



Policies: Ethnic Minorities: Actions to promote tolerance and respect

Workshop One: Building Inter Community Contact Background Information:

Policy Context

Community cohesion is a contested term that has taken on high importance in UK policy agendas in response to concerns about segregation, tension and more recently extremism. The concept of cohesion goes beyond previous policies on equality, discrimination and social inclusion to include the proactive development of positive community relations. It builds on shared belonging, goals and futures in communities but also requires a basis of equality and respect for both rights and duties.

The Commission for Integration and Cohesion (COIC) put forward a new definition of cohesion and integration'

Community Cohesion is what must happen in all communities to enable different groups of people to get on well together. A key contributor to community cohesion is integration which is what must happen to enable new residents and existing residents to adjust to one another.

Our vision of an integrated and cohesive community is based on three foundations:

- People from different backgrounds having similar life opportunities
- People knowing their rights and responsibilities
- People trusting one another and trusting local institutions to act fairly

And three key ways of living together:

- A shared future vision and sense of belonging
- A focus on what new and existing communities have in common, alongside a recognition of the value of diversity
- Strong & positive relationships between people from different backgrounds'

New Migration and Cohesion

The UK has been home to people from refugee and migrant backgrounds for many years and in this time they have made important contributions to the social, cultural and economic life of the country. However, the opening up of the UK labour market to citizens of new EU member states in 2004 initiated the largest rate of migration in British history and has brought significant challenges with it. This has occurred within the global context of increased numbers, fluidity and multi-directionality of migration.

The unprecedented scale and pace of recent migration together with the diverse range of countries, cultures and languages and the high population churn, are adding new dimensions to local communities across the UK, both those with existing multicultural populations and those new to migration. Some concerns have been expressed about the cohesion impacts of this new migration, but it can also be seen that new arrivals often settle in areas with existing issues and deprivation. They can be blamed for these issues instead of recognised for their contribution to cohesion and may face hostility based on difference, competition for resources and perceived preferential treatment.

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Key Issues and Impacts

Cohesion strategies, policies and guidance have rapidly developed within both Central and Local Government but have so far tended to focus on desired outcomes and indicators rather than developing and evaluating cohesion practice. This is reflected in Government monitoring of cohesion that is mainly policy-driven and concerned with public opinion at both national and local levels i.e. Citizenship Surveys. Much of the evidence about the impact of migration on cohesion is still anecdotal and more research into the interaction of refugees and migrants with other communities locally is required.

All new arrivals can face difficulties settling into their new community and in accessing services due to language and cultural barriers, lack of understanding of systems and entitlements and prejudice and discrimination. They experience a limited 'sense of belonging' particularly at a neighbourhood level (Markova & Black, 2007). It can be difficult for them to build relationships and links locally when they may need to move frequently, have no fixed abode, work long hours or are uncertain about their status. Those who are not allowed or able to work and have No Recourse to Public Funding face additional problems due to poverty, homelessness and vulnerability to exploitation. A lack of accurate data on populations of new arrivals further exacerbates these issues.

Regional Responses

Most localities in the West Midlands have chosen to include cohesion indicators in their Local Area Agreements but take up of the two national indicators with a focus on migration and language or housing has been very low. The cohesion indicators are based on the subjective measure of those agreeing that local people get on well together and do not indicate levels of hate crime, prejudice, community tension or negative media coverage locally. A case study of community relations in a typical urban multicultural area in the West Midlands (Daley, 2007) found that perceptions of cohesion differed significantly from the actual levels that negative attitudes, hidden tensions and lack of meaningful relationships across difference suggested for the area.

Recommendations

Government guidance has identified the need for raising public awareness, improving positive media coverage, encouraging interaction and dialogue between different groups and collating and communicating accurate information about newcomers. Local and regional mechanisms are also required for including migrant concerns and needs into local community cohesion and community safety strategies, equality schemes and Area Agreements. New migrants need to be an integral part of cohesion initiatives in the Region and included together with established communities and other ethnic minorities.



Workshop Two: Economic Downturn and Hate Crime

The latest British Crime Survey (BCS) estimates that there were around 207,000 racially motivated incidents in 2007/8. This compares with a total of 184,000 incidents reported by the 2006/07 BCS.

However, as with most crime, the majority of racial incidents are not reported to the police. During 2007/08, 57,055 racist incidents were recorded by the police, a decrease of 7% over 2006/07. There were 38,327 racially or religiously aggravated offences in 2007/08, a 10% decrease from the previous year (42,554 in 2006/07). Two thirds (66%) of these were offences of harassment. The clear-up rate for racially or religiously aggravated offences has improved slightly over the last four years (39% in 2007/08, compared to 38% in both 2005/6 and 2006/7 and 37% in 2004/05).

Definitions of Racist Incidents and Racially or Religiously Aggravated Offences

All police forces have collected information on racist incidents from 1986 on the basis of a common definition. This definition was changed in 1999 when the police adopted the proposed definition from the report of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry:

A racist incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person (Macpherson 1999)

It should be noted that incidents included here are wider than the normal definition of a crime in published crime statistics and include general threatening behaviour. Sections 28 to 32 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 introduced into law the concept of specific racially aggravated offences. The provisions came into effect on 30 September 1998. They were further extended to include religiously aggravated offences by section 39 of the Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001, with effect from 14 December 2001. An offence may be defined as racially or religiously aggravated if at the time of committing the offence, or immediately before or after doing so, the offender demonstrates towards the victim of the offence hostility based on the victim's membership (or presumed membership) of a racial or religious group; or the offence is motivated (wholly or partly) by hostility towards members of a racial or religious group based on their membership of that group.

The overall number of racist incidents recorded by the police in England and Wales decreased by 6.9% from a peak of 61,262 in 2006/07 to 57,055 (Table 3.1). Around two-fifths of forces registered an increase in the number of incidents. Three police force areas registered increases in racist incidents greater than 25% (Derbyshire, City of London and Suffolk), while four police force areas registered a decrease greater than 25% (Northamptonshire, North Yorkshire, Wiltshire and Gwent). Research from across the UK indicates that the majority of racist incidents recorded are either damage to property or verbal harassment (Maynard and Read, 1997; Clark and Moody, 2002; Jarman, 2002). Section 95 13

The BCS records people's experiences and perceptions of crime including whether victims of crime perceived the incident to be racially motivated. The number of racially motivated incidents was estimated at around 207,000 incidents based on the 2007/08 BCS. This compares with previous estimates of 184,000 incidents (2006/07 BCS), 139,000 incidents (2005/06 BCS) and 179,000 incidents (2004/05 BCS, Jansson et al., 2007).

Based on the 2007/08 BCS, less than 1% of the population of England and Wales had experienced one or more racially motivated crimes in the last 12 months. Less than 1% of the White population



had been victims of racially motivated crimes compared with 2% of people from Asian, Black and Chinese and Other ethnic backgrounds, and 3% among people from Mixed ethnic backgrounds. People in the Mixed, Asian, Black and Chinese and other groups had a higher risk of being a victim of racially motivated crimes than White people. However, differences in risk of being a victim of racially motivated crime between BME groups were not statistically significant.³

Based on previous research about how victims perceived these crimes, there were clear differences between the White and BME populations in terms of the proportion of crimes that were thought to have been racially motivated, with a larger proportion of people from BME groups perceiving incidents as having been racially motivated compared with people from White backgrounds. Of all BCS crimes where the victim was White 1% were thought to be racially motivated, whereas the comparable figure was 10% for BCS crimes where the victim was from a BME group (2006/07 BCS, Jansson et al., 2007).

In England and Wales, the police recorded 38,327 racially or religiously aggravated offences in 2007/08. This represents a 10% decrease from the previous year (42,554 in 2006/07). It is not clear why this change has occurred. Of the total, 66% were harassment, 12% less serious wounding, 10% criminal damage, and 11% common assault⁴. This is a similar pattern to previous years. The numbers of all types of racially or religiously aggravated offences decreased apart from common assault which increased slightly.

Police forces varied greatly in the number and type of offences recorded. More than 80% of all forces registered a decrease in the number of racially or religiously aggravated offences.

When compared with the total number of similar non-racially or religiously aggravated offences, 11% of harassment offences were recorded as racially or religiously aggravated, 2% of common assaults, 1% of less serious wounding, and less than one per cent of criminal damage. These proportions were very similar to those recorded for the previous year.

Detected crimes are those that have been 'cleared up' by the police, in accordance with the 'Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime'. The clear up rate is the total number of detections recorded in a given year as a percentage of the total number of crimes in the same period.

In 2007/08, 39% of racially or religiously aggravated offences were cleared up, compared to 29% of equivalent non-racially or religiously aggravated offences. Overall the clear up rate for racially or religiously aggravated offences increased by one percentage point between 2006/07 (38%) and 2007/08 (39%).

As with the previous year, only criminal damage had a clear up rate which was greater for racially or religiously aggravated offences than non-aggravated ones (21% compared to 14%). For harassment and less serious wounding the clear up rate was lower for racially or religiously aggravated offences than for equivalent non-racially or religiously aggravated offences – again a similar pattern to 2006/07. In particular, the clear up rate for racially or religiously aggravated harassment was 42% compared to 68% for its non-aggravated equivalent, and for less serious wounding it was 39% compared to 40%. For common assault the clear up rate was the same for both offences at 37%.

This publication is available on the Ministry of Justice website:
<http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/statistics.htm>



Workshop Three: Awareness Raising and Myth Busting

Background information:

New challenges both for policy and practice are linked to new migration and the related increased mix of ethnicity, language and background ('super-diversity'), changes in existing BME communities and in the areas experiencing new communities.

In the West Midlands, areas of asylum seeker dispersal and new migrant settlement are also often those areas facing cohesion challenges relating to deprivation and social exclusion such as the Housing Market and Neighbourhood Renewal Areas in Birmingham, the Black Country, Coventry and Stoke-on-Trent and rural areas new to migrants as highlighted in the Commission for Integration and Cohesion's area typology.

Hostility and discrimination towards new arrivals can arise in some of these areas focused on difference, competition for services and resources and perceived preferential treatment. There is a need to tackle deprivation, inequalities and exclusion as well as to raise awareness and create opportunities for mixing across difference. Work targeted at both new migrants and established communities is required together with clear communications, consultation and transparency on local policy and resource allocation.

The Commission for Integration and Cohesion (2008) proposed that local public agencies respond to local resource competition by:

- Addressing issues experienced by both majority and minority communities
- Developing a communications strategy that includes all residents (e.g. communicating & preparing existing communities & services for new arrivals)
- Ensuring local media understand their responsibilities in building integration and cohesion
- Proactively tackling myths and misinformation in communities (this includes Local Authorities actively working with media to rebut myths)
- Ensuring effective scrutiny and strong local data and intelligence

There is an urgent need for a programme of proactive awareness-raising work with established communities in areas of new migration to help people from a diversity of backgrounds come to terms with new population change and its impacts. Awareness-raising is an important first step in tackling the negative attitudes and misconceptions that inhibit the development of interactions and connections between people from different backgrounds. Building awareness and understanding of the diversity and experiences of new arrivals living in a local area can help established communities to recognise the valuable contributions they make and to work together with new communities in addressing shared issues and goals for their area.

Regional Work

The West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership, the lead regional policy forum on refugee, asylum and new migrant issues, co-ordinates activities regarding the dispersal, accommodation and support of asylum seekers and the integration and social inclusion of refugees and new migrants by effective multi-agency working across the region.

The Community Cohesion Regional Implementation Group (RIG) was established by WMSMP in September 2006 to take forward actions in relation to cohesion and new arrivals. The RIG's action

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plan includes a range of cohesion activities: myth-busting, inter-group contact, community safety, participation and regional co-ordination.

A key achievement of the Cohesion RIG has been the development and online publication of *'Where Our Journeys Meet*, a regional resource for raising awareness on refugee, asylum and migrant issues. This resource was first envisaged to address the identified need for accurate, up-to-date and consistent myth-busting information on refugee and migrant issues for use across the region. However, as information and material were collated, developed and piloted, it became apparent that activities raising cultural awareness and challenging racism and prejudice were also required. The resource was therefore developed into a more comprehensive awareness-raising pack.

The training course *'Understanding and Responding to the Asylum, Refugee and Migration Experience'* has been developed using material from this resource and has been delivered by members of the Cohesion RIG across the Region as part of the RegenWm and WMLGA training programmes and in-house on request by agencies.

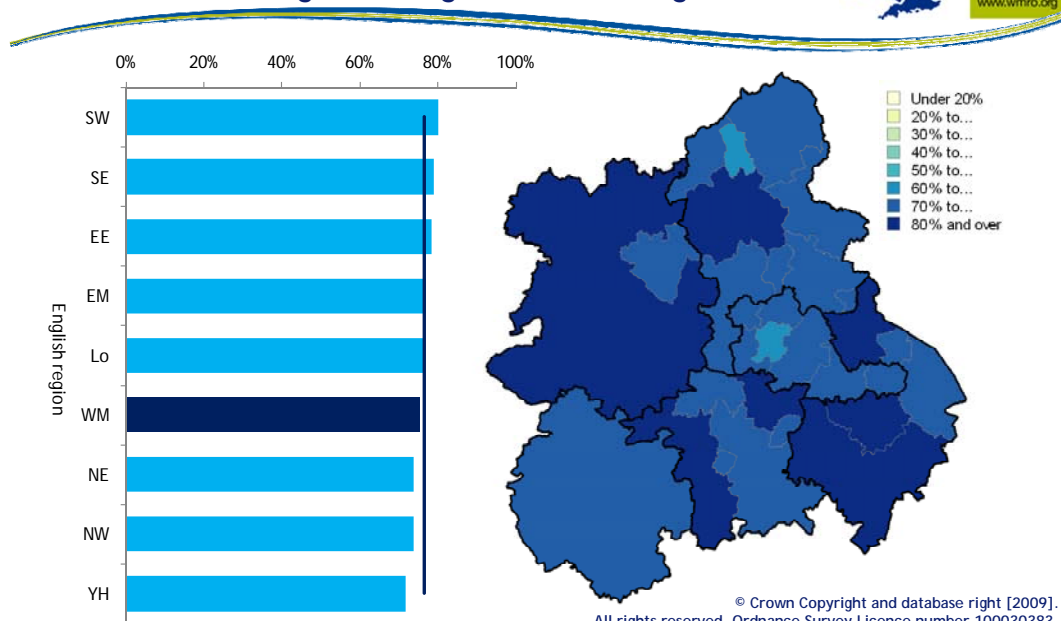
Considerable positive feedback has been received from public agencies about the usefulness of the resource and training for building understanding about the asylum process and the experiences of people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. It has also proved valuable and effective in raising the awareness of local communities, faith and ethnic groups and individuals and in building their capacity to tackle tensions, prejudice and racism and to increase understanding of diversity.

A Regional Media and Communications strategy for working with the media on refugee and migrants issues has also been developed by partners in the West Midlands. Contacts have been developed with media agencies and both reactive and proactive work undertaken to improve the balance and accuracy of reporting on refugee and migrant issues in the West Midlands. Refugee Week has been a key focus for developing public awareness about the contributions and experiences of refugees and providing opportunities for building contact between refugee & established communities.

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Proportion of residents who think that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together

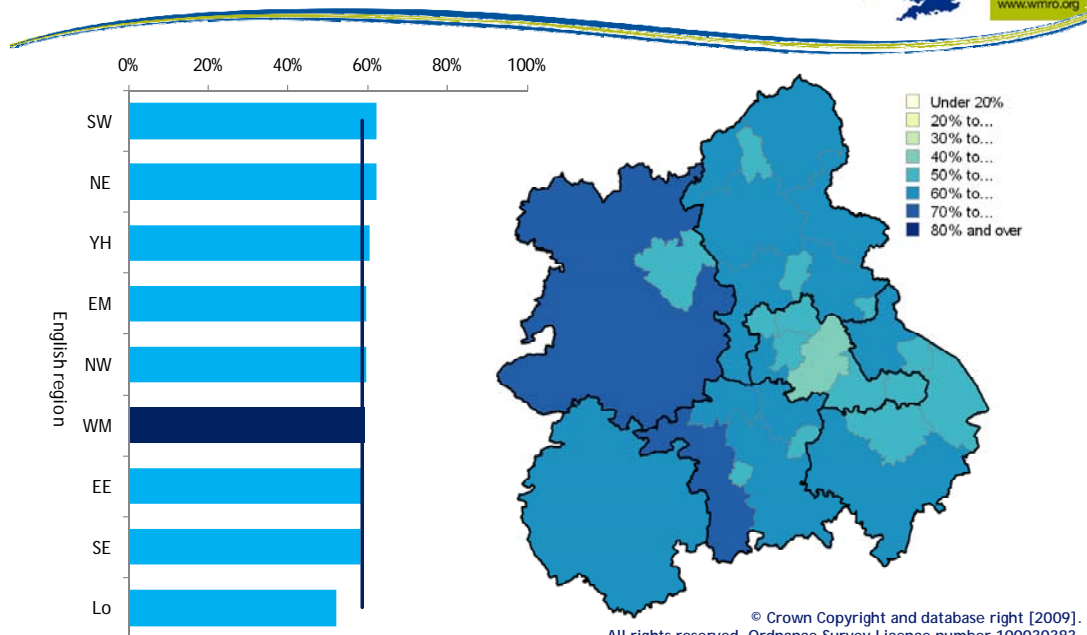


Source: Place Survey 2008

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Proportion of residents who feel that they belong to their immediate neighborhoods



Source: Place Survey 2008

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