

PSNI Human Rights Conference

Conference Report

1. Assistant Chief Constable, North Region, Sam Kinkaid LLB wrote to Mr Leslie and Mr Haughey (Inv/439/02) inviting them to attend the PSNI Human Rights Conference - on 21st and 22nd October 2002 in the Ramada Hotel, Belfast.
2. It was agreed that officials should attend the conference with Ministers attending a separate evening event at the Malone Lodge. Apologies were offered on the latter following suspension.
3. This is the second PSNI annual Human Rights based conference. The Conference theme was:

“New Directions – A Human Rights and Racial Equality Focus on Policing with Ethnic Minority Communities”.
4. The conference focused on the following key areas:
 - (a) Recommendations arising from the Stephen Lawrence Enquiry Report within a NI Context;
 - (b) Policing with the Communities;
 - (c) Police recruitment, training and continuing education; and
 - (d) Operational policing issues, which will include responses to racial harassment, property damage, crime and safety and how to use the police more effectively .
5. Attendance included the following minority ethnic voluntary organisations:
 - Chinese Welfare Association
 - Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities
 - Multicultural Resource Centre
 - Traveller Movement NI
 - Belfast Islamic Centre
 - NI African Cultural Centre
 - Al-Nisa Women's Group
 - Indian Community Centre

Other bodies represented included Police Forces from GB and the NI statutory sector.

6. The conference programme was as follows:

Day 1

Opening Mr Hugh Orde (Chief Constable, PSNI)
Chair Mr Khurshid Ahmed (Commission for Racial Equality, London)
Overview Lord Herman Ouseley
Key Area (a) Mr Imran Khan (Solicitor, London)
Key Area (b) Commander Cressida Dick (Metropolitan Police)
Panel Local minority ethnic community representatives

Day 2

Chair Mrs Evelyn Collins (ECNI)
Key Area (c) Mr Joe Stewart (Human Resources, PSNI)
Mr Ravi Chand (National Black Police Association UK)
Panel Policing Board, Metropolitan Police, Consensia & UoU
Key Area (d) Mr Maqsood Ahmad (National Probation Service, London)
Ms Zelda Holtzman (South African Police Service)
Close Mr Sam Kinkaid (Asst Chief Constable, PSNI)

Pen pictures were provided on the day and these have been placed on file.

7. Although the conference had a policing focus it raised general issues around perceptions of black and minority ethnic groups, racial attack and harassment, the media, promotion of good relations, ethnicity and colour, policy and practice, facts and information, power and leadership, Patten and recruitment.
8. Specific quotes, of interest, from a number of the speakers are included at the Annex.
9. The event included 2 workshops – one on a case study and the other on views of the conference. A number of cultural activities were also weaved throughout the event – this included both dance and music.
10. A full conference report will be issued over the next few weeks.

Lord Herman Ouseley

“There is a perception that there is no race issue in NI as there are so few minority ethnic people. Sectarianism is the issue and everything else pales into insignificance”

“It’s about people and the provision of services for people”

“Power, who sets the culture within an organisation – the decision makers”

“Demonisation of asylum seekers and refugees by the media is infectious, it affects our response”

“Racial attack and harassment are all features of the minority ethnic experience”

“Promotion of good relations is the key”

“Community cohesion is a government vision, but what does this really mean?”

“Provision of accurate facts and information is important”

“.....build trust with minority ethnic groups, allow them to see that they are contributing to the process in finding solutions”

Imran Khan

Raised the issue of ‘power’ and ‘leadership’ again

“Recognition, acknowledgement and acceptance are the mantra of the Lawrence Report”

“Ethnicity is not the issue, colour is”

“Racism has become part of the institutions within the UK”

“...not just an issue around policy but practice....outcome is the key”

“In a NI context, racism and sectarianism exists....an opportunity exists for an organisation to change provided it wants to”

“Listen to the victims ... your critics are often your best source of information”

Cressida Dick

“seek out independent advisors in your policy development”

“need to recognise the global context and a new public awareness of rights”

“be proactive in your intelligence and information gathering”

Margaret Donaghy

Hopes for a positive response from PSNI to the policing recommendations outlined in the PSI Working Group Report on Travellers

Stressed the importance in the appointment of Traveller Legal Rights Workers – non-police appointments – need to appreciate that Travellers tend to live in nationalist/republican areas – this makes it difficult for Travellers to report incidents or to seek advice from the police directly.

TMNI is willing to work in partnership with PSNI to take the PSI recommendations forward.

James Uhomoibhi (NIACC – Panel Member)

Stated his appreciation of the efforts made by OFMDFM and others in tackling the issues. Also stated his appreciation of OFMDFM funding.

Sharada Bhatt (ICC – Panel Member)

Stated her appreciation of OFMDFM funding. Stressed the importance of parental responsibilities in the education of the younger generation.

Joe Stewart (PSNI)

Patten places ethnic minorities in the category of ‘Protestant and Others’. This does not assist the process of recruitment from these specific communities to uniformed and support staff. This particular issue raised a few questions and it was agreed that this needed further consideration.

Training for new officers includes human rights and cultural awareness.

Ravi Chand

“Targets should be seen as something to work towards and not a threat”

"Black is a definition used by people of colour with a common experience"

Maqsood Ahmad

"partnership and a multi-agency approach is the way to tackle the issues"

"ownership of the issues should be promoted"

"it is a collective responsibility"

Zelda Holtzman

"training.....selecting the right trainer is important as it secures the right outcome"

"recognise the evolutionary nature of policies and procedures"

"objectives must be understood and supported"

"policy content and impact should be evaluated"