

Equality Commission response to the proposed Delivery Plan for Programme for Government Indicators 26, 31 and 35 (A respect index; % who think leisure centres, parks, libraries and shopping centres in their areas are ‘shared and open’ to both Protestants and Catholics; % the population who believe their cultural identity is respected by society).

In January 2016, the Commission set out a number of priorities¹ for delivery via the work of government over the 2016-21 mandate. In our July 2016 response to the Programme for Government Framework consultation, the Commission recommended that the PfG include actions to: challenge prejudicial attitudes, behaviour and hate crime, so as to ensure that workplaces, services, public spaces and communities are free from harassment and discrimination across the equality grounds.

We recommended that the shared space, reconciliation and respect indicators should be capable of measuring sharing for, and by, each of the Section 75 categories, rather than being narrowly focused on just, for example, community background.

We also noted that the existing shared space indicator measured sharing largely in relation to certain places associated with leisure time (leisure centres, parks, libraries, shopping centres), and not with regard to places of employment, education or housing. The Commission therefore recommended additional measures and commitments to ensure an increase in sharing more generally in education, work, housing and society.

The following considers the delivery plan content (version downloaded on 1 December 2016) against the key inequalities and policy priorities highlighted by the Commission in January 2016.

We hope that this information, in tandem with our response to the consultation on the draft PfG, will be of assistance in the further development of the delivery plan.

1. We recommend that indicators relating to ‘Respect’ and ‘Reconciliation’ (cultural identity respected) should seek to advance outcomes across all Section 75 grounds.

- a. We note that the shared society outcome recognises that respect can be experienced differently for Section 75 groups and others and that the relevant delivery plan notes that while the need for reconciliation is likely to be greatest between Catholics and Protestants, ‘particular issues and difficulties may be experienced ...by sub groups within communities, for example: ... Travellers and ethnic minorities’. We note however the current narrow focus of the associated indicators on certain groups (e.g. community background and gender). We therefore again recommend that the focus of the proposed respect and reconciliation (cultural identity respected) indicators, be across all Section 75 grounds.

¹ ECNI (2016), Equality Priorities: [Programme for Government and Budget Recommendations](#)

Supporting Information

Respect Index

- b. In relation to the proposed indicator on respect, we note that a *Respect Index* is currently being developed, with a range of questions being trialled and the range of data being considered. The narrative of the delivery plan notes² that: *'Respect may be experienced differently by individuals across the range of S75 and other groups in a range of scenarios including education, health services, public spaces, employment and communities. However, lack of respect may be experienced particularly by: ethnic minorities; older people; children and young people; LGB and trans people; people with disabilities; and people with multiple identities.'*
- c. Despite this, there is no explicit commitment in the delivery plan that the *Respect index* will be developed across all Section 75 categories. We recommend that it is made explicit that the focus on respect will both track and seek to improve outcomes across all section 75 grounds.
- d. We welcome references to taking actions in relation to promoting shared education and housing and challenging attitudes to disabled people in the employment sector, which may lead to increased respect in terms of community background and for disabled people.
- e. We recommend a clearer commitment in PfG and associated delivery plans to focus commitments and actions aimed at increasing respect and challenging prejudicial attitudes³, behaviour and hate crime so as to ensure that workplaces, services, public spaces and communities are free from harassment and / or discrimination across the equality grounds.⁴ We also recommend commitments in relation to tackling prejudice based bullying⁵ and addressing gender stereotyping; as *recommended* in our PfG recommendations.
- f. We also welcome that it is proposed that the Respect Index will consider three dimensions of respect:
- where individuals feel respected,

² At paragraph 18

³ 33% of respondents said they had been subjected to unfair treatment because they belonged to a particular group; negative attitudes existed towards Travellers (30%), transgender persons (22%) and Eastern migrant workers (21%) ECNI (2012) [Equality Awareness Survey 2011](#)

⁴ In particular, we recommend actions to challenge prejudicial attitudes⁴, behaviour and hate crime so as to ensure that workplaces, services, public spaces and communities are free from harassment and / or discrimination across the equality grounds.

It is essential that steps are taken including action:

- to address sectarianism and racism within the workplace;
- to tackle the significant attitudinal barriers to employment for people with disabilities;
- to challenge negative attitudes towards Irish Travellers, Eastern European migrant workers and other minority ethnic individuals, as well as lesbian, gay and bisexual people and trans individuals;
- to tackle hate crime experienced by section 75 equality groups including sectarian, racist, homophobic, transphobic and disability hate crime;
- to challenge gender stereotypes and gender based violence.

⁵ Apart from a potential reference in the delivery plan to environments that are 'healthy and safe', which falls short of ECNI recommendation.

- whether individuals respect others and
- whether individuals perceive Northern Ireland as a place where people respect each other.

Reconciliation indicator

- g. We note that the recognition that ‘while the need for reconciliation is likely to be greatest between Catholics and Protestants’, ‘particular issues and difficulties may be experienced ...by sub groups within communities, for example: ... Travellers and ethnic minorities’.
- h. The indicator, however, remains limited in relation to its focus on community background and gender. We recommend that revised indicator(s) seek to track and advance reconciliation across all section 75 categories.
- i. We also continue to highlight that the ‘reconciliation’ indicator is defined in terms of ‘respect’. We recommend that the distinct focus of each indicator is made clearer.
- j. The draft delivery plan undertakes to draw upon additional Good Relations indicators including: on relations between Catholics and Protestants; young people socialising with those of other religions; mixed neighbourhoods; peace lines; and the percentage of those who think the culture and traditions of Catholics, Protestants and minority ethnic communities add to the richness and diversity of Northern Ireland society. We recognise that the proposal to draw on the above Good Relations indicators opens up the potential that there will be some consideration relating to race. We recommend that the focus of the proposed reconciliation (cultural identity respected) indicators should be across all Section 75 grounds.

2. We recommend the shared space indicator is widened to cover all Section 75 groups and there is a focus on wider spaces for sharing – with supporting indicators and actions.

- k. We note the focus of the shared spaces indicator largely being on spaces associated with leisure / free time – leisure centres; parks; libraries and shopping centres – and not on places where we live, work, and are educated.
- l. Accordingly, we continue to recommend the inclusion of additional indicators aimed at tracking progress in securing increased sharing in employment, education and housing, in addition to the existing proposed indicator⁶.
- m. We also again recommend actions to monitor and challenge prejudicial attitudes, behaviour and hate crime in these contexts.

Supporting Information

- n. We welcome the recognition in this outcome that a number of Section 75 groups experience difficulties in using shared space in various contexts, as, in

⁶ ECNI (2016) [PfG Framework - Full Response](#)

our PfG response, we had recommended that this outcome refers not solely to greater sharing between different communities, but also the need to promote sharing more generally – including promoting good race relations, and building a society that respects racial diversity.

- o. We note that the associated delivery plan states: ‘Other S75 groups may also experience difficulties in using shared space in various contexts such as education facilities, public spaces, workplaces and communities including ethnic minorities (Irish Travellers, migrant workers, asylum seekers and refugees); children and young people; LGB and trans people; people with disabilities; and people with multiple identities’.
- p. We recommend that the shared space indicator is not limited to community background, but should consider the degree to which public areas are shared and open for all Section 75 groups. We had recommended in our PfG framework response that this indicator is amended to “% who think that *leisure centres, parks, libraries and shopping centres are shared and open*” and tracked for all Section 75 groups.
- q. In our PfG framework response we *recommended* the inclusion of additional indicators aimed at tracking progress in securing increased sharing in employment, education and housing, in addition to the proposed indicator linked to public space. We note our recommendation on the inclusion of additional indicators has been not been actioned. We recommend that there is a more *comprehensive* consideration of shared spaces – with indicators and commitments aimed at measuring / ensuring sharing in employment, education and in housing.
- r. We note that progress against reconciliation and shared space will be measured through selected Good Relations Indicators. These include relevant Good Relations Indicators on shared classes (% of schools who have shared classes (classes, teachers, resources, projects) and mixed neighbourhoods, workplaces and schools (% who would prefer mixed neighbourhoods, workplaces and schools). We recommend that the delivery plans make clear how these indicators will be utilised and/or built into the proposed indexes.
- s. We welcome the commitments to statutory duties under Shared Education Act (NI) 2016 and with regard to integrated education. However, there is generally no confirmation in the delivery plans of the actions that will be advanced in support of the statutory obligations, nor if those actions will ensure a move to a system of education which routinely teaches all pupils together via a shared curriculum in shared classes, and where sharing impacts meaningfully and substantially on every learner (ECNI PfG recommendations⁷). It is not clear what outcomes will result and how these will contribute to advancing equality of opportunity and good relations. We recommend that this is addressed in the delivery plan and PfG.

⁷ ECNI (2015) Key Point Briefing: Policy Position on Sharing in Education

- t. We welcome the commitment to support more shared housing and reduce the extent and impact of residential segregation (delivery plan for indicators 8 and 48). The Commission has consistently called for the expansion of shared housing⁸ as a necessary step to progress integration in our society. However, it is not clear how the proposals will contribute to advancing equality of opportunity and good relations. We recommend that this is addressed in the delivery plan and PfG.

3. We recommend that all relevant PfG measures are tracked for the impact across Section 75 grounds and that gaps in equality data are addressed.

- u. We continue to recommend that all relevant PfG measures are not only tracked in aggregate but also for the impact on individuals from each of the Section 75 grounds.
- v. We note and welcome the introductory high level PfG commitment to addressing key inequalities, particularly those experienced by the Section 75 equality groups, and to tracking progress for these groups in relevant PfG population indicators or associated performance indicators. However, we are concerned that planned actions across the PfG and delivery plans may fall short. We recommend that this is addressed in the delivery plan and PfG.

Supporting Information

- w. The delivery plan commits⁹ to collect data for Section 75 categories where possible. We recommend that there is a firm commitment to collect data for all Section 75 categories.
- x. The Commission has highlighted the lack of specific data across a number of themes in relation to a range of equality grounds including gender identity, sexual orientation and race as well as multiple identity.
- y. We have also highlighted the lack of data disaggregation in relation to some equality grounds such as ethnicity, disability and gender. The absence of key equality data means that it is difficult for the Executive, Departments and others to assess the nature and extent of key inequalities as well as to track progress in achieving agreed equality and good relations outcomes.
- z. The Executive Office has advised of data gaps – including, for example, that there is currently no data disaggregation across the PfG indicators on the grounds of sexual orientation and limited disaggregation on the ground of race and disability. We continue to recommend that PfG measures are tracked across all of the Section 75 categories.

January 2017

⁸ ECNI (2011) [Response to draft Programme for CSI consultation](#)
ECNI (2012) [Response to the Housing Strategy 2012-2017 consultation](#)
ECNI (2016) Draft [Statement on Key Inequalities in Housing and Accommodation](#)

⁹ At paragraph 20