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[Blog article](#) by **Geraldine McGahey, Chief Commissioner, Equality Commission NI**

Tackling racism and hate crime post Brexit

In recent weeks, we have been meeting with people from ethnic minorities and migrant groups across Northern Ireland. We wanted to hear first-hand about their experiences of living here and the issues they face because of their race.

We met members of the East Timor Community with Migrant Centre NI in Lurgan, Armagh Roma Support, Strabane Ethnic Community Association and the Inter-Ethnic Forum in Ballymena.

We listened to shocking and deeply concerning stories of racism. We heard about major issues when dealing with public agencies and employers.

Impact of Brexit on Minority Ethnic and Migrant People in Northern Ireland

The experiences people shared echoed findings from our research report, [The Impact of Brexit on Minority Ethnic and Migrant People in Northern Ireland](#).

The researchers engaged with minority ethnic and migrant people and relevant third sector organisations. They asked them about their experiences of life in Northern Ireland.

The report found that people from minority ethnic and migrant groups experience racism in their daily life. It also found:

- women from ethnic minority and migrant groups are more likely to experience racism
- that Brexit had led to an increase in the expression of racism
- they experience racist bullying in schools and racial profiling, including at airports and crossing the border.

The findings of this research report and our ongoing engagement work make for uncomfortable truths. Now more than, post Brexit, we need to tackle unacceptable levels of racism and race hate crime in Northern Ireland.

Helping people experiencing racial discrimination in Northern Ireland

We are engaging with people we met to see how our advice team in the Equality Commission can help them with the issues they are experiencing now.

The experiences we have heard and the findings of our report will continue to inform our own work to tackle racism and hate crime post Brexit. Going forward, the focus of the Equality Commission's work will include ensuring more effective measures are put in place to tackle racism, racial discrimination, and prejudicial attitudes. This will include:

- addressing the specific impact of racism on women;
- addressing institutional racism;
- tackling racist bullying in schools.

To improve the lives of minority ethnic and migrant people living in Northern Ireland, we will press for:

- strengthened hate crime legislation;
- strengthened racial equality legislation;
- actions to prevent racial profiling, including through improved data collection and more effective training;
- improved, collection, monitoring and evaluation of ethnic data, including disaggregated data;
- address issues and barriers for people arising out of the operation of the EU settlement scheme;
- address barriers to migrant workers accessing employment and address the exploitation of migrant workers.

To achieve this, we will need to have a collaborative approach. We need timely and structured engagement and an assessment of existing strategies. And we need commitment and leadership, particularly by government, to address these issues and ensure minority ethnic and migrant people feel welcomed, valued and respected in Northern Ireland.