



# **Northern Ireland Assembly Commission Good Relations Action Plan 2025-2030 Public Consultation Outcome Report**

**March 2025**

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Under Section 75(2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission has a statutory duty 'to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group'.
- 1.2 The draft Good Relations Action Plan 2025-2030 sets out actions on how the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission proposes to fulfil the Good Relations duty.
- 1.3 The draft Good Relations Action Plan 2025-2030 aligns with the Assembly Commission's Corporate Strategy 2023-2028 which integrates the Equality and Good Relations actions. The Corporate Strategy 2023-2028 sets out key priorities and objectives the Assembly Commission intends to deliver in carrying out the role of providing support and advice to the Assembly.

## **2. Good Relations Action Plan 2025-2030 - Development and Public Consultation**

- 2.1 In phase one of developing the draft Good Relations Action Plan 2025-2030, desk top research was undertaken by the Assembly Commission's Equality Unit. Heads of Business from across the Assembly Commission's Directorates, who were responsible for the delivery of the Good Relations Action Plan 2022-2025, were also asked to complete a number of surveys in relation to the 2022-2025 action plan's

operation, implementation and impact. Further questions were asked in relation to the identification of new sources of equality and good relations data. This data was analysed and informed development of the Good Relations Action Plan 2025-2030.

- 2.2 Phase two of the consultation involved seeking internal feedback from staff via the staff Trade Union, NIPSA, and as part of this phase, a survey was also issued to members of [The Executive Office \(TEO\) sponsored Race Equality sub-group](#), who are a representative panel for minority ethnic communities that supports implementation of the TEO Racial Equality Strategy. All responses were analysed and helped to further inform the draft Good Relations Action Plan 2025-2030.
- 2.3 Phase 3 was a 12-week public consultation on the draft Good Relations Action Plan 2025-2030 which was undertaken from 11 November 2024 to 17 February 2025. The public consultation used a range of methods including face to face meetings, emails to consultees, press advertisements, a web-based survey, emails to staff and Twitter and Facebook posts. This report summarizes the responses received to the public consultation.
- 2.4 In total, 17 consultation responses to the public consultation were received via a web-based survey and direct e-mail. The Northern Ireland Assembly Commission's draft response to each of the comments received during consultation is provided at Annex A.

# Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

## Good Relations Action Plan 2025-2030

### Public Consultation Outcome Report

Summarised Consultee Comments	Northern Ireland Assembly Commission Response
<p><b>Action 1: To deliver training to all staff to ensure they understand requirements relating to section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and how it relates to their role.</b></p> <p>I have attached several of our training sessions relating to Section 75 which may be of use regarding this action measure.</p> <p>Section 75 should be embedded into the job descriptions, policy.</p> <p>General good relations training should be completed in Induction.</p>	<p>The information provided will be considered in the review/development of the training.</p> <p>Job specifications/descriptions include the requirement to comply with our policies and procedures, including those related to Section 75.</p> <p>New staff are provided with training in relation to equality and good relations as part of our 'Getting on Board' induction programme.</p>
<p><b>Action 2: Provide training and support to policy authors in relation to the requirements of equality and good relations policy screening.</b></p> <p>Northern Ireland is an ever-changing landscape and we need to keep abreast with changing issues.</p> <p>Need to ensure data accuracy over the lifetime of the action plan.</p>	<p>Training and support are designed to enable policy authors to take account of equality and good relations in policy development. Training content is kept under review to ensure that it remains accurate and up to date.</p> <p>As above.</p>
<p><b>Action 3: Welcome training is provided to the Visitor Experience Team.</b></p> <p>A bespoke, in-house training package would be better.</p>	<p>World host training has been identified as the best option to provide training for the Visitor Experience Team.</p>
<p><b>Action 4: Establish an ethnic minority stakeholder group.</b></p> <p>There are already a number of minority ethnic stakeholder groups. Consolidation of these and a review of their terms of reference would be helpful before another is created.</p>	<p>We recognise that there are a number of ethnic minority stakeholder groups across government, but a group specifically established by the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission will benefit the promotion of good relations.</p>

Summarised Consultee Comments	Northern Ireland Assembly Commission Response
<p>Establishing minority ethnic stakeholder groups reinforces the idea of irreconcilable differences.</p> <p>Include or create a separate stakeholder group for different faith communities.</p>	<p>The ethnic minority stakeholder group will aim to promote good relations between people from different racial backgrounds.</p> <p>The stakeholder group is designed to promote good relations between people of different racial backgrounds. Whilst the stakeholder group is designed to promote good relations between people of different racial backgrounds, this will likely by extension, include those with different faiths.</p>
<p><b>Action 5: Hold an ethnic Minority Parliament as part of a series of citizens parliaments.</b></p> <p>Potentially divisive and may undermine community cohesion.</p> <p>The Older People's and Disabled Parliaments and Youth Assembly should continue as well.</p> <p>Establishing a minority ethnic Parliament reinforces the idea of irreconcilable differences.</p> <p>Should include people of different religious beliefs.</p>	<p>The Ethnic Minority Parliament will be co-designed to promote good relations between people of different racial backgrounds.</p> <p>The Older People's, Disabled People's and Women's Parliaments will all continue as will the Northern Ireland Youth Assembly.</p> <p>The Minority Ethnic Parliament will be co-designed to promote good relations between people of different racial backgrounds.</p> <p>The Minority Ethnic Parliament will be co-designed to promote good relations between people of different racial backgrounds and will likely by extension, include those with different faiths.</p>
<p><b>Action 6: Create Information Packs for minority ethnic residents, illustrating how the Assembly and Committees work to encourage engagement.</b></p> <p>Creating an Information Pack for minority ethnic residents reinforces the idea of irreconcilable differences.</p> <p>There should be an information pack which is inclusive to all citizens.</p>	<p>The Information Packs will be designed to promote good relations between people from different communities.</p> <p>The information Packs will have benefits for all communities, but will be designed to meet the needs of those from ethnic minority communities.</p>
<p><b>Action 7: Host events in support of Good Relations.</b></p>	

Summarised Consultee Comments	Northern Ireland Assembly Commission Response
<p>Focus on holding events in relation to faith groups as well.</p> <p>Enhance and develop events that already exist.</p>	<p>Events to support good relations will include people who have different religious beliefs.</p> <p>Your comments are welcome and noted.</p>
<p><b>Action 8: Continually improve accessibility of our website and digital offerings.</b></p> <p>Aim 'Scope out the possibility of automatic text translation of relevant website pages.' It's unlikely this could be integrated into the new website given the risks of an inaccurate translation. It is best to direct people to how they can use auto-translation tools while highlighting the caveat that we can't stand over the translation.</p> <p>It would be beneficial to consider developing an app. Update social media pages that promote good relations with minority ethnic and faith communities.</p> <p>The website should include the option translate into different languages.</p>	<p>The growth of AI capability in translation is encouraging and in the development of the new website this will now be scoped in terms of the possibilities it may provide for translation of static material.</p> <p>This action has been amended as proposed to <i>'Direct website users to how they can use automatic text translation tools with the caveat that the Assembly Commission cannot guarantee the accuracy of translation'</i>.</p> <p>The active promotion of good relations is not a function of the social media pages. The pages do reflect the interactions of minority, ethnic and faith communities which interact with the Assembly or hold events in Parliament Buildings. Our aim will be to provide accurate and up to date information on our website and through social media.</p> <p>See above answer on AI.</p>
<p><b>Action 11: Continue to review and analyse applicant and employee Equality Monitoring data in relation to the Northern Ireland economically active population.</b></p> <p>Add in the three-year Article 55 Review as a measurable output.</p> <p>Employ the best person for the job.</p>	<p>Completion of the Article 55 review will be added as a measurable output for this action.</p> <p>Vacancies will continue to be filled through fair and open competition and appointments will be made on merit.</p>
<p><b>Action 12: Report on progress to the Senior Management Team (SMT) every six months and the Assembly Commission every year.</b></p> <p>Would be better to report to the SMT every 3 months.</p>	<p>We consider that the reporting arrangements proposed in Action 12 are appropriate.</p>

Summarised Consultee Comments	Northern Ireland Assembly Commission Response
<p><b>Action 13: A progress report is submitted yearly to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) via the Annual Equality Progress Report.</b></p> <p>A progress evaluation should be made half way through the year as well to catch up in areas where improvements can be made.</p>	<p>The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) requires that we report on progress annually and the Annual Equality Progress Report is published on our website. Internally, progress is reported to the Senior Management Team (SMT) every six months and published on the Assembly website.</p>

### General comments

Summarised Consultee Comments	Northern Ireland Assembly Commission Response
<p>You might wish to consider adding in the Assembly's educational role in the promotion of healing community divisions.</p> <p>Also you could possibly add in developing greater sharing and collaboration of work, partnership working, publishing good practice examples for the promotion of good relations, changing and challenging behaviours, work with Youth Assembly and capacity building of representatives from local communities.</p>	<p>The Assembly Commission recognises the important role that public engagement, which includes outreach, education and visitor experience, has in encouraging awareness, understanding and participation in the work of the Assembly. The Assembly's public engagement work seeks to reach out to a diverse audience and create opportunities for a diverse range of voices to be heard.</p> <p>Noted. Information of this nature is captured and reported in Part A of the Annual Equality Progress Report which is submitted to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and published on the Assembly website. The capturing and monitoring of this information will continue.</p>