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**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE
FRAMEWORK CONVENTION FOR THE
PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES**

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



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Fifth Report submitted by the United Kingdom

**Pursuant to Article 25, paragraph 2 of the Framework
Convention for the Protection of National Minorities –
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**THE UNITED KINGDOM'S 5th REPORT TO THE
COUNCIL OF EUROPE UNDER THE
FRAMEWORK CONVENTION FOR THE
PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES**

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Introduction

The United Kingdom takes its responsibility to support and protect national minorities incredibly seriously and is committed to building a society in which all citizens feel safe, valued, and able to achieve their full potential.

The UK Government in Westminster is responsible for all citizens living in the United Kingdom and setting the direction for the country as a whole. Some policy objectives, such as health, housing and integration are Devolved to the National Administrations of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to allow the best possible understanding of and support for local communities. Where policy objectives differ between different Administrations, that will be made clear in this report.

Following the United Kingdom's 4th Report to the Council of Europe under the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM), the Council of Europe produced a series of recommendations for the UK to improve its provisions for National Minorities. This report will summarise the progress made against those recommendations, as well as any further, additional progress against the Articles of the Framework Convention.

The UK has applied the principles of the Framework Convention through a range of legislation and policies aimed at protecting minorities, reducing discrimination and hatred, and enhancing opportunity for everyone in the UK. While the UK does formally recognise certain groups as national minorities, the Government's approach has been to consider the experience and specific needs of all minority communities in the UK and to ensure that they receive the support they require.

The COVID-19 pandemic provides a uniquely challenging background to the publication of this report. Throughout our response to the pandemic, the Government has sought to protect all communities and undertake research to ensure the particular needs of different communities can be fully considered. Research undertaken by Public Health England summarised some of the disparities in risk and outcomes experienced by different ethnic groups. It showed that, after accounting for age, sex, deprivation and region, people from Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds had between 10% and 50% higher risk of death compared to White British ethnic groups¹. Engagement with stakeholders also identified that these inequalities were not created by COVID-19, but that the pandemic had exacerbated existing socio-economic inequalities between ethnic groups².

Following this review, the Secretary of State for Communities and the Equalities Minister outlined a wide set of measures to tackle some of the particular inequalities in relation to the pandemic including a mandate for ethnicity to be recorded as part of the death certification process, and the £25m Community Champions programme to enhance existing communication strategies in the most at risk places, and fund work with grassroots advocates from impacted communities³. The Community Champions project has been extended through 2021 and we continue to implement strategies to tackle inequalities through the lessons learnt in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

There was also significant work done, both at a local and national level, to encourage minority communities to participate in the vaccination programme, after evidence suggested that they were less likely to get vaccinated. The Government worked with over 90 faith, healthcare provider

¹ Public Health England, *Beyond the Data: Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on BAME groups*, 2020

² Ibid.

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/minister-for-equalities-sets-out-government-action-to-tackle-covid-disparities> (Accessed June 2021).

networks, influencers and experts from a range of communities to address people’s concerns about the COVID-19 vaccine. We also produced targeted communications campaigns in minority languages and in regional and community-specific media to tackle disinformation about the vaccine and encourage communities to get the vaccine when offered. Ensuring that communities were able to access the vaccine in a location that felt safe and familiar was also found to increase participation, and Government partnered with a wide range of faith groups and community centres to provide vaccination facilities⁴.

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-updates-on-identifying-and-tackling-covid-19-disparities>

Progress against 4th Reporting Cycle Recommendations

Race and Ethnicity in Policy Making

Para 21. The Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to give due consideration to the claims for recognition under the Framework Convention of groups expressing their interest, such as Muslims or other groups, and to engage in a dialogue with them

Para. 53. The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to ensure that support for cultural activities of all national and ethnic minorities is increased across the country and procedures improved, so that their representatives may participate in decision making on the allocation of grants.

The UK Government interprets the Framework Convention in broad terms and does not consider it necessary for minority groups to be named and recognised under the Framework Convention to benefit from support.

We are proud of the myriad of communities which come together to form the rich tapestry of life in the UK. All play an integral role in shaping the journey and identity of this nation. We have also been clear that there is no place in society for racism, and we are committed to combatting all forms of racism, both at home and abroad.

We have made great strides to become a fairer and more tolerant society but acknowledge that there is much more to do. The ethnic disparities highlighted by the Race Disparity Audit and the COVID-19 pandemic have uncovered some uncomfortable truths that cannot be tackled overnight, nor by Government alone. But we are determined that opportunities must be open to everyone regardless of ethnicity. This programme of change requires a concerted effort by Government, partners and communities to come together to provide opportunities for everyone, regardless of their ethnic background.

The UK is also firmly committed to actively participating in the full range of racism-related UN mechanisms, as well as speaking out against instances of racism and intolerance bilaterally and in multilateral fora. We have participated in and joined consensus on the key 21st century UN events and instruments on racism.

On 16 June 2020, the UK's Ambassador for Human Rights reiterated the UK's unwavering commitment to combatting racism both at home and internationally, during the Item 9 debate at the 43rd session of the UN Human Rights Council.

Alongside our work to highlight and combat ethnic disparities, we have a strong programme of work to support faith communities and combat religious hatred. Throughout our response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have strengthened our engagement with faith leaders through the Places of Worship Taskforce. This Taskforce has met regularly to discuss measures to keep places of worship and religious communities safe during the pandemic, whilst balancing their rights to religious practice. This has reinforced our continued regular work with religious communities to understand their concerns and ensure that their views are reflected in policy discussions.

We have also maintained Cross-Government Working Groups to Tackle Antisemitism and Anti-Muslim Hatred. These working groups allow us to understand and respond quickly to issues in Muslim and Jewish communities. Home Office data on police-recorded hate crimes shows that

Muslim and Jewish communities continue to be disproportionately affected by hate crime. In 2018/19 just under half (47%) of religious hate crime offences were targeted against Muslims. Jewish people were the second most targeted faith group, with 18% of religious hate crime offences targeted against Jewish people.

Para 32. The authorities should amend the statutes to include language and caste as grounds of discrimination under the definition of race

The Law Commission is currently undertaking a full review of hate crime legislation to consider whether current legislation goes far enough to protect all protected characteristics, including race. This included undertaking a public consultation which is currently being analysed, and the Law Commission intends to publish its review and recommendations towards the end of 2021⁵, and will then be considered by Government.

Recommendation: Ensure that policy documents, such as integration and race strategies, are complemented by appropriate action plans and adequate resources to ensure effective access to rights for persons belonging to minorities, in particular with regard to the Northern Ireland Racial Equality Strategy 2015-2025.

The Equality Act 2010 introduced the Public Sector Equality Duty with the aim of improving outcomes for all groups. The Duty came into force in April 2011 and requires public authorities in England and non-devolved public authorities in Scotland and Wales to “have due regard to the need to achieve the objectives set out under s149 of the Equality Act 2010 to:

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

The Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex, and Sexual Orientation.

To ensure transparency, and to assist in the performance of this duty, the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 requires public authorities to publish equality objectives, at least every four years, and information to demonstrate their compliance with the public sector equality duty.

When making policy decisions, Government officials and ministers must undertake an Equality Impact Assessment which evaluates the potential impacts of the proposed policy (both positive and negative) against the Public Sector Equality Duty and demonstrates any mitigations put in place to limit any negative impact.

⁵ <https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/hate-crime/> (Accessed July 2021)

Wales

The Race Equality Plan for Wales is a plan for anti-racism, not a strategy. We intend this to be a practical plan, outlining specific actions to be taken across all the key policy areas which emerged from our co-construction work. Our Nation of Sanctuary Plan is supported by detailed actions

Participation in Public Life

Para 136. The Advisory Committee reiterates its call to the authorities to enhance opportunities for persons belonging to national and ethnic minorities to participate in public affairs, and this should include measures that facilitate their engagement in broader political processes and mainstream political parties. Similarly, their recruitment into public service, in particular the police at central and local levels, should be promoted to send a clear message that diversity is valued across the UK.

The Government works with experts across sectors and provide funding to several initiatives to engage citizens in our democracy, make it more accessible and protect everyone's vote.

The introduction of online registration has resulted in record levels of people registering to vote and our Accessibility of Elections Working Group works to enhance inclusiveness in our democracy.

We also provide funding for the National Citizen Service (NCS) programme, which is open to all 15 - 17-year-olds across England and brings young people from different backgrounds together with a commitment to improve social cohesion, social mobility, and social engagement. The programme has a higher than average representation of young people that qualify for free school meals, who are from minority communities and have special education needs and disabilities (SEND).

The NCS curriculum focuses on democratic engagement, including sessions on Bite The Ballot which encourages young people to get involved with UK democracy. In 2019, 160 political stakeholders visited an NCS programme, which included 137 MPs. The most recent NCS evaluation shows a positive impact on participants saying they are likely to vote at the next election or referendum.

We have been working hard to improve diversity and inclusivity in the public sector and have set the challenge of making the civil service the most inclusive employer in the UK. The Civil Service Diversity and Inclusion Strategy⁶, developed in 2017, sets out the approach to increase the representation of groups that are currently under-represented in the civil service, and to build a culture of and reputation for inclusivity in order to attract and develop a diverse talent pool across Government.

Regarding recruitment to the police, the Government is recruiting an additional 20,000 police officers in the Police Uplift programme. The Police Uplift is a once in a generation opportunity to bring a range of people into policing from all communities and backgrounds. We want to be able to bring in the best and brightest talent from across the communities they serve. Including more women, and Black, Asian and Minority ethnic officers as well as recruits from a broad range of socioeconomic backgrounds. Latest data from the Uplift Programme (published on 29 April 2021) shows that since April 2020, 10.6% of new recruits (who stated their ethnicity) identified as belonging to a Minority Ethnic group.⁷

We are working hard to deliver the diverse police workforce that our communities need by coordinating efforts between Government and policing to not only attract more diverse candidates into policing, but to ensure it's a career where all recruits can thrive. Sharing best practice,

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/658488/Strategy_v10_FINAL_WEB6_TEST_021117.pdf (accessed July 2021)

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-officer-uplift-quarterly-update-to-march-2021/police-officer-uplift-england-and-wales-quarterly-update-to-31-march-2021> (accessed July 2021)

engagement with police staff associations, upskilling recruitment teams and enhanced data capture are just some of the efforts being made to improve police diversity.

The national police recruitment campaign was launched in September 2019 and continues to run to support the drive to recruit 20,000 new officers over 3 years (March 2023) and to make forces more representative of the communities they serve. The campaign includes always-on advertising and bursts of activity on a number of media channels including TV, radio, social media and digital, as well as a centralised national website that highlights which police forces are recruiting, and stakeholder activity to encourage forces and policing partners to be advocates of the campaign. The most recent wave of evaluation showed that 50% of adults aged 16-54 in England and Wales recognised the campaign – with 51% saying that the campaign made them more likely to consider a policing career. The national police recruitment website - “Make your difference”⁸ has had over 2.4 million site visitors since launch, with over half of these clicking through to a force or recruitment partner website.

The recent campaign activation on 18 May 2021, was the launch of a partnership with Channel 4; a three-part series of new films for TV, channel4.com and social media. The films feature serving officers having 1-to-1 conversations with real members of the public. The conversations were unscripted and touch on subjects we know are barriers for people when considering joining the police - particularly for people from minority ethnic groups, people who identify as LGBTQ+ and women. The next phase of TV-led advertising is anticipated to be launched in autumn 2021.

To support this paid activity, we provide police force communications teams and wider policing partners with access to the national campaign assets, so they can use them to support their own local recruitment campaigns as well as amplify the national campaign. We also continue to work closely with the Police Uplift Programme (PUP) communications team to support police forces to build local capability in running Attraction and Outreach strategies, including local recruitment campaigns by sharing insights from the national campaign.

Government communications teams are also working closely with Police Associations to create individual Association pages on the national website, and a series of co-created social assets, to help promote the support available to people considering a career in policing and help to myth-bust the common barriers to entry for groups currently under-represented in policing.

Para 137. The UK Government should continue the good dialogue with the three devolved administrations and ensure that negotiations progress in a transparent and democratic manner. It should establish permanent ongoing dialogue with Cornwall Council and the Cornish people through consultative and advisory mechanisms.

The UK Government and the devolved administrations (DAs) jointly agreed to a review of intergovernmental relations (IGR) to ensure intergovernmental structures remain fit for purpose. The review builds upon the current Memorandum of Understanding on Devolution and is just one of many steps the UK Government is taking towards implementing our vision for a strengthened Union.

The publication of the progress update on the joint review of intergovernmental relations on 24 March 2021 demonstrates the significant progress we’ve made. The draft reforms are a product of

⁸ <https://www.joiningthepolice.co.uk/>

joint thinking between the UKG and DAs, and our significant progress in reconciling a range of goals and aspirations from all parts of the UK to develop a new system for future IGR.

It is the most detailed publication on our joint progress for developing future reforms since the review was first agreed by the UK Government and devolved administrations in 2018. This product is the result of months and years of detailed joint analysis on how the UKG and DAs can work together most effectively.

We remain committed to positively changing our ways of working for the long-term. While there are still some areas in the draft reforms to agree, left in square brackets in the publication, we recognise the value of being transparent and open with the public and parliamentarians across the UK on where we have got to in jointly developing new IGR structures and processes.

We recognise the need to create a more equal, transparent, and accountable system for IGR to improve collaboration between the UKG and DAs on matters of mutual interest to benefit all citizens of the whole of the UK. This is why the UK Government also published its first transparency report on IGR on 24 March, which sits as part of the UKG's wider commitments for enhanced transparency of IGR announced through a written ministerial statement in November 2020.

The progress update published on 24 March 2021 demonstrates the four administrations' significant progress in revising intergovernmental working arrangements to positively work together, especially to support the UK's Covid-19 recovery, while respecting the different responsibilities and competences of the UK Government and devolved administrations⁹.

Engagement between Central Government and Cornwall Council remains generally positive. The existing Devolution Deal with Cornwall has been successfully delivered with the implementation of the Intermediate Body arrangements under the European Structural Investment Funds proving particularly beneficial to both parties. Cornwall will benefit from new investment in its town centres and natural landscape under plans to create a long-term legacy from the G7 Summit. The Town Deals announced for Penzance, St Ives and Camborne are worth over £65 million and will fund projects at the heart of communities in some of Cornwall's most deprived areas.¹⁰

G7 Summit Legacy programmes in Cornwall include creating a new network of foot and cycle paths across Camborne, Penzance and from St Ives to St Erth. Community hubs including theatres, sports clubs and historic buildings will also be restored and expanded to ensure both residents and visitors can fully enjoy the cultural heritage of the region. Other funding will go to sustain businesses and commercial sectors most badly hit by the coronavirus pandemic and to create new business hubs in the towns which will re-establish them as economic powerhouses and centres of innovation – creating long term, sustainable jobs.

Para 146. The Advisory Committee urges the authorities to ensure that any administrative and constituency border reform follows an inclusive process, which takes into account the presence of

⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/progress-update-on-the-review-of-intergovernmental-relations> (Accessed July 2021)

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-announces-new-funding-for-cornwall-to-create-a-g7-legacy-for-the-region> (Accessed July 2021)

persons belonging to a national minority in the territory, their meaningful participation and respect for their rights.

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) was established in 2010 by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. It is an independent Parliamentary body, responsible to the Speaker's Committee. It is vital that the independence, impartiality, and transparency of the LGBCE, as provided for by Parliament, is respected to guard against the risk of gerrymandering and provide confidence in fair local elections.

The LGBCE is responsible for local government electoral reviews, i.e. determining the number of councillors on every council and setting the ward/electoral division boundaries, and has a critical role in local government reorganisations, being responsible for putting in place the long-term electoral arrangements of new unitary councils.

The Act allows the LGBCE to undertake three forms of review:

- Electoral Reviews of the internal boundaries of local authorities
- Principal Area Boundary Reviews of the external boundaries of local authority areas
- Structural Reviews for example recommending whether two-tier areas should move to single-tier local government.

In carrying out electoral reviews, it has statutory duties under schedule 2 to the 2009 Act¹¹ to:

- Deliver electoral equality for local voters
- Reflect the interests and identities of local communities
- Promote effective and convenient local government and reflecting electoral cycles

Recommending and implementing local electoral arrangements that reflect the identities, needs and locations of diverse communities across England is therefore a key part of the work of the LGBCE.

The LGBCE has developed a People Strategy which puts equality, diversity and inclusion at the heart of what the LGBCE does and has overseen a project to ensure that the work of the Commission is as accessible as possible to all those who wish to engage with the LGBCE on its important responsibilities.

The Commission also runs an equalities working group that has a work programme covering key issues of equality in review work and internal processes and procedures. The group's current action plan includes reviewing policies and screening guidance, providing regular equality and diversity training for staff and providing guidance on completing equality impact assessments.

Recognising the small size of the organisation, the LGBCE are members of the Employers Network for Equality & Inclusion (ENEI) to help them in their work in this area.

¹¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/20/schedule/2>

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities

Para 20. Authorities should also pay attention to the specificities of Gypsies, Travellers and Roma as distinct groups to reconfigure statistics and effectively tailor policy making to their needs and in consultation with their representatives.

Para 49. The authorities in England should start collecting disaggregated data on Gypsies, Travellers and Roma, and should devise policies targeting the specific needs of persons belonging to those groups.

Recommendation: Collect disaggregated data on Gypsies, Travellers and Roma to help devise policies targeting the socio-economic inequalities that persons belonging to those minorities experience in England; start collecting disaggregated equality data on the situation of persons belonging to national and ethnic minorities to help adopt and implement effective minority protection and equality-promoting policies in Northern Ireland.

The Government recognises that members of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities continue to have the poorest outcomes in society, and we remain committed to tackling serious disparities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

The UK Government has put in significant effort in recent years to understand the specific needs of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and provide them with appropriate support. We maintain a Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Liaison Group which meets regularly to allow members of these communities to feed in directly to Government and support policy thinking.

Following the Government's Race Disparity Audit in 2018, and the creation of the Race Disparity Unit, there has been increased emphasis on using data to understand the different life experiences of different ethnic groups. The purpose of the Race Disparity Unit (RDU) is to drive change by publishing authoritative data and analysis about the variances in treatment or outcome affecting people of different ethnicities.

Some data for Gypsy, Roma and Travellers is disaggregated on the RDU Ethnicity facts and figures website¹². These data are currently being summarised in a methods and quality report for publication by RDU, using data from the 2011 England and Wales Census; educational attainment data from the Department for Education (DfE); and some health and housing datasets. This report will additionally provide further advice on the robustness and coverage of data about Gypsy, Roma and Travellers.

Ethnicity facts and figures will be updated with new England and Wales Census data when results for 2021 become available in the future.

The Race Disparity Unit also published a 'Quality Improvement Plan' on 17 April 2020¹³. The plan provides a detailed overview of the RDU's work to address issues related to the quality of ethnicity data. This is intended to be a 2-year work plan starting from publication in April 2020.

It outlines actions that the RDU will take, in collaboration with other government departments, to address issues related to the quality of ethnicity data. While the plan sets out actions to improve data for all ethnic groups, it will have an impact on the quality of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller data.

¹² <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/> (accessed July 2021)

¹³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/quality-improvement-plan-government-ethnicity-data/quality-improvement-plan-government-ethnicity-data>

One of the most significant aspects of the plan is the harmonisation of ethnicity classifications to ensure that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller categories appear in data collections. The 2011 Census had a Gypsy and Irish Traveller tick box; the 2021 Census additionally had a tick box for the Roma group. RDU are continuing to work closely with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on ethnicity classifications and promoting disaggregation of statistics into the most detailed ethnic groups that can be supported by the data.

RDU, ONS and Government Digital Service (GDS) have recently collaborated to move the digital design pattern for collecting ethnicity via online government services to the existing (2011 Census-based) harmonised standard. This means that data for Gypsy and Irish Travellers and the other ethnic groups in the standard can be collected consistently. Longer term, this design pattern will be kept up to date with evolving data collection standards that might include, for example, the inclusion of a Roma tick box.

Wales

During the development of the draft Race Equality Action Plan which the Welsh Government is currently consulting on, we heard evidence that there are significant gaps in race and ethnicity data resulting in poor understanding of the experiences and outcomes of ethnic minority people. We are currently scoping out the remit of a Race Disparity Unit and an Equality Data and Evidence Unit. Working with trades unions and employers, we will build diversity, inclusion and anti-racism objectives into the new work programme of the Workforce Partnership Council. In March 2021 we enacted the Socio-economic Duty for relevant bodies, which means those bodies now need to undertake an assessment of socio-economic impact as part of making strategic decisions.

Para 69. The authorities in England should revert to previous legislation addressing specifically the provision of permanent and temporary sites for the Gypsies and Travellers minority, and reinstate a duty on local authorities to provide these sites when the need has been identified in order to ensure an adequate supply; and expand good practices such as the negotiated stopping policy in Leeds.

Para 70. It also calls on the Scottish authorities to reintroduce a compliance duty for local authorities in respect of the provision of sites, and set-up a multi-agency Taskforce on Traveller accommodation in Northern Ireland to cater for the needs of Irish Travellers.

England

Under Section 124 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016, local housing authorities have a duty to consider the housing and accommodation needs of all persons who reside in and resort to their area, including those that live on caravan sites and houseboats. Sites can be provided in a number of ways, by local authorities as well as through private development or development by Registered Social Landlords.

It is the responsibility of local authorities to assess the need for gypsy and traveller sites in their area, and then plan to meet that need, in the same way that they plan for all forms of housing.

Scotland

Local authorities are required under the 2001 Housing (Scotland) Act to prepare a Local Housing Strategy (LHS), setting out the strategic vision for the delivery of housing and housing related services, including meeting the needs of Gypsy/Travellers. The LHS is supported by a Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA), providing an evidence-base that includes the need for specialist provision and related services for people who share a protected characteristic. The Scottish Government published updated LHS guidance in September 2019, re-affirming the need for local authorities to have a full understanding of the requirements of Gypsy/Travellers in their local areas and set out plans addressing future need. The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 also includes new duties for planning authorities to set out how they have engaged with Gypsy/Travellers in their local development plan evidence reports, and to report on how they have met the accommodation needs of Gypsy/Travellers.

The Scottish Government published a shared Action Plan, Improving the Lives of Scotland's Gypsy/Travellers¹⁴ with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities in October 2019 which includes a number of actions to improve accommodation for Gypsy/Travellers, including a key commitment to the collective review of housing and investment programmes, to ensure that the needs of Gypsy/Travellers are included. As a result, the Scottish Government provided £2 million of short-term funding to existing public sector sites in 2020-21, with a focus on making immediate improvements for residents. In addition, the Scottish Government is making up to £20 million available over the five years 2021-26, under the Gypsy/Traveller Accommodation Fund. The fund is intended for both significant renovation and improvements of standards on existing sites and the building of new sites.

Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland Department for Communities is responsible for housing policy in Northern Ireland including housing for Irish Travellers. The strategic role and responsibility for the provision of accommodation is the responsibility of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE). Some members of the Traveller communities in NI live in social housing provided by NIHE or Housing Associations, whilst others wish to live in Serviced, Transit or Halting sites.

The NIHE has recently published an Irish Travellers Accommodation Strategy 2021-2026. The Strategy will support the provision of accommodation to meet the needs of Irish Travellers and sets out plans to provide the Traveller community with access to good quality, culturally appropriate housing accommodation which fosters sustainable, vibrant Traveller communities and promotes inclusion, a sense of belonging and security.

The Department for Communities has also recently reviewed the Design Guide for Travellers' Sites in Northern Ireland and after consultation with Travellers' groups and other stakeholders, published an updated guide in October 2020. The guide is intended to support the provision of appropriate, cost effective facilities for Travellers living in Northern Ireland. It seeks to outline the key issues, including the relevant planning context, that could be considered and identify the main design and management elements necessary to create high quality and sustainable Traveller sites which meet residents' traditional and cultural needs.

¹⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/improving-lives-scotlands-gypsy-travellers-2019-2021/> (Accessed July 2021)

Para 115. The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to effectively monitor the measures adopted to guarantee equal access to, and enhance achievements of, pupils belonging to national and ethnic minorities, with particular attention to Gypsies, Travellers and Roma children to ensure they are not left behind

Recommendation: Monitor effectively the measures adopted to guarantee equal access to education and to enhance the achievements of pupils belonging to national and ethnic minorities, with particular attention to Gypsies, Traveller and Roma children across the country

The Government has a strong focus on supporting all disadvantaged pupils, and to enhance the achievements of pupils including those from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities through a number of initiatives. The Government announced in July this year a £1m GRT Pilot Education Areas programme across five Local Authority Areas to improve the education attainment and life chances of GRT children and young people.

This £1 million funding is in addition to the £400,000 funding, announced last year, for catch-up tutoring for GRT children, where the project provided support on lost learning, one-to-one support and expert guidance to help young people progress in education or find employment. Schools in England continue to receive the Pupil Premium, due to increase to £2.5 billion this year, to enable them to provide extra support and so improve disadvantaged pupils' academic and personal achievements. Since 2011 the attainment gap has narrowed by 13% at age 11 and 9% at age 16 as measured by the department's gap index. Our widespread reforms, and the focus provided by the pupil premium, have supported this improvement. Over 14,000 Gypsy, Roma or Traveller of Irish heritage pupils are eligible for Free School Meals. This represents over 40% of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils, compared with 17% of all pupils eligible for Free School Meals, meaning Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils disproportionately attract pupil premium funding for their school or local authority.

They similarly attract additional funding, directed towards pupils eligible for Free School Meals, through the National Funding Formula. We are supporting those with traveller lifestyles through additional mobility funding. We recognise that there are costs associated with pupils who join the school midway through an academic year, and that these can be significant for schools with a high proportion of mobile pupils. The mobility factor in the National Funding Formula provides funding to local authorities (LA) to support these schools with high levels of pupil mobility. The National Funding Formula includes an English as an Additional Language (EAL) as a factor, which allocates funding to schools for pupils with EAL who have entered the state education system in England during the last three years. This will support all pupils with EAL. In 2021-22 the National Funding Formula will be distributing £420 million through the EAL factor.

The Government collects and disseminates data on educational and other outcomes by ethnicity, including for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people. The Ethnicity Facts and Figures website is managed by the Government to data publicly available in one place and allow us to draw links between different indicators and datasets.

The Statistics Improvement and Coherence Plan by the UK Department for Education will review the breakdowns we publish and modernise the way that statistics are accessed. We collect pupil ethnicities, including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller and travellers of Irish heritage, through the school census and this is available for all our statistics that link to the national pupil database.

The Race Disparity Audit (RDA), collates existing data on outcomes by race and ethnicity across the public sector, including educational data. It highlights the disparities of outcomes of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community; the causes for which are complex, overlapping with barriers to positive health, education and social integration outcomes.

To help school leaders make good choices about the best way to support disadvantaged pupils, the Government has published research by the National Foundation for Educational Research which shows the characteristics of successful schools and funded the Education Endowment Foundation to trial and promote what works best to accelerate progress.

The Government has also commissioned a review of effective behaviour, which highlights strategies that school leaders can employ to create a school culture that prevents classroom disruption, maintains good discipline and promotes pupils' education, focus and wellbeing.

We published 'Respectful School Communities'¹⁵ - a self-review and signposting tool to support schools to develop a whole-school approach which promotes respect and discipline. This can combat bullying, harassment and prejudice of any kind.

We have also published a research report which details common strategies that specific schools have found to be effective for combating bullying along with more detailed case studies to show the practical actions taken by the schools. This includes an example of a school who have undertaken work to increase understanding of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (Gypsy, Roma and Traveller) communities in order to challenge stereotypes and support pupils to understand and respect those from different backgrounds and communities.

Para 142. It also reiterates its call on the authorities to step up efforts to reduce inequalities experienced by Gypsies, Travellers and Roma in social and economic life, specifically implementing measures in close co-operation with those communities' representatives to prevent discrimination in employment and housing, health inequalities and inadequate social services interventions that result in undue taking of children into foster care.

The Government is committed to ensuring that every child is in a loving, stable home that's right for them. The Government believes that in most cases children are best looked after by their families and our courts will only remove children as a last resort, when it is clear to do so would be in the child's best interest.

The Government has high ambitions for these children, just as good parents have for their own children. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 sets out 'corporate parenting principles' to which local authorities should have regard as they take on the role of parent to looked-after children and care leavers.

The Children Act 1989 promotes the approach that all children and their parents should be considered as individuals and that family structures, culture, religion, ethnic origins and other characteristics should be respected.

¹⁵ https://educateagainsthate.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/6.4953_DFE_Respectful-schools_signposting-tool_FINAL_Fillable_Client_Cop....pdf

Hate Crime, Extremism and Radicalisation

Para 76. The authorities should intensify their efforts to counter the increasing climate of inter-ethnic prejudice and hate speech by stepping up efforts and initiatives to promote tolerance and intercultural dialogue, firmly condemning derogatory and racially hostile language in public discourse and calling on all political parties to refrain from using it. The Advisory Committee also calls on the authorities to engage with media outlets to promote a more nuanced understanding and reporting of facts to avoid fuelling intolerant and ethnically hostile behaviour while promoting the use of less derogatory language.

The Government takes all forms of hate crime very seriously which is why we published the hate crime action plan in July 2016. This plan was refreshed in October 2018¹⁶ and we continue to strengthen our approach.

The government is now considering a range of options to tackle hate crime beyond the current action plan. We will work with civil society partners to explore possible approaches, and to ensure a range of views from communities are taken into consideration.

In November 2020, the Government awarded £1.8 million through the Faith, Race and Hate Crime Grant Scheme¹⁷ to support established community groups and civil society organisations to run short projects to boost shared values and tackle religiously and racially-motivated hate crime.

In December 2020, the UK Government updated its Online Harms White Paper¹⁸, following a public consultation. The Government has committed to establishing a new statutory duty of care to tackle harms caused by content or activity on online services, including hate crime and hate speech. Compliance with this duty of care will be overseen and enforced by an independent regulator.

We have a strong legal framework in place to deal with hate crime perpetrators. In October 2020, the Crown Prosecution Service updated its prosecution guidance¹⁹ on different strands of hate crime in England and Wales including racist and religious hate crime²⁰.

In September 2020, the Law Commission began a full review of hate crime legislations in England and Wales, including a consultation on reforms to the legal framework on hate crime, following a request by the UK Government for it to review the laws and consider amendments to improve their effectiveness. The Law Commission is due to report towards the end of 2021.

Wales

The Welsh Government has funded a community cohesion programme since 2012. Our work to promote community cohesion is an integral part of our wider strategy to reduce hate crime in Wales. The Welsh Government-funded Community Cohesion Programme delivers a range of proactive and preventative work to identify and mitigate community tensions before they escalate.

¹⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hate-crime-action-plan-2016> (Accessed July 2021)

¹⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/faith-race-and-hate-crime-grants-scheme-announces-1-8-million-in-project-support> (Accessed July 2021)

¹⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/online-harms-white-paper/online-harms-white-paper#a-new-regulatory-framework> (Accessed July 2021)

¹⁹ <https://www.cps.gov.uk/crime-info/hate-crime> (Accessed July 2021)

²⁰ <https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/racist-and-religious-hate-crime-prosecution-guidance> (Accessed July 2021)

The programme embodies the Public Sector Equality Duty to ensure all protected characteristics and minority groups are considered in activity contributing towards eliminating discrimination, fostering good relations and ensuring equality of opportunity. In March 2021 we launched our anti-hate crime campaign "Hate Hurts Wales" <https://gov.wales/hate-hurts-wales>. The campaign aims to raise awareness of the impact hate crime has. It encourages victims and bystanders to report hate crime to help create a safer Wales. It also sends a message to perpetrators that their hate hurts everyone, including themselves.

Para 77. The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to ensure that measures taken to prevent radicalisation do not have disproportionate consequences for persons belonging to ethnic minorities, in particular children.

The UK Government's counter-terrorism response is built on an approach that unites the public and private sectors, communities, citizens and overseas partners around the single purpose to leave no safe space for terrorists to recruit or act. Our strategy, CONTEST, is the framework that enables us to organise this work to counter all forms of extremism.

Government and academic research have consistently indicated that there is no single socio-demographic profile of a terrorist in the UK, and no single pathway or 'conveyor belt' leading to involvement in terrorism. Terrorists come from a broad range of backgrounds and appear to become involved in different ways and for differing reasons. We have not therefore framed our CONTEST strategy around particular identities or gender.

The Prevent programme (a key strand of CONTEST), is about safeguarding and supporting vulnerable people to stop them from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. Our Prevent work also extends to supporting the rehabilitation and disengagement of those already involved in terrorism, so they can be reintegrated safely back into society.

Prevent does not target a specific faith, ethnic group, or children – it deals with all forms of extremism, including Islamist and extreme right-wing terrorism. Prevent is implemented in a proportionate manner that takes into account the level of risk in any given area or institution.

The cornerstone of Prevent is our local work with communities and civil society organisations. We support civil society organisations across the country to deliver a wide range of projects working with schools, families and in local communities to build their awareness of the risks of radicalisation, their resilience to terrorist narratives and propaganda, and to help them know what to do if they have concerns that someone has been radicalised. We support these groups to develop bespoke projects, best suited to tackle the threat from radicalisation in local communities.

We also ensure that all aspects of our work are properly monitored and evaluated to inform decision-making and future developments of work programmes. Our work to tackle the causes of radicalisation and safeguard vulnerable people is having an impact.

The Criminal Justice System

Para 35. The Advisory Committee further calls on the authorities to review the rules applicable to legal aid and fees in employment discrimination cases to ensure effective access to justice for persons belonging to national minorities.

We carried out a post-implementation review of LASPO in 2019, which included an assessment of the equalities impact of the legislation and we carry out equalities assessments of all new policy proposals.

Para 82. The authorities should intensify their efforts to raise public trust in the effectiveness of the legal remedies available against hate crime by increasing communication on cases, and recording and publicising the application of enhanced sentencing, where imposed.

In 2021/22, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) is refreshing its approach to hate crime communications, with the following aims in mind:

- Build greater confidence with specific community groups experiencing hate crime who may face additional barriers to reporting or have had little or no past contact with the CPS
- Provide more consistent and timely messaging on hate crime, internally and externally celebrating the positives of successful prosecutions and helpful engagement with communities
- Work with our existing community stakeholders, including the Hate Crime External Consultative Group (ECG), by addressing any gaps in our communications with communities and providing more relevant updates and effective outcomes

As part of this work, the CPS will build on existing relations with communities impacted by hate crime, such as the stakeholder webinars which are offered to community members and community support workers, to enhance awareness of the hate crime legal framework and to offer the chance to ask questions. Another facet of this relationship building has focused on the Hate Crime Newsletter which provides community stakeholders with an update on successful prosecutions, forthcoming community engagements and issues of national interest.

The CPS will also be refreshing its hate crime leaflet with input from communities affected and will be incorporating supplementary resources for specific communities such as case studies; answers to common queries from the community in question; and any emerging issues of concern.

Para 83. The Advisory Committee also calls on them to further improve training of law enforcement to detect, investigate and bring to justice all hate speech and hate-motivated offences, and to monitor more closely hate crime against Gypsies, Travellers and Roma

Working with a range of community organisations since 2016, the CPS has sought to build confidence within Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. Central to this approach was the establishment of a National Scrutiny Panel (NSP) focused on Hate Crime experienced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. Members have been drawn predominantly from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community organisations with a focus on supporting the victims of hate crime and more recently representatives from the national police leads have also attended.

The CPS Hate Crime Newsletter regularly carries articles provided by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community members. such as: the report from Gate Herts and Buckinghamshire New University, Hate as “Regular as Rain”, examining the psychological effects of hate crime in Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities; an article from Traveller Pride formed in 2019 to bring a group of LGBT+ people from all travelling backgrounds together to walk at London Pride; and an article celebrating Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month from the Director of Romani Arts in Wales.

The CPS is currently developing a promotional video in partnership with the Traveller Movement to raise awareness of hate crime affecting communities and increase the confidence to report.

A Hate Crime training package was delivered between 2015-18 and covered all monitored strands under hate crime legislation. Specific references to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities highlighted that the law on hate crime applied to Romany Gypsies, Irish Travellers and Roma. This package was refreshed in 2020 and is now being rolled out as part of a compulsory 2 day session for all new prosecutors.

The CPS is unable to disaggregate data for any of the monitored strands of hate crime. Files will include a “flag” which indicates that the victim or any other person perceived that the offender demonstrated hostility on one or more of the monitored strands, or that the offence was motivated by such hostility.

As referenced above the National Scrutiny Panel on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller and Hate Crime continues to meet. The most recent meeting in March 2021, including representatives from the National Police Chiefs Council on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller issues and on Hate Crime. The agenda included Gypsy, Roma and Traveller experience of reporting other offences; Police response to hate crime targeting Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities; and exploring the gaps/links between civil and criminal law.

Workplace and Employment

Para 34. Bearing in mind that the employers' duty to determine the community background of the workforce impinges on the right to free self-identification, as protected by Article 3(1) of the Framework Convention, the Advisory Committee reiterates its call for careful monitoring of this duty measured against progress made to achieve fairness in the workplace, and its call to introduce monitoring of the nationality and ethnic origin of the workforce.

The Government is committed to the collection of ethnicity data, which reflects the strength of user need for this information. It helps support equality of opportunity; informs work to reduce disparities; and informs resource allocation.

There should be transparency in explaining to those being asked to report their ethnicity (the data subject) what the information will be used for, and the approach to collecting data should make it as quick and easy as possible for the individual

The way ethnicity data is collected should be acceptable to people and use categories they can relate to - Users should self-identify their ethnicity wherever this is possible and practical. This ensures the highest quality of ethnicity reporting

The Race Disparity Unit and the Office for National Statistics recommend collecting data using harmonised classifications for the detailed ethnic groups in the order shown. This classification currently follows the approach adopted for the 2011 Census, often referred to as "18+1". Harmonisation in this way allows analysts to gain deeper insight and value from their data. This delivers more meaningful statistics that give users a greater level of understanding and better meet user needs. Cost savings can be achieved by avoiding duplication.

Para 141. The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to intensify targeted initiatives to maximise the participation of persons belonging to national and ethnic minorities in employment, training, and career progression, in line with the Vision 2020 targets, and to allocate sufficient funds.

Recommendation: Intensify targeted initiatives to maximise participation of persons belonging to national and ethnic minorities in employment, training, and career progression in line with the Vision 2020 targets. Continue the good dialogue with the three devolved administrations and establish permanent ongoing dialogue and consultative mechanisms with Cornwall Council.

Ethnic minority employment increased during the 2010-15 Parliament from 2.8 million in 2010 to 3.3 million in 2014. To build on this success, in July 2015 the Government made a commitment made to increase the number of ethnic minority workers in employment by 20 per cent by 2020. To meet the 2020 challenge, ethnic minority employment needed to rise from 3.3 million (2014 figures) to around 3.9 million in 2020.

By June 2020 the commitment had been achieved: 670,000 more people from ethnic minority backgrounds were in employment than in 2015. This represented a 20.1 per cent increase in the number of ethnic minority people employed. The ethnic minority employment rate reached a record high of 67.5 per cent and the ethnic minority unemployment rate reached a record low of 6.3 per cent¹.

Due to the effect of COVID-19 on the labour market the ethnic minority unemployment rate has gone up. Even so, the first quarter of 2021 also saw an ethnic minority employment rate of 68.1 per cent, compared to the same period in 2015 when it was 61.8 per cent, 6.3 percentage points lower². We are analysing what lies behind these figures.

Our strategy for increasing ethnic minority employment has been based on providing access to mainstream services that are designed to be flexible to meet local needs and circumstances. We take this approach because there are big differences between disadvantages faced by different ethnic minority groups, and even within the most disadvantaged groups there will be many individuals who enjoy considerable labour market success. We believe that a policy predicated upon diagnosing a customer's barriers and tailoring provision should be the solution whatever the problem an individual present with.

We have allied this approach to taking targeted action in 20 local authority areas. They were selected by looking at a combination of the population and the employment rate gap, the gap between white and ethnic minority employment rates. Together these local authorities represent over half of the national ethnic minority employment gap.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) have specific interventions and work with a range of partners to help get ethnic minority people into work.

Across all 20 ethnic minority employment areas we run mentoring circles. Developed with Business in the Community, part of The Prince's Trust, the employers who facilitate the sessions are a mix of national organisations, and have included Google, BBC, National Grid and Microsoft, and local organisations such as Avon Fire and Rescue, Exeter FC and Gwent Police. The employer mentors lead meetings to strengthen the jobseekers' skills and help them to gain an understanding of different work sectors. The employer benefits by meeting talented jobseekers who they would otherwise not come across and builds their understanding of the challenges and barriers ethnic minorities face to move into employment. Employers participating can then adapt their own company profile and their attraction and recruitment processes. In the first 2018 wave over 80 businesses and five hundred jobseekers participated. The mentoring circles were rolled out to all young jobseekers in Spring 2019 with more employers and more jobseekers now taking part.

In other work with employers we have written and delivered a guide to increasing ethnic minority employment to the Local Enterprise Partnership network³. There are 38 Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) across England which bring together businesses and local authorities with a goal of full employment in their areas within a generation. We also provide quarterly information bulletins to the LEP network⁴.

We have also been running events with employers. For example, Ministers' have run workshops, with the City of London financial sector in 2019 and with DWP's main suppliers in 2021. These explore what more can be done to reduce the ethnic minority employment gap as well as sharing best practice on creating an inclusive workforce.

To make our staff more aware of the barriers ethnic minority jobseekers face, in 2018 we introduced a new ethnic minority guide to Jobcentre staff to promote the benefits of a more diverse workforce to local businesses; and also equipped the 20 areas with local data packs to help better understand the local economy and what employers want, so that better support could be offered to ethnic minority jobseekers into employment. We updated the Jobcentre staff guidance in March 2021 to coincide with the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

In July 2020 the Government introduced the new £30 billion Plan for Jobs including the £2 billion Kickstart scheme which is already creating thousands of high-quality jobs for young people, including ethnic minorities, and our Ten Point Plan which will create 250,000 green jobs, helping us build back better.

We have also boosted our Flexible Support Fund by £150 million to provide localised and tailored employment support for people of all backgrounds across the UK and we are doubling the number of frontline Work Coaches to help support people of all ages and ethnicities to find a job, retrain, or gain vital practical experience.

Media

Para 96. The authorities should take resolute action to ensure that revision of the BBC Charter improves access to the media for persons belonging to national and ethnic minorities, increases funding, ensures a variety of programmes in minority languages, in particular the Irish language, involves minorities in their production and introduces BBC support for the Cornish language

Recommendation: Take resolute action to ensure that the revision of the BBC Charter improves access to mass media for persons belonging to national and ethnic minorities; increase funding and ensure a variety of programmes for minority languages, in particular for the Irish language, and introduce such support for the Cornish language

The Government reaffirmed its commitment to the BBC's role in providing minority language broadcasting services in the last Charter Review in 2015/16. In addition, the UK Government has taken further steps to demonstrate its commitment to minority language broadcasting.

Since the publication of the last report, the UK Government has completed the Charter Review for the BBC and has embedded within it the BBC's responsibilities around minority languages.

In preparing for the Charter Review, the UK Government published a White Paper titled '*A BBC for the future: a broadcaster of distinction*'.²¹ Evidence gathered through consultation for this paper showed that people in the nations really value minority language broadcasting services, for the support it provides in helping to ensure the continued use of minority languages of the British Isles and for its importance in terms of cultural diversity and national identity. As a result, the UK Government set out its intention that the new Charter should encourage the BBC to continue its support for minority languages by retaining its partnerships with S4C, MG Alba and Northern Ireland Screen. The paper also indicated that the BBC's new Operating Licence should ensure this support continued.

The Royal Charter for the continuance of the BBC²², published in December 2016, set out the BBC's commitments to minority language broadcasting. The government embedded a duty to regional and minority languages as part of the BBC's general duties under the Charter: '*The BBC must support the regional and minority languages of the United Kingdom through its output and services and through partnerships with other organisations*'.²³

In the Framework Agreement between the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and the BBC²⁴, published in December 2016, the Government and the BBC also agreed a further set of responsibilities for the BBC on minority languages. Under its Specified Activities, the BBC must continue to support the provision of output in the Welsh Language, the Gaelic Language in Scotland,

²¹

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/524863/DCMS_A_BBC_for_the_future_linked_rev1.pdf

²²

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/577829/57964_CM_9365_Charter_Accessible.pdf

²³ Charter, Article 14(5).

²⁴

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/584329/57965_Cm_9366_Print_1.pdf

and the provision of Irish language and Ulster-Scots output on television, radio and online services.²⁵ The UK Government also set out specific responsibilities for the BBC to work with S4C and with MG Alba in this document.²⁶

It is ultimately for the BBC to set out how it will fulfil these requirements given it is an independent body. The UK Government has no editorial or operational control over the BBC and cannot influence its decisions on which content to invest in or broadcast, including whether it makes any content available in Cornish. Further, it is for the BBC's independent and external regulator Ofcom to hold the BBC to account on how well it is meeting its requirements.

The UK Government has also demonstrated its commitment to broadcasting in minority languages through other initiatives. The UK Government launched the Young Audiences Content Fund to make over £44million available over 3 years to help stimulate the provision and plurality of public service original UK content in targeted areas. Up to 5% of the Fund was targeted to produce content in indigenous UK languages including Welsh and Gaelic. One of the notable successes of this fund for the UK's minority language organisations was the short film 'Sol' - an animation about grief which was a co-commission from the indigenous language broadcasting organisations S4C, BBC ALBA and TG4 and went on to be shown more widely across the UK.

The UK Government has also continued to make additional funding available to support the UK's minority language broadcasting organisations. The UK Government fulfilled its commitment in the *New Decade, New Approach* agreement from January 2020 to provide an additional £2 million for the Irish Language Broadcast Fund and the Ulster-Scots Broadcast Fund, in partnership with NI Screen.²⁷ The funding reflects the UK Government's steadfast commitment to the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, which sets out the importance of respect, understanding and tolerance for linguistic diversity across Northern Ireland, including the Irish language and Ulster Scots.

Further, the UK Government introduced a new £200,000 fund to help support and preserve Cornwall's rich language, heritage and culture in 2019.²⁸ The fund was established to recognise Cornish culture's unique place in the UK and helped to deliver Cornish language education for adults and young people, tackle barriers to education around the traditions and heritage of Cornwall and provide media and technology opportunities for learners and speakers of Cornish.

Para 97. The Advisory Committee also calls on the authorities to establish an independent press regulator, responding to the criteria enunciated by the Leveson Report, and to ensure that training is regularly carried out and there is access to and presence in the media of persons belonging to minorities, including in supervisory organs.

Since the report of the Leveson Inquiry was published in 2012, we have seen a fundamental reform of the self-regulatory landscape for the press (1). This includes the establishment of two new regulators, Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO) and The Independent Monitor for the

²⁵ Framework Agreement, Clauses 38, 40 and 41.

²⁶ Framework Agreement, Clauses 39 and 40.

²⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-government-announces-2-million-for-northern-ireland-screens-irish-language-and-ulster-scots-broadcast-funds>

²⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-funding-to-preserve-cornish-culture-language-and-heritage>

Press (IMPRESS), both of which have established strong regulatory standards and codes for their members.

It is not appropriate for the government to arbitrate on what should or should not be published. IPSO produces guidance aimed at editors and journalists, which explores in more detail how its Editors' Code applies to particular themes or issues. Their most recent guidance relates to reporting on Muslims and Islam (2). IMPRESS also provides guidance on the application and reach of each of the clauses in its Standards Code.

We recognise that many newspapers are already doing good work regarding diversity in journalism. The Daily Mail launched the Stephen Lawrence Scholarship in 2015, which aims to improve diversity in journalism. The Guardian also runs a number of internship schemes that aim to give places to BAME and people with disabilities. In 2018, News UK formed a Diversity Board which has created its first Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. The strategy makes a number of commitments to increase the diversity of its workforce and the representation of wider society within its content. The National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ) runs a Journalism Diversity Fund, awarding bursaries to people from diverse backgrounds who want to pursue a journalism qualification. In addition, the NCTJ, in partnership with Facebook, is also focusing on improving the diversity of journalism. The initial investment by Facebook of £4.5m for 80 journalists over 2 years has since been extended by a further donation of £2.25 million to the NCTJ in order that the scheme can continue beyond the pilot stage. The additional funding will potentially take the project into 2023.

It is not for the government to interfere in any way with editorial freedom, operations or decision-making of the press. However, as part of wider moves and building on the initiatives set out above, there is clearly more the sector itself could do to further diversify newsrooms, for example, through schemes to support under-represented groups to train and work as journalists and doing more to support ways into the field other than unpaid internships.

Beyond press, Ofcom is the independent regulator for broadcasting in the UK, including content standards. It has a duty to promote equality of opportunity in relation to employment in the broadcasting sector. This includes taking the steps Ofcom considers appropriate for promoting equality of opportunity between men and women, people of different racial groups and for disabled people in relation to employment and training by the television and radio broadcasters Ofcom regulates. Ofcom is also required to set licence conditions requiring broadcasters to make arrangements for promoting equality of opportunity. In 2017, Ofcom published its first annual diversity report which presents key findings on the diversity of the broadcasters it regulates, including the main eight TV and radio organisations in the UK (3). The report highlights trends and the actions broadcasters have taken to improve diversity and inclusion. In terms of radio specifically, there have been clear moves by broadcasters in recent years to increase diversity across their on-air and online portfolios; however, more still needs to be done, including around practical ways for new talent to enter the industry. The joint government / industry Digital Radio and Audio Review will be looking at this area as part of their review.

Education

Para 122. The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to ensure that, in co-operation with minority groups, curricula, textbooks and other teaching materials reflect appropriately the ethnic diversity and historical presence of all national and ethnic minorities in the United Kingdom. Staff of all schools shall be effectively trained to accommodate diversity in the classroom and promote intercultural respect and understanding in schools

Education plays a vital role in promoting integration and ensuring that the next generation learns the shared values underpinning our society. We do this both through ensuring that schools comply with their statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010, their behaviour and safeguarding policies, curriculum and also through positive work to promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

The school curriculum comprises all learning and other experiences that each school provides for its pupils to give them the education and skills they need to achieve a fulfilling life. In addition to meeting their statutory duties, schools are free to teach any other subject or topic they deem relevant for their pupils, including topics that reflect the pupils and communities they serve, as part of the school's wider curriculum.

The national curriculum programmes of study for history set the framework for the teaching of the subject in English maintained schools in terms of the broad time periods and themes to be taught. Gypsy, Roma and/or Travellers' history can already be taught as part of schools offering a broad and balanced curriculum. This can be taught within the history curriculum and other subject areas. Various teaching materials available to schools from a variety of organisations, including Historical Association resources²⁹ will support them on this.

As part of Holocaust education, a wide array of resources are available to help teachers explain the persecution by the Nazis of different groups of people. Both Lessons from Auschwitz and the knowledge and teacher training provided by the Centre for Holocaust Education include information and resources to support an understanding of the Holocaust and the Nazi's persecution of other non-Jewish groups including the genocide of the Roma.

The Government also does a great deal of work on equality in schools through funded projects. Some examples are as follows.

- £2.8 million of funding between September 2016 and March 2020, to four anti-bullying organisations to support schools to tackle bullying, including racist bullying.
- The Linking Network's School Linking Programme works across England to provide opportunities for young people to have meaningful interactions with those from different backgrounds, help foster positive attitudes, promote tolerance and understanding of different communities, and tackle discrimination and racism.
- In November 2018 we published 'Respectful School Communities' – an online tool to support schools to develop a whole-school approach which promotes respect. This can combat bullying, harassment, and prejudice of any kind.
- The Educate Against Hate website provides support to challenge extremist views. In 2018 there were over 250,000 visits.

²⁹ <https://www.history.org.uk/secondary/module/4395/teaching-romany-gypsy-history-within-key-stages-1>

Indigenous and Minority Languages

Para 128. The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to renew and intensify their efforts to develop Irish-medium education and Irish language teaching. They should also engage in a dialogue with the Cornish minority to consider flexible and pragmatic solutions to allow for a more systematic provision of teaching in and of the Cornish language, as well as taking measures to develop the teaching of minorities' first language

Cornish

Golden Tree Productions has developed high quality teaching resources for adults and for schools, and an entry level website as a portal for learning Cornish. Golden Tree supported around 20 schools in two clusters in west and east Cornwall, training teachers to deliver basic conversational Cornish as a modern language in primary schools. At the end of term, pupils took part in town treasure trails where they could use their Cornish language in shops. With a budget of £50k and constant churn in teachers, it has been difficult to develop the number of schools taking part and to increase the amount of Cornish being taught.

Following a review in 2020, a new approach has been developed based on the charter for schools in Wales. This will provide a base level set of resources for any primary school for using Cornish language with minimal support, so that active training and support can be freed up for schools who intend to teach the language more fully in future years. This scheme is to be launched in June 2021.

Voluntary community groups provide a network of adult language classes and a series of exams - 77 students took the Cornish Language Board exams in 2018 and this increased to 90 entries in 2021. Cornwall Council is also working with WJEC, the Welsh assessment board, to develop a nationally accredited assessment which can be offered to adults and secondary school students.

Cornwall Council commissioned a research study in 2019 to explore the case for a public service broadcaster for the Cornish national minority. It demonstrated the case for a Cornish broadcaster, tapping into a rich and varied cultural scene, providing opportunities for the TV and film talent, and creating a distinctive new broadcaster that speaks and looks to the wider world. At present this has not been realised.

Irish

There are now 7,064 pupils being educated in Irish-medium schools and units in Northern Ireland. This is up from 5,256 pupils in Irish-medium education in 2014/15.

Under Article 89 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, the Department of Education NI (DE) has a duty to encourage and facilitate the development of Irish-medium education. This Article also allows DE to 'subject to such conditions as it thinks fit, pay grants to anybody appearing to DE to have as an objective the encouragement or promotion of Irish-medium education'. Comhairle na Gaeilscolaíochta (CnaG) is the body funded for this purpose, and within DE the Irish Medium and Integrated Education team acts as Sponsor Team.

DE takes its statutory duty very seriously and it manifests in a range of actions, funding support and policy adaptations. In delivering its statutory duty the Department seeks to respond positively to parental demand for Irish-medium provision in an area. All policy areas across the Department consider whether any adaptation in policy out working could support the delivery of the duty. Any Development Proposal for Irish-medium provision is considered in the context of the statutory duty to encourage and facilitate the development of Irish-medium education.

Additionally, a range of bespoke, sector specific investment is provided to support the development of Irish-medium education. This includes providing specific funding to the Education Authority and the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment to provide Irish-medium support.

The language, culture, and identity legislation, as agreed in the New Decade new Approach (NDNA) deal in January 2020, when in place, will reaffirm the Governments' commitment to Irish-medium education in Northern Ireland. The legislation will also provide for the creation of an Irish Language Commissioner which will have responsibility for issuing best practice guidance in relation to supporting the Irish language, which the Northern Ireland Department of Education and Education Authority will be subject to. The UK Government also agreed in NDNA to provide further funding to support languages in Northern Ireland, including Irish, which the Government plans to announce in the coming year.

Cornwall and Cornish

Para 19. The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to take all the legal, policy, and financial steps necessary to ensure access to the rights provided by the Framework Convention to persons belonging to the Cornish minority, irrespective of any constitutional set-up.

Para 58. The authorities should reconsider their decision to cut all funding for the Cornish language in view of the disproportionate impact such a measure can have on the delicate process of revitalisation of a minority language when access to other public financial resources is limited.

Para 59. The Advisory Committee also calls on the authorities to engage in a dialogue with representative of the Cornish minority to ensure that cultural policy is developed in a way respectful of the traditions and identity of the minority.

Para 150. The Advisory Committee calls on the British-Irish Council to address actively the Cornish language in its work and to endeavour to involve the Cornwall authorities, in part by creating an institutional presence for Cornwall in the Council and by promoting bilateral relations between the Cornwall authorities and other language communities' administrations.

Recommendation: Take the necessary measures to include a Cornish 'tick-box' in the next census in view of the Cornish people's recognition as a national minority.

Recommendation: Take all necessary steps to ensure access to the linguistic and cultural rights provided by the Framework Convention to the Cornish minority, in particular by reconsidering the decision to cut all funding for the Cornish language in view of the disproportionate impact such a measure will have on the delicate process of revitalising a minority language when access to other public financial resources is limited.

Recommendation: Engage in a dialogue with the Cornish minority to ensure that cultural policies are developed in a way respectful of the traditions and the identity of the minority; improve the use and visibility of Cornish in public life at the local level and consider flexible and pragmatic solutions to allow more systematic provision of education in the Cornish language and of the Cornish culture

The Government remains fully committed to ensuring that Cornish communities have access to the rights and provisions summarised in the Articles of the Framework Convention. Though our ability to provide resources for this work has been disrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have continued to engage closely with Cornwall Council and Cornish stakeholders regarding the provisions of the Framework Convention.

In the Financial Year 2020/21, Cornwall Council has had access to £500.3m of non-ringfenced funding – which represents an increase of £31.1m and a 6.6% cash-terms increase in spending power in comparison with the previous local government finance settlement. We have recommended that Cornwall Council use some of this funding to cover the costs of supporting projects to promote Cornish language and culture.

The UK Government has also continued to formally represent Cornwall on the British-Irish Council's Indigenous and Minority Languages Working Group, and ensure that Cornwall Council has been able to attend meetings at an official level to benefit from the discussion and ideas generated at this forum.

The Office for National Statistics' (ONS) recommendations for Census 2021 were published in the UK Government's December 2018 White Paper 'Help Shape Our Future'³⁰. Paragraphs 3.116 to 3.120 of the White Paper set out the reasons why the ONS had concluded that the need for a Cornish tick-box is very localised and not strong enough to justify its inclusion in the nationwide census and that those who wished to identify as Cornish could use the write-in option both online and on the paper questionnaire. This was supplemented by the new online "search-as-you-type" facility for the national identity question including the terms Cornish, Kerewek, Kernowek and Kernoauk.

The questions for the census were put into law through the Census Order³¹, which was laid before Parliament by UK Ministers and debated in both Houses of Parliament; the national identity question and response options were included and were subject to a vote in each House.

The ONS offered a comprehensive package of support to the Cornish for the Census³² including:

- A strong local marketing and communications campaign (centred around the ability to self-identify as Cornish in the national identity question). The media team promoting the response options via Cornish news organisations, most of which have an online presence and are read widely – not only in Cornwall.
- Promoting beyond Cornwall the ability to self-identify as Cornish through its national marketing and communications campaigns using networks to work with these communities.
- Promoting the Cornish response options with content provided for organisations with a key interest in Cornwall which are outside Cornwall.
- Additional local field support to enable all those who wish to self-identify as being of any particular identity, including Cornish, to know how to do so
- A commitment to, for the first time, produce an analytical report on the population who identify as Cornish, and how their health, housing, work and education differs from those who do not identify as Cornish.
- An on-line flexible dissemination system where users can specify the data on the Cornish population that they need and define their own queries to build tables will be available.

Para 109. The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to take measures to improve the use and visibility of Cornish in public life, and it calls on the UK Government to reinstate immediately the previous level of funding and to consider the possibility of adopting a Cornish Language Act.

In December 2021, following an extensive community listening and engagement exercise, the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Leadership Board endorsed Gyllyn Warbarth, Together We Can: The Cornwall Plan 2020-2050. One striking feature of the engagement was the strength of support and pride in Cornwall's rich culture, heritage and sense of belonging.

Valuing everyone's cultural heritage and celebrating diversity in all its forms are also at the heart of the vision within the 2018-2022 Cornwall-wide equality objectives. The Cornwall Equality and Diversity Network are in the process of refreshing objectives for 2022-2026.

³⁰

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/765089/Census2021WhitePaper.pdf (accessed June 2021)

³¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2020/532/contents/made> (Accessed June 2021)

³² <https://uksa.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/correspondence/census-2021-cornish/> (Accessed June 2021)

Curriculum Kernewek is being developed by Cornwall Council's Together for Families service. This curriculum framework for schools aims to affirm and create the opportunity for children and young people in Cornwall to express, preserve, share and develop their distinct culture and identity. A range of learning materials and lesson plans have been created which have been incorporated into the current Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum, and this will be monitored by the PSHE curriculum board to ensure that Curriculum Kernewek elements are foregrounded, evaluated and adjusted as appropriate. The PHSE programme launched virtually in July 2020, with over 200 attendees from schools. A second wave of promotion will take place during 2021, representing a great opportunity to establish Curriculum Kernewek in a wider range of schools.

The Council is supporting schools with educational resources and visits to facilitate the roll out of Curriculum Kernewek and is producing a standardised template which will assist in the creation of web-based resources. In 2020, the Council employed three full-time Curriculum Advisers, whose main focus is Curriculum Kernewek development. The Advisers are engaged with supporting schools to ensure that there is a strong, integrated Curriculum Kernewek thread running through their teaching, and that is distinctive to the context of their school and community.

A series of curriculum development workshops are taking place, which will produce units of work that can be delivered from September 2021. The Council is also looking to place Curriculum Kernewek at the heart of the Cultural Belonging strand of the Belonging Framework with the aim of shifting away from the 'additional, experiential curriculum enhancement' model to an 'embedded content' model, making Curriculum Kernewek the 'golden thread' running through the curriculum, not a commissioned additional experience. This long-term project is designed to develop and embed a Kernow-centric curriculum and intended to stop Cornwall and Cornish culture being seen as marginal.

The Council is currently considering the development of a 'quality mark' for schools that engage with Curriculum Kernewek development work, with three levels reflecting the extent of their engagement. The Council is also exploring, the possibility of aligning the Curriculum Kernewek development work to higher education accreditation, offering the potential for teachers who develop curriculum content and then engage in action research to trial it in the classroom, achieve a Post Graduate certificate or diploma towards Masters level study.

In terms of higher education, the University of Exeter (UoE) continues to host the Institute of Cornish Studies (ICS) at the Penryn campus in Cornwall. ICS is the only academic institution with a dedicated Cornish focus and offers interventions into a range of UoE courses and modules, moderates PhDs and undertakes a range of funded studies, including a significant audio archive of contemporary recordings. With the support of the ICS, the University plans to start teaching Cornish language as an undergraduate module in autumn 2021.

Northern Ireland and Irish

Para 33. In the absence of progress, the Northern Ireland Assembly should adopt robust and comprehensive single equality legislation or otherwise strengthen racial equality in Northern Ireland and harmonise protection across the UK.

[Awaiting content from NI Exec]

Para 50. The authorities should prioritise integrating the collection of disaggregated equality data on the situation of persons belonging to national and ethnic minorities into the practices of all relevant departments and agencies in Northern Ireland as a means to adopting and implementing effective minority protection and equality promotion policies

[Awaiting content from NI Exec]

Para 89. The authorities should begin to implement the ‘good relations’ duty as provided for under the Northern Ireland Act 1998 in a manner that does not run counter to the equality duty and that does not prevent access to rights by persons belonging to all national and ethnic minorities.

Para 90. It also calls on the authorities to introduce definitions of ‘good relations’ and ‘sectarianism’ in legislation, drawing on international standards relating to racism and human rights in general; and to ensure that sectarian crimes are dealt with in the criminal justice system in a way equivalent to other forms of hate crime

Recommendation: Adopt appropriate legislation protecting and promoting the Irish language and take measures to ensure progress on language rights of persons belonging to the Irish minority; the UK Government should engage in a dialogue to create the political consensus needed for adopting legislation; the Northern Ireland Executive should endeavour to implement the ‘good relations’ duty as provided under the Northern Ireland Act 1998 in a manner that does not run counter to the equality duty and that does not prevent access to rights of persons belonging to all national and ethnic minorities

Recommendation: Adopt robust and comprehensive unified legislation on equality or otherwise strengthen racial equality in Northern Ireland, and harmonise protection across the UK; introduce definitions of ‘good relations’ and ‘sectarianism’ in Northern Ireland legislation in line with international standards relating to combating racism and promoting human rights in general

[Awaiting content from NI Exec]

Para 105. The Advisory Committee sees appropriate legislation by the Northern Ireland Assembly as a necessity to protect and promote the Irish language and calls on the UK Government to help create the political consensus needed for such adoption

Recommendation: In Northern Ireland, renew efforts to develop Irish-medium education and Irish language teaching; expand and facilitate shared education; ensure that access to education and attendance by Traveller children is effectively put in place and monitored by the Traveller Education Support Service; identify pragmatic and flexible solutions to accommodating the demands of national and ethnic minorities on bilingual signage

Since the previous 4th State Report, progress has been made by both the UK Government and the Northern Ireland Executive in moving towards legislation that will protect and promote the Irish language. As noted by the Advisory Committee in their last report, political deadlock had prevented progress on legislation for Irish language. A draft Irish Language Strategy and a draft Ulster Scots Language Heritage and Culture Strategy were consulted on and published by the then Department for Culture Arts and Leisure in 2015 and reported on in 2016. However, the collapse and absence of the Executive from January 2017 to January 2020 prevented further progress.

The UK Government played a central role in facilitating several talks processes between the political parties in an effort to restore the Northern Ireland Executive. In January 2020, the New Decade New Approach (NDNA) deal was agreed to by all five Executive parties, the UK Government, and the Government of Ireland. Central to this deal was the agreement on a carefully balanced package of measures pertaining to language, identity, and culture in Northern Ireland. This package included legislation to be introduced to the Northern Ireland Assembly to amend the Northern Ireland Act 1998, making provision for:

- An Office of Identity and Cultural Expression
- An Irish Language Commissioner
- A further such Commissioner to enhance and develop the language, arts and literature associated with the Ulster Scots / Ulster British tradition in Northern Ireland

The legislation would also provide for the official recognition of the Irish language and would repeal the Administration of Justice (Language) Act (Ireland) 1737, allowing for court and legal proceedings to be conducted in a language other than English. This would allow for births, deaths, and marriages to be registered in Irish.

The Irish Language Commissioner, once in post, will support the development of the use of the Irish language in Northern Ireland. They will do this by providing advice, guidance, and best practice standards, particularly for public authorities to follow. The Commissioner for Ulster Scots will work to enhance and develop the language, arts and literature associated with the Ulster Scots / Ulster British tradition. The creation of an Office of Identity and Culture Expression will build cultural pluralism and respect, help foster social cohesion, and celebrate all aspects of Northern Ireland's rich cultural and linguistic heritage.

Issues pertaining to language and culture, including this legislation, are the responsibility of the Northern Ireland Executive. At the time of reporting, this commitment had not yet been delivered. Reflecting its commitment to the NDNA deal and all of Northern Ireland's identities, languages and cultures, the UK Government announced on 21 June 2021 in a Written Ministerial Statement to the UK Parliament that, should the Northern Ireland Executive not have progressed the necessary legislation by the end of September 2021, it will take the legislation through the UK Parliament in October 2021.

The NDNA deal contained further commitments in relation to language, identity and culture which have been delivered by both the UK Government and Northern Ireland Executive. The UK Government has provided NI Screen with £2 million to support a broadened remit of the Irish Language Broadcasting Fund and the Ulster Scots Broadcasting Funds. The broadened remit of both broadcasting funds will support the growth and development of production in the Irish language and Ulster Scots, with a particular focus on educational, interactive, and digital content. This builds on

the UK Government's work to ensure that the BBC Framework Agreement now includes a specific clause which provides a clear commitment for the BBC to continue to deliver output in the Irish and Ulster Scots languages. The UK Government also agreed in NDNA to provide further funding to support languages in Northern Ireland, including Irish, which the Government plans to announce in the coming year.

The Northern Ireland Department for Communities, in line with its NDNA commitments, has established a central Translation Hub to provide language translation services for the nine Executive Departments, Arm's Length Bodies, Local Government and Public Bodies. The Department for Communities has also commenced work on the development of an Irish Language Strategy and an Ulster Scots Language, Heritage and Culture Strategy. This will be led and developed by an Expert Advisory Panel, a Strategy Co-Design Group (to advise on the development and content of the draft Strategy and its supporting action plan); and a Cross-Departmental Working Group (to discuss and agree the content of the action plan that will sit alongside the new Strategy ensuring that the goals set out in the Strategies will be delivered).

Para 112. The Advisory Committee calls for a closer dialogue on signage among the government and local authorities in Northern Ireland to identify pragmatic and flexible solutions that accommodate the demands of the population in line with the principles contained in Article 11 of the Framework Convention.

This is a transferred matter in Northern Ireland, meaning that these issues are for the Northern Ireland Executive to consider and where appropriate for the Northern Ireland Assembly to legislate. Responsibility for street signage falls under the Local Government councils in Northern Ireland which are bound by the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. Article 11 of this legislation provides for Local Government councils to erect bilingual street signs. Each of Northern Ireland's 11 Local Government councils has the authority to develop and implement a policy for street signage.

Belfast City Council has recently updated its policy on street signage. The policy change will make it easier for residents to apply for a bilingual street sign where they live. It requires one resident or their local councillor to come forward with the request to erect a bilingual street sign. If this gains the support of 15% of residents on the electoral register it would go forward for approval by the council. Although Irish is the most popular choice for an alternative language in Belfast, applications can be made for any language.

The language, culture, and identity legislation, as agreed in the New Decade new Approach deal in January 2020, when in place, will provide for the creation of an Office for Identity and Cultural Expression and an Irish Language Commissioner. These bodies will have responsibility for issuing best practice guidance in relation to respecting cultural diversity and supporting the Irish language respectively, which Northern Ireland Government Departments and Local Government councils will be subject to.

Para 119. The Advisory Committee encourages the Executive to adopt legislation directing the Department for Education to enhance shared education

This recommendation has been fully implemented by the Northern Ireland Executive. In November 2015 the Shared Education Bill was introduced to the Northern Ireland Assembly and received Royal Assent in May 2016, thus bringing into force the Shared Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2016.

This Act makes provision in relation to shared education, namely by placing a legal duty on the Department of Education in Northern Ireland “to encourage, facilitate and promote shared education.” Shared Education as defined by the legislation means the education together of - (a) those of different religious belief, including reasonable numbers of both Protestant and Roman Catholic children or young persons; and (b) those who are experiencing socio-economic deprivation and those who are not. The legislation states the purpose of shared education is: (a) to deliver educational benefits to children and young persons; (b) to promote the efficient and effective use of resources; (c) to promote equality of opportunity; (d) to promote good relations; and (e) to promote respect for identity, diversity and community cohesion.

The Act is underpinned by “Sharing Works – A Policy for Shared Education” which includes a description of how Shared Education is expected to work in practice. The policy sits within a broader education policy framework designed to improve educational outcomes for children and young people and tackle educational under-achievement. Together, the Act and policy provide a framework for advancing Shared Education in Northern Ireland.

In line with the legislation, the Department of Education has published progress reports every two years. These ‘Advancing Shared Education’ reports have been published in 2018 and 2020. The latest report stated that, at June 2019, 61% of Northern Ireland’s Primary, Post Primary, and Special schools were involved in Shared Education, with approximately one quarter of the pupil population across these phases engaged in sharing. At the end of June 2016 there were 308 schools and early years settings, accounting for 22,036 pupils, involved in 134 shared education partnerships. By 30 June 2019 participation had increased considerably, with 716 schools and early years settings, accounting for 87,385 pupils, involved in 316 partnerships.

Para 120. It also calls on the Executive to monitor the Traveller Education Support Service to ensure that access and attendance of Traveller children to education is effective and that funds provided to schools in relation to children belonging to ethnic minorities are used to improve their attainment.

In Northern Ireland the Education Authority (EA) has established an Intercultural Education Service (IES) that provides advice, guidance, and support to help Traveller families reintegrate their children back into mainstream education after prolonged absences, via targeted interventions. The IES assists Traveller and Roma families to find school places, to transfer between schools, make the transition from primary to post-primary and access alternative education pathways. IES provides an annual Service Delivery Plan to the Department of Education for the purposes of monitoring.

Schools in Northern Ireland receive additional funding of circa £1,200 per pupil per annum for all newcomer pupils (i.e. children who do not share a language in common with their teacher), irrespective of ethnicity. Total funding allocated to schools for newcomer pupils in 2021-22 was around £20.3m. Educational attainment for former newcomers, who have received this additional support, is broadly equivalent to that of their non-newcomer peers.

Concluding Remarks

The UK is committed to ensuring that all citizens have the resources and opportunities to build the best possible life for themselves, irrespective of their ethnicity or background. Be it in the education system, the workplace, healthcare or in general society, we have been creating and implementing policies to ensure that we understand and can respond to the specific needs of minority communities and tackle disadvantage.

Since our previous 4th Cycle Report, the world has changed dramatically in ways that none of us could have foreseen. The experience of the pandemic has shown us, more clearly than ever before, that communities engage with Government services in different ways, and need different resources and information to fully benefit from them. We have worked hard to build trust with minority communities in responding to COVID-19 to encourage vaccination and keep people safe and will build on these relationships to keep supporting these communities.

As we find our feet in a new decade and a radically changed global context, we will continue to strive for a society in which minorities are able to participate fully and protected from disadvantage, discrimination, and prejudice. We are under no illusions about the challenge and ambition of this vision but remain absolutely dedicated to providing the best life chances for everyone in the UK.