



The Executive Office
Stormont Castle
Belfast
BT4 3TT

Submitted via email to: Race.Consultation@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk

3rd June 2026

Dear Executive Office

Re: Framework for Race Relations

Due to pressure of time and workload the Women's Regional Consortium are unable to complete a full response to the Executive Office consultation on the Framework for Race Relations. We wish to endorse the responses to this consultation from the Equality Coalition and the Women's Policy Group (both of which we are a member of).

We share the concerns raised by both the Equality Coalition and the Women's Policy Group about this framework at a time when racist incidents and hate crime have increased year on year and where action to tackle racism and the structural inequalities that perpetuate it is so urgently needed.

Northern Ireland has obligations under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD). By the UK's ratification of this Treaty the UK Government and the NI Executive are required to actively eliminate racial discrimination and promote understanding among all races. The most recent Concluding Observations by CERD in October 2024¹ state that "*Government should put in place or improve its policies and plans for tackling racial discrimination and racial inequality in all areas of the UK*" and specific to Northern Ireland it stated "*The Committee recommends that the State party, in particular the government of Northern Ireland, adopt robust measures to prevent and combat paramilitary racist violence and intimidation against ethnic minorities and migrants in Northern Ireland, systematically collect information on these acts of violence and intimidation and ensure that cases of paramilitary racist violence and intimidation are promptly and effectively investigated, prosecuted and punished with appropriate sanctions and that victims have access to effective protection and redress.*" We

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https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2FC%2FGBR%2FCO%2F24-26&Lang=en

share the belief of the Equality Coalition that the current framework is not capable of meeting these international obligations.

The previous Racial Equality Strategy (2015-2025) lacked clear delivery mechanisms, budgets and accountability and its failures were outlined in the Independent Review of the Racial Equality Strategy.² Therefore any new framework must address these issues and include clear actions, funding and accountability to avoid repeating the same mistakes. Unfortunately, the proposed framework does not do this.

We wish to make the following suggestions for changes which are required to the draft framework:

- The framework should shift from using 'race relations' language. Racism is a structural inequality and human rights issue.
- The framework must explicitly state what it aims to achieve, how it aims to achieve it and how its success will be measured. There must be a clear, costed action plan with targets, timelines and named responsible bodies.
- There must be ring-fenced funding for this work.
- Simply repeating past approaches (for example, awareness campaigns and cohesion work) has not reduced racism and is therefore inadequate.
- There is a need to address the real-world drivers of racism including paramilitary and far-right violence and intimidation.
- There are no definitions in the framework and it lacks an intersectional analysis that considers how racism impacts on different groups.
- There is a need for comprehensive ethnic equality monitoring across public services to provide robust data and a baseline to measure progress of the framework.
- There is also a need to strengthen action on hate crime through justice system reform, policing and victim support.
- As recommended by the UN CERD Committee there is a need to ensure meaningful engagement with affected communities through co-design.

Kind Regards



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² Independent Review of the progress on the implementation of the Racial Equality Strategy 2015-25 Final report, Sabir Zazai, March 2024
<https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-12/independent-review-of-the-progress-on-the-implementation-of-the-racial.PDF>