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RESEARCH BRANCH

‘Race’ and Racism in Northern Ireland: A Review of the Research Evidence

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The views expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of Departments.

Summary

This report provides a comprehensive overview and assessment of the empirical research that has been conducted to date on the experiences and needs of minority ethnic people living in Northern Ireland. It sets this briefly within the wider context of current legislative and political initiatives in the region and also broader debates concerning 'race', racism and institutional racism. The report concludes with a consideration of the key challenges facing policy makers and service providers responsible for meeting the needs of minority ethnic people in the region.

Defining and understanding racism

The report begins with an outline and discussion of the key terms and concepts associated with the field of 'race' and racism. It is argued that while racism can clearly be found in the attitudes and behaviour of individuals, it also represents much more than this. Racism is also to be found in the routine customs, policies and practices of organisations and institutions within society.

It is stressed throughout the report that it is the outcomes of particular activities that are important rather than whether those responsible for such activities intentionally mean to discriminate or not. Racism, whether finding expression through the actions of individuals or institutions, can therefore be as much the result of ignorance or thoughtlessness as anything else. It is thus important that individuals and organisations examine their own actions, policies and practices in order to ensure that they do not tend to disadvantage others, however unwittingly.

The legislative and political context

The report briefly outlines three significant developments that have come to form and shape the current agenda for racial equality in Northern Ireland. These are: the Race Relations (NI) Order 1997; the Northern Ireland Act 1998; and the Government's current initiative of Promoting Social Inclusion – part of its broader policy of New TSN (Targeting Social Need).

As yet, no research has attempted to assess the impact of these initiatives. What is clear, however, is that they have taken Northern Ireland into a new and unprecedented stage in relation to racial equality. Not only is racial discrimination now unlawful within the region but there is a statutory duty on all public authorities to promote racial equality and good 'race relations' within their respective areas of responsibility.

Minority ethnic people in Northern Ireland

Within this legislative and policy context, the report considers the current position of minority ethnic people in Northern Ireland. From the social and demographic data available, it is clear that Travellers emerge as a group who are significantly disadvantaged. Moreover, the research suggests that the nature of this disadvantage is multiple and inter-related with the consequences of long-term unemployment, poor health, lack of educational achievement and extremely poor living conditions tending to influence and exacerbate one another.

More generally, the available evidence suggests that there is significant diversity within the minority ethnic population in Northern Ireland with differing minority ethnic communities having differing needs and facing differing problems.

Addressing the needs of minority ethnic people

This diversity is also apparent when assessing what the available research evidence to date reveals about the specific needs and experiences of minority ethnic people. A range of research reports is discussed which highlight the very different issues and problems faced by specific minority ethnic communities in particular areas within Northern Ireland.

Within this, however, there are some issues that are relevant for many minority ethnic communities. These include: difficulties accessing existing services faced by those who speak little or no English; general lack of knowledge and/or awareness of particular services offered; the need for more staff training in relation to issues of 'race'; the failure to meet the basic cultural needs of minority ethnic people; and the significant levels of racism and racist harassment experienced by minority ethnic people in Northern Ireland.

Key challenges for policy makers and service providers

The report concludes by outlining the key challenges facing policy makers and service providers arising from the research evidence to date. While much research still needs to be done, the increasing evidence available clearly highlights the reality of racism in Northern Ireland and some of the key problems faced by minority ethnic people. Two over-arching challenges are identified for service providers:

- The need for different departments and agencies and other bodies and voluntary organisations to work together in new and imaginative ways to begin to address the problems faced by minority ethnic people; and
- The need for all service providers to 'mainstream' racial equality issues within their particular areas of responsibility. This includes the establishment of effective monitoring and consultation systems to ensure

that racial equality is given due consideration in all aspects of service development and provision.

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Needless to say, any errors or omissions are my own. It is also important to stress that this report reflects my own interpretation of the available empirical research evidence and does not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of either the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister or those individuals listed above.

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1. Introduction

Until fairly recently the dominant view has been that Northern Ireland does not have a 'race relations' problem. There are so few minority ethnic people living here, so it has been widely argued, that racism is simply not an issue (Mann-Kler 1997; Hainsworth 1998). Moreover, it has been felt that the political conflict in Northern Ireland has tended to focus people's minds on relations between just two communities (i.e. Catholics and Protestants) leaving little time to recognise and/or be concerned about any others.

However, 'race' and racism have a long history on the island of Ireland (Rolston and Shannon 2002). Moreover, through successful campaigning and lobbying, led mainly by minority ethnic people living here, things have changed. The passing of the Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 finally made racial discrimination unlawful in the region. Moreover, under the Northern Ireland Act 1998 there is now a statutory duty on all public authorities in Northern Ireland to promote racial equality and good 'race relations' among other things. Alongside this, the Government has also signaled its intent to deal specifically with racial inequalities and disadvantage in the region through its Promoting Social Inclusion initiative – a key strand of its wider New TSN (Targeting Social Need) policy.

In a little over six or seven years, therefore, the issue of 'race relations' in Northern Ireland has emerged from almost complete obscurity to one of considerable legislative and political concern. This development has also been reflected in the growing number of research studies that have been conducted on 'race' and racism in Northern Ireland. As can be seen from the list of references at the end of this report, there is now a substantial amount of research that has been undertaken on the experiences and needs of minority ethnic people in the region.

With the help of this research, therefore, we now know a great deal about the issues and problems facing many of the main minority ethnic communities living here. The problem is, however, that many of these reports are not readily available and therefore much of the important insights contained in them are not being disseminated as widely as they should be. This, then, is the purpose of the present report.

The report aims to offer a comprehensive and accessible overview of the research evidence that is currently available on 'race' and racism in Northern Ireland. While it is not possible to cover every single detail that has been raised in each and every report produced to date, this report does aim to draw attention to the key substantive themes and issues that have emerged from the empirical research conducted so far.

The report has limited its focus solely to the findings of empirical studies and/or evaluations conducted in the region. A full list of such can be found at the end of this report. Such a focus on the empirical evidence does mean that other, equally important, reports and publications have not been formally analysed here. These include reports on conference proceedings as well as wider analyses and theoretical considerations of the issues of 'race' and racism in Northern Ireland. A list of some of these references is also provided at the end of this report.

Such work is important as it has often provided another avenue through which minority ethnic people have been able to describe their experiences and raise their concerns. However, very few issues that have been raised through such work have not also emerged through the empirical research that is discussed in detail in this report. By and large, it can be safely concluded therefore that the key issues and concerns summarised below tend to reflect those raised by many of the minority ethnic communities in Northern Ireland.

The report begins with a brief outline of relevant definitions and of the legislative context with regard to 'race' relations in Northern Ireland. This is

followed by a description of the current minority ethnic population living in Northern Ireland with respect to the main ethnic groups that exist together with their histories, overall numbers, where they live and other demographic and social characteristics.

The report then offers an outline and assessment of what is known so far about the needs of these minority ethnic groups. This is accomplished in two ways. First, the report identifies those particular issues that are more generic in nature and tend to be relevant to a number of service providers. Second, an analysis is offered of more specific issues that are of relevance primarily to particular service areas.

The above analysis and assessment provide the basis from which the report concludes with a brief consideration of the implications of this analysis for service providers. More specifically, it draws attention to the key over-arching issues in relation to policy and practice that need to be considered in relation to meeting the needs of the minority ethnic population.

2. Definitions and the Legislative and Policy Context

Before outlining and discussing the core themes and issues that have arisen from the research studies to date it is important to both clarify the key concepts that are involved and also to provide some background information on the legislative and political context in Northern Ireland with regard to 'race relations'. This section will therefore begin by offering definitions of the key terms used throughout this report, namely: 'racial groups', ethnic groups, racism, institutional racism and sedentarism.

The section will then provide a brief overview of relevant legislation and Government policy. There are a number of conventions and agreements at the European and international levels that the UK is a signatory to with regard to race relations. These are more than adequately outlined and discussed elsewhere (see Dickson & Bell 1998; Mann-Kler 1997). This section will therefore restrict its discussion to those key pieces of government legislation and policy that have a direct bearing on public service providers in relation to minority ethnic people. More specifically, these are: the Race Relations (NI) Order 1997; the Northern Ireland Act 1998; the Children (NI) Order 1995; and Promoting Social Inclusion, an initiative within the government policy of New TSN (Targeting Social Need).

'Racial Groups'

The Race Relations (NI) Order defines a 'racial group' as 'a group of persons defined by reference to colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origins' (Article 5). Significantly, the Order also explicitly defines Irish Travellers as a 'racial group' in that they are 'a community of people commonly so called who are identified (both by themselves and by others)

as people with a shared history, culture and traditions including, historically, a nomadic way of life on the island of Ireland' (Article 5).

One of the problems associated with the use of terms such as 'race' and 'racial group' is that they often carry with them biological connotations. There is a danger therefore that the continued and unquestioning use of these terms can encourage an understanding of the social and cultural differences that exist between groups as being something that is biological or innate (see Miles 1982).

The use of the term 'racial group' in the present report will therefore be restricted to discussions of relevant legislation that explicitly make use of this term (see below). In order to emphasise the problematic nature of the term, however, it will always be placed in inverted commas. At all other times the report will refer to such groups as minority ethnic groups.

Ethnic groups

The preferred use of the term ethnic group relates to the fact that it encourages a focus on the social rather than biological nature of the differences that exist between groups. In essence, an ethnic group can be defined as one whose members consider themselves, and are also regarded by others, as being socially and/or culturally distinctive.

What makes an ethnic group distinctive will vary from one group to another. It could include a common sense of national identity, a shared set of customs and traditions (e.g. nomadism in the case of Irish Travellers), a shared history of migration and settlement and/or a shared experience of discrimination and exclusion.

The key point to stress is that all of these possible reasons that contribute towards the distinctiveness of a particular group are social in origin rather than biological. Some ethnic groups may be distinctive because of their skin colour. However, what makes them an ethnic group is not the colour

of their skin as such but rather a sense of shared history and identity based on a combination of one or more of the above.

Finally, it is important to stress that everyone is a member of one or more ethnic groups. The report therefore makes a distinction between *minority* ethnic groups and *majority* ethnic groups. The former refers to groups such as Irish Travellers, Chinese, Indians, Black Africans and Pakistanis. The latter refers to the two main ethnic groups categorised commonly as the Protestant and Catholic communities.

Racism

Racism can be understood as a collective term that refers to all of those ideas, beliefs, actions, customs, practices and policies that have the effect of disadvantaging and/or discriminating against members of particular ethnic groups. The defining feature of racism is therefore the outcomes of particular activities rather than whether those responsible for such activities intentionally wish to disadvantage or discriminate against others.

There is some debate concerning whether discrimination against Catholics or Protestants – more commonly referred to as sectarianism – should also be defined as racism (see Brewer 1992; McVeigh 1995, 1998b). There is certainly some merit in doing so and it would thus be worth pursuing this debate further (see McVeigh 1998c). However, in legal terms, the Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 precludes such a definition as it does not list religion as a basis upon which a 'racial group' can be identified. In order to maintain clarity, therefore, sectarianism will be treated as distinct from racism for the purposes of this report.

Institutional racism

The notion of institutional racism can be traced back to the black civil rights campaigns of the 1960s in America (Carmichael & Hamilton 1968). The use of the term reflected a desire to challenge the belief that racism was essentially an individual phenomenon borne out of individual prejudice. Rather, the aim of those who used the term was to focus attention on the discriminatory effects of institutions and broader social structures.

The recently published Macpherson Report arising from the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry in England defines institutional racism as:

the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness, and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people (Macpherson 1999: 6.45).

As with the definition of racism outlined above, the emphasis is on the outcomes of actions rather than their intentions. Moreover, the notion of institutional racism is not meant to imply that all or even most of the individuals within a particular organisation are necessarily themselves personally racist. Rather, its focus is on the effects of the organisation as a whole.

Sedentarism

Sedentarism is a term that has become popular fairly recently. It relates to all of those ideas and practices that are based upon and tend to reproduce sendantary modes of existence as the norm (McVeigh 1992). The effect of such is that those who adopt more nomadic ways of life, such as Travellers, tend to be disadvantaged. This is particularly the case where

policies, practices and services are developed which do not take into account their appropriateness for those with a nomadic lifestyle.

Sedentarism can be defined as a specific form of racism in that its effects are to disadvantage a particular 'racial group', in this case Irish Travellers. Moreover, given that sedentarism is often used to refer to the broader policies and practices of organisations and agencies, it is also appropriate to view these aspects of sedentarism as a particular form of institutional racism.

Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997

As regards relevant legislation in the region, the first and probably most significant is the Race Relations (NI) Order 1997. The Order makes it unlawful to discriminate on racial grounds in the following areas:

- employment and training (Articles 6 – 17)
- education (Articles 18 – 20)
- provision of goods, facilities or services (Article 21)
- disposal and management of premises (Articles 22 – 24)
- advertisements (Article 29)

Direct and indirect discrimination

The Order distinguishes between two forms of discrimination that have been commonly referred to as 'direct' and 'indirect' discrimination (Article 3). Direct discrimination applies to situations where someone explicitly treats a person less favourably than others because of their membership of a particular 'racial group'.

Indirect discrimination refers to a requirement or condition that is ostensibly applied to everyone but:

- is such that a considerably smaller proportion of members of certain 'racial groups' are able to comply with it;
- it is a requirement or condition that cannot be shown to be justifiable; and
- it is to the detriment of members of those 'racial groups' because they cannot comply with it.

The Order also makes it a statutory duty for district councils to:

make appropriate arrangements with a view to securing that [their] various functions are carried out with due regard to the need – (a) to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination; and (b) to promote equality of opportunity, and good relations, between persons of different racial groups (Article 67)

Establishment of Commission for Racial Equality for Northern Ireland

In addition, the Order provided for the establishment of the Commission for Racial Equality for Northern Ireland (CRENI) (Article 42) and outlined its particular duties and responsibilities. Under the Northern Ireland Act 1998, however, CRENI has been dissolved and, from 1 October 1999, its duties and responsibilities have been assumed by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (see below). The three principle duties set out for CRENI in the Race Relations (NI) Order and now taken over by the Equality Commission are:

- to work towards the elimination of discrimination;
- to promote equality of opportunity, and good relations, between persons of different racial groups generally; and
- to keep under review the working of this Order and, when it is so required by the Department or otherwise thinks it necessary, draw up and submit to the Department proposals for amending this Order.

In carrying out these duties, CRENI and now the Equality Commission is empowered to:

- provide financial or other assistance to organisations concerned with promoting equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different 'racial groups' (Article 43);
- undertake or assist research and education into race relations matters (Article 44);
- issue codes of practice for the purposes of eliminating discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity in employment and housing. While failure to comply with any such code may not render a person liable to proceedings in itself, it can be admissible in evidence and a tribunal or court will take account of the code's guidance in its determination (Article 45);
- conduct formal investigations as it thinks fit and for any purpose connected with the pursuance of its duties (Article 46). If the Commission finds, as a result of its investigation, that a person or person(s) are unlawfully discriminating it can issue a 'non-discrimination notice'. This requires the person on whom it is served not to contravene specified provisions of the Order and to the Commission such information as may be required by the notice in order to verify their compliance with that notice (Article 55). Should a person fail to comply with the notice, they may apply to a county court for an injunction restraining them from continuing to discriminate.

There have been a number of criticisms leveled at various aspects of the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 (see SACHR 1996; NICEM 1998). Two particular criticisms of relevance to this present report are:

- the limited definition of discrimination contained within the Order and its failure to address the more subtle and fundamental elements of institutional racism and sedentarism; and
- its failure to make it a duty of statutory bodies and other public authorities to proactively eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity.

In the light of these concerns, the Northern Ireland Act 1998 can be seen as representing significant developments in both of these areas.

Northern Ireland Act 1998

The Northern Ireland Act 1998 makes three significant provisions in relation to the issues of racism and racial equality in Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission

The Act dissolves the existing Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights and provides for the establishment of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission. The principle duty of the Commission is to review the adequacy and effectiveness in Northern Ireland of law and practice relating to the protection of human rights (Section 69). Under the terms of the Act (Sections 68-72 and Schedule 7), and in carrying out this duty, the Commission will:

- keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness in Northern Ireland of law and practice relating to the protection of human rights; and
- advise the Government and the Executive Committee of the Assembly of measures which ought to be taken for the protection of human rights;

- see all proposed Assembly bills, and will be able to offer an opinion on whether they are compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights;
- assist people whose rights have been denied or abused by helping them to take a case to the courts and in appropriate cases, be able to bring proceedings itself. (The provision giving the Commission these two functions came into force on 1 June 1999);
- be able to carry out investigations;
- develop, through education and research, an active human rights culture in Northern Ireland;
- consult and advise on the drawing up of a Bill of Rights to suit Northern Ireland's particular needs; and
- do all it can to ensure that the North-South Human Rights Committee envisaged by the Agreement is set up.

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

As already touched upon earlier, the Act also provides for the following bodies to be dissolved and their functions to be exercisable the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (Section 74):

- The Fair Employment Commission for Northern Ireland;
- The Equal Opportunities Commission for Northern Ireland;
- The Commission for Racial Equality for Northern Ireland;
- The Northern Ireland Disability Council.

The Equality Commission is required to secure an appropriate division of resources between the functions previously exercised by each of the bodies listed above.

Statutory Duty

Significantly, in the context of this present report, the Act also makes it a statutory duty on public authorities (including appropriate UK Departments operating in Northern Ireland and District Councils) to ensure that, consistent with their responsibilities, all functions are carried out with regard to (Section 75):

- the need to promote equality of opportunity ... between persons of different ... racial group[s]; and
- have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different ... racial groups[s].

Moreover, the Equality Commission is charged with the responsibility of ensuring that all public authorities comply with these duties. In particular, each authority is required under the Act to submit an Equality Scheme to the Commission within six months of the commencement of Schedule 9 of the Act outlining how the authority proposes to fulfil the duties *inter alia* imposed upon it as outlined above (Schedule 9).

On receipt of each Equality Scheme, the Equality Commission can decide to either accept it or refer it to the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State can then decide whether to accept the Scheme, request that the public authority draw up another Scheme or devise a Scheme for the public authority.

Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995

The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 places a specific responsibility with regard to 'race relations' on Health and Social Services Trusts, voluntary organisations and the proprietors of private children's homes who are caring and/or may potentially be caring for children. It states that, in making decisions about the future care of a child, those concerned must

'give due consideration ... to the child's religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural and linguistic background' (Section Nos. 26, 76 and 92).

The Children Order also requires Health and Social Services Trusts to take into account the different racial groups of children in their area when recruiting foster parents or arranging the provision of day care (Schedule 2).

New TSN and Promoting Social Inclusion

Finally, the element of Government policy which is relevant to the present report has been its decision to re-launch Targeting Social Need under the banner of New TSN (CCRU 1998). New TSN can be seen as an initiative which tends to compliment the equality provisions outlined above under the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

New TSN

Alongside efforts to establish formal equality of opportunity, New TSN has been devised with the aim of targeting efforts and resources towards those individuals, groups and areas that are most disadvantaged and excluded within Northern Ireland. The initiative has three component parts:

- adopting a special focus on the problems of unemployed people and on increasing their chances of finding a job;
- targeting other sorts of social need that may not be directly related to unemployment such as health, housing and education; and
- developing a special initiative called Promoting Social Inclusion (PSI) which will 'seek new and creative ways of helping people who are disadvantaged in several ways, to such an extent that they cannot enjoy the full range of life opportunities which most people take for granted' (CCRU 1998: 6).

A steering group of senior civil servants from all parts of the administration have been charged with overseeing the implementation of New TSN across Government departments. Moreover, a New TSN Unit now within the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister has been established to advise departments on how best to implement New TSN and will also set overall objectives.

Under New TSN, all Government departments are required to 'examine closely how they identify need across the range of their activities ... and how they measure the impact of their activities in terms of New TSN' (CCRU 1998: 9). They are also required to draw up Action Plans for New TSN which will be 'set against clear timescales and objectives and, where possible, targets to be achieved' (p. 9).

Moreover, Government departments and agencies are required to develop appropriate monitoring systems in order to assess the impact of their Action Plans. In addition, annual reports will be published on New TSN which will consider the performance of Government departments against what they have set out to achieve in their Action Plans. The first such report was published in November 1999 (OFMDFM 1999).

Promoting Social Inclusion

Finally, the PSI initiative within New TSN recognises that:

some groups have additional needs, which, if not catered for, could place their most vulnerable members at risk of social exclusion. Examples of such groups might include those most effected by the Troubles, Travellers and members of other ethnic minorities, older people on low incomes, and young people with limited skills (CCRU 1998: 17).

In relation to such groups, the government recognises that 'the actions needed to respond to problems of social exclusion do not always fit

comfortably within administrative boundaries' (CCRU 1998: 18). As such, it aims within PSI to tackle a series of issues which can contribute to social exclusion, with a small number being concentrated on at any one time. Each issue will be tackled by a Working Group with members drawn from Government departments, agencies and public bodies and involving other interests as appropriate.

It is envisaged that the Working Groups will be time-limited with clear aims and objectives. Their overall remit will be to identify the specific needs of a particular group and to make recommendations about 'what requires to be done, by whom, and within what timescales, and the measures to be put in place to ensure progress' (CCRU 1998: 19).

The first issues that were identified in June 1999 to be tackled by the government under PSI are:

- action to alleviate the needs of Travellers;
- a strategic approach to the needs of minority ethnic groups;
- the problems of teenage parenthood; and
- strategies for making services more accessible to minority groups and others at risk of social exclusion – focusing firstly on how information can be presented and distributed in ways appropriate to their needs.

Working Groups have since been established for each of these four areas. As regards the two relevant to this report, the Working Group on Travellers has so far produced a consultation document on its findings (OFMDFM 2000). A formal consultation process has taken place on this and, at the time of writing, the Northern Ireland Executive is currently considering its response to this.

Alongside this, the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety Working Group on Teenage Parenthood published for consultation its report – *Myths and Reality* – in November 2000. It aims to facilitate a

reduction in the number of unplanned births to teenage parents and to minimise the adverse consequences of those births to teenage mothers and their children. An Action Plan to take forward the implementation of the recommendations is due to be published in June 2002.

Conclusions

Overall, it is clear that Northern Ireland has entered a new and unprecedented phase with regard to 'race relations'. From a position of almost complete obscurity, the issue of racial equality is now firmly on the legislative and political agenda. Such developments have done much to focus the hearts and minds of policy-makers and service providers and have played an important part in stimulating the growing number of research studies that have been conducted on 'race' and racism in Northern Ireland to date. It is to the key themes and issues arising from these that the report now turns.

3. Minority Ethnic People in Northern Ireland

Before examining the particular needs of the minority ethnic population in Northern Ireland, it is important to outline what is actually known about them. The most reliable and detailed information to date derives from a large-scale study by Irwin and Dunn (1996) which focused on four minority ethnic communities: Chinese, Indians, Pakistanis and Travellers. A number of more recent and smaller-scale studies have also provided some important insights into the nature and experiences of a number of other communities including the Bangladeshis (Holder 2001), Latin Americans (Holder and Lanao 2001), Portuguese (Suarez 2002) and Jewish communities (Warm 1998). In addition, research is also emerging on the plight and specific needs of refugees and asylum seekers in Northern Ireland (Tennant 2000; McVeigh 2002).

This section will therefore set out what is currently known about the main characteristics of each of these communities and groups. While the more recent research is helping to emphasise the diversity and range of ethnic groups that are resident in the region, it is still important to stress that there are many smaller minority ethnic communities in Northern Ireland for which no reliable information or research currently exists. The picture is further 'complicated' by the significant numbers of people from mixed ethnic backgrounds. At the time of writing, research is currently being undertaken with the aim of developing a more comprehensive picture of the number of communities that exist and their language needs (see Holder 2002).

This section begins with a discussion of the overall size of the main minority ethnic communities. It then offers a brief outline of the history of each of these groups in Northern Ireland and where they now live. The

section concludes by providing a description of their household type, country of birth, age, employment, educational attainment, housing tenure and health profiles. A brief description and contact details of the main welfare organisations relating to the differing minority ethnic groups is offered in the Appendix.

Size of the minority ethnic population in Northern Ireland

An accurate account of the size and diversity of the current minority ethnic population in Northern Ireland is frustrated by the fact that the 1991 Census did not include an 'ethnic question'. Fortunately this has been rectified in the 2001 Census which did include a question on ethnicity. However, until the findings of this Census are made available (probably not until 2003/4), the only systematic empirical evidence that is currently available with regard to the estimated size of the minority ethnic population is the study by Irwin and Dunn (1996) that focused on just four minority ethnic communities and which is summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Estimates of population size of main minority ethnic groups in Northern Ireland in 1995

| | Chinese | Indian | Pakistani | Irish Travellers | Other | Total |
|---------------------|---------|--------|-----------|---------------------|-------|--------|
| Resident population | 2808 | 1021 | 611 | 1216 | 88 | 5744 |
| | - 4808 | | | | | - 7744 |
| Visitors | 317 | 29 | 30 | 150 | - | 526 |
| Total population | 3125 | 1050 | 641 | 1366 | 88 | 6270 |
| | -5125 | | | | | -8270 |

Source: Irwin and Dunn (1996: 58)

Irwin and Dunn's estimates of the size of the Indian, Pakistani and Irish Traveller communities appeared to broadly confirm the 'best estimates' for these groups that were available at that time (Irwin and Dunn 1996: 47), including the Department of the Environment's own census of the Irish Traveller population conducted in 1993 (DoE 1993). Beyond this, three points need to be made.

The Category 'Other'

The first relates to the category 'Other'. Given the research evidence mentioned above that is emerging on the smaller minority ethnic communities in the region, it would appear that this is a significant underestimate of the combined size of all of the other minority ethnic groups in Northern Ireland. For example, it is estimated that the size of the Bangladeshi population is 450-500 (Holder 2001: 6), while the Latin American population is around 200-250 (Holder and Lanao 2001: 6) and the Jewish community is about 230 (Warm 1998:227).

Moreover, it is estimated that there are around 2,000 asylum seekers and refugees currently resident in Northern Ireland with about 400 new asylum cases arising each year (McVeigh 2002). In addition, the Multicultural Resource Centre (MCRC 1997) have estimated that in 1997 there were approximately 1,500 Africans, 1,500 North Americans, 150 Filipinos and 150 South Koreans in Northern Ireland.

As regards these latter estimations, it is impossible to assess their accuracy. However, it is reasonable to assume that the size of the 'Other' category listed by Irwin and Dunn is therefore probably more likely to be in the thousands rather than under a hundred.

Estimations of the size of the Chinese population

Second, Irwin and Dunn's estimation of the Chinese population was also significantly smaller than the figure of 7 – 8,000 that was commonly believed during this period (MCRC 1997). This, in turn, has led a number of organisations such as the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities and the Chinese Welfare Association, together with commentators such as McVeigh (1998a), to question the accuracy of Irwin and Dunn's estimate.

Those who have estimated the Chinese population at around 7 – 8,000 refer to data from the 1991 Census to support their arguments. The Census lists a total of 7,914 people in Northern Ireland who did not state their country of birth. It is claimed that the majority of these were Chinese and/or other minority ethnic people who either did not understand the question because of language difficulties or who did not want to disclose their country of birth for fear of immigration controls.

However, without further evidence, it is impossible to evaluate the accuracy of these claims. Moreover, from the detailed discussion provided concerning the methodology of Irwin and Dunn's research which made the lower estimate of 3,125 – 5,125 for the Chinese community (Irwin and Dunn 1996: 31-58), there is nothing to suggest that their research was anything other than systematic and thorough.

However, some caution needs to be exercised in interpreting this lower estimate provided by Irwin and Dunn, given that the snow-balling sampling technique they used does have a tendency to under-estimate the size of a particular population (Irwin and Dunn 1996: 33). Having said that, it is debatable whether this, in itself, can account for a suggested underestimate of between 3 – 4,000 members of the Chinese community. Moreover, it is also worth noting that a separate attempt by the Northern Health and Social Services Board (NHSSB 1995) to enumerate the Chinese community in their region also led to a significant underestimate in comparison with the expected figure based upon projections from the figure of 7 – 8,000 regionally.

Ultimately, this disagreement over the size of the Chinese community in Northern Ireland is now largely academic. The estimates contained within Irwin and Dunn's report are certainly an underestimate of the present size of the minority ethnic populations. Most obviously, they are now seven years out of date. This is particularly relevant given the higher recorded annual growth rate, between 1984 and 1992, of the Chinese (7.7%), Indian (3.4%), Pakistani and Irish Traveller (both 5%) communities when

compared to the average population growth of just 0.6% in Northern Ireland over the same period (Irwin and Dunn 1996: 76).

Current size of the main minority ethnic communities

Finally it is worth noting that, overall, current estimates concerning the sizes of the differing minority ethnic groups in Northern Ireland are significantly higher than the figures suggested by Irwin and Dunn (1996). However, no research has been conducted to verify the differing estimates that exist. There are certainly a number of complex factors that may bear an influence on the changing size of each population.

On the one hand, the existence of paramilitary ceasefires and the current peace process may encourage a greater settlement of minority ethnic people in Northern Ireland. In addition, the younger age profile of the differing minority ethnic communities (see below) may also result in a higher birth-rate among such groups in comparison to the majority white population.

However, on the other hand, levels of minority ethnic migration out of Northern Ireland also need to be taken into account. Moreover, it could be argued that one of the key incentives that attracted many minority ethnic people to the region in the first place may be becoming less influential. As will be discussed below, one of the reasons that made Northern Ireland attractive was the business opportunities that existed in terms of the provision of catering outlets, textile manufacturing and so on. It could be argued, however, that the market in these areas is becoming saturated precisely because of the increasing numbers of minority ethnic people now living in Northern Ireland who are meeting that need.

In conclusion, there are many different factors that may potentially influence the changing size of the minority ethnic population in Northern Ireland. Without empirical research, it is impossible to assess the likely impact of these factors and thus predict the current size of the differing

minority ethnic groups. While it would be reasonable to assume that the current size of the minority ethnic population has increased since the research by Irwin and Dunn in 1995, there is no research currently available that has accurately gauged the size of that increase. A more accurate and reliable picture will therefore have to wait until the findings of the 2001 Census are made available.

Recent histories of the main minority ethnic communities and groups

As stated earlier, there are actually a relatively large number of different minority ethnic communities and groups currently living in Northern Ireland. While there are many for which no information or research is currently available, some details are available, to varying degrees, for others – particularly the larger minority ethnic groups. For these groups it is useful to offer a brief outline of what is currently known about their social histories as this can often help to explain their current social and economic positions. The information that is currently available is discussed below.

The Irish Traveller Community

Irish Travellers are indigenous to the region. Until the 1950s, they were mainly rural nomads, trading in such activities as tin-smithing, horse trading, seasonal farm labour, chimney-sweeping and door-to-door sales of domestic wares (Molloy 1998; Noonan 1998). There was a significant degree of informality and flexibility to their work as they were forced to apply and adapt their skills to a number of different areas in order to make a living.

What made such work distinctive was the nomadic lifestyle of those involved. Indeed nomadism became a crucial feature of this 'Traveller economy' as it enabled access to a broad range of markets so that the many different marginal activities that Irish Travellers engaged in could become economically viable (McVeigh 1998a).

However, the traditional Traveller economy has been adversely effected by a number of factors including: farm mechanisation and rural depopulation, improved rural transport and the mass production of plastic goods. As Molloy (1998) argues, such changes rendered many traditional Traveller crafts and trades redundant.

In response to this decline in the rural population and increasing urbanisation, Irish Travellers have been forced to seek out new opportunities in the towns and cities. Some have been able to adapt to this new environment by seeking out and developing new trading opportunities such as scrap metal, tarmacing and market trading.

However, the ability of many Irish Travellers to adapt economically has been severely frustrated by a number of factors including:

- the significant limitations placed upon their mobility caused by the lack of sufficient sites and the restrictions that have often be applied to those on sites preventing them from conducting their trade from there;
- competition from an increasing number of businesses being established by the 'settled community' in relation to such activities as scrap metal recycling and tarmacing;
- the formalisation of market trading with the Casual Trading Act 1995, the introduction of the Casual Trading License and the designation of specific casual trading areas which have all acted to impede Irish Travellers' trading opportunities (McVeigh 1998a: 25); and
- a relatively high level of suspicion and hostility towards Irish Travellers from the 'settled community' limiting the take up of services that they can offer.

Consequently, the impact of these factors on the Traveller economy together with the lack of provision of sufficient serviced sites provides the

context for understanding the increasing marginalisation of Irish Travellers in relation to employment, health, housing and education (see below).

The Chinese Community

The majority of the Chinese people in Northern Ireland originate from the rural area of Hong Kong, the New Territories, where people speak Hakka and Cantonese. In contrast to the city of Hong Kong, the New Territories remained under-developed and those living there were likely to be economically and socially disadvantaged. Due to economic hardship, some people from the New Territories chose to migrate in search of work. Chinese people began arriving in Northern Ireland in the early 1960s. The majority of these first arrivals set up trade in the catering industry (Braid and Gadd 1999).

The Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962 and the implementation of the employment voucher system limited further immigration into the UK to certain professionals and those workers with jobs already arranged (Watson & McKnight 1998). This provided for 'chain migration' where those who had set up catering businesses in Northern Ireland were able to provide jobs for families and friends from their region to enable them to migrate. This therefore had the effect of specialising the Chinese community further within the catering industry.

Further growth in the Chinese population during the 1970s was caused by the increasingly competitive and saturated market within the Chinese catering industry in Britain. For some, Northern Ireland was attractive because of the relatively cheap accommodation and the many opportunities that existed for catering businesses due to the wide geographical spread of towns and villages.

The Vietnamese Community

Towards the end of the 1970s Northern Ireland saw the arrival of people from Vietnam, known as the 'boat people'. Many of these were actually Chinese by ethnic origin. They had fled Vietnam for fear of persecution from the Communist forces and arrived at reception areas across Hong Kong. The majority of those who migrated to Northern Ireland initially settled in Craigavon where some local families set up a pairing and befriending scheme. The problems encountered in finding employment meant that many sought work in Chinese restaurants and carry-outs.

Today, few of the original 'boat people' remain in Craigavon. Most have moved on either as a result of the worldwide programme of reunification of families from Vietnam or because of particular problems faced locally such as racist harassment, isolation and lack of transport and other facilities (Gillespie *et al.* 1999). The estimated 30 or so Vietnamese families currently in Craigavon are therefore not 'boat people' but are most likely to have arrived later during the 1980s directly from Vietnam and to be ethnically Vietnamese as well.

The Indian Community

The first members of the Indian community arrived in Northern Ireland during the 1920s and 30s. Many of the original settlers came from a few specific areas in Northern India, from the states of Punjab and Gujarat. They migrated for a number of reasons including the desire to escape the communal conflict and also to find work (Kapur 1997).

Many of the earlier Indian settlers in Northern Ireland were involved in door-to-door sales of goods and especially clothing. This involvement in the clothing industry has remained today with a number of the Indian community operating family-staffed shops and, for some, moderate-sized manufacturing plants (Marger 1989: 204).

The Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962 also had a significant effect on the Indian community. The stricter controls operated through the employment voucher system led to an increasing 'professionalisation' of Indian immigration during the 1960s and 70s (Irwin 1998).

The employment characteristics of the current Indian community is slightly more diversified than the Chinese community but with a higher concentration in particular professional occupations and as self-employed in small businesses such as small factories, clothing, shops and restaurants.

The Pakistani community

The majority of Pakistanis living in Northern Ireland had lived in Britain before moving to the region. As with the Indian community, many came in search of work while others migrated to Britain to escape the political conflict and instability in Pakistan, especially after its partition from India in 1947. They migrated from all over Pakistan but mainly from the Punjab, Azad Kashmir and the North West Frontier Province (Donnan and O'Brien 1998).

Because of the types of work they had been recruited into, largely within manufacturing industries, the onset of the economic recession in Britain during the 1970s and rising levels of unemployment disproportionately affected the Pakistani community. Within this context, some Pakistanis decided to move to Northern Ireland in search of work.

For those who moved to Northern Ireland, some chose self-employment, especially in terms of market trading in items such as clothing and bed linen (Mann-Kler 1997). During this period, a smaller number of professionally qualified Pakistanis migrated directly from Pakistan, mirroring the type of 'professionalised migration' discussed earlier in relation to the Indian community.

The Bangladeshi Community

Much less information is available on the Bangladeshi community (see Holder 2001). While it can be recalled that some had arrived in Northern Ireland as early as 1969, the majority have only been here for the last 10-15 years. Some had migrated directly from Bangladesh although it was more common for members of the community to have lived in Britain first. The majority (70%) of those living here were therefore born in Bangladesh although there is now a growing younger generation of children who have been born here.

The majority of Bangladeshis live in North Down and Greater Belfast and are employed in the catering business – both as staff and owners of restaurants (often marketed as 'Indian restaurants'). This is particularly so for those Sylheti speakers in the community who constitute the vast majority of the Bangladeshi community (about 80-85%). A smaller number of Bangladeshis, mainly Bengali speakers, have also found work in a range of professional occupations.

The Latin American Community

There is also only limited information available on the Latin American community currently living in Northern Ireland (see Holder and Lanao 2001). This 'community' is much more diverse and transitory. Most have only been living in Northern Ireland for a few years and while a significant proportion had arrived from Colombia and Brazil, there are people currently living here from all of the countries in Latin America. All those interviewed were either Spanish or Portuguese speakers.

Four main reasons appear to underlie their decision to migrate to Northern Ireland. The most significant reason given (applying to 39% of those interviewed by Holder and Lanao 2001) was that their partner was originally from Northern Ireland. Of the rest, 27% had migrated for

employment reasons, 17% had come to study here and 17% had followed other family members over.

The Portuguese Community

The only information currently available on the Portuguese community is that provided in a recent study of the Portuguese living in Dungannon and Portadown (Suarez 2002). This study suggests that the Portuguese population is a highly transient one with most (77%) tending to stay for six month periods working on temporary contracts on factory lines, mostly in meat processing factories. A smaller proportion had travelled over to study as well as work (17%). Not surprisingly, the vast majority would appear to be male, single and aged under 35. Two thirds had also worked in other European countries before arriving in Northern Ireland.

The Jewish Community

As regards the Jewish community, the only published empirical work to date is that based upon oral history interviews conducted by Warm (1998). Warm points out that Jewish people have long had a presence on the island of Ireland dating back probably to the thirteenth century. While small pockets of Jewish settlement could be found in various parts of the island the two main settlements have been in Dublin and Belfast.

The current community in Belfast can be traced to two settlement patterns. The first consisted of Jewish immigrants from Germany in the 1860s who were secure linen merchants seeking to establish trading links with the flax industry here. Sufficient numbers settled during this time that by 1869 a synagogue was established in Belfast. Towards the end of the 1800s, Belfast also saw the arrival of Jewish immigrants from Russia and Lithuania and other parts of Eastern Europe. They were much less economically secure and also likely to be more orthodox in terms of religion and culture. Eventually, these immigrants were to become the

dominant group within the Jewish community in terms of size and influence.

Over time the Jewish community developed a relatively strong sense of identity, supported by a number of communal institutions including the Synagogue and the Belfast Jewish Institute. They also tended to live close together in the working class districts of the lower Crumlin Road and adjacent streets, in close proximity to the new Synagogue that was purpose built in 1964.

Historically, the Jewish community has experienced a significant rise and more recently a fall in numbers. In 1861 it was recorded that 400 Jews lived on the island of Ireland with about 50-60 living in Belfast. The small but strong sense of community that then developed in Belfast began to attract other settlers so that this number rose to an estimated 365 families (about 1,500 individuals) by the late 1960s. However, since the early 1970s a number of factors, including the increasing violence associated with the 'Troubles', has led to a decline in numbers to an estimate of around 140 families in 1997 (about 230 individuals).

The Black African Community

There is very little information on the Black African community in Northern Ireland. Of that which does exist, it would appear that the majority have migrated from various countries within the African sub-continent. As part of their study of the employment and training experiences of minority ethnic people in Northern Ireland, Connolly and Keenan (2000b) suggest that a significant proportion of the Black African community is likely to be relatively transient, coming to Northern Ireland simply to study or to work for a specific period of time. However, there are also others who have come to settle in the region, including many who are in ethnically mixed marriages with local white people (NICEM 1997).

Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Finally, given the increasing prominence and concern expressed over refugees and asylum seekers in recent years it is worth outlining what is known about those who are currently in Northern Ireland. While no accurate figures currently exist, it is estimated that there are about 2,000 refugees and asylum seekers currently living here with about 400 new asylum cases arising every year (McVeigh 2002).

Refugees and asylum seekers represent an extremely diverse group with people coming from a large number of different countries including Europe (principally the former Yugoslavia), China, Latin America and Africa. A recent study of those who were detained on arrival in Northern Ireland showed that nineteen nationalities were represented among the 75 studied with just three – Romanian, Nigerian and Chinese – accounting for two thirds of the total number (Tennant 2000).

Some of the specific problems faced by refugees and asylum seekers are discussed later in this report.

Settlement patterns of the minority ethnic population

The current settlement patterns of the largest minority ethnic groups reflects the social histories outlined above. The only systematic demographic data available is that of Irwin and Dunn's (1996) research on the Irish Travellers, Chinese, Pakistanis and Indians. A summary of their distribution across the differing regions of Northern Ireland can be seen in Table 2 below.

The Indian community is the most geographically spread, partly representing the greater mobility of the earlier settlers as door-to-door traders. In contrast a high proportion of the Chinese community are settled in Belfast and the eastern region. Of the 14% that live in the west, virtually

all appear to be involved in the catering industry (Irwin and Dunn 1996: 73).

Table 2: Distribution of main minority ethnic groups by region (%)

| | Chinese | Indian | Pakistani | Irish Travellers | Total |
|---------|---------|--------|-----------|------------------|-------|
| East NI | 45 | 28 | 59 | 5 | 36 |
| Belfast | 41 | 36 | 34 | 35 | 38 |
| West NI | 14 | 35 | 7 | 61 | 26 |
| Total | 54 | 18 | 9 | 19 | 100 |

Source: Irwin and Dunn (1996: 74)

As regards the Pakistani community, only 7% live in the west. While also having a significant proportion living in Belfast, the majority reside in the east, particularly in the Craigavon and Ballymena areas where most of them had first settled in the 1970s. In contrast, only a small proportion of Irish Travellers live in the east with the majority living in the west and, to a lesser extent, Belfast.

Table 3 below ranks the 10 district council areas with the highest proportions of minority ethnic people. The percentages relate to the

Table 3: District councils with the highest proportions of minority ethnic people (%)

| Rank | District Council | % of the minority ethnic population |
|------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | Belfast | 38.1 |
| 2 | Craigavon | 6.5 |
| 3 | Newry and Mourne | 4.7 |
| 4= | Ballymena | 4.6 |
| 4= | Derry/Londonderry | 4.6 |
| 6 | Lisburn | 4.0 |
| 7 | Dungannon | 3.9 |
| 8 | North Down | 3.7 |
| 9 | Newtownabbey | 3.5 |
| 10 | Coleraine | 3.2 |

Source: Irwin and Dunn (1996: 75)

proportions of the minority ethnic population as a whole. As can be seen, Belfast has by far the highest proportion of minority ethnic people. However, it needs to be remembered that, according to Irwin and Dunn (1996: 75), this translates into a figure of 1% of the Belfast population as a whole.

Household size and type

The only systematic data that exists regarding the household type and size of the various minority ethnic communities is that provided by Irwin and Dunn (1996) in relation to the four groups they studied. Their findings are illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4: Average household size by ethnic group

| | Northern Ireland | Chinese | Indian | Pakistani | Irish Traveller |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|---------|--------|-----------|--------------------|
| No. of persons per household | 2.8 | 3.9 | 3.5 | 5.0 | 5.0 |

Source: Irwin and Dunn (1996: 61)

As can be seen, the average household size of these minority ethnic communities is significantly higher than the general population. This largely reflects the higher number of children within minority ethnic households (see below). The emerging evidence with regard to the Bangladeshi community suggests that a similar pattern exists for them as well (Holder 2001).

The majority of households for all four minority ethnic communities consisted of a married couple with or without children. The number of co-habiting couples was negligible. In contrast the number of lone parents with dependent children was low for the Chinese (3%), Indian (4%) and Pakistani (2%) communities. Again, a similar situation appears to be true for the Bangladeshi community (Holder 2001).

The exception to this trend is the Irish Traveller community which tended to have a high proportion of lone parents families with dependent children (15%). However, within this community there were no co-habiting couples with or without children recorded. All of these figures together appear to suggest that there is a higher prominence of traditional family structures among all four minority ethnic groups (Irwin and Dunn 1996: 64).

Country of birth

As regards country of birth, again, the only systematic data available is that provided by Irwin and Dunn (1996) in relation to the four minority ethnic communities they studied. Their findings are illustrated in Table 5 below. Significantly, other than Irish Travellers, around half of the minority ethnic population were born outside of the UK and Ireland. This appears to support the social histories outlined earlier with the emphasis on migration patterns from the 1960s onwards.

Table 5: Country of birth by ethnic origin (%)

| Birthplace | Chinese | Indian | Pakistani | Irish Travellers | Total |
|---------------------|---------|--------|-----------|------------------|-------|
| Great Britain | 6 | 5 | 11 | 4 | 6 |
| Republic of Ireland | * | 1 | 1 | 18 | 4 |
| Northern Ireland | 34 | 41 | 46 | 78 | 44 |
| Elsewhere | 60 | 53 | 42 | * | 46 |

*Indicates less than 1%. Source: Irwin and Dunn (1996:69)

From the social histories outlined above for the other minority ethnic groups, it would appear that the vast majority of the Portuguese and Latin Americans living in Northern Ireland were not born here. While this also appears to be largely true for the Bangladeshi community, a growing proportion (about 30%) appear to have been born in Northern Ireland. No data exist on the Jewish community.

Age distribution

The general age profile of the minority ethnic population is younger than the majority ethnic population. Again, the only systematic and reliable data available is that provided by Irwin and Dunn (1996) whose main findings have since been confirmed by those of a number of other studies (Tipping 1997; EHSSB 1999; Gillespie *et al.* 1999). The overall age distribution is detailed in Table 6 overleaf. With the exception of the Irish Traveller community, this again reflects the social histories of the minority ethnic groups and the fact that many have only relatively recently migrated to Northern Ireland in search of work.

Table 6: Distribution of age for the general population and minority ethnic population in Northern Ireland (%)

| Age category | General population | Minority ethnic population |
|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| 0-4 years | 8 | 10 |
| 5-15 years | 18 | 24 |
| 16-44 years | 42 | 50 |
| 45-59 years (female)/ | 18 | 12 |
| 45-64 years (male) | | |
| 60-79 years (female)/ | 12 | 3 |
| 65-79 years (male) | | |
| Over 80 years | 3 | * |

*Indicates less than 1%. Source: Irwin and Dunn (1996: 67)

There are some significant differences between the differing minority ethnic groups however. More than half of the Chinese community (53%) were in the prime working age group leading to a much higher rate of economic activity (see below). As regards the Indian community, they had the greatest proportion of all groups in the older age ranges, reflecting their longer social history in Northern Ireland (Irwin and Dunn 1996: 66-7).

Moreover, two particular trends distinguish Irish Travellers from the other minority ethnic communities. First, over half (52%) of all Travellers were under 16 compared to only just over a quarter of the general population (see also ACT 1988). Second, and most disturbing, only 6% of Irish Travellers were found to be aged 45 or over compared to a third of the general population. This is particularly significant given that Travellers are indigenous to Northern Ireland and so patterns of migration cannot be used to explain the lack of older members. Rather, more likely explanations for such low life expectancy rates are extremely poor living conditions leading to much lower levels of health compared to the general population (see below).

Economic activity and occupational class

Other than the general impressions discussed earlier in relation to the work patterns of the Bangladeshi, Latin American and Portuguese communities, no systematic data exists for these groups. The only accurate and reliable data regarding levels of economic activity and the occupational class distributions of the minority ethnic population are to be found in Irwin and Dunn's (1996) study. The findings for the four ethnic groups they researched are set out in Table 7 overleaf. As can be seen, with the exception of Irish Travellers, there is a higher rate of economic activity among the main minority ethnic groups.

The Chinese community is characterised by a significantly high rate of economic activity, partly reflecting the family business nature of the catering industry. Also of note is the high rate of economic activity among Chinese women (70%) compared to Pakistani (25%) and Traveller (16%) women (Irwin and Dunn 1996: 85-6).

As regards occupational class, three particular trends are worth noting. First, there are significantly higher proportions of the Indian and Pakistani communities to be found within the professional and managerial classes. This largely reflects the 'professionalisation' of immigration that occurred

under the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962 and the higher proportions of self-employment as discussed earlier. However, it should also be noted that a small but significant minority of the Pakistani community are also characterised as long-term unemployed (7%).

Second, the occupational class of the Chinese community appears to be largely bimodal in its distribution. As Irwin and Dunn (1996: 87) explain, this largely reflects the distinction between those owning/managing a catering outlet and those working within it as cooks and kitchen staff.

Table 7: Economic activity and occupational class by ethnic group (%)

| | General Population | Minority Ethnic Groups | Chinese | Indian | Pakistani | Irish Traveller |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|---------|--------|-----------|--------------------|
| Economically Active | 58 | 64 | 80 | 62 | 59 | 47 |
| Economically Inactive | 42 | 36 | 20 | 38 | 41 | 53 |
| Professional | 3 | 5 | 1 | 16 | 11 | - |
| Managerial/ Technical | 19 | 24 | 24 | 49 | 22 | 1 |
| Skilled (non- manual) | 17 | 10 | 2 | 23 | 28 | 1 |
| Skilled (manual) | 17 | 19 | 35 | 3 | 7 | 7 |
| Partly Skilled | 13 | 9 | 16 | 1 | 4 | 1 |
| Unskilled | 6 | 2 | 1 | - | 1 | 6 |
| Other | 4 | 15 | 18 | 5 | 19 | 13 |
| No paid work in last 10 years | 21 | 16 | 2 | 3 | 7 | 70 |

Source: Adapted from Irwin and Dunn (1996: 86-7).

Third, the particularly adverse situation of the Irish Traveller community should also be noted (ACT 1988). Alongside having very little representation among the top three occupational classes, a significant majority (70%) stated that they have had no paid work in the last ten years. This represents evidence of their general exclusion from the mainstream labour market. However, it should be noted that these figures do not take into account those working in the Traveller economy as discussed earlier.

Educational attainment

The only data currently available on the educational achievement of minority ethnic groups relate to the four communities focused on by Irwin and Dunn (1996). Table 8 below shows the highest qualification gained by these four groups. The particular performance of Irish Travellers should again be noted with only 2% having gained further or higher educational qualifications. The high proportion of those in the 'Other' category is misleading in that it simply represents a primary school-age qualification (Irwin and Dunn 1996: 89). If that was to be discounted, then the vast majority of Irish Travellers would be counted as having no formal qualifications.

More recent data from the Department of Education (DE 2001) suggest that there has been little improvement in the educational achievement of Travellers. Very few Traveller children were found to stay on until Year 12 with current estimates being between just 10 and 30 children in the whole of Northern Ireland. According to the Department of Education, in a typical year more than half of these achieve no GCSEs.

Of the other minority ethnic groups, however, the data suggest that they are actually performing at a higher level in comparison to the general population. However, Irwin and Dunn (1996: 89) point out that for all of the ethnic groups, those born elsewhere were more likely to have the highest educational qualifications than those born in Northern Ireland. This may

suggest a slightly different educational experience for those educated in local schools here.

Table 8: Educational level by highest qualification by ethnic group (%)

| | General Population | Minority Groups | Chinese | Indian | Pakistani | Irish Travellers |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|---------|--------|-----------|------------------|
| Degree level or higher | 6 | 14 | 11 | 37 | 17 | 1 |
| BTEC (Higher), HND, HNC | 2 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 3 | - |
| GCE 'A' Level | 6 | 7 | 7 | 13 | 8 | 1 |
| BTEC(National) ONC, OND | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 2 | - |
| GCSE, GCE 'O' Level | 16 | 12 | 11 | 14 | 21 | 6 |
| CSE (Other than Grade 1) | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 7 | 1 |
| No formal qualifications | 65 | 27 | 14 | 19 | 27 | 50 |
| Other formal qualifications | - | 35 | 54 | 8 | 15 | 42 |

Source: Irwin and Dunn (1996: 89)

Housing tenure and density of occupation

Again, the only available evidence on the housing tenure and density of occupation of the minority ethnic population that exists to date is that provided by Irwin and Dunn (1996). The housing tenure of the four minority ethnic groups they studied is shown in Table 9 overleaf. Three trends are to be noted from the data. First, it can be seen that there is a higher level of owner occupation among the Indian and Pakistani

communities, possibly reflecting their higher representation among the top social classes.

Second, in relation to the 'Other' category, the figure for Irish Travellers (83%) reflects the high proportion of those living in caravan or trailer accommodation (83%) and the respective figure for the Chinese community (3%) represents those living in property above catering premises or owned by the restaurant owner. Third, it is also worth pointing out the general under-representation of the minority ethnic groups in relation to those in public authority housing. This in part reflects a rule used until recently by the Housing Executive which imposed a seven year residency requirement that would clearly adversely effect newly arrived immigrants (Irwin and Dunn 1996: 71). Given that this rule could well constitute a form of indirect discrimination under the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997, the Housing Executive has since decided to remove it.

Table 9: Tenure arrangements by ethnic group (%)

| | General Population | Minority Ethnic Groups | Chinese | Indian | Pakistani | Irish Traveller |
|---|-----------------------|------------------------------|---------|--------|-----------|--------------------|
| Owner Occupied | 62 | 60 | 65 | 84 | 81 | - |
| Rented from Local or Public Authority | 31 | 9 | 9 | 3 | 3 | 16 |
| Privately Rented | 5 | 15 | 23 | 13 | 16 | - |
| Other | - | 15 | 3 | - | - | 83 |

Source: Derived from Irwin and Dunn (1996: 72). Figures are approximate.

As regards levels of housing provision, Irwin and Dunn's (1996: 82) research has drawn attention to the higher density of occupation by

minority ethnic people compared to the general population. As they state: 'compared to the general population, four times as many Pakistanis, six times as many Chinese and nearly eight times as many Traveller respondents live in homes with over one person per room and upwards'.

The one exception to this trend is the Indian community where their levels of occupancy at the higher end is comparable to the general population. Moreover, the proportion of these with less than 0.75 persons per room (74%) was found to be higher than for the general population (63%), again partly reflecting the relative affluence of those in the professional and/or managerial classes.

Health

While there has been a number of research studies investigating minority ethnic people's experiences and needs in relation to health services, there is very little empirical data charting the general health patterns of the minority ethnic population in Northern Ireland (Paris *et al.* 1995). Unfortunately, the research by Dunn and Irwin (1996) did not focus on this area.

With the exception of Irish Travellers, the only empirical study of current levels of health relates to the Chinese elderly (Braid and Gadd 1999) which found that those studied enjoyed a relatively high level of independence and fairly good levels of health. The types of illnesses and problems faced by this group were those that were to be found among the elderly more generally. However the research did point out that such problems were likely to become more acute in the future as the average age of the Chinese population increases.

Beyond this study, the only empirical data that is currently available relates to Irish Travellers. The low life expectancy of Travellers, touched upon above, has also been highlighted in data from a survey which found that only 10% of the Traveller population were aged over 40 years and only 1%

over 65 years (EHSSB 1989). Overall estimates have placed the life expectancy of Travellers as 20% lower than the general population (ACT 1988).

In addition, infant mortality among Travellers has been found to be higher than the general population and the death rates of Traveller children up to 10 years of age has been found to be ten times that of children from the 'settled' population (EHSSB 1989; Gordon *et al.* 1991). More generally, levels of childhood immunisation and take up of routine screening services among Travellers has been found to be poor (Gorman 1986; SACSP & STEP 2001) and much higher admission rates to hospital, especially for children, for infectious diseases have also been reported (Mason 1998; Noonan 1998).

Conclusions

The key factor emerging from the social and demographic data outlined above is the significantly disadvantaged position of Irish Travellers within Northern Ireland. Across the range of empirical indicators relating to age, economic activity, occupational status, education, housing and health, it is clear that they are a group who are multiply disadvantaged.

The general picture is a little more complicated. Overall, the main issues arising from the research evidence to date that is or relevance to policy makers and service providers are:

- the large proportion of Traveller families with children under 16 and the implications this has for child care and early years educational provision;
- the high rate of economic activity for Chinese women in particular and, again, the specific needs of this group of women in relation to appropriate (i.e. culturally-sensitive) childcare;

- the significant minority of long term unemployed among the Pakistani community and the high levels of exclusion from the labour market altogether of Irish Travellers;
- the occupational segregation of some minority ethnic groups, especially the Chinese and Bangladeshi communities in the catering industry;
- the extremely poor educational performance of Traveller children;
- the generally higher levels of overcrowding for many minority ethnic groups; and
- the significantly poorer health profile of Irish Travellers.

These are issues that will be returned to in the following two sections which assess the general and specific needs of the minority ethnic population.

4. General Needs of the Minority Ethnic Population

In discussing the experiences and needs of the minority ethnic population in Northern Ireland it is useful to make a distinction between those needs that are general in nature and which relate to a number of service areas, and those that are more specific and which therefore have implications for particular Government departments or agencies.

This section will therefore outline those needs that are more generic in their nature. In drawing upon the available research evidence, five particular issues emerge: the language barrier; lack of information; attitudes of and lack of understanding among staff ; the cultural needs of minority ethnic people; and the general incidence of racial prejudice and racist harassment in the region.

The language barrier

Given the high proportions of minority ethnic people that were not born in the UK or Ireland (46%), it is not surprising to find that language provides one the most significant barriers in relation to access to services (Barnardos 1995; NHSSB 1995; Gillespie *et al.* 1999; Leong 2000; Holder 2001; Holder and Lanao 2001). This is particularly the case for the Chinese community, as Irwin and Dunn (1996: 93) found in their own survey, where 87% of respondents cited this as a problem in relation to education and 83% in relation to healthcare. The extent of this problem is also corroborated by a survey of health professionals in the Eastern Board which found that 37.5% identified problems in relation to communicating with members of the minority ethnic population (EHSSB 1999: 7).

Of particular concern in relation to healthcare, is the situation where some minority parents have no option other than to rely upon their children to accompany them on visits to their GP or hospital in order to translate for them. Not only can this be deeply embarrassing for the parent but it can also prevent them from seeking help when their medical condition is more 'personal' in nature. Moreover, it is clearly an unacceptable burden to place on children and has been found to lead to confusion and misunderstanding when children are unable to translate more complex medical information (see NHSSB 1995; Mann-Kler 1997; Mason 1998; Mackin 2000).

Language difficulties have also been found to be a particular problem for the Chinese elderly who have found it especially difficult communicating with GPs, community nurses and home helps as well as having to seek help with quite routine tasks such as reading the instructions on medical bottles (Braid and Gadd 1999).

More generally, even for those with a competent grasp of English, this may well not be enough to understand the more specialist and/or technical information associated with a number of services, including the benefits system for example (Mann-Kler 1997). It was also found to inhibit some from visiting local Training and Employment offices for fear of ridicule if they were unable to understand what was being said or to be understood (Dunn 1998). In addition, problems with language have also had an impact on the ability of many minority ethnic people to become involved in voluntary work of one kind or another (Leong 2001).

The language barrier has been found not only to create problems in face-to-face meetings, but also in understanding official letters sent to members of minority ethnic communities from Government departments and agencies. Mann-Kler (1997), for example, found that some had to wait a week or so to find someone to translate letters they had received from the Social Security Agency before they could respond to them.

The need for interpreters and more bilingual staff is therefore quite clear. Barnardos (1995) in their own survey of the Chinese community found that 70% of those interviewed would welcome more interpreting services (see also Mann-Kler 1997; Ginnety 1998; Braid and Gadd 1999; EHSSB 1999; Mackin 2000).

Lack of information

Partly because of the language barrier, research has consistently found a significant lack of understanding among the minority ethnic population regarding the range of services that are available to them. Mann-Kler (1997) found that this lack of understanding was not specific to particular agencies but was general, from lack of knowledge concerning GPs and other healthcare services such as post-natal support, to the functions and provisions of social services and the tax and benefit system.

This lack of understanding of services available has also been found by other surveys in relation to training and employment (Dunn 1998; Connolly and Keenan 2000b), housing (NIHE 1995), healthcare (Barnardos 1995; NHSSB 1995; Braid and Gadd 1999; Greer 2001), education (Connolly and Keenan 2000b), services for the elderly (Braid and Gadd 1999) and social security benefits (Holder 2001; Holder and Lanao 2001; Connolly and Keenan 2001b). It has also been found that some minority ethnic women will not seek help with regard to domestic violence for fear and lack of understanding over their immigration status (Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation 1998).

The lack of information available that is accessible to minority ethnic communities is compounded by the very different cultural expectations found within the various communities. For example, for those who have arrived in Northern Ireland from Hong Kong or Vietnam, they will have been used to a system where they would have to pay for everything, including visits to their GP and dentist. For those not informed differently, it has been found that a tendency exists therefore for them not to go for

health and/or dental check-ups unless there is a serious problem (Mann-Kler 1997).

Training needs of staff

A number of reports have found that there are relatively high levels of satisfaction among minority ethnic communities with the way they have been treated by staff, especially in relation to health and education (see, for example EHSSB 1993; NHSSB 1995; Tennant 2000; Connolly and Keenan 2001b; Holder and Lanao 2001). However, alongside such positive experiences, many minority ethnic people have also provided examples of more negative treatment, either due to a simple lack of understanding or cultural insensitivity through to a more intentional condescending and/or hostile attitude.

As regards the general lack of awareness and understanding, a survey of 20 midwifery students found that not one had an understanding of the relevance of 'race' relations to Northern Ireland (Baiden 1994). Similarly, a survey of teachers revealed that 96% had received no information on minority ethnic people as part of their initial teacher training and 85% had received none as part of their inservice training (Gallagher and Leitch 1998).

This lack of understanding can have a number of consequences. For example, it can lead to a sense of awkwardness among staff who may therefore not spend as much time with their minority ethnic clients because they find it difficult to relate to them (Baiden 1994). It has also been found to result in confusion among staff at medical centres over whether particular minority ethnic individuals are eligible to register and/or gain treatment (Holder and Lanao 2001).

For others, this lack of understanding can translate into more negative behaviour. Barnardo's (1995) survey of a sample of the Chinese community found that a significant proportion listed the 'unhelpful' attitude

of staff as a problem accessing services. Similarly, Mann-Kler's (1997: 42) research found examples where Travellers felt that staff at their local Social Security Office had an 'uncooperative attitude' (see also Irwin and Dunn 1996: 93) and Connolly and Keenan (2001b) also found relatively high levels of dissatisfaction among Travellers with how they have been treated by district council officials and the police.

Staff training with regard to 'race' relations is therefore an important need across service boundaries. It is certainly something that would appear to be welcomed by staff in many areas including teaching (Gallagher and Leitch 1998) and training and employment (Dunn 1998).

More generally, the specific problems regarding language, lack of information and lack of staff training can often act together to provide a significant obstacle to minority ethnic people accessing various services. A study by Leong (2000) examined the problems faced by minority ethnic people in need of legal advice. She found that there was a high reluctance among many minority ethnic communities to approach mainstream solicitors, advice agencies and public bodies such as the Equality Commission. Rather, they were much more likely to seek advice from one of the existing minority ethnic organisations themselves even when they may not have the particular legal training and expertise required.

Leong (2000) found that this reluctance was caused by a range of factors including: lack of awareness and understanding of the existence and role of particular organisations and agencies; lack of accessible information that was free of jargon; language difficulties; the fact that the staff in most organisations and agencies are all white and the belief that they are unlikely therefore to understand their particular problems and concerns; and general experiences of racism and racist harassment leading to lack of confidence among minority ethnic people. Leong (2000) argues that these research findings suggest that mainstream organisations need to take a much more proactive role in reaching out to particular communities. Moreover, consideration should be given to providing core funding and

training to existing minority ethnic organisations who are already playing a valuable role in supporting and advising minority ethnic people in the region.

The cultural needs of minority ethnic people

In addition to the provision of staff training, organisations need to consider how they can meet the basic cultural needs of minority ethnic people more generally. A theme to be found running across a range of service areas is the failure to recognise and/or meet the basic needs of minority ethnic people especially in terms of diet and religious observance. This has been found, for example, in terms of the failure to provide:

- appropriate chilled foods for the Chinese elderly (Braid and Gadd 1999);
- appropriate meals and adequate support for religious observance for children in schools (Connolly and Keenan 2000b; Holder 2001) and also for asylum seekers who have been (often inappropriately) detained in prison (Tennant 2000); and
- funeral arrangements that are sensitive to the particular religious customs and cultural practices of specific minority ethnic communities (Watson *et al.* 1996).

Not recognising the basic cultural needs of minority ethnic people can often add to their sense of exclusion and thus make it more difficult for them to participate fully in society. For example, the lack of female doctors or female-only swimming sessions at the local leisure centre can have the effect of restricting certain minority ethnic people from accessing health and leisure services (Mann-Kler 1997; Holder 2001; Mackin 2000).

Another example is provided by Leong (2001) in her study of the barriers that minority ethnic people face when engaging in voluntary work. In this case they were often made to feel that they were requesting something special when asking their organisations for time off for basic religious or cultural festivals.

Racial prejudice and racist harassment

Unfortunately, racial prejudice and racist harassment appear to be a common experience for many minority ethnic people in Northern Ireland (Irwin and Dunn 1996; Mann-Kler 1997; Connolly and Keenan 2001a; Jarman 2002). As regards racial attitudes and prejudice, four attitudinal studies have been completed to date on the attitudes of the general public in Northern Ireland towards minority ethnic people (Paris *et al.* 1995; Brewer and Dowds 1996; UMS 1998; Connolly and Keenan 2000a). Three particular trends have emerged from these studies.

First, there is a general lack of understanding or concern for 'race' related issues among the general population. UMS (1998: 1) found that 57% of their own sample viewed race/immigration as unimportant. In addition, they found that only a minority of the population felt that there was racial discrimination in Northern Ireland in relation to housing, education, health, state benefits and civil rights (p. 1). Brewer and Dowds (1996: 97) also found that six times as many people in Great Britain than in Northern Ireland felt that there is a lot of prejudice against Asians.

In addition, while UMS (1998: 1) found that 76% of the population recognised that it was illegal to discriminate on the basis of 'race', there was significant misunderstanding in terms of the legislation. For example, of an additional sample of companies surveyed, UMS (1998: 2) found that only 25% considered it illegal to discriminate in employment, 9% in housing and 7% in education. Moreover, only 25% of the general population were aware of the existence of an organisation that dealt with cases of racial discrimination. However, less than half of these were able to identify it as the Commission for Racial Equality.

Second, although there are these high levels of misunderstanding and/or lack of concern, there does appear to be a generally positive and progressive attitude towards minority ethnic people among the majority of

the population in relation to certain issues. 86% of those surveyed by Connolly and Keenan (2000a), for example, expressed support for multiculturalism to be taught in schools and a further 84% felt that there should be effective equal opportunities policies in place for minority ethnic people. Brewer and Dowds (1996: 104) also found that 69% were in favour of legislation to outlaw discrimination.

A note of caution is needed, however, in not interpreting these findings too literally. While they certainly represent a positive overall attitude, there is no simple relationship between these attitudes and the behaviour of the general population (see Connolly and Keenan 2000a). For example, while Paris *et al* (1995: 116) found that an overwhelming majority (77%) of those surveyed felt that special serviced sites should be provided for Travellers, 64% went onto state that they would be likely to object to a site being located near to their home.

This is also born out by the third trend to arise from these studies which found that 'race' was still a significant factor that influenced the general population's attitudes towards minority ethnic people. Brewer and Dowds (1996: 103) found that about a third of respondents would mind 'a little' or 'a lot' if a close relative of their's married an Asian (37%) or a Chinese (32%) person. A further 18% would equally mind if they had an Asian boss and 11% if they had a Chinese boss.

A more recent survey has found that, if anything, these attitudes have increased. Connolly and Keenan (2000a) found in their survey that 53% would not be willing to accept a Chinese person marrying into their family and 54% would equally not accept a South Asian person. Indeed, just over a third would not be willing to accept minority ethnic people as colleagues at work and just over a quarter would not willingly accept them as residents in their local area.

The most stark finding of Connolly and Keenan's (2000a) research is that around twice as many people expressed an unwillingness to mix with

people from minority ethnic backgrounds, in whatever context, than they did people from the other main religious community to themselves.

The final trend to draw attention to with regard to these attitudinal studies is the significantly more negative attitudes towards Travellers than any other minority ethnic group (see also Butler 1985; Gorman 1986; Noonan 1994). For example, Connolly and Keenan (2000a) found that 41% of people felt that the lifestyle of Travellers was not a valid one and thus should not be supported and resourced by government. Moreover, 57% would not willingly accept Irish Travellers as residents in their local area, 66% would not willingly accept them as colleagues at work and over two-thirds (70%) would not be willing to accept them as a close friend.

The media appears to play a role in influencing such attitudes. According to research by Fawcett (1998, 1999), the local media has tended to ignore news on 'race' except for those incidents that are significantly negative and/or violent. As Fawcett argues, while such an approach has helped to raise awareness about some of the issues facing minority ethnic people, it has also tended to construct them largely as a 'problem category'.

This is particularly true in the case of Travellers where the reporting of news on Travellers in the local press has tended to focus on just four themes: the arrival of Travellers in or near a town; controversy surrounding the proposed developments of new sites for Travellers; alleged feuds between Traveller families; and complaints about the alleged 'mess' caused by Travellers (Fawcett, 1999: 6). Equally significantly, as Fawcett shows, the local press also tends to report the views of local politicians uncritically thus providing an additional avenue for the dissemination of what are largely anti-Traveller sentiments.

Overall, it is clear from the above that there is both a significant degree of ignorance and lack of understanding about the needs and concerns of minority ethnic people as well as a worrying level of prejudice against them. Especially in relation to attitudes towards Travellers, it is also clear

that the media needs to take some responsibility for its coverage of Traveller news and events. Unfortunately, the problem does not seem to be limited to people's attitudes but there is plenty of evidence to suggest that such attitudes also tend to inform people's behaviour.

There are now a number of studies that have highlighted the significant levels of racist harassment that exist in Northern Ireland (Irwin and Dunn 1996; Chahal and Julienne 1999; Connolly and Keenan 2001a; Jarman 2002). Irwin and Dunn's (1996: 101) survey for example found significant proportions of their minority ethnic respondents had been verbally abused (44%), experienced criminal damage to their property (29%) and had been physically abused (10%). Most recent figures show that the number of racist incidents reported to the police has increased some 400% between January 1996 and December 1999 (Jarman 2002).

Such experiences appear to be most common for the Chinese community where Irwin and Dunn found that 65% had been verbally abused and 52% had experienced criminal damage to their property (see also Watson and McKnight 1998). This higher level of harassment can, partly, be explained in terms of their greater contact with the general public through Chinese restaurants and takeouts (see Connolly and Keenan 1999).

More generally, racist harassment has been found to take place in a variety of contexts including schools (Gorman 1986; Mann-Kler 1997; Connolly and Keenan 2000b), housing (NIHE 1995), the workplace (Connolly and Keenan 1999, 2000b) and also in a range of public places such as in city centres, shops, train stations, on buses and in the street (Connolly and Keenan 2001a; Jarman 2002).

Moreover, Connolly and Keenan (2001a) in their study of minority ethnic people's experiences of racist harassment have shown that harassment does not always take the form of negative and intentional behaviour. The constant stares and the sometimes well-meaning but ignorant comments that people at times make can often increase minority ethnic people's

sense of isolation and vulnerability. Moreover, Connolly and Keenan (2001a) give particular attention to racial banter which tends to be presented as a bit of harmless fun but which they found often simply reflects deeper seated prejudices.

Overall, racist harassment, particularly in the form of name-calling and so-called 'harmless banter', appears to have become so common that many minority ethnic people appear to have accepted it as a normal part of life here (Connolly and Keenan 2001a). This 'normalisation' of racist harassment would appear to have had the effect of discouraging minority ethnic people from reporting incidents of racist harassment unless it becomes intolerable (Chahal and Julienne 1999). Moreover, Chahal and Julienne (1999) in their study have found that the victims of harassment have often felt isolated and unsupported.

Finally, as regards the perpetrators of racist harassment, while it does not appear to be the sole domain of any section of society the highest levels of offending appears to be found among boys and young men (Connolly and Keenan 2001a, Jarman 2002).

Conclusions

This section has highlighted a number of issues of relevance across service boundaries. All Government departments and agencies and other organisations and institutions therefore need to consider how they can more effectively:

- provide for the needs of those who speak little or no English;
- disseminate information about their services more widely and comprehensively to the minority ethnic population;
- increase the knowledge and skills of their staff in dealing with the needs of minority ethnic clients;
- ensure that the basic cultural needs of minority ethnic people are met;

- address racial discrimination and harassment both in their own particular areas of responsibility and also collectively, in relation to the attitudes and behaviour of the general public;
- examine, more specifically, how victims of racist harassment can be encouraged to report incidents and be given appropriate support; and
- consider ways of attempting to reduce racist harassment, particularly in terms of targeted work with boys and young men.

5. The Needs of Minority Ethnic People in Relation to Specific Service Areas

This section outlines the more specific findings arising from the research conducted to date regarding the needs of minority ethnic people as they relate to particular service areas. The section will address each of the following areas in turn: training and employment, housing and accommodation, health, education, the police service and immigration. Some service areas will not be covered explicitly here because either there is a lack of research into these areas and/or the general concerns raised in the previous section reflect the key issues raised to date for that area.

It is important to note that the discussion concerning each service area is not meant to 'stand alone' and to be read in isolation. Indeed the key issues raised in the previous section relate equally to all of the service areas to be addressed below. In order to gain a fuller appreciation of the main needs of the minority ethnic communities, therefore, this section should be read in conjunction with the last one.

Training and Employment

Five particular issues can be identified from the research evidence available to date on the training and employment needs of the minority ethnic population.

The occupational segregation of the minority ethnic population, especially the Chinese and Bangladeshi communities

The data discussed earlier highlighted the general tendency of some minority ethnic groups to be segregated into specific occupations. This

was particularly the case for the Chinese and Bangladeshi communities where the majority of their economically active members appeared to be employed in the catering industry.

However, research by Connolly and Keenan (1999, 2000b) on the Chinese community has found that this is certainly not the preferred choice of many but that they feel they lack the adequate language skills and educational qualifications to move out into other areas of work (see also NHSSB 1995). Moreover, many had a distinct impression that they would not be welcomed by the majority population in areas outside of catering. Unfortunately, the data outlined in the previous section appears to partly confirm this perception.

Many adult members of the Chinese community, and especially those of middle age and older, appear to be resigned to working in the catering industry and simply lack the confidence to consider other options (Irwin and Dunn 1996). As Dunn (1998) also found, their hopes appear to be more directed to their children who are much more likely to be fluent in English and to have much better chances of gaining the required educational qualifications.

This would appear, therefore, to suggest that a more proactive strategy is required to help inform the Chinese community of what career options are open to them and in providing them with the basic language skills and educational qualifications that they require in order to pursue their chosen options. This would appear to be particularly appropriate given the extremely low levels of take up among the minority ethnic population generally of Government training programmes (Gillespie *et al.* 1999).

Language courses

In developing the previous point, there is a clear demand for language courses from the minority ethnic communities (Mann-Kler 1997; Dunn 1998; Gillespie *et al.* 1999; Mackin 2000; Connolly and Keenan 2000b). It

appears to be a demand, however, that is not so much for formal educational qualifications in English, but in courses aimed at improving their general levels of proficiency to enable them to interact more effectively with those at work and/or within more social environments.

This suggests that there is a demand for at least two distinct levels of English language courses for minority ethnic people. The first addressing the general skills associated with reading and writing English. The second, where demand exists, for more specific tuition in areas relevant to particular occupations (i.e. the catering or clothing industries).

Childcare arrangements

Childcare is an issue that is a concern for women of all ethnic groups. However, the younger age profile of the minority ethnic communities means that the lack of adequate child care arrangements can potentially impact upon them more severely. This is particularly so for Chinese women given their much higher rate of economic activity in comparison with others.

A further, compounding factor is the noticeable lack of childcare provision that is culturally appropriate. As Dunn (1998) found, minority ethnic women would much prefer to leave their children in the charge of someone who can speak their mother tongue and/or is sensitive to the specific cultural needs of their children.

A greater provision of childcare, and particularly culturally-sensitive child care, would therefore aid the career options of minority ethnic women. One possible way of achieving this would be to offer more specific training and encouragement to those women from minority ethnic communities that would like to work in the area of childcare themselves.

The long-term unemployment of Irish Travellers

One of the most concerning issues to arise from the data outlined earlier is the high levels of long-term unemployment among the Irish Traveller community and their general exclusion from the labour market. It is a problem compounded by the decline of the traditional Traveller economy which has formed an integral part of their ethnic identity and nomadic way of life.

The research suggests that the key in developing effective employment and training opportunities for Travellers must be choice. There are some, especially some of the younger Traveller women, who have expressed a desire to enter the mainstream labour market and pursue particular careers (Connolly and Keenan 1999, 2000b; Mongan 2002). For these, a number of studies have suggested that services need to be developed that can:

- help develop their general skills and abilities and improve their levels of confidence and self-esteem (Noonan 1994; Connolly and Keenan 2000b);
- identify and meet the specific educational and training gaps of those wishing to become eligible for entry onto particular, career-specific apprenticeships and training courses (Gorman 1986; Noonan 1994; O'Riain 1998) and
- provide a more proactive service generally that aims to provide encouragement and support to Travellers and to ensure that they are fully informed of all of the available services and career options (Connolly and Keenan 2000b).

However, there are equal numbers of Travellers that wish to continue working within the Traveller economy (McVeigh 1998a) and who regard mainstream work as at odds with traditional Traveller culture (Butler 1985). For these people, mainstream training courses and business development programmes are simply not appropriate (Connolly and Keenan 1999,

2000b). Research studies such as that by McVeigh (1998a) suggest therefore that it is important that services are also developed which can, where appropriate:

- identify and provide the specific skills required by those who wish to work within the Traveller economy; and
- plan and develop ways, in conjunction with Travellers, of helping to support the Traveller economy and encourage its development and diversification.

Recognition of foreign qualifications

Finally, a couple of studies have drawn attention to the problems that some minority ethnic people have faced in attempting to have the qualifications they have gained overseas accepted by employers and/or educational institutions in Northern Ireland (Connolly and Keenan 2000b; Holder and Lanao 2001). as Holder and Lanao (2001) found, this has led to examples such as qualified teachers having to work in hotels or administration and a psychologist taking voluntary work. Both studies suggest that efforts be made to assess the comparability of differing qualifications and to ensure that those that are suitable are recognised as such.

Housing and Accommodation

There are four key issues regarding the needs of minority ethnic people in relation to the provision of housing and other forms of accommodation.

The seven year residency requirement for eligibility for public housing

The general criterion that had been set by the Housing Executive requiring applicants to be resident in Northern Ireland for seven years before becoming eligible for public housing has been found to disadvantage particular minority ethnic groups (Holder 2001; Holder and Lanao 2001).

This is especially the case given the significantly higher proportions of certain minority ethnic groups who have only relatively recently arrived in Northern Ireland. However, it is a rule that has since been removed by the Housing Executive given that it could constitute a form of indirect discrimination within the provisions of the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997.

Overcrowding

The issue of overcrowding appears to be a significant issue arising from the demographic data reported earlier (Irwin and Dunn 1996). It would seem appropriate for more research to be conducted into the nature and causes of the higher levels of overcrowding among the minority ethnic communities and what possible role the Housing Executive could play in helping to address this.

The provision of care and/or sheltered accommodation for the elderly

Increasing consideration will be required in relation to the needs of elderly members of the minority ethnic communities in the years to come. Among the Chinese community, for instance, it is already being pointed out that some of their elderly members are left alone for prolonged periods during the day due to the labour-intensive nature of the catering industry (Watson and McKnight 1998; Braid and Gadd 1999).

Such studies have recommended that strategies need to be developed, both for the immediate and longer term, in relation to the effective provision of care and/or accommodation, including sheltered accommodation, for elderly members of the minority ethnic population.

The provision of Traveller sites

With regard to current provision of sites for Irish Travellers, it has been estimated that space only exists for 63% of Traveller families to be

accommodated (Paris *et al.* 1995: 53). A substantial minority therefore remain camped on unofficial and, for the most part, unserviced sites.

With the lack of basic amenities on unserviced sites such as water and sanitation, it is not surprising that the general health levels of the Irish Traveller population, as detailed earlier, is significantly lower than that of the general population (Butler 1985; Gorman 1986; Gordon *et al.* 1991; Noonan 1994). Moreover, the lack of serviced sites has also been found to severely restrict movement and thus have a debilitating effect on the viability of the Traveller economy (McVeigh 1998a).

As Paris *et al.* (1995) have found, the future responsibility for the provision and maintenance of sites is the key issue that needs to be addressed. Until recently, responsibility for sites rested with district councils. However, the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI) Order 1985 only empowered them to provide sites but, crucially, did not oblige them to (Molloy 1998).

Despite the DoE providing 100% of funding for the construction of sites, some district councils had been found to be extremely slow and reluctant in making adequate provision (Paris *et al.* 1995; Maginn *et al.* 1999). This reluctance could be seen, in part, to be as a result of the politicised nature of the development of new sites and the strong local opposition that such developments face.

However, the announcement of the Minister for the Environment in August 1999 to give the Northern Ireland Housing Executive the lead role in the provision of accommodation for Travellers would certainly seem to be a sensible response to this problem (see DoE 1999). Under the new arrangements announced, the Housing Executive is to take ownership and responsibility to manage all existing Traveller sites. Given the findings of existing research it is safe to presume that such new arrangements would certainly help to:

- 'depoliticise' decision-making with regard to the development of Traveller sites;
- encourage a more strategic and 'province-wide' approach to the planning and development of sites and accommodation for Travellers; and
- allow for the development of a more coordinated approach for Travellers in relation to the provision of sites and public accommodation.

One potential problem that may still remain, however, relates to the intention under these new arrangements to leave district councils the responsibility for the provision of new transit sites. More specifically, given the political nature of district council decision-making, they may well remain reluctant to make adequate provisions for transit sites. At the time of writing the consultation process on these proposed new arrangements has still to be concluded.

Whatever system finally emerges, the research evidence would indicate the importance of a more flexible approach to accommodation being developed as advocated by the DoE (1994) in its Regional Development Strategy. This would include a range of accommodation options being made available to Travellers including transit pitches, permanent serviced sites and more specialised accommodation, including group housing.

Within this, the sites that are provided should be planned with the needs of those working within the Traveller economy in mind. This would require the provision of sufficient transit sites to facilitate mobility and also the provision of adequate workspace on sites, as recommended by the DoE (1998: 14) in its 'Design Guide for Travellers' Sites in Northern Ireland'. Ultimately, experience of previous developments suggests that Travellers need to be included in a full and meaningful way in the planning and building of any future sites (Mann-Kler 1997).

Health

Many of the key issues regarding the needs on minority ethnic people in relation to health care, such as the language barrier and lack of information, have been discussed in the previous section. However, three additional concerns have been raised by existing research.

The health needs of Travellers

The significant disadvantages being experienced by Travellers in relation to health has already been highlighted earlier. A significant part of this would appear to be related to the extremely poor living conditions that many are faced with as also highlighted earlier. However, there are also two other concerns that the research evidence to date has highlighted that also need to be addressed.

The first is the lack of effectiveness of preventative health programmes evident, for example, in the low levels of immunisations among Traveller children; the lack of attendance of Traveller women at Well Women clinics; and the general lack of take up of various routine screening services (Gorman 1986; SACSP & STEP 2001). The second is the concern held by some health professionals of the problems ensuring continuity of care and follow-up with Travellers who are more likely to move on fairly regularly (Gorman 1986; Gordon *et al.* 1991). Such concerns have given rise to recommendations that appropriate, Traveller-specific health strategies are required.

Low levels of GP registration among some minority ethnic communities

It has been noted that some members of the minority ethnic population are less likely to register with a GP. This is of particular concern given that GPs provide the gateway to specialist and allied health services (Mason 1998).

Three main reasons have been offered for these lower registration rates. The first relates to language difficulties which may act as a deterrent to registration (Mann-Kler 1997: 28). The second relates to cultural differences where Chinese people's expectations of GPs are very different because of the different system that exists in Hong Kong. The third is more specific to Irish Travellers and relates to the problems they face trying to register when they do not have a permanent address (Ginnety 1993). As regards this latter point, while a recent survey of Travellers suggests that the vast majority are registered with a GP, a small number (7%) were finding it difficult to register and these were most likely to live on unauthorised sites (Connolly and Keenan 2001b).

Considering that GPs play a central role in health care, the studies discussed above have suggested that it is therefore important that some form of ethnic monitoring of GP registration takes place. Moreover, particular systems need to be devised which can deal with and encourage the registration of Travellers living on unauthorised sites.

The psychological needs of refugees and asylum seekers

Recent research on asylum seekers and refugees in Northern Ireland has drawn attention to the tendency for them to be routinely screened, particularly for a range of communicable diseases (McVeigh 2002). However, given their particular experiences prior to seeking asylum, it is likely that many refugees and asylum seekers will require substantial psychological support and counselling. At present, however, the research suggests that such needs are not being routinely met (Tennant 2000; McVeigh 2002).

Education

The problems of racist harassment in schools and the need for training for teachers in relation to multiculturalism/anti-racism have been touched upon in the previous section. In addition, four particular issues arise from

the research literature with regard to the minority ethnic population's needs in relation to education.

English as a second language

Many minority ethnic children who first enter school will have come from a home where the first language spoken is not English. While such children usually show great skill in adapting and learning English quite quickly, there is a need for more focused support for these children especially in the first few years of their schooling (Mann-Kler 1997; Gillespie *et al.* 1999; Connolly and Keenan 2000b). This is also a concern, more generally, for children of refugees and asylum seekers who will also often have extremely acute language needs when first arriving in Northern Ireland (McVeigh 2002).

In Great Britain, such additional financial support has been traditionally provided under Section 11 of the 1966 Local Government Act. To date, however, no similar support has been provided in Northern Ireland. Moreover, while there are reports of some very good services offered in relation to English language support by particular Education and Library Boards, the level of support has been found to vary significantly across the region (Gallagher 1999). There is certainly scope to consider the development of training programmes to equip minority ethnic people with the skills required to act as bi-lingual classroom assistants and/or teach English as a Second Language.

In addition, a number of respondents in Mann-Kler's (1997) research expressed a desire that their children are given the opportunity to learn their mother tongue in school, possibly up to and including GCSE level. While it is recognised that it is probably not feasible for each school to employ full-time teachers to provide such mother-tongue tuition, it may be possible for each Education and Library Board to draw up a central register of teachers able to teach languages such as Urdu, Hindi and Cantonese.

Multicultural/anti-racist curriculum

There is also a desire among many minority ethnic parents and children for schools and other educational bodies, such as the youth service, to develop a curriculum that reflects the multicultural nature of society (Gillespie *et al.* 1999; Connolly and Keenan 2000b; Milliken *et al.* 2000). It will be remembered from the previous section there is also strong support for this from the general population.

At present, however, teachers in Northern Ireland feel ill-equipped to incorporate a multicultural/anti-racist dimension to their work (Gallagher and Leitch 1998). Moreover, of those who have tried to include a multicultural perspective, it has sometimes been done in an insensitive manner (Mann-Kler 1997).

The research suggests that there is certainly a need therefore for a more multicultural/anti-racist approach that can permeate the school curriculum, not least because it would seem to be one of the most sensible ways of attempting to address the ignorance and rather negative racial attitudes of the general population outlined in the previous section. The proposed developments within the Northern Ireland Curriculum with regard to citizenship education certainly provides the potential for the successful integration of a multicultural/anti-racist dimension into a broader curricular framework.

However, such a curriculum needs to be carefully thought-out. Experience of multicultural teaching in England suggests that ill-considered and 'tokenistic' schemes can actually have a tendency to reinforce children's existing racial stereotypes (Connolly 1998). In addition, and as the Macpherson (1999) Report has recently proposed, children also need to be encouraged to engage more directly with the issue of racism and to explore its nature, negative effects and consequences.

Relations with parents

Irwin and Dunn (1996: 93) found that 50% of the Chinese community they sampled felt that they experienced difficulties in relation to educational provision. Much of this relates to language problems and many parents' frustration at not being able to help and support their children with regard to their school work (Connolly and Keenan 2000b).

However, for the Chinese community in particular, they also expressed problems in attending meetings with teachers, given the long hours they work in the catering industry (Connolly and Keenan 2000b; Holder 2001). The available research suggests therefore that further consideration should be given to not only arranging meeting times which are more suitable to the needs of the different minority ethnic communities, but also how parents may be given more practical support in helping their children.

Irish Traveller children

The most concerning trend in relation to the data on educational attainment is the serious underachievement of Irish Traveller children. Four key issues emerge from the research literature in relation to this.

First, the evidence suggests that preschool participation is very low among Travellers children (SACSP & STEP 2001). Recent figures from the Department of Education (DE 2001) indicate that only 18% of Traveller children were enrolled in a preschool place in 1998/9 compared to the overall participation rate of 56%. Given the importance of preschool education, a need exists therefore to encourage greater up-take among Travellers. This should be possible given that a recent survey of Travellers suggested that a large majority (72%) felt that it was either important or very important to send their children to existing local nurseries and preschool playgroups (Connolly and Keenan 2001b).

Second, the high levels of non-attendance at school among Travellers is also a significant matter of concern (Gorman 1986). As discussed earlier, Department of Education figures suggest that, in any one year, literally only a handful (between 10 and 30) Traveller children stay on at school to Year 12. More generally, a tendency still remains for many Traveller children not to stay on at school beyond primary education (Connolly and Keenan 2000b). The research by Connolly and Keenan (2000b) suggest three reasons for this: the negative attitudes of and/or low expectations held by teachers; the fear of bullying, especially at secondary school; and also a perception among Traveller children that education is not relevant to them (see also Butler 1986).

In addition, other research has suggested that another factor influencing parents' decisions not to send their children to school is the difficulty they face simply getting their children ready for school. For example, Noonan (1994: 67) found that two thirds of the parents that took part in his survey stated that they had problems preparing their children for school given the extremely poor environmental conditions on their site.

Third, the perception among some Traveller children that existing education is not relevant to them also raises the possibility of developing a more flexible curriculum for older Traveller children where those who want it could choose more practical, vocational subjects. Recent research has found that some Traveller children tend to prefer more practical and creative subjects (Mongan 2002). Moreover, a survey of Travellers found overwhelming support for such a change with 74% stating that a more flexible curriculum was very important and a further 25% stating that it was important (Connolly and Keenan 2001b). Among the types of vocational subjects they would like to see, Travellers mentioned carpentry, plumbing, mechanics, hairdressing and childcare.

Finally, a problem exists in relation to the existing Traveller-only primary school in Belfast. While the Department of Education is committed to the principle of fully integrating Traveller children into mainstream educational

provision, it is mindful of the need to respect the wishes of parents. A recent survey found that the views of Travellers were split with regard to whether the Traveller-only school should continue or should be phased out (Connolly and Keenan 2001b). Those that felt it should be phased out gave two main reasons.

The first reason related to a feeling that it was important for Traveller and settled children to mix to encourage better relations and understanding. The second related to the poor reputation that the school has had in the past when it did not cover the full curriculum and teachers were perceived to have low expectations of the children. While the school has since changed and the full curriculum is offered, such lasting perceptions remained, especially for those adult Travellers who had previously attended the school themselves.

For those who wish to keep the school as it is, they offered a number of reasons including that the children liked the school and that they were 'safer' there and thus less likely to be bullied. They also felt that Traveller children were more likely to be anxious and find attending school difficult. The existence of a Traveller-only primary school was therefore seen by some as a way of helping to address this problem and help the children to gain confidence so that they would be ready to mix by the time they reach secondary school.

Overall, it is clear that while fully integrating the Traveller children in Belfast into mainstream schools would be the most appropriate long-term goal, the evidence suggests that the issues are complex and a significant amount of work with children and parents will be needed to achieve this goal.

The Police

Two particular issues arise from the research to date in relation to minority ethnic people's experiences of policing in Northern Ireland. The first

relates to the higher levels of dissatisfaction Irwin and Dunn (1996: 95) found in relation to the Chinese community's attitudes towards the police service. More qualitative interviews suggest that this is, in part, related to a feeling that some police officers do not seem to take racial crimes seriously (Mann-Kler 1997; Connolly and Keenan 1999, 2000b). The situation appears to be changing however. The increase in the number of racist incidents reported to the police of over 400% between 1996 and 1999 suggests that there is both a greater awareness and commitment to addressing such incidents among the police as well as increasing confidence among minority ethnic people in reporting these in the first place (Jarman 2002).

Second, there appears to be poor relations between the police and sections of the Irish Traveller community (Jarman 1999; Connolly and Keenan 2001b). Irwin and Dunn (1996) found that Travellers were particularly reluctant to report crimes to the police, possibly reflecting a lack of confidence in them. Moreover, Mann-Kler (1997) reports incidents where the police would regularly visit some Traveller sites in search of stolen cars and other property.

Immigration and Asylum Seekers

Alongside the particular language, cultural and health needs of asylum seekers that has already been discussed, three key issues are evident from the research to date in relation to the issue of immigration and the needs of asylum seekers. The first relates to the detention of a significant proportion of asylum seekers in prison (Tennant 2000; McVeigh 2002). The research suggests that not only is it wholly inappropriate to lock up asylum seekers alongside convicted criminals, but that in the majority of cases it was unnecessary to detain them in the first place. This is especially significant given that in over a third of the cases studied, the detainee was separated from their children and/or partner (Tennant 2000). The research recommends therefore that clearer and more stringent criteria is used to determine whether an asylum seeker needs to be

detained and also, for those that do, that more appropriate accommodation be provided.

Second, a number of asylum seekers interviewed have complained of what they feel to be the unnecessarily long delays in processing their asylum applications (McVeigh 2002). For those who have been detained awaiting decisions on their applications, Tennant (2000: 12) found that the average period of detention was just under 36 days. However, there was significant variation in the overall lengths of detention which ranged from one to 235 days.

Third, for those who are not detained but are awaiting a decision on their application for asylum, many experienced a significant degree of frustration at not being allowed to work and being forced into dependence on food vouchers. A number of those interviewed found this hard to understand and consequently felt it to be degrading and debilitating (Holder and Lanao 2001; McVeigh 2002). It also created a situation where those who sought work in any case were more vulnerable to being abused and exploited (McVeigh 2002).

Finally, the emphasis on asylum seekers and illegal immigrants also tended to impact upon some of the minority ethnic people who had settled in Northern Ireland. During interviews with members of the Bangladeshi community, for example, Holder (2001) found that some felt resentment at what they perceived to be the unfair targeting of their businesses by immigration raids and the insensitive way in which such raids were carried out.

Conclusions

The many different issues raised in relation to the needs of the minority ethnic communities across the various service areas are too diverse and complex to summarise here. Three concluding points are worth making at this stage, however:

- the needs of minority ethnic people in relation to any particular area have to be seen as a combination of the specific issues raised above and the more general concerns outlined in the previous section. For example, because racist harassment was covered in the previous section, it was not explicitly raised in this section as an issue in relation to minority ethnic children in schools, even though increasing evidence suggests that some experience it quite routinely (Mann-Kler 1997; Chahal and Julienne 1999; Connolly and Keenan 2000b);
- The issues covered in this section in relation to the specific needs of the minority ethnic population are certainly not intended to be regarded as offering a comprehensive picture. The particular issues covered above relate simply to those concerns that have been raised by the research that has been conducted to date.
- the diversity and complexity of the needs identified draw attention to the importance of developing a systematic system of research, monitoring and evaluation in order to maintain an understanding of the differing needs of each community and of the effectiveness of existing programmes of intervention.

6. Key Challenges for Policy-Makers and Service Providers

From the foregoing sections it is clear that there is now a growing and fairly substantial body of research evidence on the needs and experiences of minority ethnic people in Northern Ireland. While there is still plenty more research to be done, there is sufficient agreement between the work that does exist for us to be pretty confident in identifying what the key problems are that need to be addressed with regard to 'race' and racism in the region. This is especially the case given the fact that there is so much overlap between the main findings arising from the research to date and the key themes and issues that have been raised by minority ethnic individuals and organisations themselves through a range of other events and publications.

Lack of detailed information can therefore no longer be used as an excuse for not taking appropriate action to meet the needs of minority ethnic people in Northern Ireland. While some of these needs are specific to particular service areas as highlighted in the previous section, many of the core needs are actually general in nature and cut across a range of service areas. Most obviously these include: overcoming the language barrier; providing information on services and facilities; increasing staff training on racial equality; meeting the basic cultural needs of minority ethnic people; and also addressing racial prejudice and racist harassment.

Given the amount of issues covered, it is not possible nor is it appropriate to conclude this report with a long and detailed list of recommendations. Much of the specific action that is required is apparent from the discussions contained in the previous sections. However, it is possible to draw attention to two over-arching challenges that now face policy-makers

and service providers in attempting to address the needs of minority ethnic people in Northern Ireland.

Adopting an Inter-Agency Approach

The first arises precisely from the recognition of the generic nature of many of the problems facing minority ethnic people in Northern Ireland. Given the limited resources that are also available, the challenge is for departments and agencies to devise effective and imaginative ways of working together to meet the needs of minority ethnic people. This is precisely the challenge identified by the Government through its Promoting Social Inclusion initiative. Certainly, the recommendations made by the PSI Working Group on Travellers in its report offers much potential for creating effective mechanisms not just for inter-agency working but also for the real involvement of Travellers and Traveller organisations in service planning and delivery.

More generally, it will only be through such inter-agency working and the pooling of expertise and resources that real progress will be made in terms of such matters as:

- the provision of interpreters;
- the development of multidisciplinary outreach work;
- the wider dissemination of information;
- the development of staff training programmes; and
- the development of a broader educational campaign in the media and in schools to raise awareness of issues of 'race' and racism in Northern Ireland.

Service Planning, Delivery and Monitoring

The second main challenge facing organisations and agencies is how best to plan, deliver and monitor the services it offers in order to ensure their

appropriateness to minority ethnic people. The requirements within the Northern Ireland Act and also the Government's New TSN initiative, will certainly ensure that each organisation and agency develops its own strategy in this regard.

From the discussion contained in the previous sections, some of the issues that will need to be considered within the development of any strategy include:

- the development of effective ethnic monitoring procedures;
- the establishment of procedures, more generally, for the long-term evaluation and strategic planning of policies and services for minority ethnic people;
- the development of appropriate and meaningful systems of consultation with minority ethnic communities and the support and resourcing of existing minority ethnic organisations to help them identify and play a role in addressing their own economic, social and cultural needs;
- the development of diverse and effective strategies for the dissemination of information regarding services offered;
- the development of effective equal opportunities procedures within any particular organisation or agency with regard to 'race' as well as clear and comprehensive strategies for dealing with racist harassment and discrimination; and
- the commissioning of research into areas of service provision where little knowledge is currently available (i.e. the general health patterns of the different minority ethnic groups).

Conclusions

It is clear that organisations and agencies in Northern Ireland face a challenging agenda ahead of them with regard to racial equality. Recent legislation and government initiatives have certainly provided the

immediate basis for this agenda. At the heart of the challenge lies the need to develop effective inter-agency working while also introducing comprehensive systems for strategically planning and monitoring service delivery. It is hoped that the research evidence outlined and discussed in this report will provide the necessary impetus for effectively responding to this challenge.

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Appendix: Useful Contacts

There are now a relatively large number of minority ethnic organisations and groups representing the interests of a range of communities in Northern Ireland. Rather than attempting to list them all here, further information and contact details can be gained from any of the general organisations listed below.

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

The Equality Commission is an independent public body responsible for combating discrimination and promoting equality in Northern Ireland. It was established under the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and, from 1 October 1999, has taken over the functions previously exercised by the Commission for Racial Equality for Northern Ireland, the Equal Opportunities Commission for Northern Ireland, the Fair Employment Commission and the Northern Ireland Disability Council.

- Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
Equality House, 7 - 9 Shaftesbury Square, Belfast BT2 7DP
Tel: 028 9050 0600 Fax : 028 9033 1544 Web: www.equalityni.org

Multicultural Resource Centre

The Multicultural Resource Centre was set up in 1991 and gained independence in 1998. It provides a range of services to all minority ethnic groups including a drop-in facility. It also provides information and training to the majority ethnic community and has an extensive reference library. MCRC has worked recently with emerging communities promoting volunteering, empowerment and conducting needs assessments. Current MCRC Projects are the Minority Ethnic Women's Project, the Active

Citizenship Project (Community Development and Outreach) and the Minority Ethnic Community Health and Wellbeing Project.

- Multicultural Resource Centre,
9 Lower Crescent, Belfast BT7 1NR
Tel: 028 9024 4639 Fax: 028 9032 9581 Web: www.mcrc.co.uk

Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities

The Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities is the main umbrella organisation representing the interests of the differing minority ethnic communities in Northern Ireland. It was set up in 1994 and has maintained a high profile ever since. Alongside adopting a distinct lobbying and campaigning focus, NICEM also offers a range of services including: interpreter training; immigration advice; asylum advice and support; anti-racist training; and capacity building.

- Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM),
3rd Floor, Ascot House, 24-31 Shaftesbury Square, Belfast, BT2 7DB
Tel: 028 9023 8645 Fax: 028 9031 9485 Web: www.nicem.org.uk