violence with regard to the White community.

Theft

Theft is the smallest category of incidents numerically: theft was the principal activity in 45 incidents (5% of the total) but was recorded as a factor in 60 incidents (7% of the total). Thefts can in turn be subdivided by the nature of the crime (either burglary or 'theft') and the sub-categories of location of the 'thefts', that is whether they took place in the home, at work or in the street.

Table 24: Cases of theft by ethnic group

	Burglary	House	Work	Street	Total
Black		1		1	2
Chinese	22	13	4	2	42
Indian	1	4	1	3	9
Other	1	1		1	3
Traveller					
White		1	2		3
Total	24	22	7	7	60

Theft and burglary is primarily a problem for the Chinese community, 70% of all thefts have been reported by Chinese people and 17% of all incidents reported by members of the Chinese community involve theft of some kind. In 9 of these cases (21%) the perpetrator of the crime carried a weapon. In contrast, theft was a factor in between 2% and 3% of cases involving the Black, Indian and Other communities and was involved in 6% of cases reported by the White community. There were no cases of theft reported by the Traveller community.

Damage to Property

Attacks on, or damage to, property account for the primary form of harassment in 329 cases, but it is a factor in 360 cases overall, almost 41% of all incidents. Damage to property can be broken down into a number of sub-categories of damage or action. These include having windows broken; having stones or missiles thrown at property; having fireworks put through a letterbox, petrol bombs thrown or a fire started; damage being caused to vehicles; or miscellaneous damage to home or garden. These are broken down in Table 25. A small number of cases involve more than one category of damage.

Table 25: Nature of damage to property

	House/Garden	Windows	Missiles	Fire*	Vehicle	Business
Black	2	4	14	2	1	1
Chinese	12	31	39	7	34	3
Indian	13	37	48	15	38	6
Other	7	13	11	4	14	
Traveller		2	1		1	
Unknown					1	
White	5	1	4	1		
Total	39	88	117	29	89	10

Note: *'Fire' includes: 19 cases where fires were started, 3 petrol bomb attacks and 7 cases where fireworks were used.*

The figures show that the most widespread type of incident involving damage to property involves missiles being thrown at a house or windows being broken (although separated here they are practically often linked); and damage to a vehicle parked near someone's home. Perhaps most worrying is the small number of incidents (3% of the total) that have involved the use of fire or incendiary devices. These include fires being started in or near property, fireworks being pushed through a letterbox and in three cases petrol bombs being thrown at a house. In 15 of the 29 cases involving fire, the victim was a member of the Indian community.

Abuse

Table 26 indicates that racist abuse is the most frequently reported form of harassment. In 298 cases (34% of cases) abuse is the principal form of harassment being recorded and abuse is a factor in 497 cases overall (56% of total incidents). It is the single most common form of harassment recorded in incidents against the Black, Other, Traveller and White communities, although both the Chinese and Indian communities have reported damage to property more frequently than abuse. Abuse can be sub-divided into a number of distinct categories: verbal abuse, threats, written abuse in the form of letters, telephone abuse, graffiti and other generalised forms of discrimination.

Some form of abuse features in 77% of incidents involving Blacks, in 70% of cases involving Travellers and Whites, 67 % of incidents reported by Others, and 56% of

cases reported by members of the Indian community. However, abuse is only recorded in 40% of cases involving members of the Chinese community. Verbal abuse is a factor in 69% of cases reported by Blacks, 62% by Others, 58% by Whites and 52% by Travellers. It is noted in 45% of cases involving the Indian community, but appears to be a factor in only 30% of cases reported by the Chinese community.

Table 26: Number of incidents of different forms of racist abuse

	Verbal	Threats	Written	Phone	Gr'fiti	Other	Total	% of Total
Black	70	2	2	2	3	2	81	77
Chinese	67	8	2	12	8	1	98	40
Indian	139	11	7	12	14	6	189	56
Other	66	6		3	2	1	78	67
Traveller	13	1	2			3	19	70
White	25	4	2	1	2	1	35	70
Total	380	32	15	30	29	14	500	

Note: Other includes: Causing a Nuisance (7); Discrimination (4); Being Refused Service (2) and Indecent Exposure (1).

The Chinese community may well be subject to less frequent or widespread abuse than other communities, but it may be that they choose to report such matters less readily. These figures in fact probably understate the significance of racist abuse overall because many report forms do not specifically state whether abuse was a factor or not. Furthermore, in cases of serious assault or damage to property examples of abuse may not be included on the report form.

The varied nature of racist abuse indicates that often it is not a random act. Cases involving the use of the telephone, abusive letters and graffiti written on someone's house clearly involve a degree of detailed knowledge regarding the injured party. Similarly, cases of verbal abuse may also involve a threat of further action to the injured party. In such cases there is a real concern that the perpetrators of the abuse know, or are monitoring the behaviour of the people that they are harassing and thus increasing the likelihood that such action will occur again (see also Section 2.7). In fact some form of abuse was noted in 197 cases (50% of the total) where the victim indicated they had been subject to repeated or previous instances of harassment.

Summary

These figures show that the nature or form of racist harassment experienced by the different communities has slightly different profiles.

- All the communities note a high degree of abuse, although the Chinese community reports such abuse less frequently than the others.
- Over 40% of incidents reported by both the Chinese (46%) and Indian (43%) communities involve some form of damage to property.

- Blacks, Travellers and Whites all report a higher percentage of cases involving physical assault than the other communities.
- The Chinese community were most likely to report cases of theft or burglary.
- Members of the Chinese community also reported a majority of cases involving the use of a weapon.

2.6 Time of Year and Time of Day of Incidents

Over the six years under consideration racist incidents have been recorded fairly evenly over the year. Most incidents (90) have been recorded in February and the least (63) have been recorded in January.

Table 27: Number of Incidents By Month, 1996-2001
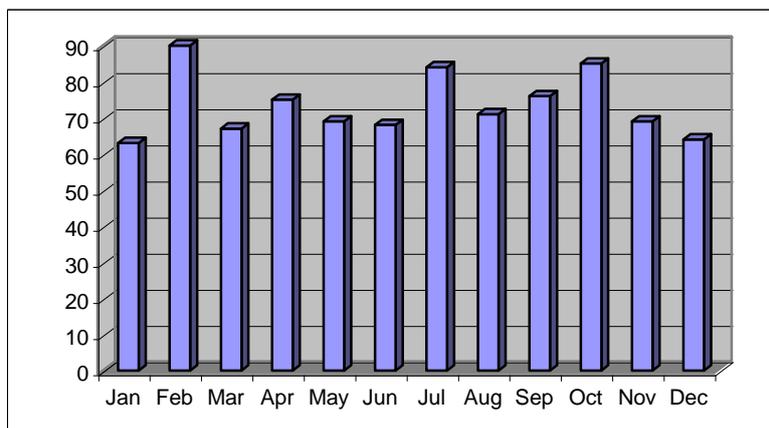
Apart from the peak month of February, there have been slightly more incidents recorded in the late Summer/Autumn than over the rest of the year and there has been a lower number of incidents recorded through the early winter months. In the period from July to October there has been an average of 79 incidents per month, while from November to January the average drops to 65. This is compared with an average for the year of 73 incidents per month.

In 1996 there were a number of cases of car theft, which were associated with protests and violence related to the marching dispute at Drumcree, but apart from that year there does not appear to be any correlation between other social tensions and a rise in racist harassment. In fact most incidents in July occur after the Twelfth rather than in the run up to it.

Day of the week on which incidents occur

It is not possible to determine whether there are any trends or patterns in relation to the day of the week on which incidents have occurred because police forms do not indicate the day on which the incident took place. Analysis of data on racist incidents by the Metropolitan Police indicated that in London 'incidents were spread fairly evenly across days of the week' (Metropolitan Police 2002).

Time of day of incident

The time of day that the incident occurred is supposed to be recorded on the police report form. However, 143 of the 881 forms (16%) had no time recorded. In some cases the lack of time could be explained by the fact that incidents occurred when the victim was at work or on holiday, in which case the time was unknown. In a number

of cases, officers appeared to have neglected to fill in the time of incident box. On a further 71 forms (8%) the time stated was in more general terms, for example 'overnight' if the incident was discovered when the person got up in the morning, or 'during the day' if it was discovered when a person returned from work. Therefore, only 667 incidents (76%) can be clearly categorised by the time they took place.

For Table 28 the incidents have been grouped into one of eight three-hour blocks throughout the day. The table shows that the vast amount of incidents (553 or 83% of those whose time was well documented) were recorded in the afternoon, evening and night time, between 3pm and 3am, with a peak occurring between 9pm and midnight. Overall 37% of incidents occurred in the late afternoon and early evening, while 46% occurred in the three hours either side of midnight. In contrast only a small proportion of incidents (n = 114 or 17%) were recorded in the twelve hours from 3am to 3pm.

Table 28: Incidents by time of day
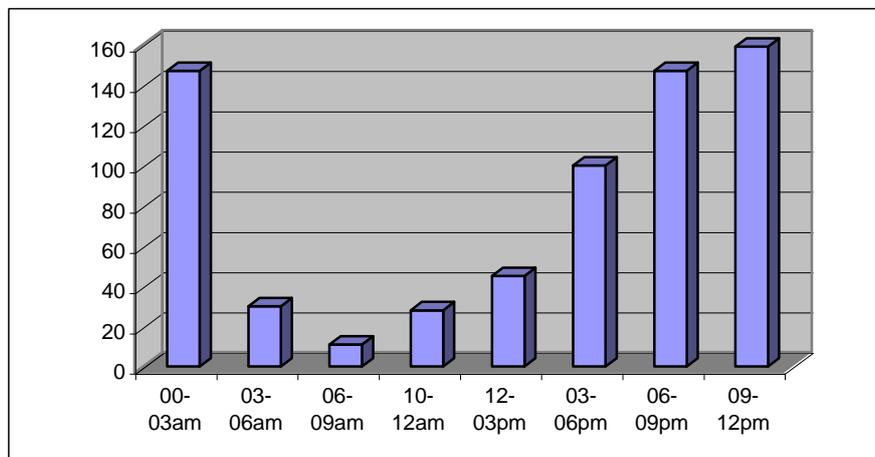
The pattern of time at which the incidents have been recorded in Northern Ireland is somewhat different from those recorded in London. Metropolitan Police data reveals that racist incidents peaked in the late afternoon and that around 43% of incidents occurred between 3pm and 9pm. Furthermore, some 25% of incidents in London occurred between 9am and 3pm a period in which only 11% of racist incidents were recorded in Northern Ireland (Metropolitan Police 2002).

2.7   Perpetrators of Racist Harassment

The police report forms can frequently give information about the perpetrators of racist incidents. Although the details are often rather vague, and therefore of limited value to the police, the information can be useful for constructing general patterns regarding the identity of perpetrators and perpetrator groups and the relationships with the victims.

In 286 of the incidents, or 32% of cases, the perpetrator was unknown and no information of any kind is available. This could be due to a number of factors, for example because the incident occurred overnight or while the person was at work or because an object was thrown but the thrower unseen. However, this also means that in 68% of the cases recorded, the perpetrator has been seen or identified to some extent either by the injured party or by a third party.

This group of 593 cases can be further disaggregated by degrees of identification: whether the person was simply seen and can thus be identified broadly by age, gender, ethnicity etc; if the person was identified as someone living locally or was even an immediate neighbour; and finally if the person is identified by name on the form either because he/she was apprehended or known to the victim.

- There were 239 cases, 22% of the total, where the perpetrator was seen by the injured party.
- There were 121 cases, 14% of the total, where the perpetrator was recognised and identified as 'local' by the injured party.
- There were 170 cases, 19% of the total, where the perpetrator was 'known' and could be identified by name.
- Of these, in 63 cases, 7% of the total, the perpetrator was identified as a 'neighbour' by the injured party.

One could also combine the categories of 'local' and 'neighbour' to illustrate that in 233 instances, 26% of the total recorded cases, the perpetrator of the racist harassment was someone who lived close to the injured party. Furthermore, it is reasonable to suggest that local people also carried out many of the 288 incidents in which the perpetrator was unseen. Particularly in those cases where windows were broken in a house, missiles thrown at a home or other damage was done to the property or to a vehicle parked near the home. This would indicate that in a further 181 cases the perpetrator was a local person and subsequently 414 examples of recorded harassment or 47% of all incidents were perpetrated by someone living close to the injured party.

The forms can also reveal something of the age, gender and ethnicity of the perpetrators of racist harassment. However, the figures are uneven as not all of the forms contain the same amount of information.

Age of Perpetrators

There were 480 cases where the age of the perpetrator was indicated.

- In 170 cases (35% of cases where the perpetrator was identified in some way and 19% of all cases) the perpetrator was described as an adult.
- In 220 cases (46% and 25%) the perpetrator was described as a youth.
- In 88 cases (18% and 10%) the perpetrator was identified as a child.
- In two cases an adult and child were both involved in the harassment.

Gender of Perpetrators

There were 469 cases where the gender of the perpetrator was identified.

- In 401 cases (85%) the perpetrator was a male or group of males.
- In 48 cases (10%) the perpetrators were all female.
- In 20 cases (4%) both males and females were involved in the harassment.
- Males were thus involved in 421 cases (90% of the total).
- Females were involved in 68 cases or 14.5% of cases where gender was specified.

Table 29: Perpetrator by age and gender

	Adult	Youth	Child	Ad + Ch'd	Unknown	Total
Male	141	139	35		86	401
Female	13	14	14	1	6	48
Total	154	153	49	1	92	449

It is interesting to note that where females were identified as perpetrators they were evenly divided between adults, youths and children, whereas male adults and youths were more likely to be identified as perpetrators than male children. In fact girls accounted for 29% of cases where females were identified as a perpetrator whereas boys accounted for only 9% of male perpetrators.

Ethnic Group of Perpetrator

There were 396 cases where it was possible to determine the broad ethnic background of the perpetrator. In 384 cases the perpetrator was identified as White. In just over 3% of cases (n = 12) the harasser was identified as a member of another minority ethnic community. In 4 cases the perpetrator was described as Black, in 3 cases they were categorised as Other, in 2 cases each the perpetrator was identified as Chinese and Travellers. Finally, in one case an Indian was accused of racist harassment.

The victims in these 12 cases came from across each of the racial categories. However, in four of the 12 cases the victim was described as White.

Data from England and Wales indicates a diversity of evidence of racist harassment both in cases where the perpetrator and victim are from minority communities and cases where the perpetrator is from a minority community and the victim is white. The

Metropolitan Police data, for example, suggests that around one in four racist incidents in London include a victim who is described as white European (Burney and Rose 2002). It is perhaps further, if depressing, evidence of the growing cultural diversity and social complexity of Northern Ireland when one does not automatically assume that the perpetrator of racist harassment is white.

Table 30: Minority ethnic perpetrators of racist harassment

Perpetrator	Black	Chinese	Indian	Other	Traveller	Total
Victim						
Black	1	1				2
Chinese	1					1
Indian			1	1		2
Other				1	1	2
Traveller		1				1
White	2			1	1	4
Total	4	2	1	3	2	12

Number of Perpetrators

The report forms also reveal that in 202 cases (36% of cases where the data was given) a single person was involved in the harassment while in 361 cases (64% of cases where data was available) more than one person was involved in the harassment.

Stereotyping

In generalising from these various pieces of information the data on the police report forms suggests that the principal perpetrator of racist harassment is a white male, over the age of 16, who is acting in consort with one or more similar white males and that these young white males will live near to, and therefore know the victim of their racism.

However, having identified the rather predictable perpetrator one should not ignore some of the other facts revealed by the data from the 881 racist incidents:

- In 14.5% of cases females were involved in racist harassment and,
- In 18% of cases where the age of the perpetrator classifiable, the perpetrator was a child under the age of 16.

Part Three

Responding to Racist Harassment

Part three reviews the range and nature of the current responses to racist harassment by the police and other statutory bodies and by a range of voluntary and community organisations. It then reviews the partnership initiatives in this field and a number of recent consultation documents issued in relation to racism and racial equality.

3.1 Police Responses to Harassment

In Section 1.3 we listed a number of factors that might limit the willingness of members of minority ethnic groups to report cases of racist harassment to the police. These included such matters as the inability of the police to respond effectively to racist harassment, the lack of feedback on successes in prosecuting perpetrators, police ignorance of the significance of such harassment for the victims, police racism and language and cultural barriers. In each of these cases the police have some capacity to attempt to respond to the concerns and thus increase confidence within the minority communities. This section describes some current and recent initiatives taken by the police to improve their ability to respond to complaints of racist harassment and to improve their relationships with the various minority ethnic communities.

It is not always easy to determine the scale or even the nature of the police response to such cases from the report forms, apart from the fact that the police have paid a visit to the injured party and have taken down the details of the incident. The Race One report forms do not always include relevant details of police responses and where they do it may only indicate the earliest stages of an enquiry. The bare details of the police response that can be gathered from the Race One forms is as follows:

- In 64 cases the police spoke to one or more suspects;
- In 13 cases the police arrested one or more suspects;
- In 1 case a person was bound over;
- 2 people were cautioned;
- 3 people were charged;
- In 35 cases a prosecution was taken or expected to be taken;
- In 282 cases no further action was to be taken.

While this appears to be an extremely low response to the number of cases involved, there are a number of possible factors, which affect this:

- It is clear that in a number of cases, the police are responding to incidents rather than to crimes. While this is a necessary part of the response to racist incidents, there is often little formal action that can be taken if no crime has been committed. When the new ICIS computerised recording system is fully operational it should be possible to disaggregate cases of racist incidents and racist crimes.

- It is also evident that in over 40% of all cases there is no visual evidence of the perpetrator and there is therefore little that can be done by the police to apprehend the perpetrator.
- In cases of verbal abuse, where the perpetrator is often identified, it is often likely to be one person's word against another as to what happened. While it is possible for a police officer to speak to the alleged perpetrator, there is little more that can be done.
- In cases of criminal damage to vehicle or to property there may be few indications of the identity of the perpetrator, tyres are slashed overnight, a stone is thrown and the perpetrator disappears before he/she can be seen.

Evidence from England and Wales suggests that the response rate by police forces to racist incidents is varied. In cases of verbal harassment a very high proportion of incidents were deemed to require 'no further police action' (Maynard and Read 1997). In 1999 only 1,150 offences were sentenced by the courts whereas the police had recorded nearly 48,000 incidents in 1999-2000 (Burney and Rose 2002). This suggests that the situation in England and Wales is little different from Northern Ireland. However, there has been a significant increase in the prosecution of racially aggravated offences in London following the introduction of the Crime and Disorder Act in 1998 and the publication of the Stephen Lawrence Report the following year.

In spite of the difficulties that may be experienced by the police in identifying and prosecuting perpetrators of racist harassment more could be done to document the actions that are taken by the police. The way in which the data is currently recorded does not appear to readily allow the full range of police responses to be added to the Race One form. In most cases the information goes no further than acknowledging the reporting of an incident. The development of the ICIS computerised data recording system should improve the capacity of police analysts to track the range of responses to racist crimes and feed these back to relevant interest groups.

The PSNI are currently exploring the options for use of restorative conferencing for the perpetrators and victims of racist incidents (as opposed to crimes) in the hope that being brought face to face with the victim will increase recognition of the distress that low-level racist harassment can cause. They are also exploring ways to respond to persistent or recurrent low-level abuse or harassment perhaps through prosecuting offenders for behaviour likely to cause a breach of the peace.

If people are encouraged to notify the police of racist incidents even when there is little chance that the police can apprehend the perpetrator, then the police should look to find more creative solutions to reduce the opportunity for such crimes in the first place. In North Belfast persistent attacks on vehicles belonging to the Sikh community were reduced by providing a space for the vehicles to be parked in or near to the local police station. While this may be a short-term solution it has helped to build the relationship between the police and the Sikh community and may provide space for a more permanent resolution to the problems in the area. Future responses to racist harassment need to be as much about intelligence-led, problem solving, multi-agency approaches as about simple policing responses to criminal activity. There is a need to build upon and extend relationships between the minority families or communities being targeted and the police, but also to widen these to include other relevant

statutory agencies and community organisations if the type of multi-agency response to racist crime recommended by the Stephen Lawrence Report is to be realised and effective.

In reality any effective response to racism will need to extend beyond the activities of the PSNI and involve both the education system and a much broader range of statutory, community and voluntary organisations working together to develop ideas and projects that are based on principles of mutuality, integration and tolerance and encourage the acceptance and celebration of cultural diversity and difference in building a more cohesive society.

Working with Minority Communities

When a racist incident is reported to the police, the investigating officer completes a Race One form documenting the nature of the incident and including details of the victim and the perpetrator if available. This form is passed to the Minority Liaison Officer (MLO). The MLOs are responsible for liaison with minority ethnic groups/individuals, they offer support to victims of racist incidents and try to build relationships with minority groups in their areas.

On receipt of a Race One form the MLO will contact the victim if this has been agreed to during the initial contact with the investigating officer. Most MLOs send a letter and include a Hate Crime leaflet, a business card and/or a Victim Support flyer. The Hate Crime leaflet contains contact details for support agencies such as the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities, Traveller Movement and Victim Support. Some MLOs visit victims personally as this allows them the opportunity to explain matters, offer advice, for example on crime prevention, and provide contact numbers for victim support groups or minority ethnic organisations. Some MLOs prefer to contact the victim by telephone, but others cited language difficulties as a reason for limiting personal contact with victims.

The MLOs we interviewed were generally aware of the minority ethnic groups and organisations in their area. In many cases, they had made contact with such groups and met with them on a regular basis to provide support, reassurance and crime prevention information. In the areas where no local group existed, the MLOs had phone numbers for Belfast-based groups such as the Chinese Welfare Association, Multi-Cultural Resource Centre and the Indian Community Centre. Where appropriate, an MLO would contact and liase with the Housing Executive if evidence of harassment or violence was needed, for example in cases of re-housing applications on the grounds of intimidation.

The police had better contacts with members of minority ethnic communities in Belfast than in rural areas as support organisations are largely Belfast-based. However the overall increase in the numbers of minority ethnic people throughout Northern Ireland is placing greater demands on the police in all areas to build effective relationships with local people. However, this is also happening at a time of internal re-organisation and of a reduction in the number of available police officers. This has meant that in some DCUs liasing with minority ethnic communities is not regarded as a high priority and the role of MLO is not as effective as it should be.

The changing nature of Northern Irish society and the emergence of new minority ethnic communities is also forcing the police to maintain an awareness of the needs and demands of communities in their areas. Police in Dungannon and South Tyrone introduced a twice-weekly surgery at the police station in July 2002, specifically aimed at the local Portuguese-speaking community. As many of the Portuguese-speaking workers in the area do not speak fluent English, a translator is provided at these sessions. In addition, the Hate Crime and Domestic Violence leaflets have been translated into Portuguese. At time of contact, this initiative had only been in operation for a few weeks, therefore, it is too early to comment on its usefulness in supporting Portuguese-speaking victims of racist incidents or effectiveness in monitoring and recording racist attacks on the Portuguese-speaking community in the Dungannon area.

The degree of contact between the MLO and the victim is dependent upon the individual MLO concerned. Some MLOs establish and maintain regular contact with the victim while others rely upon the investigating officer or sector beat officers to keep contact. The evidence from police records of racist incidents suggests that there is a positive relationship between personalised contact with a specific police officer and the readiness to report incidents. In areas where a police officer is more pro-active in building relationships and responding to problems, the local minority communities in turn seem more willing to report a wider range of incidents. Thus an increase in recorded incidents can be related to the level of police support for victims as much as a rise in the scale of the problem.

Training

Issues have been raised around the style, substance and quality of police training in relation to matters of race and ethnicity. Members of minority ethnic communities have been involved in the delivery of some aspects of both cultural awareness training and anti-racism training for some years. However, many such groups would argue that anti-racist training in particular needs to go further and deeper than at present and they should be involved in overall design and thinking behind such training rather than simply being invited to deliver a talk or two.

Although many of the MLOs accept the importance of issues of racism and improving relations with the minority communities, this is not accepted by all officers. There is a feeling that such training is not treated seriously by too many officers, who consider issues of racism as less relevant to police work in Northern Ireland.

This report makes no pretence to be able to effectively evaluate the quality or failings of police anti-racist training for new student officers and existing officers, but would note that it remains an issue of concern to many groups and will therefore impact upon their perceptions of police practices and procedures. It may well be that the establishment of the Independent Advisory Group for minority ethnic groups will go some way to creating a forum where disagreements over such matters can be addressed and resolved in a constructive manner.

Other Police Initiatives

The PSNI are working with representative minority ethnic organisations to improve the level of service delivery and awareness of needs and concerns. A Multi-Cultural Independent Advisory Group, including representatives of many of the support organisations was established in June 2002. The group will be consulted on the development of new policies that are relevant to the minority communities at an early stage of the policy formulation process. The police are also exploring ways in which police stations can be made more welcoming places for people from minority communities and are exploring the potential for use of basic signs in a wide range of languages. They are also exploring how to improve interpreter facilities for people visiting police stations or making complaints, an issue that has been a regular source of complaint from minority ethnic communities. This has the potential to become a persistently problematic issue as the number of language communities in Northern Ireland is rapidly increasing (MCRC 2002).

Minority Ethnic Police Officers

One issue that was raised in some discussions as a factor that would increase confidence and support in the police from minority ethnic communities would be to see more police officers from minority communities who could then provide something of a role model to encourage people to work with and support the police. The Patten Report recognised the value of having an larger number of officers from minority ethnic communities in the reformed police service and although it suggested that efforts should be made to recruit from those communities (and the initial advertisements for new recruits did include people from minority ethnic backgrounds) it resisted the idea of setting target figures. This seems to have been primarily based on the assumption that the size of the minority ethnic communities was too small to make this realistic and that almost 50% of these were Chinese who were not interested in joining the police service (Patten 1999: paras14.6 & 15.8)

Until recently the police have been unable to provide figures for the number of minority ethnic officers in the PSNI but at a conference on Human Rights and Racial Equality in October 2002 it was indicated that there were eighteen minority ethnic officers out of a total strength of around 7000 full time regular police officers. If the police had been set a target to have a representative figure of minority ethnic officers, as all police services in England and Wales have, they would be aiming for a figure of between 70 and 100 such officers. Although such a figure would still be small, the officers would nevertheless be more visible.

However, a point was also made at the conference that any applicant from a minority ethnic community would be included in the Protestant and other category. To date there have been many more applicants in this category than within the Catholic category, thus limiting the opportunities for minority ethnic applicants being recruited. One hundred and thirty six applicants from minority ethnic communities applied to join the PSNI in the first three rounds of recruitment, four of them were successful. It was claimed at the conference that the current situation thus appears to

make it more difficult for a member of a minority ethnic community to become a police officer than it was in the past.

Complaints of Racism by the PSNI

The police are the principal agency with responsibility to respond to complaints of racist harassment by members of the public. The police has also been accused of institutional racism and general complaints have been made of examples of racist behaviour by police officers. Since November 2000 any complaints made against the police are investigated by the office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland. In the period until the end of December 2002 there had been twenty-two complaints lodged against members of the PSNI.

In analysing the twenty-two complaints no clear patterns emerge:
- Eleven complaints were made against police officers in Belfast, three in Armagh, two each in Bangor and Coalisland and one each in Ballymena, Cookstown, Enniskillen and Limavady.
- Four complaints each were made by members of the Pakistani, Traveller and White ethnic groups, two each by members of the Black, Chinese and Other ethnic groups and one each by a member of the Asian and Indian ethnic groups. In two cases the ethnicity of the complainant was not known.
- In eight cases a police officer was accused of racist abuse or making racist comments.
- In seven cases the complaint was of discrimination based on colour or ethnic origin.
- In four cases a police officer was accused of exhibiting a racist attitude.
- In three cases the police officer was accused of not taking a report of racist harassment seriously.

The Police Ombudsman's office responded to the complaints in a variety of ways:
- Nine cases were closed because of non-co-operation of the complainant.
- In four cases the complaint was withdrawn.
- Three cases were considered not-substantiated.
- Two cases were considered ill-founded.
- One case was closed due to abuse of procedure.
- One case was closed because it was outside of the remit of the Ombudsman.
- In one case an informal resolution procedure was used to address the complaint.
- One case was being investigated.

3.2 Statutory Support

This section deals with the broad range of support that is available and given to victims of racist violence or harassment from organisations within the statutory sector. It is based both upon interviews with key individuals in the various organisations and a review of the relevant policy documents made available to us.

Housing

As noted earlier in the report, 52% of recorded racist incidents between 1996 and 2001 took place at or involved attacks on the home. It is therefore not surprising that some victims of racist harassment seek alternative accommodation. Data contained in the Race One forms reveal that there were:

- 31 cases where the victim of a racist incident had moved house,
- 31 cases where they were planning to move house; and,
- 14 cases where they had contacted the Northern Ireland Housing Executive with the aim of seeking new accommodation.

Although the Housing Executive does not have a specific policy to cover racist harassment or intimidation, it can provide support for victims of racist incidents under existing policies. As such the Housing Executive can provide temporary homeless accommodation, re-house the victim, remove graffiti or in certain cases purchase a privately owned property under the SPED scheme. Under the normal procedures for the allocation of housing, the issue of intimidation is addressed under Rule 23 of *The Housing Selection Scheme Guidance Manual*. According to this rule intimidation points may only be awarded:

a) To applicants or tenants who are owed the Full Duty (i.e. those who are homeless, are a priority and are unintentionally homeless) and whose reason for being accepted as 'homeless' by the Housing Executive is that they were intimidated;
b) To those applicants or tenants who have been initially accepted as 'homeless' by the Housing Executive for reasons other than 'intimidation', and who are subsequently confirmed as being intimidated from their last settled address or are intimidated from their 'crisis' accommodation.

Thus victims of racist intimidation, be they applicants or tenants, can obtain extra points if either of the following is established:

a) That the applicant's home has been destroyed or seriously damaged (by explosion, fire, or other means) as a result of terrorist, racial or sectarian attack; or,
b) That the applicant cannot reasonably be expected to live or to resume living in his or her home because if he or she were to do so there would, in the opinion of the designated officer, be a serious and imminent risk that the applicant, or a member of the applicant's household, would be killed or seriously injured as a result of a terrorist, sectarian or racial attack.

Intimidation points are not, however, awarded to applicants who are under threat or being intimidated as a result of a dispute with a neighbour or harassment by a single individual. The policy sets out guidance on how to define the nature of the intimidation by seeking evidence from outside authorities such as the police. Victims of racist intimidation who are owner-occupiers can apply to have their home purchased by the Housing Executive under the SPED (Scheme for the Purchase of Evacuated Dwellings) scheme. To qualify under this scheme the applicant must satisfy certain conditions including:

- The house must be owner-occupied and must be the applicant's only or principal home;
- A certificate signed by the Chief Constable of PSNI, or an authorised signatory, must be submitted to the Executive, stating clearly that it is unsafe for the applicant or a member of his/her household residing with him/her to continue to live in the house, because that person has been directly or specifically threatened or intimidated and as a result is at risk of serious injury or death. A Chief Constable's Certificate will only be issues where there is information or evidence to suggest the involvement of a proscribed organisation;
- The applicant must qualify for Full Duty Applicant status under the Executive's Housing Selection Scheme.

Difficulties arise in cases where an applicant or tenant is experiencing harassment and not intimidation. The degree of recognition, which would be given for harassment in the selection scheme, is less than would be given for intimidation. Anti-social behaviour procedures would cover neighbour-neighbour disputes including racist harassment. Under such procedures, the Executive can take action against tenants who are perpetrators of racist harassment. Ultimately, the tenant could be evicted. As noted earlier in the report, there have been no recorded incidents of racist abuse or attacks recorded in the anti-social behaviour statistical returns from the Housing Executive's district offices.

The addition of racist intimidation as a factor for inclusion in the Housing Selection Scheme is a relatively recent measure dating from November 2000 and the recognition of the problem of racism means that other Housing Executive policies are being amended. In August 2002 the criteria for eligibility for an Emergency Re-Housing Grant was changed to include those tenants suffering racist intimidation. The Executive is currently reviewing all policies and procedures with a view to extending them to include racist intimidation where appropriate.

Since the fieldwork for this research was carried out the Housing Executive has taken on additional responsibility for Traveller accommodation. Under the Housing Order (NI) 2003 the transfer of responsibility for serviced sites from councils is a new area of operations for the Housing Executive. The transfer of sites on 1 December 2003 means increased contact between staff and members of the Traveller community. As such the Housing Executive has been carrying out staff training sessions on the policy backdrops for the new responsibilities as well as cultural awareness. The aim of the latter is to raise awareness and highlight issues around prejudice and understanding of traveller culture.

Education

Given the findings of qualitative research in Northern Ireland and more widely in the United Kingdom that members of minority ethnic communities are frequently subject to racist harassment and bullying in schools, it is somewhat surprising that the police data reveals only six incidents of racist harassment in schools. According to Save the Children/Barnardo's (2002) 66% of minority ethnic school children in Northern Ireland have experienced racist harassment, while Mongan's (2002) research into the educational experience of Traveller children in Belfast found that children transferring from St. Mary's Primary School to a local secondary school were fearful of being bullied. The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission surveyed students aged 11-18 years on their aspirations for a Bill of Rights (NIHRC 2002). They found that young people particularly wanted the right to protection from bullying, including protection from racist, sectarian and homophobic harassment and violence.

The recent Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003 contains an amendment to the legislation on school discipline which requires schools to have an anti-bullying policy and to consult with pupils and parents as to the content of the policy. The Department of Education rejected the idea of producing a standardised or model anti-bullying policy and instead issued a practical guide, entitled *Pastoral Care in Schools: Promoting Positive Behaviour* (2001), which encourages schools to take a holistic approach to discipline in school and includes a chapter on developing an anti-bullying culture, while also offering advice on how to support a child whom has been bullied:

Teachers should listen sympathetically to, and take seriously, what the pupils who have been targeted by the bullies have to say ... Support and protection should be promised, and agreement reached with them on an appropriate course of action. (Paragraph 121: 73)

Likewise, the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) offers support to integrated schools and has produced materials such as *The Anti-Bias Curriculum* (2002). This handbook acts as a resource for schools in the development of an anti-bias curriculum; it includes a chapter on culture and race. Accordingly, the aims of education about culture and race are:

- To provide children with a variety of stimuli from both major cultures, with a positive exposure to a wide range of other cultures and races;
- To introduce children to differences between cultures to show that no culture is either superior or inferior;
- To encourage children to be secure in their own culture; and,
- To promote positive acceptance of racial and cultural differences.

The need to provide counselling support for pupils has been recognised by the Department. As a first step in developing a framework for service development the Education and Training Inspectorate have been asked to undertake a review of existing provision. At present access to counselling support varies across Northern Ireland and support is available from a range of providers including a school's own staff, school based counsellors, the Education Welfare Service, Educational Psychology Service and voluntary organisations which work with young people.

The responses from the various Education and Library Boards, NICIE and the Department of Education suggest that at present the provision of support for victims of racist bullying is left to the individual schools concerned. Without consulting those schools that have minority ethnic pupils, it is difficult to assess whether any mechanisms currently exist to deal with racist bullying and if so, whether these mechanisms are working effectively.

Employment

The Office of Industrial Tribunals and Fair Employment Tribunals (OITFET) has responsibility for responding to complaints of racist harassment and discrimination under the 1997 Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order. The Tribunals were established under the Industrial Tribunals (NI) Order 1996 and the Fair Employment (NI) Act 1989. They hear and determine employment cases involving discrimination on sex, disability, racial, religious and political grounds or employment rights. Hearings are usually in public and evidence is heard on oath. Whilst the proceedings are less formal than in an ordinary court they are part of the legal system. Each tribunal has a legally qualified Chair and may have two other members.

Responsibility for the administration of justice lies with the President of the Industrial Tribunals and the Fair Employment Tribunal. OITFET provides an administration service to the Judiciary and is staffed by civil servants and is the responsibility of the Department for Employment and Learning. Data from the OITFET reveals that the number of complaints lodged with them on an annual basis between 1998 and 2001 has increased from 66 to 142. This represents an overall increase of 115%. Complaints of racial discrimination under the Order have also increased from 1.6% of total complaints to 2.4% over this same period.

Victim Support

Victim Support is an established service provider for individuals who are victims of crime. It was introduced into Northern Ireland in 1981. Victim Support offers support and advice to victims of crime including information on compensation and insurance matters, on home security and on court procedures, and advice on how to contact other sources of help.

Following the publication of the Stephen Lawrence Report, Victim Support established a Working Party on Services to Victims of Racist Crime at the national level in July 1999. This working party consulted with members of Victim Support and reviewed existing services to victims of racist crime. The contents of the resulting document *Supporting Victims of Racist Crime: Good Practice* (2001) was agreed by Victim Support's National Council in September 2000 and published the following year. The document represents a key component of the work arising from the recommendations of the Working Party on Services to Victims of Racist Crime. Subsequently, the National Council has agreed *'that local Victim Support services must use this document'* (section 1.2) and its content *'should form the basis for service provision to victims of racist crime'* (section 1.3).

In terms of service delivery, victims of both racist crime and racist incidents should have access to Victim Support services:

Racist incidents may also be categorised as crimes that may not normally be referred to Victim Support, for example victims of car crime. It is appropriate to support victims of racist incidents from all categories received, and assess each incident appropriately as in any case of on-going harassment (section 7.1).

Under this procedure victims referred with consent receive personal contact and in addition, repeat victims are prioritised for personal contact. If the crime or incident is identified as having a racist motivation, then it is envisaged that a specially trained volunteer will be allocated to offer support from the start.

Victim Support aims to increase its ability to respond to victims within the minority ethnic communities and has recently offered to train members of minority ethnic communities as Victim Support volunteers even though they would initially be expected to respond to problems of racist harassment and within their own communities. At present Victim Support only works with victims of crimes but under this scheme they would extend their support to victims of racist incidents as well.

Victim Support also monitors the source of referrals in terms of the types of crime for which people are victims. In 2000-01 the organisation received 20,508 referrals for racist crimes in England and Wales while the following year, 2001-02 the figure increased to 23,130 referrals, an increase of 13%. Comparable figures for racist incidents or crimes in Northern Ireland have not been made available to us.

Conclusion

The agencies discussed above all have a responsibility to respond to problems of racist harassment in some way or other. However, while each of them readily acknowledges this responsibility, they have done little to document or quantify the scale of the problem they are responding to. It is therefore important that each of these bodies recognises the significance of racist harassment as an issue in its own right and a problem of increasing concern to an ever-wider section of our society. The next steps for each of these bodies is to begin to work in partnership with other relevant agencies in developing appropriate and standardised recording and monitoring mechanisms, to establish internal systems that will enable then to quantify the scale of the problem of racism in their sector and to document their strategies for responding to racist harassment.

3.3   Voluntary and Community Support

In addition to support from statutory bodies, victims of racist incidents can also turn to a number of voluntary groups and representative groups from within the minority ethnic communities for advice and assistance.

Citizens Advice Bureaux

The Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB) offers a range of advice on benefit issues, housing problems and employment matters. Most of the approximately 1,000 discrimination enquiries recorded between 2000 and 2001 were related to religious and gender discrimination in employment. Although the CAB operates a computerised case file management system, discrimination enquiries cannot be disaggregated into sub-categories such as racist or homophobic discrimination.

CAB works with a number of minority ethnic organisations on a regular basis. It has links with the Chinese Welfare Association throughout Northern Ireland and is currently promoting a three-pronged approach with regards to the Chinese community:

- Promoting the CAB through the development and launch of a bilingual leaflet;
- Encouraging members of the Chinese community to join the management committees of local CAB;
- Trying to recruit members of the Chinese community as volunteers.

The CAB has also established outreach projects at a number of Traveller sites in Belfast and Coalisland, and works with the Portuguese-speaking migrant worker population in the Dungannon area where it has dealt with between 40-50 cases involving Portuguese-speaking clients over the past 12 months. For a time, the CAB also had a Portuguese-speaking volunteer who was able to provide translation services for local people. The Dungannon CAB also participate in a local forum in the area, known as the Portuguese Forum. This will be discussed later in this section.

Despite these contacts, CAB deals with few enquiries about racist harassment. In an attempt to address this deficit the CAB launched their campaign *Report Racism – CAB Can Help* in March 2002. This aimed to encourage people to use the bureaux to report racist incidents. However, despite the publicity given to the launch, staff did not think this had led to an increase in the numbers of minority ethnic people using CAB.

The national CAB has also advocated a more active role for the organisation in responding to racism. Their recent document: *Bridging Communities – A Race Equality Guide for Citizens Advice Bureaux* (2002), envisages a pro-active role for CAB in *'bringing about better relations between individuals and between different communities'*. This document offers guidance on facilitating links with minority ethnic communities, providing support and advice to victims of racist crime, highlighting race equality issues locally and engaging in multi-agency schemes to monitor racist crimes. The launch of the *Report Racism* campaign should therefore be seen as a

positive step in developing a more active role for the CAB in Northern Ireland, but this campaign will need to be supported and encouraged if it is to have any effect.

Housing Rights Service

The Housing Rights Service (HRS) is an independent organisation based in Belfast, working to eradicate homelessness and poor housing and they deal with a small number of racist harassment cases. They work with a number of the minority ethnic organisations, for example HRS meets with the Traveller Movement on a quarterly basis and members of the Traveller community have undertaken training courses. The Chinese Welfare Association is also member of HRS and clients can avail of the Language Line telephone translation service. Referrals to HRS also come via minority community support organisations such as the Multi-Cultural Resource Centre.

Law Centre

The Belfast-based Law Centre does a wide range of work with refugees and asylum seekers and is a member of the Refugee Action Group. Staff provide legal advice to people from minority ethnic communities and come into contact with people who might have experienced racist harassment. They do not collect any statistical data relating to such experiences but they would be interested in being included in any initiatives that are developed in response to problems of racism and harassment.

Minority Ethnic Organisations

There are a number of minority ethnic community groups and organisations, some are organised throughout Northern Ireland with local groups, while others are Belfast-based. Such groups offer support, advice and guidance on a whole range of issues and provide a focus for community members. The following section reviews the main activities of the larger groups in relation to responding to racist harassment.

Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities

The Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM) is an umbrella organisation working on behalf of minority ethnic communities in Northern Ireland. NICEM undertakes a range of activities and through its racial equality services it provides legal and support services to the victims of racist discrimination, harassment and attacks. It has financial support from Comic Relief for a Racial Harassment Support and Advocacy Project, which provides advice, support and remedial action to victims of racist harassment and will refer them to the appropriate specialist agencies. NICEM has a target of 80 new cases per year for the project. The project aims to promote and establish a self-supporting Victim Support Network where victims of racist harassment can share experiences and respond positively to such harassment.

Multi-Cultural Resource Centre

The Multi-Cultural Resource Centre (MCRC) is an umbrella organisation working with minority ethnic communities. It supports community development work with

many of the smaller or more recently arrived groups and has published reports on the experiences and needs of the Bangladeshi, Latin American and Portuguese-speaking communities, on people from minority ethnic communities living in rural mid-Ulster and on language issues and linguistic diversity with the minority communities. The MCRC do not work directly on racist harassment but their welfare advisor deals with problems related to such matters. MCRC encourages victims of violence to contact relevant agencies, whether the police, Victim Support or other appropriate bodies.

Chinese Welfare Association

The Chinese Welfare Association (CWA) has been monitoring racist harassment for the past 10 years and works closely with the police in responding to such problems. Members of the Chinese community who are victims of racist incidents are encouraged to report to both the police and the CWA. The CWA also monitor how the police respond to reports of racist harassment. They claim that many victims feel that reporting incidents to the police rarely has a positive outcome. Many complain that the police are slow to respond to reports of racist incidents and this has given the police a poor reputation within the Chinese community. In spite of such concerns the CWA continues to provide guidance and information about crime prevention, compensation, and legal advice and make referrals to the Police Ombudsman. The CWA work with the police in providing racism awareness training, and they work with the Housing Executive by providing interpreters on housing and racism related problems when needed.

The CWA also funds the Sai Pak Chinese Community Project in Derry Londonderry. This project has a multi-agency committee, including representatives from the Education and Library Board, Social Services Board, Derry City Council and the police. Unlike the situation in some parts of Belfast, Derry Londonderry was not regarded as a particularly 'racist' city and any incidents, apart from minor problems such as name-calling, would be reported directly to the police, rather than be monitored by Sai Pak.

Indian Community Centre

The Indian Community Centre (ICC) acts as a focus for the Indian community throughout Northern Ireland. The ICC does not monitor cases of racist harassment, but rather members of the community would be encouraged to contact the police directly following incidents of racial harassment or violence. Staff do provide guidance and advice about who to contact. Although incidents of racist harassment occur, they are not considered a serious problem. Minor incidents such as name-calling were not taken seriously and members of the Centre were unlikely to report them to the police, only the more serious incidents were reported. The staff at the ICC generally felt that they had a good relationship with the police and would contact them in advance if they were organising events as there had been problems in the past with vandalism to cars parked outside the Centre. Usually the police responded positively to any such concerns conveyed to them.

Belfast Islamic Centre

The Belfast Islamic Centre is the focus for Muslims living in Belfast. The Centre houses a mosque, runs a part time Islamic School and organises activities, including English classes, talks and information sessions. Members of the Centre are encouraged to contact the police directly to report incidents of harassment or violence, although minor incidents such as name-calling would not tend to be reported. It was felt that the police do not respond particularly well to minority ethnic people or take all such incidents seriously. It was said that in the past when people reported cases of verbal abuse the police did not bother to respond, in other cases incidents reported over the phone have been found not to have logged and therefore did not generate any action. It was also claimed that the Housing Executive had been unwilling to move Muslim families and individuals unless they had been physically harmed, while some Muslims who had been designated as homeless were still waiting to be housed. The lack of adequate provision of interpreters at hospitals and clinics was also seen as an issue of concern.

Traveller Support Groups

Three Traveller support groups were interviewed as part of this research: the Traveller Movement (NI), Derry Travellers Support Group and the Belfast Travellers Education and Development Group. It is clear from the interviews that relationships between Travellers and the police are practically non-existent. It was felt to be unlikely that members of the Traveller community would report racist incidents directly to the police, this is supported by the data for recorded racist incidents between 1996 and 2001 – only 3% of these involved a Traveller victim. Anecdotal evidence from the support groups suggests that Travellers experience a range of racist abuse and discrimination on a daily basis. This includes verbal abuse, damage to vehicles, bullying in schools and refusal of services. In those instances where a Traveller was refused service or suffered discrimination it was felt that the individual was most likely to contact a local solicitor or the Equality Commission, rather than the police.

Conclusion

There is now a wide range of groups working on, or with an interest in, issues relating to the various minority ethnic communities. It is important that any initiatives that are developed in response to growing awareness of the problems of racism and racist harassment should draw upon the diversity of skills, experiences and interests of the bodies outlined above and ensure that such programmes are as inclusive and representative as possible.

3.4   Working in Partnership

Any attempt to develop effective responses to issues of racist harassment requires a co-ordinated and structured partnership between all relevant agencies working on, or with an interest in, the issue. Such approaches will not only facilitate a more efficient use of resources but will also lead to greater levels of trust between organisations and wider recognition of the problems faced by each of the specific partners. There are a small number of such initiatives in the early stages of development and these will need to be nurtured and supported to ensure that they are able to function effectively for all interested parties.

Multi-Agency Racist Incident Forum

At a conference convened by the PSNI, Equality Commission and NICEM in June 2002 it was agreed that a multi-agency response was the most effective way to begin to document the full scale of racist harassment and to develop appropriate policies and responses to the problem. A working group involving the police, Equality Commission, Housing Executive, Departments of Health and Education plus the main representative groups of minority ethnic communities has since been convened to establish a common system for reporting and recording incidents of racist harassment. The group aims to adopt a standardised form for recording racist incidents and to establish a system for compiling reports to all agencies into a single database. It is hoped that this system will be established in 2003. Initially it is intended to incorporate only public bodies into the network, but with the option of expanding the system to include NGOs as well.

The group are also exploring options for reporting incidents via the internet and through the use of pro-forma reply paid forms in order to encourage the maximum number of people to report any racist incidents they have experienced. However there is some concern that such reports would not be easily verified and it may be difficult to validate the status of such report. The Stephen Lawrence Report recommended the establishment of a wide range of reporting racist incidents and it may well be that such concerns have already been addressed by groups in the UK.

Community Safety Committees

Another way of responding to the concerns and problems of minority ethnic communities is through the growing number of Community Safety Committees being established by district councils in many areas. In England and Wales such bodies are required under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the Criminal Justice Review recommended that similar procedures should be established in Northern Ireland (Criminal Justice Review Body 2000, Crawford and Matassa 2000, Feenan 2000). A number of such bodies have been or are in the process of being established following the lead taken by Antrim Borough Council in 2000.

Such bodies would have the benefits of incorporating the concerns of minority ethnic communities directly into local decision-making structures and would also help to counter the Belfast centrism of many of the organised support groups and thus the

contacts that the police and other bodies have. In both Antrim and Ballymena attempts have been made to engage with the local minority ethnic communities and to encourage them to participate in the community safety structures. However, in these and many other smaller towns the minority communities are both small in number and relatively unorganised and it will require some effort on the part of the Community Safety Committees to ensure that the voices of the minority communities are heard.

South Tyrone Empowerment Programme (The Portuguese Centre)

One area where a multi-agency group has recently been established to respond to the changing demographic context has been Dungannon. The South Tyrone Empowerment Programme (STEP) is a local community development group that has been established to respond to issues of social exclusion. STEP identified the growing Portuguese-speaking migrant worker 'community' as a distinct and marginalised group within the area. The Portuguese speakers are not a homogenous community but rather come from diverse backgrounds in mainland Portugal and former colonies, however they are united in their common language and by their outsider status in Dungannon.

Because of the numbers of Portuguese-speaking people in the area, a Portuguese Forum has recently been established. This is a multi-sectoral forum comprised of STEP, CAB, trade union shop stewards, the local Community Relations Officer, NICEM and the Multi-Cultural Resource Centre. One of the aims of STEP is to stimulate the creation of a sense of community amongst the Portuguese-speaking migrant workers. They have employed a part-time Community Development Worker, a native Portuguese speaker, and have identified a physical space in the centre of Dungannon to house a Portuguese Centre. It is too early to assess the effective level of advice, support and guidance offered to users of the Portuguese Centre.

Conclusion

These are a small number of the existing partnership approaches that can have an impact in responding to racist harassment and problems impacting on the minority communities in Northern Ireland. The Community Safety Committees in Antrim and Ballymena and the STEP project in Dungannon are also significant in so far as they represent initiatives outside of the Belfast area, which has tended to dominate much of the activity in relation to the minority ethnic communities. There is however an ever greater recognition of the fact that all areas of Northern Ireland are becoming increasingly demographically diverse and a comparable need for representative bodies outside of the two main cities to reflect that diversity. It may well be that the newly established District Police Partnerships could also become a forum for the voices of those focusing on forms of harassment and victimisation and concerns over the policing of the minority ethnic communities.

3.5   Consultation Documents and Good Practice Guides

As noted earlier in the report, as well as the police a number of other public bodies have acknowledged their responsibility to recognise and respond to racism and racist harassment in the various consultation documents and Good Practice Guides that have been published. This section examines all such recent documents related to racism and racist harassment.

Racial Harassment at Work: What Employers Can Do About It

This document was published by the Equality Commission in order to draw attention to the issue of racial harassment at work (as opposed to racial discrimination which is covered in a separate document). The impetus for the document was the enactment of the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 but it draws entirely on case studies from Britain, which the document uses to illustrate examples of behaviour that can be considered to constitute racial harassment.

The document also sets down a number of steps that employers should take to protect employees from the possibility of racist harassment. These include:
- Adopting a harassment policy as part of an overall equal opportunities policy;
- Providing training for staff in what is meant by unacceptable behaviour at work;
- Developing both informal and formal complaints processes; and
- Keeping these policies and procedures under review.

The report notes that many cases that go before industrial tribunals are due to a failure of employers to instigate such procedures and policies or because having established them, they then fail to act upon them.

The Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 gives any individual who believes they have been discriminated against in any way because of their race, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origin a right to lodge a complaint with an industrial tribunal. This has to be done within three months of the date of the incident. The complaint can be withdrawn at any time if satisfactory agreement is reached with the employer.

Racial Equality in Education: Good Practice Guide

Racial Equality in Education: Good Practice Guide was produced by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland in co-operation with the Department of Education. It was developed within the context of the Equality Commission's remit under the Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity and good relations between different racial groups, in addition to the statutory duties placed on public authorities under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The Guide is envisaged as a tool for policy makers and administrators within education. It provides a benchmark against which racial equality standards can be established and measured.

Of interest to our research are the sections that cover the monitoring and recording of racist incidents, support measures for victims of such incidents and the procedures for dealing with the perpetrators of racist harassment. Racially motivated incidents and racist harassment involving a child or young person are covered by Section 13 of the Good Practice Guide. The early sections provide a definition and context for racist harassment. It continues by stating that:

All early years settings should have policies and procedures in place to deal with racially motivated incidents and racial harassment.

It also states that incidents involving members of staff should be dealt with in accordance with the employer's harassment policy and procedures. The Guide fails to offer any example of what the policies and procedures should look like, although it does refer the reader on to other documents such as Equality Commission's model statement (on racial harassment policy and procedure) and its publication *Racial Harassment at Work – what employers can do about it*. The Guide also notes that members of staff also need to be protected from racial harassment by pupils or parents and states:

Employers may be held to be vicariously liable for such incidents if "such steps as were reasonably practicable" have not been taken to prevent such behaviour. (Section 13.9)

In incidents involving children or young persons, the Guide recommends that the alleged perpetrator be moved to another class or location following the reporting of an incident (Section 13.12). The Guide envisages the investigation of the complaint in order for a conclusion to be made and asserts that:

it is essential that appropriate follow-up action is taken, for example through closer observation or supervision taking account of the ongoing needs of the victim and the perpetrator to ensure that such behaviour is not repeated. (Section 13.13)

The Guide also envisages the availability of help and support for both the victim/s of racist harassment and their parents and the perpetrator/s of such incidents and their families. This support needs to be of a specialist nature. In incidents where the victim is a member of staff *'then appropriately trained advisors should also be on hand'*. (Section 13.11).

From interviews with representatives from the Department of Education, it became clear to us that schools in Northern Ireland operate relatively autonomously from the Department. We were told that: *Local management of schools means local management of schools.* As such there is currently no requirement for schools to keep a record of cases of bullying, let alone cases of racist bullying and unless the issue is considered serious enough to warrant a suspension or an expulsion then any such problems will not become apparent to other parts of the education system such as the relevant Education and Library Board or the Department of Education.

The Stephen Lawrence Report acknowledged the role that the education system can play in promoting cultural diversity and preventing racism. Recommendation 68 states that

- Schools should record all racist incidents;
- All recorded incidents are reported to the pupils' parents/guardians, school governors and local education boards;
- Numbers of racist incidents are published annually on a school-by-school basis; and numbers and self-defined ethnic identity of 'excluded' pupils are published annually on a school-by-school basis.

One recent publication by the Department of Education *Pastoral Care in Schools: Promoting Positive Behaviour* (2001) has an extensive section on the responsibilities of schools in responding to bullying, but does not raise the issue of recording or publicising cases of (racist) bullying and harassment. The Stephen Lawrence Report recommendations were acknowledged in the Good Practice Guide which advocates that *'all incidents should be monitored'* (section 13.14) and that *'monitoring information should be presented annually to and considered by the management committee or Board of Governors'.* (Section 13.16). If incidents of racist incidents are so considered then the figures would become publicly available, although not in any centralised manner.

This suggests that the issue of racist harassment and bullying is seen as something that should continue to be regarded as an internal matter that each individual school should respond to as it sees fit. However it is clear that unless this issue is raised publicly and until there is a legal requirement for schools to formally monitor racist harassment and bullying, it is unlikely that they will do so voluntarily and as a result the Good Practice Guide produced by the Equality Commission will remain largely unimplemented.

Racial Equality in Health: Good Practice Guide

The *Racial Equality in Health: Good Practice Guide* was produced by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, in partnership with the Department of Health, Social Services and Personal Safety in response to the demands of both the 1997 Race Relations Order and the 1998 Northern Ireland Act. Research in Britain has found that minority ethnic staff within the National Health Service have experienced racist harassment in the course of their work (Department of Health 2001), the Good Practice Guide acknowledges that:

Both service users and staff may experience racial harassment, patients may be harassed by other service users or staff, and staff by patients or other members of staff. (Section 4.3.3)

The Guide in turn advises policy makers and administrators in the health and social care sector *'to refer to the Equality Commission for NI's publication Racial Harassment at Work: what employers can do about it'* and for the Commission to *'be contacted for further advice and assistance in developing appropriate policies and procedures'.* (Section 4.3.3)

The Equality Commission document that is cited includes the following observation:

Racial harassment can occur wherever people of different ethnic, racial or national backgrounds work together ... In some areas, such as hospitals, where the organisation provides services to the public, there is the additional risk of harassment by customers and clients. Employers have a legal and moral responsibility to protect their employees from the humiliation and indignity of harassment (Equality Commission nd p18).

Racial Equality in Housing and Accommodation: Code of Practice (Consultation Document)

The *Racial Equality in Housing and Accommodation: Code of Practice (Consultation Document)* was published by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland in September 2001 and open for responses until February 2002. The Code was envisaged to provide assistance to those organisations and bodies involved in the provision of housing and accommodation in a non-discriminatory way. In addition, it was hoped that the Code would also raise awareness of some of the particular difficulties encountered by minority ethnic communities, such as racist harassment. Thus the Code offers substantial guidance in relation to racist harassment.

The Code suggests that all landlords should establish written policies and procedures for dealing with racist harassment and that these should define racist harassment in light of the definition put forward in the Stephen Lawrence Report. Furthermore, landlords should ensure that their tenants are aware of their policies on racist harassment. This can be done in a number of ways including:

- Explaining the policy when tenancy/licence agreements are signed;
- Distributing leaflets and posters;
- Mounting publicity campaigns involving the local media and articles in tenants' newsletters (section 5.1.2)

The Code also suggests that landlords should have support mechanisms for victims of racist harassment and procedures for dealing with perpetrators. Examples of support mechanisms for victims can include visits to gather information and to provide comfort and support, further visits to monitor the situation, repairs to damage or the removal of graffiti and/or the installation of security and surveillance equipment. In cases involving on-going and persistent racial harassment, the option of re-housing the victim may be considered. In those instances where re-housing is necessary, then it must be *'effected as quickly as possible. Victims should suffer no detriment in terms of the quality and location of alternative accommodation offered'*. (Section 5.1.2)

Suggested action against perpetrators of racist harassment can include the issuing of verbal and written warnings, eviction and injunctions preventing further harassment. The Code notes:

The need to ensure that people can live in safety should be fully recognised. However, simply rehousing a victim as soon as an incident occurs can provide a signal to perpetrators that harassing people can achieve the results they desire. Even when

victims are rehoused, it may still be possible to take action against the perpetrators. (Section 5.1.2)

The Code of Practice relating to racial equality in housing and accommodation acknowledged that racial harassment required 'effective inter-agency work' and that:

Housing organisations should therefore develop links with appropriate agencies, including the police, education and social services, voluntary groups such as Victim Support, housing advice agencies and other housing providers. (Section 5.1.2)

We made some comments in response to this consultation in particular with regard to the reporting and recording of racist incidents and it is worth summarising some of these here. Our main area of concern was related to the lack of any elaboration over the structures and systems that should be put in place to monitor racist harassment and which need to be defined in a more elaborate manner. For example it states that '*if anyone...perceives an incident as racist, it should be recorded as such*' (p17 para3) but it does not indicate who should record such incidents and how they should be recorded.

The document also fails to address whether information on racist harassment should be gathered and recorded by individual organisations or by a central body, and if the latter which central body. It is therefore not clear if the recording should be done by housing bodies, by the police, by both, or by a body independent of such agencies. There is also a question of how information can and will be shared and/or pooled and whether monitoring of such incidents is carried on at an individual organisational level or by an oversight body. Similarly the section on 'Action to support victims' (p18) does not provide any advice or information about how, where and why people should report racist harassment.

The section on inter-agency work (p19) also needs to be developed and clarified. For example there is no reference to organisations that represent minority communities such as NICEM or MCRC or to the role that the Equality Commission itself might well play in the co-ordination of such responses. The Stephen Lawrence Report made a number of clear recommendations in relation to matters of developing a multi-agency response to reporting and recording racist incidents and the Equality Commission has acknowledged the slow response made to these so far in Northern Ireland (McGill and Oliver 2002). The final Code of Practice document would benefit from the inclusion of the relevant recommendations made in that report. It will be interesting to see the final published document in light of these and other comments on the contents of the Code.

Race Crime and Sectarian Crime Legislation in Northern Ireland: A Consultation Paper

This consultation document, published in November 2002, addressed the value of introducing aspects of the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act to Northern Ireland, specifically the sections which relate to the creation of a number of new categories of racially aggravated offences as well as the possibly of creating a new range of offences aggravated by sectarianism. Recent research in England and Wales (Burney

and Rose 2002) suggested that the legislation was successful in sending a message that racist crime would not be tolerated, but that overall it was not as successful as had been hoped as it created difficulties for the prosecution in some cases and created more work for the police and the courts.

The authors argue that the law had most impact in those areas where the police were taking the issue of racist attacks seriously and that other strategies such as restorative justice approaches could be more valuable than prosecution in many cases (Burney and Rose 2002: 107-116). Elsewhere the Crime and Disorder Act has been criticised because the real problem was the reluctance of the police and courts to 'acknowledge racist attacks as crimes at all' (Bridges 2001: 72). Bridges also argues that in some areas the police had used the new law more readily against black people than against whites and that in certain cases the legislation had made successful prosecution more difficult, a factor also acknowledged by Burney and Rose (Bridges 2001: 73, Burney and Rose 2002: Chapter 7).

At this stage it is not clear how far such legislation would contribute to improving the situation in Northern Ireland besides sending out a broad message that racist crime will not be tolerated. However, it should also be noted that Part III of the 1987 Public Order (Northern Ireland) Order already outlaws stirring up fear or hatred towards those of a different religious, ethnic, racial or national group, but cannot be said to have any significant impact. It appears that there has either been a reluctance to use the existing powers against 'hate acts' under the Public Order (NI) Order or a weakness in the legislation, which has made it difficult to prosecute. The consultation document does not explain how often section 9 of the Public Order (NI) Order has been used, how effective it has been, what difficulties there are with using it against perpetrators of racism or sectarianism or how the option for a new law would deal with such problem(s). Without such information it is difficult to evaluate how effective any new legislation might be.

The consultation document suggests a number of options that can be taken with regard to this issue. At a minimum there should be an equality of sentence for comparable offences in England and Wales and Northern Ireland, this would seem to be an easy and simple option that would address one clear discrepancy. Furthermore given that the sentencing guidelines already provide for racist or sectarian motivation as an aggravating factor (para 5.8) it would also make sense to provide for an increased penalty in cases where racism, sectarianism or homophobia were a factor (para 5.9). However, if such legislation were to be introduced it should not be restricted to racist and sectarian behaviour, but should be extended to include homophobic violence and harassment towards members of the gay, lesbian and bisexual communities as well.

Any change to the legislation would be most effective if it were to be done as part of a package of measures designed to address the problem of racism, homophobia and sectarianism at all levels of society. This point was made strongly in relation to racism in the recent Equality Commission report *A Wake Up Call on Race*. There should be more robust procedures put in place for recording and monitoring instances of hate crime, for tracing the progress of cases through the criminal justice system, through encouraging and supporting the PSNI to develop restorative conferencing practices

and through a widespread political and educational programme which campaigned against all forms of hate crime.

Any change in legislation should also be accompanied by an extensive and sustained education campaign against all forms of hate crime. This campaign should also be publicly supported by both national and devolved governments and by all political parties and delivered through both the media and the education system.

Race Equality Strategy: Consultation Document

This document, published in February 2003, is part of a process of developing an overarching strategy in relation to racism and race equality. It builds upon and incorporates many of the main aims and objectives set out in the other recent consultation documents. Its seven primary aims are to:

- Eliminate racial discrimination and promote equality of opportunity for people of different ethnic backgrounds in Northern Ireland.
- Increase equality of opportunity for minority ethnic people in accessing and benefiting from public services, including training, education and employment opportunities.
- Combat racism and provide protection against racist crime.
- Promote good relations and mutual respect between people of different backgrounds, including Irish Travellers.
- Increase awareness and respect for Northern Ireland's ethnic and cultural diversity.
- Increase participation of people from minority ethnic backgrounds in social, public, economic and cultural life.
- Build capacity within minority ethnic communities to help minority ethnic people to contribute to achieving the strategic aims set out here.

The intention is to develop a five year strategy, co-ordinated and led by the Race Equality Unit in OFMDFM, in conjunction with a Race Forum drawn from the statutory and community/voluntary sector, that will build upon existing work and policies and take them forward in a partnership involving government, statutory bodies and NGOs that will respond effectively to racism, discrimination and social exclusion.

This document, whilst necessarily offering only a broad outline of intentions, is positive recognition of the need to develop and co-ordinate policies, practices and procedures among all those with responsibility for supplying services, support and training and for promoting more open and inclusive policies and structures in relation to minority ethnic communities. It is both recognition of the diverse society that Northern Ireland has become and an acknowledgement of the need for a more structured and co-ordinated response to the significant problem of racism and discrimination that was highlighted in the recent Equality Commission report.

Conclusion

The recent consultation and guideline documents on promoting racial equality in education, health and housing offer some limited ideas about responding to racist harassment. However, each document appears to be responding to a hypothetical problem rather than any actual experienced examples of harassment or intimidation. This is in large part because none of the agencies with responsibility for the documents can quantify the scale of the problem they are presuming to address. As we have noted earlier no figures are available for cases of racist harassment in the health service, schools are not required to gather data on racist bullying, let alone make it publicly available, the housing bodies cannot disaggregate figures for racist harassment. Furthermore the Office of Employment Tribunals does not separate figures for complaints of racist harassment at work.

Until such figures are gathered and made publicly available, it is going to be impossible to gauge the scale of the problem that documents such as these are attempting to address. Until the scale of the problem is clearly identified the effectiveness of the policies being put in place to tackle them cannot be evaluated and the benefits of new legislation to address racially motivated crime is questionable.

Part Four

Recommendations for Future Action

We noted at the beginning of this report that the Stephen Lawrence Report made a number of recommendations to improve responses to racist incidents and crimes. In April 2000 the Home Office published a Code of Practice on racist harassment, which provides a basic framework for responding to the problem of racist attacks. More recently a number of consultation documents have been issued focusing on the requirements of statutory bodies, employers and service providers to respond to the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 and Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

The Equality Commission's recent report *A Wake Up Call on Race* noted that little action had been taken to implement the recommendations of either the Stephen Lawrence Report or the Code of Practice in Northern Ireland or to respond to concerns of institutional racism. Since that report was published, the PSNI, the Equality Commission and NICEM have held a seminar to progress the idea of an inter-agency initiative on racist harassment and a working group has been set up to begin to develop procedures for such a body. It is important that these initial steps are built upon and developed into an effective inter-agency working group.

Developing Inter-Agency Responses to Racism

This report has identified a number of key organisations and agencies, which have or should have an interest and responsibility in responding to the problem of racist harassment and it is essential that all such bodies are committed to the development of such a body.

It is clear from our conversations and interviews and our reading of reports and policy documents that a number of organisations have acknowledged and begun to respond to the problem of racist harassment. Several bodies, including the Housing Executive, Housing Rights Organisations, Citizens Advice Bureaux as well as a number of the NGOs and community support groups, have data in some form or other on aspects of racist harassment. However, much of this data is incorporated or subsumed in more general statistics and not readily accessible. There is clearly scope for more co-ordination or co-operation between the different approaches in building effective working partnerships and in sharing practices and data in an attempt to develop a common strategy.

It is important that a common and inclusive approach to data gathering and recording is developed with regard to cases of racist harassment and violence. This should include:

1. The development of a standardised racist incident report form that will be used by all agencies involved in this work. This would require a complete revision of the current police Race One report form. It should be based on the guidelines set

down in the Home Office Code of Practice and should be based primarily on a tick-box method of gathering data for ease and speed of completion.

2. The development of methods of reporting elsewhere than at police stations. This may include the ability to report at NGO offices, community centres, doctors' surgeries, housing centres etc. This process would be facilitated by the use of a standardised report form.

3. The capacity to report an incident 24 hours per day. At present the police alone have such a capacity but thought could be given to how this might be done elsewhere either through the establishment of an emergency phone line in a similar way to Women's Aid, or by reporting on the internet etc.

4. The process of interagency data gathering and recording would also require some basic training for staff in all agencies involved in the network. This should include cultural awareness and anti-racism training, training in the provision of advice and support for victims, and for liaison between partners in the reporting and recording process.

5. The agreement on a method of aggregating all the data recorded by the various agencies, making such data accessible to all partner agencies and publishing such aggregated data on a regular basis.

6. The Stephen Lawrence Report also recommended revising the provision of support and services to victims of racist harassment and violence (Recommendations 29-31). Our research suggests that there is considerable variation in the procedures followed by different police officers and there is a wide range of agencies and organisations providing advice and support to such victims. This should be co-ordinated and standardised in a similar fashion to the recording and reporting of racist incidents to ensure that all those bodies involved follow similar guidelines and procedures. This could be done within the framework of the interagency initiative already underway. Victim Support has begun to acknowledge the need to develop more flexible practices and procedures to respond to the victims of racist harassment. They should take the lead in ensuring all partner organisations adopt similar standards and procedures.

7. The proposed Inter-Agency Working Group should also take cogniscence of all the recommendations made in the Stephen Lawrence Report and should take responsibility for ensuring member agencies to do likewise. The group should review how far the recommendations have been implemented and what steps could be taken to encourage adoption of the remainder.

8. The current multi-agency initiative is working on a Northern Ireland wide level but it is also important that any local initiatives in response to crime and anti-social behaviour, such as Community Safety Committees, also include minority ethnic communities and organisations in the strategic planning and action programmes.

9. Although the development of multi-agency initiatives is widely accepted as best practice for problems such as racism, such initiatives are not unproblematic and often do not deliver what is expected (Bowling 1998, Lemos 2000). It is therefore important that progress on any multi-agency initiative is closely monitored to ensure that any such body does not simply become a talking shop or get bogged down in procedural, resourcing or personality issues. The critical monitoring of such multi-agency bodies is probably best carried out by NGOs working in the relevant field.

10. The multi-agency initiative on racist harassment should be clearly defined in its focus and orientation, but should also be integrated into the work of other such bodies interested in similar themes. For example the work of the Race Forum, which was formally announced in February 2003 with responsibility to promote, monitor and facilitate the development and implementation of the Race Equality Strategy, would need to be co-ordinated with specific initiatives on racist harassment and violence.

Improving Policing Responses

11. As it stands the PSNI remain the main agency dealing with racist harassment. They have taken some steps in responding to the Stephen Lawrence Report and have been a lead agency in promoting an interagency response to the subject. There are a number of actions the PSNI could take on their own behalf to improve the monitoring and information flow on racist harassment, while others would need to be done in conjunction with those responsible for the implementation of the Patten recommendations. We recommend that the PSNI should:

12. Adopt the Home Office Code of Practice document and begin to develop a more comprehensive form for recording racist incidents.

13. Initiate a wider means of recording racist incidents by, for example, creating the capacity to report incidents via the Internet.

14. Expedite the use of the ICIS system for analysing racist incidents and for distinguishing between racist incidents and racist crimes.

15. Publish a more detailed analysis of the scale and nature of racist harassment and crime, and of police responses on an ongoing and regular basis. This could be done by the PSNI itself, by the NISRA or by an independent body.

16. Undertake to track those cases where the perpetrators of racist crimes are identified and apprehended in order to identify the numbers of arrests, prosecutions and punishments given out.

17. The PSNI are currently exploring the possibilities of using restorative conferencing with the perpetrators of racist harassment and are exploring options for prosecuting repeat offenders of low-level abuse and harassment. This should be encouraged and supported as an example of a more proactive strategy of engagement with the problem.

18. The PSNI should also continue to work with the minority ethnic organisations through the Independent Advisory Group and use that forum to maintain an ongoing review of policies and practices relating to the minority ethnic communities. This would in particular include a review of training provision and delivery, translator and interpreter services and providing liaison and support for members of minority communities in smaller towns and rural areas.

19. The PSNI should also publish figures for the number of minority ethnic officers currently in the service and should monitor the level of recruitment from minority communities. Although the Patten Report did not set a desired level of minority ethnic recruitment for the new police service, the Policing Board and the PSNI should acknowledge the desirability of the service being representative of the entire community and take steps to encourage greater numbers of applications from minority ethnic communities.

20. As part of this process applications from minority ethnic communities should no longer be included within the 'Protestant and Other' block but should be a distinct category in their own right. This will require a change to the current recruitment procedures and a shift away from the bipolar 50/50 arrangement for Catholics and Protestant/Others, however it would also serve to rectify a deficiency in the Patten recommendations and would be a further step in acknowledging that Northern Ireland is a more complex and diverse society than in the past. This would be a decision for the NIO to make rather than the PSNI.

21. It has been noted earlier that the minority ethnic communities are represented on the Northern Ireland Policing Board. It is also important that members of minority ethnic communities are also included in the devolved policing structures, both the statutory District Police Partnerships and at any locally organised policing forum.

Activities for Other Agencies

22. All agencies and voluntary organisations identified in this report as having an interest or responsibility in responding to racist harassment and racist incidents should agree to work together in developing an effective interagency response to racist harassment. This will require committing an adequate and appropriate level of resources.

23. Research should be undertaken to indicate the scale of the problem of racist harassment in the areas of education, housing and the health service where anecdotal or comparative work has indicated an actual or possible problem with racist harassment or bullying.

24. The Housing Executive is currently reviewing its policies to ensure that they effectively address the issue of racist intimidation and harassment. It should also ensure that all of the relevant staff are appropriately trained to address and respond to problems of racist harassment of its tenants.

25. The Equality Commission should ensure that all other social housing providers are aware of their responsibilities in relation to issues of racism (this work has begun with the draft Code of Practice on Racial Equality in Housing) and that such bodies are aware of, and involved in the work of the multi-agency forum on racist harassment and they adopt best practice models devised through the forum.

26. The Department of Education should review its current policy on bullying and harassment in schools. It should require the figures for bullying to clearly identify the cause of the bullying, and that such figures are made public. The DoE should also require schools to develop appropriate policies to respond to the issue of racism in schools.

27. All those agencies and voluntary organisations that have acknowledged a responsibility for dealing with racist harassment, intimidation, bullying and violence should review their procedures for recording racist incidents. They should disaggregate these figures so that the scale of the problem of racism that needs to be addressed can be more clearly identified. These figures should also be made public in order to begin to establish the scale of the problem across all areas of social life in Northern Ireland. All such agencies and voluntary organisations should also work with the PSNI and the Interagency Group to develop a standardised form for recording such incidents, agree a system for aggregating the data from the diverse sources and for monitoring responses to the issue of racist harassment and crime.

These recommendations, if implemented, would go some way to establishing a clear indication of the scale of the problem of racist harassment in Northern Ireland, of raising awareness of such issues among the management strata and key personnel of the principle agencies engaging with this issue, of providing some appropriate support for victims of harassment and encouraging the development of more effective responses to the problem of racism.

Developing Wider Strategies

A number of other recent documents (ACPO 2000; Lemos 2000 in the UK; Connolly and Keenan 2002, McGill and Oliver 2002 in Northern Ireland) suggest a range of both more specific and more wide ranging procedures and practices that could be adopted to respond both to racist harassment and more general issues of racial discrimination. This variety of recommendations should be kept under review and consideration by any multi-agency forum for action when it has established effective baseline practices.

28. It is in fact important that all statutory agencies working on issues of racism should have identified workers tasked with the responsibility to monitor their procedures and practices and keep up with best practice in comparable bodies in the UK. The RaceActionNet website (www.raceactionnet.co.uk) is one resource that provides up to date information of all policy initiatives, reports and models of good practice.

29. It is also important that more pro-active and wide-ranging strategies should be developed that address both the more generalised issues of racism and harassment but also promote the practicalities of increasing diversity and interculturalism in Northern Irish society.

30. A first step in this type of initiative could involve developing a broad ongoing anti-racism campaign. This could be something along the lines of the 'Know Racism' campaign that is running in the Republic of Ireland as a 'national anti-racism awareness programme'. Such a campaign should be established for five years in the first instance to allow for the development of a strategic framework of activity. It should have a budget that would enable it to initiate and co-ordinate a programme of anti-racist events and activities, support projects and initiatives through grants and generally raise awareness of issues of racism and ethnic diversity.

31. Any such campaign set up in Northern Ireland should link up with the activities of the Know Racism campaign (www.knowracism.ie) and the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (www.nccri.com) and should work with these organisations to extend North/South working on anti-racism activities, education and information.

32. It is also important to raise issues of racism and ethnic, cultural and religious diversity as early as possible with children and young people through the education system and as part of the basic school curriculum. Such education programmes would also offer a way of tackling the issue of racist bullying from another perspective.

33. However such activity should also be part of the development of a positive approach that promotes and celebrates the increasing cultural diversity. In London schools often use the flexible holidays they have to celebrate important annual events of non-Christian cultures. Offering a school holiday around the time of Chinese New Year, Pesach, Eid, Diwali, Guru Nanak's birthday or another prominent minority anniversary would be one way of acknowledging, celebrating and valuing the non-Christian cultures here in Northern Ireland and incorporating their celebrations into the wider majority cultures.

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