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[Blog article](#) by Paul Noonan, Senior Policy Officer, Equality Commission NI

## Waiting for racial equality in Northern Ireland

Racial equality made the news headlines last week as [PSNI figures](#) showed that racial hate incidents have reached an all-time high. These figures do not take into account the multiple acts of intimidation, damage to the property and businesses of minority ethnic citizens and acts of violence against them, following several anti-immigration protests in August.

Although Northern Ireland (NI) has become an increasingly diverse society over the last twenty years, progress on developing effective measures to tackle racism and racial inequality have been painstakingly slow.

### The failure to develop an outcome focused plan

Almost a decade ago the Commission welcomed the NI Executive's publication of the [Racial Equality Strategy 2015-2025](#) (*pdf*). However, we and other stakeholders are concerned at the failure of the Executive to develop an outcome focused action plan to eradicate racial inequalities.

Moreover, whilst the current Strategy is drawing towards a close, key commitments made in the previous [2005-2010 Strategy](#) (*pdf*) remain undelivered e.g. the introduction of ethnic equality monitoring; reform of racial equality legislation; and the publication of a Refugee Integration Strategy.

### UNCERD supports Equality Commission recommendations to Government

Last month, the [UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination](#) met to examine the UK Government's most recent progress reports on racial equality.

The Committee published their [concluding observations and recommendations](#) on 23 August. These reflected most of the key issues we raised in our [shadow report](#) (*pdf*):

## Law Reform

- the need to adopt comprehensive anti-discrimination and equality legislation which addresses direct, indirect, structural, multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination; and protection against caste-based discrimination

## Racial Equality Strategy

- the need to ensure the delivery of a renewed and resourced Racial Equality Strategy, with specific, time-bound and measurable goals

## Hate Crime

- the need to address the persistent underreporting of hate crime and the lack of specific statutory offence for prosecuting hate crimes in Northern Ireland

## Ethnic Equality Monitoring

- the need to collect and publish statistics on the enjoyment of rights by members of ethnic minorities in all fields of life, to identify ethnic disparities, inform policy decisions to eliminate racial discrimination and to evaluate their impact.

## Help raise awareness of our recommendations

We would welcome any steps you can take to help promote racial equality in Northern Ireland. One way you can do this is by engaging with decision-makers to raise [awareness of our positions and secure adoption of our recommendations](#).

## Further information

- Read more about the Commission's [racial equality policy priorities and recommendations](#) and our work with the [UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination](#).