

Reporting Race Hate Crimes or Discrimination

Unless someone is in danger, it is important to have the permission of the victim before you take action. Many people fear making their situation worse by making a complaint. Where people are willing, there are a number of ways of reporting an incident. Racially motivated crimes come under the heading of 'hate crime'.

In an emergency you should dial **999**; for non-emergency calls about hate crime phone **101**. The PSNI have access to translators and telephone translation services and have copies of their leaflet on Racial Incidents on their website in English, Polish, Lithuanian, Portuguese, Mandarin, Russian, Latvian, Slovakian and Romanian www.psni.police.uk/index/advice-and-legislation/advice_hate_crime/advice_hate_crime_racist.htm

You can report a hate crime online at www.urzone.com/hatecrime/hatecrime.asp

You can also report incidents confidentially on the **Crimestoppers** number **0800 555 111**

There is a police-funded **Hate Crime Victim Support Advocacy Service** www.nihe.gov.uk/victim_support_advocacy_service.pdf
Phone **(028)90438962** or E-mail [bilingualsupportworker@nicem.org.uk](mailto:lingualsupportworker@nicem.org.uk).

The **Belfast Migrant Centre** offers support for victims of racist harassment
Phone **(028 9043 8962)** or see www.belfastmigrantcentre.org/

The **Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE)** encourages reporting of neighbourhood harassment to their district offices.

For contact details see www.nihe.gov.uk/index/about/contact_us_home/your_nearest_office.htm.

They have also published a **Hate Harassment Support Pack** www.nihe.gov.uk/index/community/anti_social_behaviour/hate_crime.htm

The **Equality Commission for Northern Ireland** is responsible for preventing discrimination and promoting equality. It covers various areas of discrimination including gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, marital status and religious or political belief.

If you want advice from the Equality Commission about unlawful discrimination contact them on: information@equalityni.org or telephone **(028) 9089 0890** (Enquiry Line).

You shall love your neighbour as yourself. Mark 12: 30

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Building a Welcoming Community



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EMBRACE Information Sheet 4

How Should we Respond to Racism?

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From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth...

Acts 17: 26

What is Racism?

Dictionaries tend to define racism in terms of beliefs that some 'races' are superior to others. Many people today do not hold conscious views of racial superiority but retain ideas about people from different countries or ethnic backgrounds that lead to discriminatory attitudes and actions. Our troubled past has also helped to develop territorialism and suspicion of outsiders.

Negative stereotyping in the wider community is a breeding ground for more overt racism and racist crime. Physical and verbal racial attacks are publicised but more subtle forms of racial discrimination and indifference also affect many aspects of people's lives in a detrimental way.

Racist attitudes develop out of negative thoughts that are often based on fear, myths and ignorance about immigration and why our society is changing. If these attitudes are not challenged they lead to negative language. If this is unchecked, harassment and physical attack can follow.

The incidence of racially motivated crime, recorded by the PSNI, tended to rise during the last decade as the number of people from other countries and ethnic backgrounds increased in our communities. There was a decline in reported incidents between 2010 and 2013 but 2013/14 saw a serious increase with nearly 100 more reported instances of violence against the person with a racist motivation than in the previous year. Violence against the person made up 49% of the crimes and criminal damage 46%. Numbers of racist incidents rose by 30.9%. www.psni.police.uk/hate_motivated_incidents_and_crimes_in_northern_ireland_2004-05_to_2013-14.pdf

How Racism Escalates

Negative Attitudes → Derogatory Language

Derogatory Language → Harassment and Threats

Harassment and Threats → Physical Attacks

Who is Likely to Be a Victim?

Anyone can be a victim of racist attitudes or actions, however people from minority groups are more likely to be. Even age is no barrier.

'I have witnessed a racist attack. It was in P6. Two boys were being picked on by about six people and they said "go back home" ...'

National Children's Bureau report published Belfast, 2010.

'Promise Awoyelu was asleep at about 05:30 GMT on Saturday when she was hit on the head by a brick thrown through her bedroom window ... The child's father, Charles Awoyelu, who has been living in Northern Ireland for seven years, described the attack as 'shocking'. ... 'We are here to make a living and we are a peace-loving family.'

BBC News N Ireland, January 2012

www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-16665103

Many people are exposed to negative behaviour at work. In 2009, 80% of interviewees working in the private care sector said they had experienced racist bullying and discrimination and have felt humiliated at work.

[www.unison.org.uk/file/MW_Racism_and_the_Recession_-_final_report\[1\].pdf](http://www.unison.org.uk/file/MW_Racism_and_the_Recession_-_final_report[1].pdf)

Public officials are not immune from prejudice.

'I asked [a Social Security official]: "Can you please tell me if there is anywhere else I can go for help?" The answer was blunt and direct: "No! Go and ask the Portuguese Government to help you.'

A woman dismissed from her job because she was pregnant.

Animate Research Compendium, 2006

Neither are Christian communities.

'We have once sat in the church ... we smiled as we sat down, but there was nothing in response. They shifted and moved to keep space and distance between us so much that it became embarrassing. ... Was this just? Everywhere we go, it brings home the fact that once you have coloured skin you are regarded as scum ...'

Yvonne Mefor in *Inter-Cultural Insights: Christian Reflections on Racism, Hospitality and Identity from the Island of Ireland*

Some groups report particular anxiety. These comments are from a survey of Polish people living here, who were asked about their concerns:

'I feel more and more unwanted in this country'

'I'm worried about the harassment of Polish people and the lack of understanding towards my countrymen'

Dr Robbie McVeigh and Chris McAfee 'Za Chlebem':

The Impact of the Economic Downturn on the Polish Community in Northern Ireland

www.nicem.org.uk/uploads/publications/Za_Chlebem_Report.pdf

What Can We Do?

Everyone should be prepared to challenge racist language (including jokes) or myths and negative remarks about minority groups. Migration awareness or anti-racism training will help to give you confidence. Be aware of your own prejudices.

It is helpful to be prepared in case there is a racist incident in your area. Here are just some suggestions as to what you can do both before and after such an event.

- Organise training on diversity and migration awareness. (EMBRACE can help.) You can start by reading our leaflet 'Migration and Us'.
www.embraceni.org/category/about-us/embrace-resources/
- Build links with people from other nationalities and backgrounds who have moved into your area.
- Bring churches together to plan a joint response in the event of a racist incident.
- Make sure you know how to contact the right people in the agencies who can help. (See overleaf.)
- Visit people who have been attacked to reassure them and see if there is anything you can do.
- Go in pairs and, if there are women alone in the house, ensure that there is a woman among the visitors.
- Never give publicity to an incident unless the victims want it to be known.
- If you are acting on behalf of someone keep a very careful record of events.
- Ensure that there is one person who can make a statement on behalf of everyone.
- Bear in mind that blanket statements attacking people who act in a racist way do little to help the victims and can make whole communities feel picked on and resentful.

So Peter ... said: 'Truly I understand that God shows no partiality...'

Acts 10:34

For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us.

Ephesians 2:14