New Migration, Equality and Integration

Issues and Challenges for Northern Ireland

Agnieszka Martynowicz and Neil Jarman, Institute for Conflict Research

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Equality Commission
FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

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Foreword

Only those without an eye to see or an ear to hear will not have taken account of the changing nature of the population of Northern Ireland. The rate of change may often be exaggerated but, without doubt, change there is. The picture of life painted by the Census of Population of 2001 is already well out-of-date. The composition of those who live in Northern Ireland is quite different now.

The presence among us of new residents is a relatively new but not an entirely novel phenomenon. It is, of course, the case that in very recent years, the numbers of people from beyond the shores of these islands seeking to make their homes in Northern Ireland have substantially increased but population movements into and out of Ireland are nothing new.

People leave their homes for many reasons. Those who live on the island of Ireland should be well aware of that fact. We in Northern Ireland should know from our history what a difficult decision it is to leave home but what a significant contribution those who move can make to their adopted country.

These developments may add to our understanding of ourselves. Perhaps they help us to realise that we have been living with ethnic diversity for a great deal longer than we think. Quite apart from the considerations that define the two main traditions within the community, there have been Irish Travellers living here for a very long time and there are long-established Indian and Chinese communities. To this mix has been added in recent years the richness of people from a range of European countries, from the Philippines and from sundry other places.

The changes that we have seen show that some people will have come for relatively short periods; they are migrants who intend to return home or to move to another country. It is also the case that many others, for a complex variety of reasons, want to make Northern Ireland their home, to settle here, to set down roots here, to become part of this community and to bring up their families here. So much within that simple sentence is positive and desirable that it is difficult to see why anything negative should be involved.

But social change brings its own issues and we are challenged in a range of ways by what is happening about us. The notion of diversity challenges our sense of ourselves and of the community in which we live. It challenges us to be generous, to respect others, to celebrate difference. The challenge of living in an increasingly diverse society is to see the contribution that all groups make to the community in which we live and to open up to the experience of sharing this space with them. It reminds us that we live not just in an economy but in a society, that those who come to live in Northern Ireland do not come simply as economic units and that a

purely economic analysis of their position would not be an adequate response to their presence or to their needs. They come as complete human beings with all the aspirations, all the virtues, all the failings and all the potential of the rest of us.

To be able effectively to respond we must know the facts and we must have the capacity to develop a set of public policy responses that will address the new needs. This is not to absolve individuals from our responsibilities but to recognise the role of policy makers and service providers. That was the prompt for this study. The Equality Commission recognised that demographic and social change was outpacing the development of strategy and policy. It commissioned the Institute for Conflict Research to prepare this thought-provoking paper to identify the key issues and to stimulate an energetic policy response. By so doing, it also contributed to the work of the Good Relations Forum that it jointly chairs with the Community Relations Council.

The paper rightly points to the central role of forward planning in dealing with new realities. New situations need new responses and it is necessary to recognise now the likely needs of the future.

That this study is prompted by the recent arrival of new residents is not to overlook for a moment the needs or interests of longer-established minority ethnic communities. Less still should there be any sense of competition between groups. The reality to be faced – and the opportunity to be grasped – is that Northern Ireland will be home to a more diverse population than ever before and that this will not be a temporary phenomenon but a defining characteristic of the future.

This publication is especially important and particularly timely. It urges us to think creatively and practically about meeting new needs so that integration and community cohesion become lived realities and so that community tension does not find new outlets.

All who live here must share Northern Ireland; there is no other option. But there are different ways of sharing. We can share the same space the way passengers do in a railway carriage or patients in a waiting room or people at a race meeting. But that is no real sharing; no shared interest, no real knowledge, no understanding. It would be a much diminished way to live our lives. The alternative is to be open to one another; to find new ways to recognise those things that we have in common and that bring communities together; and to be at one with Louis MacNeice in rejoicing in "the drunkenness of things being various".

Bob Collins
Chief Commissioner
January 2009

Executive Summary

In recent years, Northern Ireland has witnessed an unprecedented change to the make-up of its population, particularly as the effect of increased international inward migration. Many people have come here to take up employment. Others have come for educational reasons, while growing numbers have accompanied or joined relatives and family members.

The unprecedented scale of recent migration into Northern Ireland very quickly highlighted the lack of strategic preparation by government, employers, and service providers for dealing with additional needs and expectations of the new communities. Initially, policies have necessarily been reactive, and focused on the immediate provision of services. The reactive nature of policies failed to consider the rapidly changing reality of the demographics of new immigration and to recognise the increasing diversity of its impact. The paper argues, therefore, that the experience of sustained large-scale inward migration should now convince policy makers that forward planning is central, if the pressures and inequalities that follow are not to become a cause of sustained community conflict.

The paper aims to highlight gaps in our knowledge and understanding, rather than to fill them, and to highlight emergent problems. It does, however, make a number of recommendations for public policy, including for the forthcoming Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration for a Shared and Better Future, in relation to the impact of economic policies, monitoring, language policy, and the inclusion of community and voluntary sector in policy development.

Introduction

There have been significant numbers of migrants moving to Northern Ireland in recent years. Many people have come here to take up employment. Others have come for educational reasons, while growing numbers have accompanied or joined relatives and family members. The number of migrants is increasing across a variety of areas including: country of origin, employment sector, residential location, and age profile. These new migrants are adding to the existing diversity of the Northern Ireland population, but their presence also presents new challenges, with regard to policies designed to confront the high levels of segregation within the majority population and build a more integrated and cohesive society.

There has been some considerable attention paid to the new migration: a growing number of research papers and reports have been produced (see bibliography), numerous publications offering advice and information and a number of non-government organisations providing assistance and support. A draft strategy on migrant workers for the devolved government was published in late 2006 and has been regularly updated to frame and reflect departmental thinking and actions. Despite this, our understanding struggles to keep up-to-date with the rapidly changing patterns in immigration demographics and its impact on the local context.

The recent new patterns of inward migration very quickly highlighted the lack of strategic preparation by government, employers, and service providers for dealing with the additional needs and expectations of the new communities. The initial reaction of local and central government has been to focus on service provision, in particular on making the health service and education provision accessible to the new residents and their families. While making immediate provision available, some agencies until recently considered the increased inward migration a 'temporary phenomena' (Holder 2007) and did not see the need to factor it into future planning. The reactive nature of policies failed to consider the rapidly changing reality of the demographics of new immigration and to recognise the increasing diversity of its impact.

While these have been necessary responses, the experience of sustained large-scale inward migration over recent years should now convince the policy makers that planning is central if the pressures and inequalities that follow are not to become a reason for sustained community conflict. It is also important to give some greater consideration to the longer term needs and expectations of Northern Irish society in relation to sustaining the processes of migration, to consider what

needs to be done to ensure migrants are subject to the same equality provisions as the majority population, and to include them within policies that aim to build integration and community cohesion. Although many people welcome the new residents, there has also been an increase in racist harassment and violence, and voices have been raised about the pressures on housing, employment and service provision. Unfortunately such expressions are likely to increase rather than diminish, unless efforts are made to ensure that there is a more co-ordinated response to the full range of impacts of the new migration.

This paper has been prepared for the Equality Commission as a review of recent and emerging developments, in relation to the growing demographic diversity in Northern Ireland and to highlight some of the emergent issues and factors associated with immigration. The paper has three main elements:

- the first part outlines key developments, emergent trends and some of the current thinking about future developments
- the second part highlights key issues and concerns for the equality of new migrants
- the third part focuses on the effective integration of the growing diversity of the population: the majority communities, the established minority ethnic communities and the new migrant populations

The paper aims to highlight gaps in our knowledge and understanding, rather than fill them, and to highlight emergent problems. Among the issues that form the backdrop to these recent developments are:

- the rapidly changing demographic context of Northern Ireland, and the consequently changing policy context
- the relationship between United Kingdom immigration policies and the specific needs of Northern Ireland
- the extent and barriers to wider integration of minority ethnic and national groups in Northern Ireland
- the wider context of economic growth and demographic change
- the changing profile of the new migrant population through family re-unification
- the implications for public policy making

The paper is framed within the context of key policies including the Programme for Government, the Northern Ireland Investment Strategy and the Review of Public Administration. It also refers to strategies that were relevant to the area of integration in recent years, including A Shared Future and the Racial Equality Strategy. It will be important that migration is considered as more than an employment and economic issue, but rather needs to be viewed as a

dynamic social factor that increasingly impacts on all aspects of society and which therefore will highlight the need to frame policies from the perspectives of integration, cohesion and equality. The paper, therefore, makes some initial recommendations on the way forward, including as to what should be included in the new Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration for a Shared and Better Future currently being discussed by the Northern Ireland Executive.

Development, Trends and Planning

Studies have in the past identified the difficulties in establishing the exact numbers of new migrant workers residing in Northern Ireland (Bell et al 2004; Jarman 2006; McVeigh 2006). This situation has recently begun to improve significantly with the inclusion of a wider range of statistical sources of data into international migration estimates (Beatty et al 2006; Jarman and Byrne 2007), although some outstanding difficulties remain. Currently NISRA uses a number of sources to calculate net migration figures:

- the Home Office Worker Registration Scheme for A8 nationals
- the Home Office Registration Schemes for A2 nationals
- the Home Office Work Permits Scheme
- new National Insurance Numbers registered to nationals of countries other than the UK
- the Department of Education Annual School Census (including questions about English as an Additional Language and in-migration questions added to the 2007 Census)
- the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Farm Structure Survey
- the country of birth of new mothers in Northern Ireland
- the country of birth of new fathers in Northern Ireland
- new registrations with a family doctor
- de-registrations from the family doctor system (health cards)
- new National Insurance Numbers registered to non-UK nationals which are no longer in use
- out-migration questions on household surveys in Northern Ireland (particularly investigating migration movements of household members)
- out-migration questions added to the 2007 School Census[1]

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[1] NISRA *Long-term International Migration Estimates for Northern Ireland (2006-07)* (NISRA, July 2008, available at: http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/population/migration/NI_Migration_Report(2007).pdf).

NISRA's most recent estimates of net international migration set the increase in population at over 8,000 in a year between July 2006 and June 2007.

Table 1: Estimated Net International Migration, by age and gender (July 2006 - June 2007)

Gender / Age	Estimated Net International Migration
Male	**4,377**
Less than 18 years	1,046
18-24	1,735
25-34	1,458
35-44	117
45-54	146
55-64	-39
65 years and over	-86
Female	**3,660**
Less than 18 years	1,054
18-24	1,383
25-34	1,181
35-44	84
45-54	86
55-64	-57
65 years and over	-71
Total	**8,037**

Source: NISRA (July 2008)[2]

It has to be borne in mind that the above figures include, but are not exclusively made up of, the number of migrant workers per se. Data on international migration estimates produced by NISRA allows for identification of the overall trends, and also of the districts in Northern Ireland where one might expect greater impact of migration on local communities, services and needs and community relations. For example, it is worth noting that over 2,000 people included in these estimates are under the age of 18. This highlights first that increasingly it is whole families that are travelling to Northern Ireland, or family members are joining

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[2] http://www.nisra.gov.uk/demography/default.asp?cmsid=20_21_191&cms=demography_Population%20statistics_Migration+Statistics&release=

existing migrants; and second that the relatively large numbers of children will require in particular educational provision and language support.

Table 2: Estimated Net International Migration, by Local Government District (July 2004 - June 2007)

Area (LGD)	Estimated Net International Migration (Jul 2004 - Jun 2005)	Estimated Net International Migration (Jul 2005 - Jun 2006)	Estimated Net International Migration (Jul 2006 - Jun 2007)	Total
Antrim	194	417	307	918
Ards	-28	102	42	116
Armagh	234	416	385	1,035
Ballymena	290	318	313	921
Ballymoney	40	94	44	178
Banbridge	112	108	114	334
Belfast	329	1,138	1,625	3,092
Carrickfergus	-5	41	33	69
Castlereagh	26	72	22	120
Coleraine	128	179	21	328
Cookstown	233	312	341	886
Craigavon	926	1,141	894	2,961
Derry	-187	75	-31	-143
Down	-49	207	220	378
Dungannon	1061	1,443	1,421	3,925
Fermanagh	282	515	332	1,129
Larne	-1	58	16	73
Limavady	35	86	14	135
Lisburn	135	410	164	709
Magherafelt	191	345	284	820
Moyle	-17	-7	13	-11
Newry & Mourne	584	1,174	1,223	2,981
Newtownabbey	-41	-28	-149	-218
North Down	11	100	-63	48
Omagh	287	324	454	1,065
Strabane	-99	-17	-2	-118
Northern Ireland	**4,671**	**9,023**	**8,037**	**21,731**

Source: NISRA (July 2008)

An outstanding difficulty with current population estimates is that they remain historical, and there are currently no authoritative predictions as to the future numbers of migrant workers coming to Northern Ireland.

Contrary to trends prevailing in the last few years, NISRA's long-term population projections predict a sharp fall of net migration in Northern Ireland. Currently NISRA estimates that the overall annual net migration will be as follows:[3]

Period	Net Annual Migration
2006-2007	10,000
2007-2008	3,000
2008-2009	3,000
2009-2010	2,000
2010-2011	2,000

It is not clear how those numbers relate to the predicted long-term dependency of some sectors of production and services in Northern Ireland on migrant workforce:

NI employers have been actively recruiting foreign labour to take up hard to fill vacancies. This trend is by all accounts set to continue with employers in some sectors, e.g. meat processing, stating that if they could not fill these vacancies they would have to give serious consideration to relocating their businesses. (Devine 2006).

Ongoing skills and labour shortages coupled with demographic trends which predict a fall in the working age population mean long term dependency on inward migration and this has clear planning implications. (Holder 2007)

In 2006, Concordia made recommendations on this issue stating that:

The lack of any robust estimate by the government of the […] future number of migrant workers in Northern Ireland, and of their geographical distribution, is one of the main factors behind many of the problems migrant workers are currently encountering. (Concordia 2006)

While, as indicated above, some very useful estimates have now been produced in relation to the historical aspect of the situation, the gap in estimating numbers of migrant workers for the purpose of future planning remains. The limitations of the available population statistics lead to reactive, rather than proactive, planning

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[3] http://www.nisra.gov.uk/demography/default.asp20.htm

policy. The existing methods of assessment appear to ignore the fact that while there is clearly a need to provide services and policies that match the local need, economic migration is not a static phenomenon. Closures of businesses operating in a particular area, or end to a specific investment, may lead to whole groups of migrant workers moving internally within Northern Ireland looking for work in other places (Holder 2007). While some sectors will almost definitely continue to depend on migrant workers (particularly considering the planned long-term investment in infrastructure[4] and continuing high vacancy levels in health and social services[5]), new sectors – such as retail - may emerge as those competing for workers from other countries, following the significant investment in new work places.[6]

An additional factor that needs to be taken into consideration is the possible outward movement of migrant workers back to their home countries, or re-location elsewhere. Political and economic changes in those countries, as well as introduction of policies designed to reverse the outflow of workforce, may encourage returns. It has been widely reported that the large in-flow of migrant workers from Eastern Europe into the UK significantly slowed down, with applications for Workers Registration Scheme falling by 18% in the last quarter of 2007.[7] The same has been the case for Northern Ireland (see: Table 3 below).

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[4] Northern Ireland Executive *Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2008-2018* (available at: http://www.pfgbudgetni.gov.uk/index/investment-strategy-for-northern-ireland.htm).
[5] DHSSPS *Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Workforce Vacancies as at 30 September 2007* (available at: http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/vacancy_survey_sept_2007_web_report.pdf).
[6] In Belfast alone, the newly opened Victoria Square required 3,000 staff. While not all those jobs would have been new posts (with re-location of some of the shops from elsewhere), significant numbers of them were directly connected to the creation of this new centre. With planned development of, for example, the Lower North Street into another large-scale shopping centre, this trend is bound to continue.
[7] Border and Immigration Agency (2008) *Accession Monitoring Report, May 2004-December 2007* (London: BIA).

Table 3: Northern Ireland Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) Registrations by Quarter (May 2004 - March 2008)

Time-period	WRS Count (NI)	WRS Count (UK)	Northern Ireland as a percentage of UK
May – Jun 2004*	745	38,830	2%
Jul – Sep 2004	1,340	46,440	3%
Oct – Dec 2004	1,570	40,605	4%
Jan – Mar 2005	1,840	41,495	4%
Apr – Jun 2005	2,460	55,105	5%
Jul – Sep 2005	2,325	58,870	4%
Oct – Dec 2005	2,220	49,485	5%
Jan – Mar 2006	2,040	46,765	4%
Apr – Jun 2006	2,105	54,890	4%
Jul – Sep 2006	2,305	62,830	4%
Oct – Dec 2006	2,505	63,225	4%
Jan – Mar 2007	2,355	50,315	5%
Apr – Jun 2007	1,980	52,340	4%
Jul – Sep 2007	2,200	57,270	4%
Oct – Dec 2007	1,950	50,650	4%
Jan – Mar 2008	1,595	42,790	4%
Total	**31,535**	**811,905**	**4%**

Source: UK Border Agency 2008; NISRA (July 2008)

Press reports suggested in recent times that significant numbers of migrant workers are returning or planning to return to their home countries.[8] The prospect of creation of jobs, as well as better prospects of promotion and career progression in home countries, are a significant 'pull' factor in the other direction. At the beginning of 2008, this trend was visible in relation to, for example, a number of hotel staff and IT specialists who were re-locating back to Poland, having spent a number of years in the UK or the Republic of Ireland,

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[8] *'Tide turns as Poles end great migration'*, TimesOnLine, February 16, 2008; *'Tide of migration turns as Polish workers return'* Independent.co.uk, February 27, 2008; *'Polacy wyjezdzaja z Irlandii'* http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,5334183,Polacy_wyjezdzaja_z_Irlandii.html.

gaining experience and improving their language skills.[9] Planning, including population projections, should also consider the prospect of other countries of the EU15 opening their markets to workers from A8 and A2 countries, which they are required to do by 2011 at the latest. Proximity to the country of origin, knowledge of a language other than English, higher salaries and access to social protection,[10] and even the weather can be deciding factors in the choice of migration destinations (Kropiwiec and King-O'Riain 2006). Population projections also have to consider the changing economic situation in the UK or the Republic of Ireland, with recession a considerable possibility, as well as fluctuations on currency markets that make work abroad less profitable.

The consequence of possible future movements of migrant workers is that while specific actions may be designed for a local area, centralised policies must be in place to enable local resolutions to progress speedily, should the need arise elsewhere. It should also be a central requirement of any future planning that policies are flexible and that they easily adapt to changes in migration patterns.

Migration ceases to be a 'temporary phenomena' once one considers the implications for the labour market of long-term investment strategies that are currently at the forefront of the Executive's Programme for Government. The ambitious projected investment in infrastructure and regeneration, in particular, suggest that large number of workplaces will be created over the next 10 years – not only in the construction industry, but also – for example - in auxiliary services. The experience of the employment of migrant workers in Northern Ireland in recent times suggests that a significant proportion of those industries will be filled by migrant labour, and increasingly on a long-term basis.

While recruitment and employment predominantly lies within private sector employers, employers' needs will to a large extent be dictated by governmental investment strategies. As such, the Executive, the Assembly and public authorities in Northern Ireland need to be prepared to take the lead in the provision of services, in line with this growing demand. The current Programme for Government recognises that the success in attracting investment and skills to Northern Ireland is largely dependant on the creation of an inclusive society. The understanding of 'inclusion' in this context should concern equal access to services, in particular provision of education to pupils with English as a second

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[9] 'Hotelarze wracaja z emigracji' , Gazeta Wyborcza, February 18, 2008; 'Informatycy wracaja z zagranicy', Gazeta Wyborcza, February 27, 2008.
[10] 'Norwegia kusi Polakow z Wysp'; http://gazetapraca.pl/gazetapraca/1,67738,5463877,Norwe gia_kusi_Polakow_z_Wysp.html

language, access to health care, access to affordable housing, effective access to employment rights, access to childcare, and access to language training. It is also of utmost importance that action against prejudice is mainstreamed across all public authorities and is central to community cohesion programmes.

Policy Context

The discussion about future actions in relation to community integration and good relations has to be set within the context of existing and proposed policy measures, which have or will have a bearing in the future on any actions in this area. Among these, the Racial Equality Strategy is of particular significance. In turn, the Review of Public Administration (particularly in the area of community planning), the Budget and Programme for Government, and future economic policies set the wider context in which the two former operate.

The Racial Equality Strategy recognised the positive contribution of minority ethnic communities to social reality in Northern Ireland, with their effects stretching well beyond the economic sphere. The Strategy stresses that the ever-increasing diversity of a society can transform its character and that the presence of increasing numbers of members of ethnic and national minorities have 'a genuinely leavening effect on a society that has long been frozen in its 'two traditions' divide'.[11] It also recognises, however, that the context of long-standing sectarian divide shaping community relations requires actions that are specific to Northern Ireland and the need to take that context into consideration.

The final Programme for Government refers in a number of contexts to "a shared and better future for all" and to the centrality of "equality, fairness, inclusion and the promotion of good relations" to policy-making across the Government. Following the consultation on the Draft Programme for Government, and recognising the validity of the criticisms presented above, the Executive also committed itself to "[…] bring forward a programme of cohesion and integration for this shared and better future".[12]

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[11] OFMDFM (2005) *A Racial Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland 2005-2010*, (Belfast: OFMDFM; p.28).
[12] At page 12. See also: comments we make later in this article in relation to political leadership.

The aims of the Racial Equality Strategy have been previously 'adopted' as complementary to those of A Shared Future, and brought into the A Shared Future action plan and reflected in its priority outcomes.[13] However, the A Shared Future policy is due to be 'refreshed' in the form of a Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration for a Shared and Better Future. This programme aims to include racial equality and cohesion, yet there has been no explicit statement from the Northern Ireland Executive in relation to the current status of the Racial Equality Strategy. Clarity is, however, needed around what policies should be usefully adopted as a framework for integration and community cohesion and how they can support initiatives on institutional, community and individual level. Good relations planning should not be limited to the analysis of policies that are specifically designed to address those issues, but needs to be seen in the wider economic and social context.

Inward migration was not given much, if any, consideration in the most recent round of planning for public expenditure and economic and investment strategies. This is of serious concern, considering that the available research, as well as messages from providers of services, advice and support on the ground, indicate the centrality of proper planning and budget allocations to the improvement of service provision and mainstreaming of examples of good practice developed regionally and locally.

While we appreciate the limitations of the budget process (particularly in relation to the allocation of resources centrally from the Exchequer) and the nature of competing priorities for allocation by the Assembly and the Executive, the fact that the Budget or Programme for Government did not once mention the impact of migration on public expenditure is rather surprising. Further, migrant workers did not feature in the analysis section on social context or in the analysis of economic context. This is consistent with other short to medium-term economic policies. As Jarman (2006) pointed out while commenting on the *Economic Vision for Northern Ireland* (DETI 2005):

> *[…] while the document notes the importance of the 'increasingly global nature of the marketplace' and highlights the need for more entrepreneurial approach within the private sector, the report does not acknowledge the increasing globalisation of the recruitment of labour role by the private sector in Northern Ireland. Nor is there any consideration given of the potential for development of specialist services and resources for and by the members of the new migrant population.*

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[13] Those aims are: elimination of racial inequality; equal protection, equality of service provision; participation; dialogue and capacity building (see: OFMDFM (2006) *A Shared Future: First Triennial Action Plan 2006-2009* (Belfast: OFMDFM)

There is an identifiable need to look at the specific characteristics of the Northern Ireland economy as it stands at the moment and its progression. The general focus of future development may dictate the nature of inward migration, the numbers of workers and their geographical locations. Jarman (2006) identified the differing and distinctive patterns of migration into Northern Ireland in comparison with other countries of the UK. In this context, it is of utmost importance that the work of the Migration Advisory Committee, for example, does not replace local predictions that would form the basis of future planning for Northern Ireland, including that of community cohesion strategies, with data based on the context of England or Great Britain.[14]

Lastly, the issue of administrative reform should be considered, and that of its importance to integration and community cohesion. In particular, the role of the community planning function under the Review of Public Administration. In the Introduction to its Recommendations Paper,[15] the Community Planning Sub-group of the Local Government Taskforce stated:

> *The planning for, and the process of, Community Planning […] should be brought forward with full regard to "A Shared Future" and all the challenges and opportunities that that presents.*

When introduced, Community Planning will play a major role in allocation of resources and provision of services, as well as in decision-making processes regarding other policies at the local level. Community Planning has the potential to involve migrant workers, and their families, into the process of social consultation. Local councils should therefore make sure that representatives of this section of the community take part in planning partnerships.

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[14] The Migration Advisory Committee is a non-statutory, Non-Departmental Public Body, sponsored by the UK Border Agency, and established in 2007. At its first meeting, the Committee presented a paper concerning the use of existing skills shortage indicators for planning of skills needs that will inform the Points Based System (in operation from 2008). One of the problems with the proposed approach is the use of statistical sources such as the British Household Panel Survey, or National Employers Skills Survey that are not used in Northern Ireland. Nowhere in the paper, or indeed the accompanying minutes of the meeting, are the specific data for Northern Ireland mentioned, nor is the need for a separate consideration of the needs of this jurisdiction. (All information regarding the Committee and its first meeting can be found on: https://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/aboutus/workingwithus/indbodies/mac/aboutthemac as accessed on the 15 January 2008.) The first full report on shortage occupations list is to be published by the Committee in August 2008.

[15] Local Government Taskforce, Community Planning Sub-group *Recommendation Paper* (available at: http://www.doeni.gov.uk/index/local_government/local_government_reform/taskforce/community_planning.htm).

Attitudes towards Migrant Workers versus Integration and Good Relations

Existing data on attitudes towards migrant workers provides an interesting starting point for considerations of future planning of good relations strategies (NISRA 2007; Gilligan 2008). Results from the Omnibus Survey published in January 2007, showed high levels of perceived prejudice towards migrant workers.[16] That study indicated that 24% of respondents thought that people were very prejudiced towards migrant workers, with a further 60% stating that people in Northern Ireland are 'fairly prejudiced'. Significantly, respondents often admitted to their own prejudice, with 31% stating that they were 'very' or 'a little' prejudiced. Younger people were more likely to be prejudiced themselves (41% of 16-25 year olds and 33% of the 25-44 years old age group) than older respondents.[17]

Some of the results of the survey indicate some level of conflicting views in relation to migrant workers. On the one hand, 45% of respondents felt that migrant workers take jobs away from people who were born in Northern Ireland. This is consistent with the findings of some qualitative research into the factors informing anti-migrant worker racism (Holder and Khaoury 2005). On the other hand, an overwhelming majority of those surveyed (76%) thought that migrant workers mostly take up jobs that local workers do not want, with nearly 50% agreeing that migrant workers are good for Northern Ireland's economy. Similar ambiguity was also evident in the published results of the 2006 Northern Ireland Life and Times survey, where 48% of respondents agreed and strongly agreed that migrant workers 'take jobs away', while 79% agreed with a statement that those jobs are not wanted by local workers.[18]

Despite the relatively large numbers of new migrants, a reasonably high number of Northern Ireland-born respondents still had little or no contact with them at the time when the surveys were conducted. The combined percentage of those Northern Ireland-born respondents coming in contact with people from new communities very rarely or not at all was 38%, with the proportion rising to 53%

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[16] This replicated previous findings in relation to prejudice towards members of various minority communities, see for example Connolly and Keenan (2000) and Borooah and Mangan (2007).
[17] Among 45-64 year olds, the percentage of those self-identifying as 'very' or 'a little' prejudiced was 27%, while falling to 24% among those 65 or over.
[18] Gilligan, C. (2008) *Migration and migrant workers in Northern Ireland* (ARK Research Update, Number 53, February 2008).

of respondents, who were not in paid employment at the time of the survey. The results of the survey suggest that the incidence of direct contact with the new communities were mostly correlated to employment/economic activity and age, with persons between 25 and 44 most likely to come across migrant workers in their daily lives. The incidence of first-hand contact with migrant workers was not influenced by place of residence (urban or rural area), but was different when considering community background, with higher proportion of respondents from a Protestant background (42%) than those from a Catholic background (35%) having little or no contact with migrant workers.

One aspect of information that is missing in relation to this area is the knowledge of attitudes of migrant workers towards the 'established' communities and their approach to integration (or otherwise) with them in the short or long-term. Gaining such information would be extremely useful, if the debate on social cohesion and good relations was to be framed as a two-way process.

Existing Inequalities?

The intensity of inward migration in recent years dictated the nature of responses in relation to service provision and advice for new communities. While planning ahead has been largely put on a backburner, the research into the local and regional initial solutions provided invaluable knowledge of the gaps and issues facing migrant and established communities, as well as providing information about examples of good practice that could be mainstreamed into policy and practice.

The Equality Commission's *Statement on Key Inequalities in Northern Ireland* (ECNI 2007) identified six broad areas where, despite legislative and policy initiatives in Northern Ireland key inequalities persist. These areas are:

•   education
•   employment
•   health and social care
•   housing
•   participation in civic and public life
•   prejudice

In some of those broad areas, this report identified the difficulties faced by migrant workers. It acknowledged that there is lack of reliable statistical data on migrant workers in relation to employment practices. It also stressed, however, that

anecdotal evidence existed that issues involving migrant workers were now going beyond employment issues and included, among other things, wider community engagement.

It is our view that difficulties in the above areas are compounded in the case of migrant workers, particularly by the existence of restrictions on their entitlements in accordance with migration status (for instance, to social housing or particular benefits or emergency funds), as well as other factors restricting their access, such as language barriers and prejudice.

Holder (2007) documented some experiences of migrant workers attempting to access services and met with misunderstanding at the least, and institutional racism at the worst part of the spectrum. Commenting on instances of racist incidents, McVeigh identified the structural inequality almost inherent in the position of migrant workers on the labour market:

> *Migrant workers are obviously defined by their status as workers. Not surprisingly therefore much of their experience of Northern Ireland is defined by their experience of work. Here we find that negative experiences are both systemic and routine. […] Just being a migrant worker makes people unequal in different ways. (McVeigh 2006)*

There exists a wealth of evidence indicating significant problems facing migrant workers in access to services, such as health and social care, education and housing (see for example: Bell et al 2004; Holder and Khaoury 2005; Holder and Lanao 2006; Betts and Hamilton 2006). In some areas, restriction of access stands in direct contradiction to the fact that the service itself is often dependant on needing to employ migrant workers. The health sector is the most striking example. This paper is not intended to rehearse all the existing research in this area. The following section provides, however, a brief summary of issues facing migrant workers in some of the areas identified by the Commission in its *Key Inequalities* paper as the most problematic in relation to general inequalities.

Employment

A number of recent studies have documented a whole range of significant difficulties faced by migrant workers in the area of employment. These refer in particular, but are in no way limited, to issues around access to employment rights.

Bell et al (2004) recorded a number of concerns in relation to employment practices. In particular, the research highlighted the fact that often salaries paid to migrant workers did not reflect their professional skills and experience and problems faced by those hired by employment agencies in receiving payment for the work they have already done. Problems related to holiday pay, sick pay entitlement, and maternity leave, as well as time off for doctor's appointments were also prevailing. The research also raised issues around unfair dismissals, including for taking time off when ill or for becoming pregnant.

Research by McVeigh for NIC-ICTU (2006) documented instances of unfair treatment and exploitation of migrant workers by employers and recruitment agencies, particularly in relation to a lack of contracts of employment and lower rates of pay, compared to local workers in similar positions. Unfair and exploitative employment practices were also evidenced in other research – including long hours and bad working conditions (Animate 2005), negative changes to terms and conditions of employment upon arrival to Northern Ireland (Holder and Lanao 2006), and discriminatory practices in application of disciplinary measures (Holder and Lanao 2006).

There is also increasing recognition that migrant workers are often employed in jobs well below the level of their skills and experience. Problems regarding recognition of relevant overseas qualifications and reluctance of employers to count relevant experience into the requirements of a particular position largely contribute to this situation (Holder et al 2006).

Further, the Commission's *Key Inequalities* paper acknowledged that the recent migration resulted in a major change to the labour market and the composition of the workforce in Northern Ireland. It also pointed out, however, that as yet very little detail is known about those changes and how they affect the labour market. Workforce monitoring systems should play major part in establishing patterns of employment across sectors, and consideration needs to be given urgently to extending monitoring under fair employment legislation to include nationality and ethnicity.

Education

Until recently, most of the research and available evidence in the area of education for migrant workers' children concentrated on the provision of support for pupils with English as an Additional Language. Serious shortcomings have been identified in relation to such provision, as well as with existing funding

formulas (Holder 2007; Concordia 2006; Watts and McGaughey 2006). Difficulties faced by pupils whose first language is not English stretched beyond discomfort in the classroom and barriers on access to the curriculum. It has been reported, for example, that children of migrant workers face difficulties in accessing grammar schools in Northern Ireland and that problems with accessing academic selection results in systemic, indirect discrimination in education for this group of children (Watts and McGaughey 2006). It has also been reported that schools face difficulties in communicating with parents of children whose first language is not English. This clearly significantly limits parental involvement in the school and their child's school life (Watts and McGaughey 2006).

The issue of educational provision in schools for migrant workers' children goes well beyond English language support. A study of experiences of Polish migrant workers in the Republic of Ireland (Kropiwiec and King-O'Riain 2006) revealed a strong need for the preservation of Polish as a first language in the case of children of migrant workers attending local Irish schools. A school for children of Polish citizens living abroad has been established in Dublin and is currently certified by the Polish Ministry of Education. The possibility of families returning to Poland after a few years of living in the Republic of Ireland makes the issue even more pressing if the education of a particular child is to continue in the country of origin.

Some opportunities for language education are created by cultural organisations established by migrant communities. However, the school system should support such needs with the provision of lessons in their mother tongue. Good practice examples – such as the provision of Polish as a GCSE subject in Hazelwood Integrated College in North Belfast (Jarman and Byrne 2007) – should urgently be mainstreamed throughout education provision.

Health and Social Care

The impact of inward migration on the health and social care services is twofold: on the one hand, the NHS is increasingly dependant on the healthcare skills brought into Northern Ireland by migrant workers, such as by ancillary staff, nurses, consultants, etc. On the other hand, the increased population increases the demand for health and social care services and places the NHS under considerable pressure in relation to managing provision, as well as developing a service that can be tailored to the needs of the migrant worker population (Watt and McGaughey 2006).

Some of the research available to date identified examples of good practice in health service provision (see in particular: Watt and McGaughey 2006). There is also, however, a considerable body of evidence indicating that inequalities in the provision of basic health care are based more on prejudice and unwillingness of service providers to facilitate access to them, than on problems with available resources (see for example: Holder and Khaoury 2005; Sobieraj 2005; Holder 2007). This was particularly true of access to primary healthcare (registration with GPs), leaving many migrant workers and their families unregistered (Animate 2006). Problems in obtaining access are compounded by language barriers, as well as – in some cases – document requirements for registration.

Housing

The main problems with housing provision for migrant workers have been well documented by the research undertaken in recent years. In 2004, a survey conducted by the Institute for Conflict Research revealed significant problems with accommodation tied to employment (Bell et al 2004). Among the difficulties identified by respondents were:

- the fact that accommodation was usually organised for single adults and it was therefore largely impossible for their families to join them
- in the case of agency housing, the arrival of families and the need to move to other accommodation often meant that the person lost their job
- overcrowding
- the loss of accommodation due to dismissal from their employment agency
- the absence of tenancy agreements, enabling employment agencies and employers to move people between different accommodation without proper notice
- the deduction of rent directly from wages
- the significant differences disadvantaging the workers between the rates of rent set by employment agencies and the amounts charged by private landlords for similar properties

Since 2004, research into this area indicated further problems, particularly in relation to the lack of enforcement of regulations concerning Houses of Multiple Occupation, poor housing conditions (including exploitative and discriminatory practices), exorbitant rents, lack of access by significant number of migrant workers to Housing Benefit and lack of emergency re-housing resources (Concordia 2006; Holder 2007; Watt and McGaughey 2006). The Northern

Ireland Housing Executive reported in 2007 that over a one-year period (until 31 July 2007) 998 migrant worker households applied for social housing, while 469 households registered as homeless in the same period (NIHE 2007).

Racism and Discrimination

In 2003, research by the Institute for Conflict Research (Bell et al 2004) identified problems with racist harassment and discrimination in the workplace and elsewhere, for example in bars, shops, and around their homes. Research highlighted examples of physical and verbal attacks in day-to-day life, as well as direct and indirect discrimination by employers or co-workers.

Since the publication of that report, a number of organisations and authors raised the issue of differential treatment of and racism towards migrant workers as one requiring urgent attention, both at individual and institutional levels (Betts and Hamilton 2006; Holder 2007; McVeigh 2006; Watt and McGaughey 2006). Research has also identified the mechanisms through which prejudice becomes 'legitimised':

> *On another part of the spectrum to actual physical attacks migrant workers seem subject to widespread clichéd myths and rumours at level of social discourse. Such myths are often repeated without conscious malicious intention. […] the myths are in fact the base of racism and create demonisation and hostility that can lead to the climate of hostility where people are demonised as being less human than others […]. (Animate 2004)*

Examples of behaviours fuelled by prejudice and racist attitudes include the denial of access to employment rights, difficulties with accessing health service provision, being subjected to inappropriate questioning in job interviews and the exploitation on the housing market.

Cohesion and Integration

Social integration in the context of growing ethno-national demographic diversity has become regarded as increasingly important in the UK over recent years, with concern particularly generated by the riots and disorder across northern England in 2001 and the more recent bombings and attempted bombings in London and elsewhere. The apparent increasing alienation and radicalisation within sections of the Muslim population has generated debate about the value of multicultural versus intercultural approaches to diversity, about segregation, parallel lives and the lack of community cohesion.

Much of this debate resonates with the situation in Northern Ireland and with the practical and policy initiatives that aim to challenge the deeply ingrained segregation of many sections of the Catholic nationalist and Protestant unionist populations. The growth of the new migrant population from a diverse range of national, ethnic and religious backgrounds gives added emphasis to the importance of working towards a more integrated and cohesive society.

There are also real differences between the situation in Northern Ireland and the context in Great Britain. The minority communities in Northern Ireland are still very small, despite the rapid growth in recent years. As yet, there are no distinct minority ethnic residential areas, although some district council areas have larger numbers of migrants than others. Rather, the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) and migrant populations are scattered throughout the region. We should also note that increasingly small clusters of migrants are being established in previously predominately Protestant or Catholic areas, and this may have implications for issues of hostility or racism within the wider local community, particularly in areas with no previous experience of engaging with minorities. There is not a large second and third generation BME population that is either marginalised or struggling to create a distinctive or hybrid identity. However, some consideration will need to be given to the specific needs of second and subsequent generation migrants. An example of this is the Chinese community work of Generation Y.[19]

However, it may only be a matter of time before such issues emerge, unless consideration is given to the importance of integration sooner rather than later. We have been made well aware over the past few years of the scale of prejudice, racism and xenophobia in Northern Ireland (Borooah and Mangan 2007; Jarman

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[19] The Chinese Welfare Association has developed Generation Y to provide a range of activities to young Chinese people across Belfast

and Monaghan 2004) and the long established patterns of residential segregation and territoriality that will have to be challenged, if they are not to be replicated on a more diverse scale.

A recent report from the Institute for Public Policy Research identified the importance of national and local government working to promote a common sense of belonging, in an attempt to create greater cohesion and social solidarity (Rogers and Muir 2007: 6). This report highlighted a number of actions that focused on building allegiance around a common national identity. This approach may, however, be less relevant to Northern Ireland, first because of the obvious divergence of views on nationality and national identity, but also because of the different make up of the minority ethnic and migrant communities in Great Britain compared with Northern Ireland.

The British approach is very much focused on working with established multi-generational communities, whereas in Northern Ireland we need to begin to explore opportunities for engagement with newly arrived migrants, who have little historical or colonial connection with the region. Some research has suggested that many migrants do not necessarily intend to stay here permanently when they arrive (Jarman and Byrne 2007), but that intentions do change as people become established in their new environments. The Northern Ireland approach to integration needs to be developed in a fashion tailored to meet the distinctive local, historical and diversity context. It needs to focus both on encouraging and supporting the processes of integration and also preventing the marginalisation and alienation of new migrants. This can be done through a variety of actions directed both at the migrant population and at the majority communities.

The process of integration needs to be a reciprocal process, one that involves actions by the local communities and the structures of authority, as well as by the new migrants. It needs to be based on the principles of human rights and equality, but also on respect and responsibility. It cannot be based on expectations of newcomers assimilating, or learning 'how we do things here', nor on separate development and segregation. Rather, it must be a dynamic process of interaction and exchange. Such an approach necessarily puts demands on all, rather than just on 'them' meeting 'us' on 'our' terms.

Various studies have begun to explore the issue of what should be done to better assist in the process of the integration of new migrants into the new polity (Amin 2008; Commission on Integration and Cohesion 2007; Rogers and Muir 2007). There appears to be a consensus, around the need to ensure that new migrants are able to feel part of the country they live in: that they are welcomed, encouraged to become involved in political activity and are treated equally

with other members of the population. This highlights the need to regard the newcomers not simply as migrant workers, but as full members of the local community. This requires leadership and example at all levels of society, as well as requiring some degree of resourcing and actions to facilitate integration and protect the new residents from discrimination and hostility.

In fact, over the past few years, there have been a variety of initiatives that have aimed to facilitate the arrival of new migrants, and to provide appropriate resources and services to welcome the growing diversity of Northern Irish society. Many of the initiatives are still at an early stage, or are only being undertaken in limited areas. There is therefore a need to build on and extend the activities designed to increase integration and community cohesion. Some of the key areas of activity that have been identified as important for promoting and supporting the integration of migrants are briefly outlined below:

a.   Political leadership: Both the direct rule and recently devolved governments in Northern Ireland have been inconsistent in focusing on the subject of new migration and its importance for Northern Ireland. The issue has been addressed in the *Racial Equality Strategy* (2005) and more recently through the work of the Department for Employment and Learning, who have developed and updated a *Migrant Workers Strategy* (2006), but, as noted above, does not appear either in the *Programme for Government* (2007)[20] or the *Economic Vision for Northern Ireland* (2005).

There is therefore a need to incorporate the reality of the ever-growing diversity of Northern Ireland across government and not marginalise it in the departments responsible for 'race equality' or employment. While this is often accepted as an obvious requirement, it has nevertheless proved difficult to ensure that challenging the legacy of sectarianism, building good relations and creating a shared future is the responsibility of all government departments.

b.   Civic leadership: Rogers and Muir (2007: 8-9) have highlighted the role that local government can play in helping to integrate new migrants. A number of positive initiatives have already been started across Northern Ireland:

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[20] Other than by vague reference to an introduction of cohesion programme: *"We will bring forward a programme of cohesion and integration for this shared and better future to address the divisions within our society and achieve measurable reductions in sectarianism, racism and hate crime." (Programme for Government*, at page 12).

- Belfast City Council and Dungannon District Council have both employed staff to work on policy and practice relating to new migrants
- in a number of council areas, networks of key partners have been established to co-ordinate a more effective response to the changing demographics
- several district councils have supported the production and distribution of welcome and information pack for new residents

In a recent paper, produced for an event organised by Belfast City Council, Amin (2008) has highlighted the approach of the authorities in Vancouver, Canada, through the development of a 'Vision and Value Statement Concerning Newcomers' (see the Appendix at the end of this report) and he holds this as a possible model for authorities in the UK. This type of approach could be one way, both to acknowledge the positive impact that new migrants can have on a city/district and also to recognise that they are not just 'workers', but rather are expected to be fully fledged members of the community.

c. Political participation: A recent report from the European Policy Centre[21] highlighted the differential access across the European Union of migrants' right to vote or participate in political life. Migrants in Northern Ireland have been encouraged to register to vote, and appear to have begun to do so in reasonable numbers (OFMdFM 2007). However, this work needs to be built upon, both in encouraging more people to register as voters, but also through raising the overall presence and profile of members of migrant and BME populations more generally in public life.

Local Northern Ireland political parties in particular need to engage with this new constituency if it is to be encouraged and to flourish. Greater political participation by migrants and members of minority ethnic communities may also be one way in which the traditional political polarities and positions are challenged and stretched as they begin to reflect the growing diversity of perspectives. Evidence of the possibilities for such activity is the recent election of Anna Lo to the Northern Ireland Assembly for the Alliance Party. Similarly, in the Republic of Ireland, a number of recent new residents have successfully contested council elections.

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[21] http://www.epc.eu/en/er.asp?TYP=ER&LV=293&see=y&t=2&PG=ER/EN/detail&l=&AI=755

d.   Workplace issues: The arrival of new migrants has largely been stimulated by the needs of the local economy and in particular by the private sector. It is important that the business community acknowledges the wider responsibilities that come with its new recruitment practices: in ensuring that migrants have the same rights and benefits in the workplace as local staff; in supporting the integration of migrant staff into the wider community and social environment; and in participating in wider activities and networks designed to promote greater integration.

The Trade Union movement has also begun to respond to the changing workplace environment and their continued engagement with this issue will be an important factor in ensuring the protection of the rights of migrants and their integration into the wider working environment.

e.   Media representations: Media representations of the changing social demographics of Northern Irish society can be an important element of creating a climate either of fear or of welcome. To date, the local media has been largely positive in their reporting of the changing demography and sensitive in its reporting of hate crimes. In some areas, the local media has gone further: by producing columns or sections of the paper specifically for new migrants; or in commissioning members of migrant communities to write comment pieces from their perspective.

f.   Language training: For many migrants, learning or improving their command of the English language is a key factor in deciding to come to the UK or the Republic of Ireland . It is important to promote and resource the development of language skills among members of migrant communities, if they are to be able to take up a more active role in civil and political society. Many adult migrants make use of language classes that are delivered through the further and higher education sector, and it is important to ensure that sufficient resources are available to meet the needs of current and prospective students.

It is also evident that the new migrant community includes growing numbers of school-aged children, many of whom require initial support with their language skills. The provision of teaching resources for English as an Additional Language courses have been restructured in recent years. It is therefore important that sufficient and appropriate resources are made available, to ensure that the education of the children of new migrants does not suffer, and that they are not marginalised through any inability to study and develop through the medium of English.

It is also important to recognise the importance of ensuring that children of migrants retain and develop their capacity to engage in their mother tongue. Some schools have already begun to offer GCSE and A levels in eastern European languages, but consideration should also be given to promoting the study of Polish, Russian and other eastern European languages among children whose first language is English.

The creation of a multi-lingual practitioners' culture should also be encouraged. Proper attention should be given to the promotion and support of good practice examples in this area, such as employing bi-lingual advocates by the United Hospitals Trust or multi-lingual staff by the Sure Start projects in Dungannon and South Tyrone. Initiatives to mainstream foreign language skills as being essential in a changing labour market and in the area of service provision, should be incorporated into regional policies and appropriately resourced. We note that the Department of Education has recently commissioned Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster to develop a comprehensive Language Strategy for Northern Ireland.[22] The above considerations should be taken into account in the development of any such strategy. It is therefore extremely encouraging that available consultation materials, as well as websites relating to the Language Strategy, provide an opportunity for migrant communities to have their say about its contents.[23]

g.   Community development: There are already some community support structures and networks that focus on the needs of the new migrant population, and groups such as STEP[24] in Dungannon have been at the forefront of providing advice and assistance and supporting interaction and engagement between migrants and the majority communities. New networks and organisations are also emerging from within some of the migrant populations, as they create more cohesive communities for themselves. The Polish and Filipino communities, in particular, have begun to develop a clear presence and identity. However, more specific support might need to be targeted at some of the smaller national communities, or at migrants living in areas without a history of a minority ethnic population. Such support will need to be resourced, but at the same time the overall budget for supporting the work of the BME and migrant communities will need to reflect the growing scale, diversity and needs of this section of the local population.

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[22] *NICVA News*, 4th February 2008.
[23] http://www.nils.org.uk/
[24] South Tyrone Empowerment Programme

h.   Territoriality: The new migrant population is moving to regions in which many housing estates and residential areas are highly segregated, in which many communities have a strong sense of territorial belonging, and many areas are closely identified as republican/nationalist or loyalist/unionist. Where and how are migrants expected to fit within these demarcations? We are only too aware that many of the recorded incidents of racial harassment occur in residential areas and many migrants have been subjected to abuse and/or violence in or around their home (Jarman and Monaghan 2004; Bell et al 2004).

The Housing Executive has in the last year completed a benchmarking of the geographical location and housing status of the BME and migrant population (NIHE 2007). This research reveals both the widespread dispersal of new residents across Northern Ireland and a growing population in a small number of areas.

The Housing Executive is also taking an interest in the housing conditions of migrants, particularly in relation to over-charging, over-crowding and situations where accommodation is tied to employment. Newly arrived people can be particularly vulnerable to being exploited in relation to the provision of housing, and this can be exacerbated by the segregation and territoriality of many communities in Northern Ireland, where they can be isolated, marginalised and identified as a cause of wider social problems. There would be value in supporting initiatives by established community groups to extend their remit to including working with new migrants.

Perhaps more than any other single issue, the matter of housing highlights the intersection of two key direct rule policy documents - A Shared Future and the Racial Equality Strategy. The housing issue stresses the need to develop a coherent and integrated policy, which challenges segregation, racism and prejudice in all its manifestations. This will be an important goal for the Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration for a Shared and Better Future.

i.   Hate Crime: The growing incidents of racist and other forms of hate crime have been acknowledged by many agencies in recent years and there has been a diverse range of responses by different agencies and organisations. These include the following:

- the government has introduced legislation providing for the possibility of an increased sentence for offences aggravated by various forms of bigotry
- the PSNI has reviewed its overall policy and practice in this field and has established an effective means of recording hate incidents and in general has established good contacts with many minority communities

- systems of support have been established for victims of hate crimes
- there have been a number of publicity campaigns drawing the public's attention to the problem
- the media has highlighted the continuing problems of violent attacks on members of minority communities

While these initiatives may have led to a decrease in the number of racist crimes and incidents in the last year,[25] the numbers of prosecutions for hate crimes remain very low (Criminal Justice Inspection 2007: 33). It is unclear, for example, if the hate crime legislation introduced in September 2004 has ever been used successfully.

There is a need, therefore, to focus more energy and resources on challenging the perpetrators of hate crimes and of challenging the stereotypes that underpin the actions of racist people. Many of the activities and approaches that have been highlighted in this section, aim to help integrate migrants as members of Northern Irish society and thus may also help to create greater acceptance of the overall diversity of the local communities.

Integration and Equality

Lastly, one overarching question needs to be urgently considered. If equality is the counterpart to integration, is it possible to integrate migrants fully into society, if they are not given the same rights and freedoms as everyone else, or if they are subjected to unequal or discriminatory treatment by virtue of the organisation of the immigration system?

Of concern is the fact that there is a legally established hierarchy among members of the various migrant and minority ethnic communities, whereby some categories of new residents have more rights than others, both in the civil and political sphere, as well as in relation to access to social and economic equality. For example:

- citizens of EU A8 countries do not have the same rights of access to welfare benefits in the UK as EU15 nationals, until they complete 12 months of continuous employment in the UK

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[25] PSNI (2008) *Statistical Report No.3: Hate Incidents and Crimes, 1st April 2007 – 31st March 2008* (available at: http://www.psni.police.uk/3._hate_incidents_and_crimes-4.pdf).

- A2 nationals (Bulgaria and Romania) have greater restrictions on their rights to work than nationals of other EU countries, including the A8 nationals
- asylum seekers cannot work lawfully
- undocumented migrants have no rights to work and extremely limited access to welfare provision

This structural inequality raises an important question, whether the integration of all migrants is possible, if some migrants are 'parachuted' into Northern Ireland for short periods of time. For example, under the Work Permit Scheme, individuals are only allowed to remain in the UK for set periods of time, with no right to settle. The diversity of structured inequalities among the different sub-sections of the migrant population, contradicts the wider process of providing for legal equality among the population of Northern Ireland. It thus highlights one of the key challenges for the future: should all people living here have equal rights or should some be less equal than others?

At present, the overall framework for immigration policy and the differential rights of different categories of migrants is the responsibility of the UK government in Westminster. However, public authorities in Northern Ireland should be mindful that their obligations in relation to equality of opportunity are based on considerations of racial equality, not on the immigration status of an individual, and that this approach gives them the opportunity to shape policies locally. The ongoing process of debate on the Bill of Rights implicitly acknowledges the distinctive historical trajectory of Northern Ireland and this debate also provides the opportunity of ensuring that there is a genuine equality for all people living in Northern Ireland.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

1. The Northern Ireland Executive and the Assembly should ensure that public policy considers the consequences for public service provision of its economic strategies. The focus on economic growth, which requires attraction of new labour resources, should be matched with the responsibility for the wider social consequences, including proactively encouraging public authorities to meet their equality obligations

2. Planning of services should urgently consider the impact of migration, and focus should now be shifted from reaction-led actions to strategic planning. The dependence of the Northern Ireland economy on migrant labour and skills is a long-term issue and temporary responses should be mainstreamed throughout service provision

3. As a matter of priority, the Executive should consider the implications of its short and long-term investment strategies on the structure of the workforce and the need for planning for new residents, who will inevitably fill some of the new work places, and their families

4. As a basis for future planning, public authorities should be required to conduct audits in their area of responsibility on a regular basis, that could feed into overarching policies (including the new Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration for a Shared and Better Future)

5. When introduced, community planning will have the potential to involve migrant workers and their families, into the process of social consultation. Local councils should therefore make sure that representatives of this section of the community take part in planning partnerships

6. Urgent consideration needs to be given to the need to extend monitoring under fair employment legislation to include nationality and ethnicity

7. Language policy should move beyond provision of English as an Additional Language support and mainstream good practice examples, in relation to the provision of mother tongue education, as well as promote the study of a wider range of European languages by pupils whose first language is English

8. Consideration needs to be given as to how the process of integration can be developed as a reciprocal, rather than an assimilationist, process. This involves creating appropriate spaces and opportunities for members of new migrant communities to have an active input in the wider social, political, religious and cultural aspects of Northern Irish society

9.   The forthcoming Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration for a Shared and Better Future, that will update and take forward A Shared Future and the Racial Equality Strategy, is a real opportunity to develop a policy that provides for effective integration of all communities and also challenges prejudice and segregation of all kinds. The Programme needs to be Northern Ireland-specific and consider in detail the differences between this jurisdiction and the developments in both Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland

10. The development of the Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration for a Shared and Better Future should be treated as one of the Executive's most urgent priorities. The community and voluntary sector in Northern Ireland should be widely consulted on the draft Programme, and its expertise in this area taken into consideration by the Executive at all stages of the Programme's development

11. It is important that the ongoing debate over the Bill of Rights includes consideration of the increasing diversity of Northern Ireland and that any extended framework of human rights includes members of the new migrant population within its remit

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Appendix

Mayor's Proposal on Immigration and Diversity in Vancouver

Priority One: Vision and Values Proposal: to adopt a City of Vancouver Vision and Value Statement Concerning Newcomers

Preamble
While immigration has traditionally been under federal and provincial jurisdiction, most immigrants in Canada live in cities. It is therefore increasingly important that cities play an integral role in advocating for the inclusion of newcomers in Canadian society.

Vision and Value statement concerning newcomers:
Vancouver is a city where newcomers to Canada have the best opportunities to become an integral part of the social, economic and cultural fabric of civic life.

1. The City of Vancouver is proud of its cultural diversity and values the distinctive characteristics of its residents, including newcomers to Canada.

2. The City of Vancouver is committed to fostering an open, welcoming and safe environment to people of all cultural backgrounds.

3. The City of Vancouver acknowledges that newcomers contribute to the social, cultural and economic vitality of Canadian society, locally and nationally, and that newcomers contribute to the relationships with other countries and cultures. Accordingly, Vancouver seeks ways to maximize newcomers' contributions to civic life, socially, culturally and economically.

4. The City of Vancouver will ensure that newcomers have equitable access to all the services provided by the City.

5. The City of Vancouver will help to ensure that newcomers have access to appropriate and timely settlement and integration services, by working in partnership with other orders of government and non-governmental organizations.

6. The City of Vancouver acknowledges its role with respect to a large number of visitors to Canada, including tourists, international students, and temporary migrants.

Equality Commission
FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

January 2009