

TITLE/ORGANISATION	Racial Equality Subgroup Single item agenda to discuss the draft new approach to racial equality post-2025.
VENUE:	Microsoft Teams
DATE/TIME:	25 September 2025, 14:00-15:00
List of Attendees:	<p><u>Attendees</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Susan Russam – GEMS NI • Paul Yam – Wah Hep • Ivy Goddard – Inter Ethnic Forum • Judith Searle – Barnardo’s NI • Mimi Unamoyo – Bomoko NI • Katy Radford – Belfast Jewish Community • Deirdre McAliskey - South Tyrone Empowerment Programme (STEP) • Nicholas (Nick) Cassidy – Omagh Ethnic Community Support Group (OECSG) • Lili Wu – Chinese Welfare Association (CWA) • Nisha Tandon - ArtsEkta • Fergal Quinn – Building Communities Resource Centre • Takura Donald Makoni - ACSONI • Heather Floyd – LORAG (deputising for Gerard Rice) • Kathryn Barr – ECNI (deputising for Paul Noonan) • Shannon Doherty – NWMF • Joanne Neill – Bryson Charitable Group <p><u>TEO</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orla McStravick – Director of Race Relations & Integration • Paul Naylor – Head of Race Relations Development & Delivery • TEO Officials
Apologies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul Noonan (Equality Commission NI) • Gerard Rice (LORAG)

Orla McStravick (OMcS) referred to the draft new approach to Racial Equality post-2025 which had been shared with the Subgroup prior to this meeting. She highlighted that it was a working draft which was subject to engagement with Ministers and a final draft would be consulted upon publicly. OMcS reinforced that the purpose of this meeting was to take views and comments to help inform a final draft for Ministerial consideration.

Key views/comments from members included:

- Emphasis should be put on the policies the Subgroup takes a position on e.g. hate crime and the commitment of other departments – particularly DoJ – will be required to make this happen (Nisha Tandon (NT))
- Actions, resources, timeframe and funding i.e. MEDF should be included (NT)
- Overlap between other strategies, in terms of interventions and clarity on future of T:BUC and how departments are feeding into it. Suggested that one overarching strategy from which action plans fall out would be more suitable (Katy Radford (KR))
- Consider the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) Strategic Framework and Delivery Plans, as EVAWG worked through a year one delivery plan then developed subsequent delivery plans (Kathryn Barr (KB))
- is currently not clear what resources there are attached to the new approach; what the targets are and what success will look like; nor what the immediate priorities are (KB)
- Consideration of the Title of the Framework (KB). Clarity was also sought on whether the Subgroup may input into the drafting of the title (Fergal Quinn (FG)) **[AP1]**.
- Consider including Civil Service training as well as mandatory Ethnic Equality Monitoring (KB)
- Seek meaningful involvement of the Department of Education as well as the youth sector so that interventions are not limited to schools (KB)
- The consultation version of the new approach should have more detail on who is involved in strategic planning, monitoring and reporting and should also include detail on how the Racial Equality Champions contribute (KB)
- Concerns around resourcing of the new approach and adequate resourcing should be provided. Year 1, 2 and so on needs proper planning, particularly for resourcing and monitoring, including how departments will be held to account (Ivy Goddard (IG))
- Champions should be held to account, too, as the voluntary nature meant some departments contributed greater and better work than others and you could see the difference on the ground (IG)
- Consider the language in the preamble as it is unhelpful, and though potentially unintentional, it implies the global majority has to join the fold of our society (Deirdre McAliskey (DMcA))
- The language of rights is missing i.e. Rights holders (the people), duty bearers (government), and suggested to start the document with the 'duty bearers' statement, with emphasis that government recognises that minority communities do not experience their rights the same as the majority community (DMcA)
- The descriptors of types of racism is also missing and should be included (DMcA)
- The framing on outcome 4 should be considered as the key issues are not the actual issues, but rather they are symptoms and not causes (DMcA)

- Concerns that there is no mention of children even though the evidence shows the impact of racism on the development of children and throughout their lives (DMcA)
- Could be specific about the groups that are affected and that more is needed regarding Irish Travellers in the document specifically; the desire for an Irish Traveller strategy needs to be acknowledged. Cultural identity as a right is not included (DMcA)
- Concerns around the lack of child and youth voice throughout and the need for a child's rights lens and trauma informed approach (Judith Searle (JS))
- Concerns the reference to promoting an educational piece is not strong enough and that programmes in schools should be mandated (JS)
- Concerns that key issues referenced in the document as high levels of unemployment and educational underachievement may contribute to misinformation as we do have skilled workers migrating here. The group where education and employment fall short are Roma (IG)
- Concern with advancing the economic message, that people/groups contribute to our economy, also needs caution as potential for people who are not deemed of economic value to be demonised
- Concern language surrounding integration, perceptions of unwillingness to integrate could legitimise misinformation (KB)
- Suggests increased access to ESOL provision is included in the new approach. For example, Italy's policy on ESOL for newcomers. The community sector does a lot, but it's not enough, and government needs to provide support via inclusion in the strategy for ESOL and mental health support (IG)

In addition to specific comments on the draft Framework, discussion also focused on the urgent need for continued MEDF support and confirmation of approach post March 2026.

A legal report produced by CAJ into where the NI Executive can legislate in rolling back elements of the hostile environment was also referenced and it was agreed this would be circulated (<https://caj.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Hostile-environment-MB-legal-research-report.pdf>) [AP2].

Takura Donald Makoni (TDM) referenced that the local 'indigenous' population is impacted (attitude wise) by the language they here from politicians and institutions and there is a need to recognise that with all our differences we are one community or we will not see changes. He also highlighted that racism is a threat to the Public Health because it affects public health, public services and impacts on our productivity as a society. He highlighted the economic impact on Belfast and outlying towns during the violence in the years since August last year to now, and the consequences thereof on councils, businesses and homesteads. TDM then queried whether the Department of Finance, Department for Communities and Department of Health collate figures on the impact of the unrest since August 2024 on our economy?

OMcS asks attendees for opinion on what the main priorities and core interventions should be and views included:

1. MEDF will strengthen the sector in order to deliver for communities.
2. Including a recognition of where we are in society within the document; rights are being diminished across various groups.

- i. A review of where we are, what government policies are doing to society, to provide a baseline.
- ii. Then, targeted and proactive work to allow underprivileged people to progress, live a better life.
- iii. Legislation is the thread that ensures this happens and holds deliverers to account.

DMcA asked whether TEO will come back to the Subgroup with a revised document, before consultation launch. DMcA shared the following reports with attendees "[It's Silent](#)": [Race, racism and safeguarding children – Panel Briefing 4](#); [How Racism Can Affect Child Development - Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University](#)

OMcS closed the meeting by thanking members for their input and confirmed that TEO is engaging with departments in parallel with a view to submitting a draft Framework to Ministers. She advised that the feedback will inform the draft document [AP3], and that colleagues will engage with counterparts in NISRA regarding TDM's points [AP4].

ACTION POINTS/OFFICIAL RESPONSIBLE/TARGET DATE:

- **AP1** Subgroup members, if they wish to, to supply their suggestions for the title to TEO. [complete]
- **AP2** Secretariat to share CAJ report with the Subgroup. [complete]
- **AP3** TEO to come back to the Chair once the document has been amended for sharing again with the Subgroup. [complete]
- **AP4** TEO to approach colleagues in NISRA for figures on cost of impact the summers' violence has had for consideration to include in the document. [complete]

Minutes written by:
TEO Secretariat

Date:
25/09/2025