

# Acknowledgements

All of the photos used in Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society are from successful projects to increase race equality and build cohesive communities. The projects featured are:

## **Front cover and Executive summary**

Peacemaker in Oldham

Elevate – the housing market renewal pathfinder in East Lancashire

Tackling heart disease in the Asian community, Bristol South and West Primary Care Trust

## **Introduction**

Tower Hamlets Mediation Service and the Rapid Response team of the Tower Hamlets Youth Support Service in London

Race for Justice in Hampshire

## **Improving life chances for all**

Community Safety Partnership in Derby

Lancashire Constabulary tackles antisocial behaviour in Preston

Tackling heart disease in the Asian community, Bristol South and West Primary Care Trust

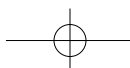
## **Building community cohesion**

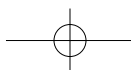
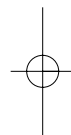
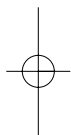
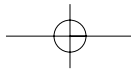
Elevate – the housing market renewal pathfinder in East Lancashire

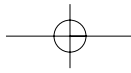
Peacemaker in Oldham

Operation Black Vote in London

For more details about these projects, please visit the Home Office website at [www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk)

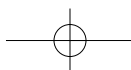
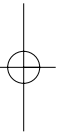
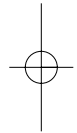


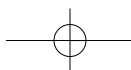
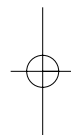
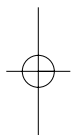
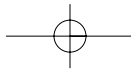




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# Foreword by the Home Secretary

Opportunities in Britain have undoubtedly grown over the last eight years. Not just because of what the Government has achieved, but because others, such as community organisations, business and front-line public services, have worked with us.

But go to any community and it is clear that there is still more to do.

This strategy is not about putting all people from minority ethnic communities in one category and those from the majority in another. That fails to recognise the progress of many, and can fuel the politics of division. Rather, it is about getting much better at identifying and responding to the specific needs of different communities, in education, health, employment, housing, security. For example, we are focusing educational support on those in greatest need and developing health services which better meet the circumstances of different communities.

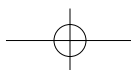
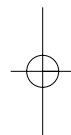
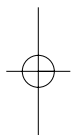
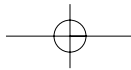
This strategy is also about looking beyond opportunities for individuals, to the importance of strengthening society. This is not something that the Government can do alone, but it is an issue on which we can give a lead: helping people come together from different backgrounds; supporting people to contribute to society; and taking a stand against racism and extremists who promote hatred. As a society, I believe we need to give more attention to what binds us together if we are to achieve the economic and social progress that benefits all. So this strategy signals our intention to give greater emphasis to providing this support and leadership.

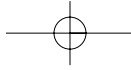
Equal opportunities can sometimes generate more rhetoric than action. That is not our approach. This document is focused on practical measures. I hope that it provides a framework that helps us continue to work with businesses, local public services and communities themselves to ensure that we further improve opportunities and cohesion in Britain over the next three years.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Charles Clarke'.

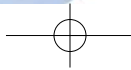
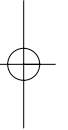
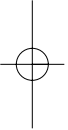
**Charles Clarke MP**

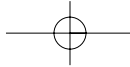




# Chapter 1

# Executive summary





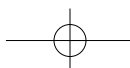
1. The Government is committed to improving the life chances of all members of society, particularly those suffering disadvantage. Over the last seven years, we have made enormous progress in building a society with opportunities for all. Unemployment is at a 29-year low. Educational opportunities are far greater than a generation ago, with greatest recent progress in those inner-city schools that have traditionally been left behind. We are making huge strides in better treating diseases such as cancer and heart disease – conditions that are most prevalent among the disadvantaged – and in preventing ill health in the first place.
2. But there is more to do to ensure that everybody in Britain has the life chances that they deserve. So the Government is stepping up our drive to increase opportunities. This strategy sets out one element of this commitment – to ensure that people are not discriminated against because of their race or religion, and that all can make a full contribution to our society. It complements our wider strategies to support progress among the population as a whole, and specific programmes with other groups who experience particular disadvantages.

### Improving life chances

3. Many members of Black and minority ethnic<sup>1</sup> communities are already doing well in Britain today. But the picture is by no means uniform. Many still suffer particularly poor outcomes in education, employment, health and other life chances, for a complex mixture of reasons, including racial discrimination, lack of opportunities, inadequate thought in how public services address the needs of different communities, the neighbourhoods they live in, longstanding lack of skills and cultural factors.
4. At the heart of this strategy therefore is an overarching objective to reduce race inequalities. This strategy signals the advent of a comprehensive cross-Government Public Service Agreement target to monitor and reduce race inequalities between 2005 and 2008, including specific goals to reduce perceptions of discrimination in a wide range of public services, reduce employment inequalities and monitor the progress of minority ethnic communities across major public services, from education to housing. This objective will be delivered through broad measures to tackle disadvantage and tailored programmes to meet specific needs.
  - In **education**, where some groups, such as Chinese pupils, are now generally thriving but others, such as African-Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi boys, are performing much worse, we will help schools focus on those who are still struggling by better targeting the £162 million

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1 In this strategy we use the terms 'Black and minority ethnic', 'minority ethnic' and 'ethnic minority' interchangeably.



Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant and we will step up best practice in raising pupil attainment among these groups. We want to ensure that young people from all communities benefit from the huge development and expansion of early years services, especially children's services, so that every child gets the best start in life. We will also improve the teaching of English for pupils for whom it is a second language and increase the recruitment of minority ethnic teachers to at least 9 per cent of those entering the profession during the next three years in order to ensure that teachers are more representative of the communities they serve.

- In the **labour market** the gap is closing between ethnic minority groups and the majority population, but most still have lower employment rates, particularly women. Fewer than half of those from Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin of working age are in employment; those that do hold jobs are more likely to be concentrated in roles where there is little chance of progression. In a competitive economy, we need to make use of the talent of all members of society and so we have launched an ambitious cross-government strategy on ethnic minority achievement in the labour force. Again, focusing on the most disadvantaged groups, we will therefore provide more tailored support for jobseekers from such communities. This work is supported by an overall Government strategy to improve literacy and numeracy among at least 1.5 million adults, particularly those from disadvantaged groups. We will look to make better use of government procurement to promote diversity and race equality in those organisations that supply public bodies.
- In **health** our overall drive to provide greater patient choice will include more tailored services to meet the particular needs of different cultural and ethnic groups. We will develop a host of national and local services in this way, such as tailored action to promote cervical screening among Asian women in primary care and improvements to mental health services for Black and minority ethnic communities including through 500 new Community Development Workers. Through our overall NHS programme to reduce all health inequalities we will also take particular action to tackle inequalities experienced by minority ethnic groups, such as the disproportionately high levels of heart disease among South Asians. The Chair of the Commission for Racial Equality will continue to chair an independent panel to scrutinise progress in increasing the representativeness of NHS staff and addressing the health needs of Black and minority ethnic communities.
- In **housing**, overcrowding and the number living in poor quality accommodation is greater, and resident satisfaction lower, among nearly all Black and minority ethnic communities, although again with significant variations between communities. We will ensure that all social tenants live

in decent accommodation by 2010. This measure alone will help around one in ten Black and minority ethnic households, reflecting the current concentration of minority households in such homes. We will also ensure that at least 70 per cent of vulnerable owner occupiers and private tenants are in decent accommodation through greater help with home improvements – a policy that will again particularly assist Black and minority ethnic communities. While overall economic deprivation is clearly a factor in the housing problems which some minority ethnic groups face, housing policy can also play a role. So we will monitor our choice-based lettings programme to ensure that it does not disadvantage any ethnic group, and we will continue to monitor and tackle discrimination through the work of the Audit Commission and the Commission for Racial Equality's forthcoming code of practice on housing. We will publish a new comprehensive action plan to address Black and minority ethnic housing needs later this year.

- In **policing and the Criminal Justice System** we have come a long way since the 1999 Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report to improve the way services meet the needs of all communities. But further measures are needed. We will therefore introduce a new statutory duty on police authorities to promote diversity within their forces and ensure that assessment and selection panels are more representative of the Black and minority ethnic communities they serve. We will provide better support and training for prison officers and those managing the Criminal Justice System locally to help them address discrimination and serve all communities equally. We will more effectively engage all groups in shaping services, such as through a new Community Panel to scrutinise the use of Stop and Search powers.
5. In a diverse society, meeting the needs of all communities is a fundamental task for all public services. Race equality needs to be integral to their work, not an 'add on'. That is why the Government has already introduced a duty on all public bodies to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equal opportunities and good race relations. Over the next three years, our focus will be to further embed this integrated approach by:
- i. together with the Commission for Racial Equality, advising public bodies on promoting race equality, including further developing, later this year, the Commission's plans on monitoring and assessing public bodies' progress in meeting their legal duties; and
  - ii. continuing to develop closer partnership working between the Commission for Racial Equality and public sector Inspectorates, so that both more effectively fulfil their roles in promoting race equalities.

6. Alongside the embedding of existing legislation, we always need to be aware of potential new forms of discrimination. In 2003, the Government introduced protection from discrimination in employment and vocational training on the grounds of religion or belief. We now plan to go further. We will introduce legislation against discrimination in the provision of goods, facilities and services on the grounds of religion or belief, responding to concerns raised in our consultation that such discrimination may be growing. In practical terms this will mean that providers of goods and services will not be able to refuse services to people on the grounds of religion or belief and will need to ensure that they do not discriminate indirectly in the way the services are provided.
7. The establishment of the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights will, by 2009, help provide a more integrated approach to promoting overall equality and good relations between communities.

### A cohesive society

8. The measures we outlined above will not only increase the opportunities for those individual members of Black and minority ethnic communities who currently suffer disadvantage, they also make for a better society; one in which people from all backgrounds can work together to create leading businesses, respond to common challenges such as improving neighbourhoods, exchange ideas, and draw on the best talent available in sports and the arts.
9. But such a cohesive society relies on more than equal opportunities for individuals. It also relies on a number of social conditions that help people from all backgrounds to come together and develop a sense of inclusion and shared British identity defined by common opportunities and mutual expectations on all citizens to contribute to society. This is not just important for Black and minority ethnic groups. Without widespread social participation and a valuing of all local cultures, those from majority communities can also feel excluded or left behind by social change. This strategy heralds the Government's intention to give greater emphasis to promoting a sense of common belonging and cohesion among all groups, setting out a vision for an inclusive British society in which:
  - i. **young people from different communities grow up with a sense of common belonging.** As youth services and school partnerships are developed, we will improve opportunities for young people from all backgrounds to learn and socialise together and to develop an inclusive sense of British identity alongside their other cultural identities. We will help young people develop mutual understanding and social participation, through embedding the development of citizenship education in schools,

providing increased opportunities for volunteering and by exploring options for developing local ceremonies to help mark their transition to adult membership of society. We have already produced a new framework to help schools use religious education to increase understanding of all faiths.

- ii. **new immigrants are integrated.** To promote a sense of belonging among immigrants, who increasingly come from a very diverse range of countries, we will continue to support citizenship ceremonies, underpinned by practical help and guidance for those adapting to life in the UK. Our forthcoming Refugee Integration Strategy will set out our aims to promote and support the integration of refugees, especially by helping them to meet their practical and longer-term integration needs through a personal caseworker programme and Refugee Integration Loans.
- iii. **people have opportunities to develop a greater understanding of the range of cultures that contribute to our strength as a country.** Sports and arts have a great track record of bringing people together and over the next three years we are committed to enabling more people to participate in these, particularly from disadvantaged communities. We also expect museums, galleries and community cultural programmes to play an increased role in promoting an understanding of, and celebrating, the diverse elements of our local and national society, and we plan to pilot a Citizenship Day to provide a focus for these activities. We will help faith and ethnic communities promote understanding and dialogue, such as through a new £3 million programme to help faith-based groups develop their capacity for such work and by better Government engagement with faith groups in developing and delivering policies. We aim to help different cultural groups promote a tolerant society in which all groups can resolve differences in a framework of mutual respect and fairness.
- iv. **people from all backgrounds have opportunities to participate in civic society.** For example, we will help more people from disadvantaged backgrounds to be active in their communities and engage with public services, such as through volunteering. Our target is, by 2008, to increase participation by at least 5 per cent among those at most risk of social exclusion – including Black and minority ethnic groups and those who live in deprived areas – through programmes such as the £4 million Volunteer Recruitment Fund.
- v. **racism is unacceptable.** We will focus on further driving the reduction in racially motivated incidents of the last few years,<sup>2</sup> including through

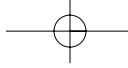
2 Data from the British Crime Survey suggest that there has been a noticeable reduction in racially motivated incidents over the last seven years. Figures reported to the police and received for prosecution are much lower than British Crime Survey figures but have increased over the past five years, suggesting improvements in the proportion of incidents reported.

improved reporting and recording of racist incidents by police, local authorities and others, continued efforts by the Crown Prosecution Service to ensure that hate crimes are handled effectively, work by the new National Offender Management Service to ensure that behavioural programmes for offenders address racist attitudes, and the provision of greater support for victims of hate crime. This focus will be matched by broader measures to ensure that racism is seen as unacceptable in modern Britain, such as through implementation of guidance to help schools combat racist bullying, better helping youth workers to tackle prejudice among young people, supporting campaigns such as 'Let's Kick Racism Out of Football', and working with the media to promote better informed reporting on race and faith issues.

- vi. **extremists who promote hatred are marginalised.** While their influence should not be overstated, extremist organisations – whether political or religious – can undermine inclusion and fuel resentment. We have therefore recently introduced legislation to make incitement to religious hatred an offence, while protecting free speech, responding to the way that racist organisations have increasingly turned their focus on followers of certain faiths. We will also take this opportunity to clarify the requirements of the existing offence of incitement to racial hatred to ensure that it can be used more effectively in our work against hate crime. Because strong political and community leadership can prevent extremists from gaining a hold in communities, we will step up work to strengthen the skills of those in local government to tackle racism and extremism, and we will continue to support faith communities, such as through training for religious leaders.
10. These actions will support the existing duty on all 43,000 public bodies to promote good race relations, backed up with new guidance from the Commission for Racial Equality on how to meet this duty. We will also ensure that housing and regeneration programmes support cohesion, help train community leaders to resolve tensions if they do occur and continue to disseminate findings from a major Government programme to develop and share best practice in helping people from different communities to come together at the local level.

## Delivering our strategy

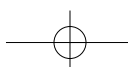
11. This is a realistic strategy, reflecting the commitment by all parts of the Government to promote equal life chances for all, within the context of an inclusive British society that helps people come together to thrive economically, socially and culturally. Of course we cannot do it alone. Business has a vital role to play in ensuring that the talent of all is used and many companies have already been leading the way in promoting diversity.

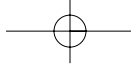


Community groups will be essential to progress in strengthening the sense of belonging and cohesion in society, and we will look to work together with them to deliver many of the measures set out above. Individuals have a responsibility themselves to contribute to society and use services appropriately. This document sets out the Government's contribution.<sup>3</sup> To help hold us to account, for the first time we will provide transparent information on progress in tackling race inequalities across the public services, including levels of perceived discrimination in a number of public organisations, and we will also provide greater information on perceptions of community cohesion. Together with our partners, we believe that this strategy will be an important contribution to building a fairer, more inclusive and more dynamic Britain.

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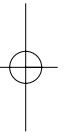
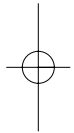
<sup>3</sup> The strategy reinforces the implementation of our obligations under the International Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination. It also meets our commitments to action agreed at the 2001 UN World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, including the development of a National Action Plan Against Racism.





# Chapter 2

## Introduction



1. This strategy sets out one strand of the Government's overall drive to improve fairness and opportunities for all in Britain; how we will ensure that a person's ethnicity is not a barrier to their success and foster the social cohesion necessary to enable people from minority and majority communities to work together for social and economic progress.
2. The last seven years have been characterised by progress across much of society. Unemployment is lower than at any time since 1975 and household incomes have risen by 22 per cent since 1997,<sup>1</sup> thanks to the longest period of economic growth since records began, and specific programmes to support people back into work. The Government is on track to reduce the number of children in poverty by a quarter in 2005, compared to 1997. School attainment is rising, most rapidly in those inner city areas that have traditionally been characterised by poor results, and more young people are going on to higher education. The risk of being a victim of crime has fallen by almost a third and by more in high crime, deprived areas. Life expectancy is up by around 4 years on average in the last 20 years thanks to better treatment and a drive to tackle the causes of ill health, such as smoking.<sup>2</sup> The number living in non-decent housing is down by 13 per cent. By almost any standard we are a country of greater opportunities.
3. Yet it is clear that to sustain and accelerate this progress, more needs to be done to build on the work of the last seven years. Achieving such progress requires a two-pronged approach:
  - i. continuing to foster underlying economic growth, community strength and improvements in public services; matched with,
  - ii. more focused support for groups with particular needs, such as those living in a deprived community, with disabilities or certain health problems, a long standing lack of skills, or facing discrimination.
4. Focused support is often appropriate in helping disadvantaged Black and minority ethnic groups. The experience of the last few years demonstrates that ensuring these groups enjoy full opportunities can require specific measures to address particular barriers to progress, associated with their circumstances, experience of racial discrimination, or culture. Generic programmes of support are important, but not always sufficient. This strategy therefore sets out a number of ways in which the Government will meet their specific needs. More broadly, we set out measures to foster community cohesion in order to help all sections of society work together. At a time in which rapid economic and social changes, such as greater mobility, can generate the potential for fragmentation within communities, support for cohesion is more important than ever.

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1 Median, after housing costs. *Households Below Average Income, 1995–2002/03*, Department for Work and Pensions, 2004.

2 Figures compared for 1981 and 2002, Office for National Statistics, [www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk).

5. This introduction sets the context for the Government's plans. The following chapters outline our measures in detail.

### Black and minority ethnic groups in Britain today

6. Around one in twelve people in Britain belong to a minority ethnic community, from recent migrants to the many who were born in this country. While no community is truly homogeneous, different parts of the country have varying concentrations of people from ethnic and religious minorities living in them. In some areas of London, over half of the population is of Black and minority ethnic origin.
7. Many members of these communities are thriving. From our economic and civic life, to our arts, music and sports, members of Black and minority ethnic groups are leading the way. In some areas of life, minority ethnic groups as a whole are doing better than the majority population. More enter higher education than the national average, for example, and rates of employment are rising faster. The days when it was sensible to consider all Black and minority ethnic groups as disadvantaged are over.
8. Yet despite progress and while some groups are succeeding, others still suffer significant disadvantage, and many continue to experience racism and discrimination. The Government's *Race Equality in Public Services* report, published alongside this strategy, outlines this complex pattern in detail.<sup>3</sup> The issues also vary between localities; in some urban areas large numbers of people from very different communities have varied needs and in other areas, such as some rural localities, there are specific isolated groups.
  - In **education**, some groups are performing well. For example, in 2003, 75 per cent of young people of Chinese origin achieved at least five A\*-C grades in GCSE and those from an Indian background also achieved significantly better than the national average. But children, particularly boys, from Black African and Caribbean, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, and Gypsy and Traveller groups are consistently less likely to succeed, and often do particularly poorly by the end of formal education. The proportions achieving good GCSE attainment rates among these groups are at least 10 per cent lower than the national average. One of the most encouraging developments is that the majority of young people from Black and minority ethnic communities are now going on to universities and colleges at some point after leaving school (56 per cent compared to 40 per cent among the population as a whole), although the proportion who attend the most prestigious universities is lower.

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<sup>3</sup> *Race Equality in Public Services*, Home Office, 2005, [www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk).

- In the **labour market**, despite many very successful individuals and overall increases in employment rates, on average almost all Black and minority ethnic groups are still more likely to experience unemployment and economic inactivity. Among those of Black Caribbean origin, for example, almost one in ten are unemployed, compared to less than one in twenty-five among the population as a whole. Fewer than half of working-age people from Bangladeshi and Pakistani backgrounds are in employment and those in employment are often in poorly paid jobs. Consequently, nearly two-thirds of children of Pakistani and Bangladeshi descent are growing up in poverty, compared to around one-fifth of children in the population as a whole.
- While all communities are vulnerable to experiencing poor **housing conditions**, members of nearly all Black and minority ethnic communities are most at risk. More are likely to live in officially recognised 'non-decent' homes, particularly people of Asian origin. Many face a greater risk of overcrowding at home (21 per cent of households of Pakistani descent, 30 per cent of those of Bangladeshi descent and 13 per cent of people of Black African descent, compared to 2 per cent of those households identifying as white). Unsurprisingly, fewer are satisfied with their accommodation. And more live in deprived areas.
- In **health**, limited data is available on overall disease prevalence and mortality by ethnic groups. However, a number of studies have shown that people from many Black and minority ethnic groups tend, in general, to have worse health than the wider population. The Census found somewhat higher rates of self-reported limiting long-term illnesses among Asian and Black groups than in the population as a whole, especially among the over 50s. Some conditions are also concentrated among certain ethnic groups, such as heart disease among South Asians. Asian people are also up to five times more likely to have diabetes, those from African and Caribbean backgrounds three times more likely. More broadly, health services need to be sensitive to the cultural backgrounds of all patients, but some minority ethnic groups, such as people of Indian, Bangladeshi and Pakistani descent, have lower perceived levels of access to care than the population as a whole. In mental health care, recent evidence shows that young Black men are six times more likely to be compulsorily detained than the national average.<sup>4</sup>
- Many minority ethnic groups have a markedly different experience of certain aspects of the **Criminal Justice System**. Risks of victimisation are generally similar, although significantly higher for those of mixed race backgrounds, but fear of crime is much higher: around 20 per cent of the

<sup>4</sup> *Delivering race equality in mental health care*, Department of Health, January 2004, [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk).

population as a whole are very worried about violent crime, compared to around 40 per cent of Black and Asian people. People from minority ethnic communities are more likely to be stopped and searched, arrested, prosecuted and imprisoned, and are more likely to believe that organisations such as the police will treat them worse because of their ethnicity.

9. The reasons for these disadvantages are complex and mutually reinforcing. Poor employment, skill levels, income, housing, health, cultural factors such as diet, and living in a deprived area all influence each other, and untangling all the causes of disadvantage will never be precise. But where experts have looked at these issues in depth – such as at employment – coming from a minority ethnic community appears to carry added disadvantages. For example, even among relatively successful groups such as those of Indian origin, success is lower than among people with comparable education and skills who are not from a minority ethnic community. And while great strides have been made to reduce blatant discrimination, direct and indirect discrimination is still far too frequent. Only five years ago the Inquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence severely criticised the police for institutional racism and subsequent inquiries into other public services have continued to raise concerns about discrimination.
10. Given the complex picture outlined above, this strategy:
  - i. signals the Government's intention to develop more sophisticated, tailored approaches to meeting the specific needs of different minority communities, and to focus on those groups who still suffer particular disadvantage, rather than treating all minority groups as disadvantaged or having the same needs. This is the time to move on from one-size-fits-all approaches to meeting Black and minority ethnic needs.
  - ii. sets out a vision for providing such tailored, appropriate services as an integral element of delivering excellent public services.
  - iii. reflects the Government's commitment to strengthening, supporting and enforcing discrimination legislation.
  - iv. strengthens accountability for delivering the above, with stretching cross-cutting Government targets to reduce race inequalities and monitor outcomes.

### Strengthening community cohesion

11. Progress on increasing life chances for all is a fundamental element of building strong, cohesive communities and a dynamic society and economy. Conversely, where tensions have developed between different ethnic groups, such as in some Northern English towns in the summer of 2001, deprivation and lack of opportunity have been significant contributory factors.

12. Yet a strong society relies on more than simply good individual life chances. Experience suggests that people also need a sense of common belonging and identity, forged through shared participation in education, work and social activities, and through mutual understanding of cultural difference. National cohesion rests on an inclusive sense of Britishness which couples the offer of fair mutual support – from security to health and education – with the expectation that people will play their part in society and respect others.
13. Compared to many societies, Britain has done well to build a sense of inclusive membership, among the majority and minorities. Self reported racial prejudice is on a slow long-term downward trend,<sup>5</sup> although concerns about prejudice in society may be rising and certain minorities experience particular hostility. Racially motivated incidents are noticeably fewer than just seven years ago. Surveys indicate that nearly nine out of ten of people disagree that you need to be White to be British.<sup>6</sup> Most consider that Britain is a place that has good relations between different ethnic communities.<sup>7</sup> Today, Britishness encompasses the collective contribution diverse communities make to the country. People should not need to choose between their British identity and other cultural identities. They can be proud of both.
14. Yet despite progress, there are a number of new opportunities and challenges which underline the need to keep reinforcing cohesion:
- The nature of diversity is becoming more complex. Alongside established minority ethnic communities are newer immigrant groups, generating enormously heterogeneous populations in many urban areas. In London, for example, over 300 languages are spoken. While for some, their country of origin is an extremely important element of identity, for others religious belief is more important. There are over a million and a half Muslims and over half a million Hindus in Britain, alongside majority Christian populations and significant numbers of Jewish and Sikh people. Such religious and racial diversity is overlaid by significant variations in lifestyles among all groups – majority and minority – creating enormous variation in the customs and social lives of neighbours.
  - In many areas, the diversity within and between communities has been a source of rich cultural interactions, but in other areas segregation has led to people leading ‘parallel lives’ with little interaction.
  - While British Crime Survey figures suggest that racially motivated incidents have fallen over the last seven years, with over 200,000 incidents in 2002/3 there is still a long way to go to ensure that all citizens are secure and

5 Less than a third of those asked by the British Social Attitudes Survey in 2003 considered themselves prejudiced compared to over 35 per cent for much of the 1980s.

6 MORI, September 2004.

7 MORI, September 2004.

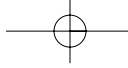
accepted in Britain. Prejudice and hatred against people of different ethnic groups and religions remain far too prevalent, for example anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.

- In a period of general economic and social change, there is some evidence that extremists who promote hatred are increasingly seeking to divide communities. While their influence should not be overstated, we see some worrying developments.
15. This strategy therefore heralds the Government's intention to step up our investment in helping build cohesive communities – strengthening the social fabric of Britain and sense of common citizenship. This is not about assimilation of cultural differences. But it does signal a greater focus on helping build a stronger sense of common belonging and social participation, at national and local levels, in partnership with civic organisations and communities themselves.
  16. Our underlying vision is of a greater sense of inclusive British citizenship, supported by a society in which:
    - i. young people from different communities grow up with a sense of common belonging;
    - ii. new immigrants rapidly integrate;
    - iii. people have opportunities to gain an understanding of the range of cultures that contribute to our strength as a country;
    - iv. people from all backgrounds participate in civic society;
    - v. racism is unacceptable; and
    - vi. extremists who promote hatred are marginalised.
  17. The proposals we set out draw on a four-month public consultation.<sup>8</sup> Respondents highlighted the need to consolidate progress achieved over the last few years, while tackling some of the specific outstanding challenges raised above.<sup>9</sup> Further proposals on the distinct, but related, issue of effectively managing migration and asylum will also be published later in the year. These will build on recent improvements to strengthen border security and application processing, which have already reduced asylum applications by around two-thirds compared to 2002. Our determination to deliver a fairer and more effective immigration system will contribute to good race relations.

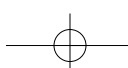
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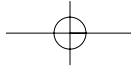
<sup>8</sup> *Strength in Diversity: towards a community cohesion and race equality strategy*, Home Office, 2004.

<sup>9</sup> A summary of consultation responses is available on the Home Office website [www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk).



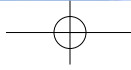
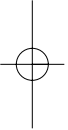
18. This is a strategy for Great Britain and will apply in Northern Ireland only to those matters that are reserved or excepted under the provisions of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. It acknowledges that race equality and community relations are matters for the Northern Ireland Administration, which is developing strategies for race equality and community relations. It also acknowledges that there are separate devolution arrangements for Scotland and Wales. This strategy has been developed in consultation with the Scottish and Welsh administrations, who are committed to its aims and will produce their own action plans, outlining how they will promote community cohesion and race equality over the next three years. It reinforces the implementation of our obligations under the International Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination. It also meets our commitments to actions agreed at the 2001 UN World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, including the development of a National Action Plan Against Racism.
19. This strategy draws together the different Government programmes relating to race equalities and community cohesion. A number of the specific measures have been noted in the five year strategies that government departments have recently published, and in other recent Government statements. To ensure that an integrated approach also characterises the delivery of these plans, a Ministerial Committee will oversee their implementation.





## Chapter 3

# Improving life chances for all



1. This chapter outlines how the Government will help ensure that no one in Britain is discriminated against on the basis of their race or religion; that all can benefit from and contribute to our economy, society and public services. Our approach is not to privilege Black and minority ethnic groups above any other groups, but is rather one element of our overall commitment to increasing life chances for all.
2. As the Introduction highlighted, life chances for members of different minority ethnic groups vary greatly in the key areas of employment, education, health, housing and experience of the Criminal Justice System, and the challenges and opportunities that different groups face are by no means uniform. This strategy therefore presents a significant shift, to give greater emphasis to the most disadvantaged minority ethnic groups and tailor services to the particular needs of specific ethnic and cultural groups, rather than pursue a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to diversity. And because diversity is such an important feature of British society, our approach to meeting the needs of a range of different minority ethnic communities is very much to build provision for such diversity (and differing needs within the majority population) into our overall vision for good public services. Catering for a variety of groups should be an integral element of good services today, not a special feature.
3. The Government cannot create equal life chances for all through its work alone. Employers, voluntary and community organisations and individuals themselves all have a role. But public services play a vital part in creating opportunities for many. Therefore, we have set out a cross-government Public Service Agreement target for the years 2005 – 2008, to reduce race inequality and build community cohesion. This includes a wide range of goals, including:
  - reducing perceptions of racial discrimination by key institutions and in the labour market;
  - increasing the employment rate of minority ethnic groups, taking account of the economic cycle;
  - promoting ethnic diversity in the workplace; and
  - monitoring and publishing data on race inequalities in areas such as educational attainment, housing and the Criminal Justice System.
4. In addition, a number of public services have set themselves further objectives, both to reduce disadvantage and inequalities as a whole (which will help disadvantaged members of Black and minority ethnic groups as well as other disadvantaged population groups) and to meet the specific needs of minority ethnic groups.
5. This chapter summarises our approach to meeting these objectives in a number of major services, setting out plans in education, employment,

housing, health and the Criminal Justice System. It also outlines how plans in specific areas will be complemented by a greater overall drive to help services provide opportunities for all, such as through better advice from the Commission for Racial Equality and new legislation to provide protection from religious discrimination in the provision of goods and services. To ensure that an integrated approach characterises the delivery of these plans, a Ministerial Committee will oversee their implementation.

### Education – focusing on those whose attainment still falls behind

6. The Government is committed to providing equal educational opportunities for all children. Our comprehensive Skills Strategy aims to give every young person a firm foundation in the skills they need for adult and working life, and for adults, opportunities to keep developing their skills. This is the backbone around which we are developing specific work to support disadvantaged Black and minority ethnic children, as well as other disadvantaged groups.

#### Early years – integrated support for families

7. Sure Start Children's Centres are being significantly expanded, offering early education and childcare, family support, health services, employment advice and specialist support on a single site. By 2010 there will be 3,500 Sure Start Children's Centres in England alone, one for every community.<sup>1</sup> As part of their objective of addressing disadvantage, the centres are expected to provide services that are responsive to the needs of Black and minority ethnic children. Research shows that a smaller proportion of Black and minority ethnic children, especially those from Bangladeshi and Black African households, attend childcare and nursery education compared to the population as a whole. The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) is committed to ensuring that Black and minority ethnic children benefit fully from the planned huge expansion in early years and childcare services. They will ensure that all Sure Start early years services are appropriate, relevant and accessible to all communities and that there is increased recruitment of Black and minority ethnic groups into the workforce.

#### Aiming High – raising attainment in schools

8. As we set out in the Government's Five Year Education Strategy, we intend to step up our work in schools to combat the effects of deprivation on educational attainment. The *Aiming High* programme brings a strong focus to meeting the needs of Black and minority ethnic pupils and pupils with English as an additional language, particularly groups whose attainment is lower. As we noted in the Introduction, some groups such as pupils of

<sup>1</sup> *Chancellor's Pre-Budget Report*, 2 Dec 2004, Hansard.

Chinese and Indian descent are now generally thriving, but others of Black African and Caribbean, Bangladeshi and Pakistani origin, particularly boys, still fall behind and will be our priority over the next three years. This is also the case for Gypsy and Traveller pupils. The programme includes:

- i. *Reform of the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant* – making the £162 million grant better targeted and more focused on areas with the greatest need.
  - ii. *Supporting learners for whom English is an additional language*. Around 10 per cent of all pupils in England have English as an additional language.<sup>2</sup> We will ensure that they are supported by developing a national qualification for teachers of English as an additional language. Teachers' skills will be boosted further by working with 21 local education authorities and over 50 associate authorities through the Primary National Strategy pilots. We are looking at options to extend these beyond 2005.
  - iii. *Raising the achievement of underachieving Black and minority ethnic pupils*. By identifying and disseminating good practice through a pilot programme in 30 secondary schools, we will continue to identify methods of improving the attainment of pupils of African-Caribbean background. The pilot is due to finish in August 2005 and will be independently evaluated. Further expansion of this work will be dependent on an assessment of the current programme's effectiveness.
9. We will also focus on improving the achievement of Gypsy and Traveller young people, who have the poorest recorded achievement levels at GCSE.

#### **Boosting the number of teacher role models**

10. As in other public services, having a representative workforce in teaching is crucial both to ensure that we draw on the full range of talent available and generate confidence among all communities. This is particularly the case in teaching, where the visible role-modelling of diverse staff teams is in itself an important educational experience. By the end of the next academic year, we will ensure that at least 9 per cent of new entrants to the teaching workforce are from Black and minority ethnic communities, and we will maintain or exceed that figure for the next three years. This will build on the progress of increasing recruitment to 8.3 per cent of all mainstream trainees in 2003, up from 5.1 per cent in 2000.

#### **Aimhigher – increasing participation in higher education**

11. One of the great successes of the last few years has been the significant expansion in further and higher education among young people from Black and minority ethnic communities (so much so that higher education participation rates exceed those from the majority of the population), but students tend to be clustered in a relatively small number of mainly new

<sup>2</sup> *Race Equality in Public Services*, forthcoming, Home Office.

institutions. Through its partnerships between higher education, schools and colleges, the *Aimhigher* programme will work with gifted and talented young people who live in deprived areas, including those from Black and minority ethnic communities, helping them to see that top universities are within their grasp. Typical activities include summer schools, weekend or evening study sessions and visits to universities.

12. These specific programmes will be supported by broader support for increasing the access of disadvantaged groups to higher education, through the abolition of upfront tuition fees and the introduction of grants of up to £2,700 per year for students from lower income households. From 2006, around half of all new full-time students are expected to receive a full or partial grant.

### **The labour market – more tailored responses to the needs of specific groups**

13. As in education, our approach is to address the needs of specific ethnic groups as part of our ambition to increase the employment rate of all disadvantaged groups. If anything, the challenges are greater than in education, with most ethnic minority groups appearing to suffer some disadvantage and particularly high unemployment rates among those of Black African and Caribbean origin, and high economic inactivity among those of Pakistani and Bangladeshi descent. Certain minorities are also concentrated in industries with few chances for progression; for example 53 per cent of male workers of Bangladeshi origin are employed in the hotel and restaurant trades and 12 per cent of men of Pakistani origin work as taxi drivers.
14. To respond to these challenges, the Government has developed the first cross-government ethnic minority employment strategy. The strategy falls into three broad themes, each addressing the main factors in ethnic minority employment disadvantage:
  - Connecting People to Work;
  - Human Capital; and
  - Equal Opportunities in the Workplace.
15. The Ethnic Minority Task Force is the key mechanism for delivering the strategy. It brings together ministers from five Government departments and also includes representatives from the Trades Union Congress, the Confederation of British Industry and the Commission for Racial Equality.

## Connecting People to Work

16. We will help connect disadvantaged ethnic minority groups to the labour market over the next three years by:
  - i. *Providing guidance for jobseekers and employers.* Jobcentre Plus is improving its services to ensure that clients receive the specialist and flexible support they need. Specialist Employment Advisers, who were introduced in 2004, offer support and practical advice to employers on race equality issues, and work with them to develop ways to ensure that their recruitment practices reach a diverse range of potential employees. Ethnic Minority Outreach works with community organisations to engage jobseekers from ethnic minority groups, and provides tailored guidance and support.
  - ii. *Piloting new locally-led partnerships.* The National Employment Panel has set up the Fair Cities initiative, a set of pilot partnerships between business, local government and the voluntary sector that will aim to provide people with skills that match the needs of employers.
  - iii. *Creating incentives to search for work.* The Department for Work and Pensions will pilot the Work Search premium for partners from October 2005. This introduces a £20 weekly payment to give non-working partners in low-income families help to meet the costs of searching for employment. This pilot is for partners in general, but we expect will be particularly useful in testing ways of helping ethnic minority groups, who experience particularly low employment rates and who are over-represented in low-paid single earner families.

## Human Capital – workforce skill development

17. The Skills for Life programme will improve the numeracy and/or language skills of at least 1.5 million adults by 2007. Within this more general context, the Department for Education and Skills and Jobcentre Plus will be targeting key groups as a priority, and the Government will seek to ensure that current and new skills programmes fully address the needs of ethnic minority communities as an integral element of their work.

## Equal Opportunities in the Workplace

18. Equality and diversity are important for achieving business objectives – bringing in the maximum range of talent and helping organisations meet the needs of a diverse range of customers – as well as being socially just. The Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force has agreed to drive work to use public procurement as a lever to promote race equality. It will be working with the Sustainable Procurement Group and the Office of Government Commerce to explore the use of procurement in this way. The Institute for Public Policy Research's business-led Race Equality and Diversity Task Force has recently proposed further action on three key recommendations – on leadership, incentivising business and guidance. We welcome this work by

representatives of many of the UK's major employers. We will review progress against the business-led initiative in three years time to ensure that the recommendations are making a difference. We will consider further measures in light of this review.

19. The Government will lead by example in promoting diversity and ethnic minority achievement in the workplace. To accomplish this, all government departments will implement plans to improve their recruitment and promotion of members of ethnic minority groups. For example, many aim to increase the proportion of senior civil servants from ethnic minority backgrounds to between 4 and 8 per cent by 2008. Another aim is to ensure that by 2009, police force staff are representative of the economically active population in each force area.
20. Alongside this programme of action, the National Employment Panel will work with the Ethnic Minority Business Forum to report by spring 2005 on further measures to encourage employment, self-employment and the growth of small business among ethnic minority and faith groups.

### Reducing health inequalities and providing culturally appropriate services

21. The Government's action to address the health needs of particular disadvantaged minority ethnic communities takes place in the context of our drive to increase health overall and to reduce inequalities. This was set out in the White Paper *Choosing Health*, which, in November 2004, underlined the Government's aim for everyone to achieve improved health and to focus specifically on inequalities in health. From April 2005 there will be a new performance framework for the NHS and social care, *National Standards, Local Action* requiring different needs and inequalities within the local population to be taken into account on the basis of a systematic programme of health equity audit and equality impact assessment. This will enable local NHS bodies to target action in response to locally identified needs and help organisations address inequalities in access to services and in health outcomes experienced by Black and minority ethnic groups.
22. For example, to combat the disproportionately high levels of heart disease among people of South Asian origin, the Department of Health recently published a best practice toolkit *Heart Disease and South Asians*, to support all relevant health workers. A multi-million pound tobacco education campaign is helping address the high levels of smoking among Black and minority ethnic groups, particularly the Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities, including training for frontline health care workers who deal with Asian clients. The Department is also looking at ways of improving services to reduce diabetes. More broadly, Race for Health is a three-year programme that

supports 13 Primary Care Trusts around the country, working in partnership with specific local Black and minority ethnic communities to improve health and modernise services, increase choice and create greater diversity within the NHS workforce.

23. To address issues in providing mental health services for Black and minority ethnic people, the Department of Health recently launched an action plan for reforming services, *Delivering race equality in mental health care*, accompanied by the Government's response to the independent inquiry into the death of David Bennett. The plan sets out three key elements for reform of services:
  - i. *more appropriate and responsive services*, focusing both on improving organisations and the workforce, and on tailoring services more effectively to specific needs;
  - ii. *community engagement*, supported by 500 new Community Development Workers and delivered through 80 planned new community engagement projects; and
  - iii. *better information*, through improved monitoring of ethnicity, including a new regular census of mental health patients.
24. As we develop greater choice and responsiveness in the NHS, we are committed to ensuring that services are developed to meet the specific needs of different cultural groups, and are concerned about lower perceptions of service among some groups such as people of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin. For example, we will continue to design tailored services such as specific cancer screening programmes for women of Asian origin, and will pursue organ donation campaigns targeting specific minority ethnic communities in order to raise awareness and promote organ donation.
25. In order to better understand and respond to the health needs of particular Black and minority ethnic communities we are committed to raising the quality of data on the health needs and experiences of these groups. We will revise the guidance for NHS organisations on the collection of ethnic group data. Local examples of good practice in the collection and use of Black and minority ethnic data are being identified and collated, and will be shared across the NHS in 2005. Opportunities for systematic data collection will be supported by integrated IT infrastructure and systems for all NHS organisations in England by 2010.
26. These measures take place within the overall drive to reduce health inequalities and the specific national framework of the Leadership and Race Equality Programme, which is a long-term undertaking to give greater prominence to race equality in the NHS. Trevor Phillips, Chair of the Commission for Racial Equality, chairs an independent panel to keep the Leadership and Race Equality Action Plan under review, provide advice and challenge progress.

## Improving housing conditions

27. Our aim is to ensure equal access to public and private sector housing across all communities, and to improve conditions in the most deprived neighbourhoods. We will do this through concerted efforts in the social housing and private sectors and through our cross-government National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) produced *Addressing the Housing Needs of Black and minority ethnic people: an Action Plan* in November 2001. This document is currently being updated to reflect progress and outstanding opportunities and challenges. The new action plan, due for launch in early 2005, will detail how we will ensure equality in housing policy and housing service delivery.

### Decent homes

28. Members of nearly all Black and minority ethnic groups are more likely than average to live in poor condition housing. In 2001, 39 per cent (560,000) of all Black and minority ethnic households lived in homes that did not meet the decent homes standard. These groups will benefit from our target to ensure that all social sector homes meet the standard by 2010 and to increase the proportion of vulnerable households living in decent homes in the private sector. This social sector target alone will benefit one in ten of all Black and minority ethnic households (150,000 households).
29. We expect to increase the proportion of vulnerable owner-occupiers and private tenants in decent homes from 57 per cent in 2001 to 70 per cent in 2010. This will benefit a significant proportion of the 140,000 vulnerable Black and minority ethnic households who live in such non-decent homes.

### Equality of access

30. The Government's aim is to ensure equal access to public and private sector housing across all communities, and to improve conditions in the most deprived neighbourhoods.
- Our choice-based lettings policy is a major step forward in offering social housing tenants greater control over where they live. The evidence so far is that the choice-based lettings schemes have generally been welcomed by Black and minority ethnic customers. The ODPM is committed to carrying out a race impact assessment of the allocation legislation, including choice-based lettings policies. To address similar issues in the private sector, the ODPM is developing tools for the private sector, to address cohesion and race equality, particularly in relation to lettings and estate agents.
  - In addition to the ODPM's work to increase the choices available to tenants, the Government will also continue to monitor how effectively social landlords are fulfilling their duties to address discrimination in access

to and quality of housing more generally. A number have already implemented best practice in, for instance, funding advisory services and ensuring that customer satisfaction rates are high across all communities using the service. Their activities are monitored and assessed by the Audit Commission's Housing Inspectorate and advice will be provided by the Commission for Racial Equality's forthcoming Code of Practice on housing.

- We are committed to ensuring that Gypsies and Travellers have access to accommodation that is appropriate to their needs and those of surrounding communities. Unauthorised sites are unsatisfactory for Traveller communities and can be damaging to community cohesion. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) is reviewing and consulting on Gypsy and Traveller accommodation policies, with the aim of mainstreaming provision through the housing and planning systems, bringing about increased provision, and improving the social inclusion of this often marginalised group, while reducing potential tensions with local communities. Action in this area has already begun and the new provisions in the Housing Act 2004 will require local authorities to carry out housing needs assessments for Gypsies and Travellers and take a strategic approach to meeting those needs.

### Creating better neighbourhoods

31. The National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal will continue to tackle inequalities by narrowing the gap between the most deprived areas and the rest, benefiting all who live there. One billion pounds has been allocated for the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund for 2006–2008. Race equality remains critical to the successful delivery of neighbourhood renewal, improving life for those members of Black and minority ethnic groups disproportionately concentrated in deprived areas. As a response to this challenge, the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit will continue to use its support and challenge role with other government departments on the delivery of floor targets, to ensure that outcomes are being achieved for Black and minority ethnic groups.
32. The Unit is also introducing measures to further support neighbourhood renewal partnerships and programmes in their efforts to tackle race inequalities. The ODPM will, through a Race Equality Action Plan, set out the key areas for improvement where race equality in neighbourhood renewal is concerned. Our aim is that by 2020, no one will be seriously disadvantaged by where they live.

## Equality in security and justice

33. The criminal justice agencies such as the police, courts, prosecution, prison and probation services, have a major Public Service Agreement target of ‘reassuring the public, reducing the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour, and building confidence in the Criminal Justice System without compromising fairness’. This includes a specific element of the target to achieve an increase in the proportion of people from Black and minority ethnic communities who think that criminal justice agencies treat people of all races equally. We have set these targets because these agencies have experienced problems with discrimination in the past, and because public perceptions, measured today, show that people are concerned that they do still racially discriminate.

## Improving the police service

34. Much has already been achieved in terms of establishing better structures and procedures to challenge racism in the police. For example, we have established an Independent Police Complaints Commission and met the vast majority of the recommendations of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report into the death of the teenager in 1993. The Association of Chief Police Officers, supported by the Government, has banned staff from joining the British National Party, Combat 18 or the National Front, as the aims and pronouncements of these organisations are not compatible with forces’ race equality duties.
35. But there is more to be done to ensure that the police respond effectively to all communities. Therefore, one of five key priorities for the police over the next three years is ‘achieving a citizen-focused police service which responds to the needs of communities and individuals, and inspires public confidence in the police, particularly among Black and minority ethnic communities’.
- Taking these aims forward over the next three years we will:
- i. *establish a new statutory duty* on police authorities to promote diversity within both their police force and authority;
  - ii. *continue to strengthen the recruitment process* to ensure that candidates’ attitudes towards race and diversity are comprehensively assessed as a key part of the selection process. We will introduce a new regulatory requirement in National Recruitment Standards that assessment and selection panels should be reflective of their areas, including members from local communities and ensuring that local Black and minority ethnic communities are appropriately represented;
  - iii. *continue to roll out training* in community and race relations, building on the participation of over 130,000 officers since the publication of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report;

- iv. *improve the use of Stop and Search*. Working with a series of partners,<sup>3</sup> we are investigating the process of Stop and Search to ensure that it is applied fairly and appropriately to all communities and we will identify good practice to drive improvements in the use of Stop and Search powers in early 2005. An independent Community Panel, chaired by Lord Victor Adebawale CBE, will scrutinise the work and its impact on communities, and a Delivery Board, co-chaired by Doreen Lawrence, will oversee implementation. Police forces will continue to record the ethnicity of the person stopped and searched to measure how the powers affect different communities. From 1 April 2005 police officers will also record Stops<sup>4</sup> as well as Stops and Searches. We are clear that these powers must be applied in the least bureaucratic way possible; and
- v. *address the findings of the Commission for Racial Equality's inquiry into racism in the police*, in partnership with the police. We will develop a race equality action plan addressing employment issues (a major focus of the Commission for Racial Equality's inquiry) and other key issues which are central to the delivery of race equality and diversity and we will consider with stakeholders how the recommendations of the Morris Inquiry report into employment matters in the Metropolitan Police Service might be applied more broadly across the police service and considered in relation to our police reform agenda.

#### Addressing perceptions of discrimination by courts

36. We have commissioned a comprehensive two-year study, reporting in summer 2006, which will investigate whether there is evidence that sentences differ for offenders from Black and minority ethnic communities compared with White people convicted of offences of a similar nature and seriousness. If evidence exists, we will take action to address the issues. We already know that offenders from some Black and minority ethnic communities are more likely to be remanded in custody than White offenders. We are investigating this potential discrimination through research and pilots looking at the remand decision making process and will implement the findings once the pilots are completed in May 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Partners include the Association of Chief Police Officers, police authorities, the Commission for Racial Equality, the Metropolitan Police, Police Federation, the Superintendents' Association, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, and the Independent Police Complaints Commission.

<sup>4</sup> These do not include all encounters between officers and individuals but only those occasions where an individual has been asked to 'account' for themselves by an officer.

### Tackling racism and racial discrimination in prisons

37. The Prison Service and the Commission for Racial Equality have a joint five-year action plan to improve the delivery of its duty to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination. Taking this forward we will:
- i. *continue to support targeted intervention* across prison sites where help is needed to promote race equality and eradicate discrimination. These interventions involve operational secondees and voluntary sector organisations working intensively with a prison, helping staff and inmates to put in place the framework for effective consultation and race equality;
  - ii. *continue to develop a range of interventions* that can be used to challenge racist attitudes and behaviour amongst prisoners, including better training materials;
  - iii. *pilot mediation skills training* to help staff to address prisoners' racial complaints and racist behaviour at a number of establishments; and
  - iv. *launch an externally accredited programme of training to combat racism among prison officers and staff* who are in need of further intensive support and guidance. Managers will be able to recommend the programme for staff where needed.

### Monitoring and building confidence in the Criminal Justice System and the immigration service

38. To draw these programmes together and help drive progress in increasing overall confidence in the Criminal Justice System among Black and minority ethnic communities we have established a National Race Forum for Local Criminal Justice Boards, which will facilitate the exchange of good practice, such as learning from Boards who have run pilot schemes to improve their performance assessment on issues of race equality, and promoting better engagement with local communities. We are undertaking a fundamental review to ensure that we collect the right statistics on race and the criminal justice system to inform policy development and evaluation, and to be most useful to local managers.
39. The new National Offender Management Service is committed to engaging with all sections of the public more actively in its work to reduce re-offending. We expect that this will raise public confidence in its service, and in early 2005 will begin a formal consultation exercise to develop its strategy.
40. The Immigration Service is taking similar measures to ensure that it serves all communities fairly. For example, following allegations of racism and mistreatment at Yarl's Wood Removal Centre, the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman carried out an independent investigation into the Centre. The report reached the conclusion that Yarl's Wood does not have a general culture of racism, but noted a number of specific issues. The Government

has accepted all 29 of the report's recommendations, the majority of which have now been implemented. These include greater involvement of the Centre's Independent Monitoring Board in staff training, and improved access to the Board for detainees, and improved training, including on race relations and cultural awareness. All 15,000 Immigration and Nationality Directorate staff will receive diversity training over the next two years. The Independent Race Monitor, in partnership with Home Office researchers, is to explore the factors that influence an immigration officer's decision to select a passenger for further checks and to make sure that they are fair and the Immigration Service is committed to using the findings to improve their training for frontline staff and their procedures.

### Addressing discrimination and promoting better life chances for all across public services

41. These specific programmes of action within education, employment, health, housing and the Criminal Justice System will be complemented by a further drive to embed tackling discrimination and promoting race equalities as integral elements of all good public service delivery. This includes transport, planning, social services, benefits administration and rural services which have not been highlighted specifically in this strategy. In a diverse country, particularly in which public services engage with users from a very wide range of backgrounds, such an integrated approach is essential to meeting the Government's overall priority of promoting opportunities for all.
42. The creation of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 was a major step in promoting such race equality, giving Great Britain some of the most powerful race equality legislation in Europe. It places a legal obligation on all 43,000 public bodies to make race equality central to their work. This new duty has three parts:
  - eliminating unlawful discrimination;
  - promoting equal opportunities; and
  - promoting good race relations.
43. Over the next three years we will strengthen the implementation of this legislation, foster a culture of opportunities for all, and provide increased protection against religious discrimination, which were highlighted as priorities by respondents to our *Strength in Diversity* consultation. The Commission for Racial Equality will draw up proposals later this year on what it, in partnership with others, could do further to monitor public bodies' progress on meeting their equality targets and obligations under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act.

### Using public service Inspectorates more effectively

44. Public service Inspectorates have a crucial role in contributing to service improvements, such as ensuring that promoting equality and diversity is at the heart of public services. Over the last few years, many have been developing their work in this field. Over the next three years, our aim is for Inspectorates to continue and build on this progress, ensuring that equality and diversity are integral to their work. For example:
- i. Promoting diversity, equality, user focus and human rights will remain central to the work of the Audit Commission. For example, where it finds a public body, such as a local authority, that is failing to meet the duty to promote race equality, it will inform the Commission for Racial Equality, which can advise the authority in making improvements. It will establish similar protocols with the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Disability Rights Commission and the new Commission for Equalities and Human Rights. The Audit Commission has also developed a self assessment framework to help public service providers improve their performance in equality and diversity.
  - ii. The various Inspectorates of the Criminal Justice System (CJS)<sup>5</sup> play a similar role. Where they encounter serious problems, they can involve the Commission for Racial Equality, which will advise the agency in question in developing an action plan to address racial inequality. As part of a general review of the inspection arrangements for public services, the Government intends to consult later this year on different, more coherent arrangements for the end-to-end inspection of the CJS. This will, of course, involve examining the role of the CJS Inspectorates in promoting race equality.
  - iii. The Healthcare Commission, the independent inspectorate of health services, came into existence in April 2004 with an explicit commitment to reducing inequality and to promoting the rights of all to opportunities to improve their health and to have good healthcare. The Commission prioritises specific reviews that address issues of inequality and also routinely assesses the performance of NHS organisations in addressing the needs and rights of Black and minority ethnic people. It is also planning to undertake a cross-Inspectorate study of best practice in the implementation of schemes relating to race, diversity and human rights in health.

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5 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate, Her Majesty's Magistrates' Courts Service Inspectorate, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Court Administration, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation.

- iv. The Ofsted *Framework for Inspecting Schools* will continue to put a strong focus on inclusion, ensuring that settings and schools promote inclusive policies for equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children. Where schools do not meet their statutory duties in this respect, the inspection report will include a statement that the governing body should make the necessary improvement, and this improvement will be tested at the next inspection. The focus on inclusion will continue under the future inspection arrangements planned to commence in September 2005.
45. The Commission for Racial Equality will continue to develop closer partnership working with public sector Inspectorates and service providers, to help each to fulfil their respective responsibilities in the most efficient and effective ways possible, and promote services that respond to the needs of diverse communities without imposing additional burdens on frontline services.

#### Helping public and private organisations to put equality first

46. Our aim is, wherever possible, to support organisations to fulfil their legal duties to eliminate illegal discrimination and promote race equality, rather than take enforcement action. Many of the specific programmes to increase opportunities in education, employment and other services outlined in previous sections contain significant commitments to sharing best practice and increasing support, as do other sector-specific programmes, such as improving access to the countryside and the way benefits are delivered. This will be complemented by general advice and materials for all public bodies to help them meet their statutory duties.<sup>6</sup> In this way we will focus on enabling public services to meet their existing race equality duties without adding to bureaucratic requirements on frontline services. Central government offices have committed to studying the feasibility of introducing faith monitoring to support this process. This will be considered in light of the need to avoid unnecessarily intrusive questions into people's faith.
47. In the private sector, we are also committed to helping employers understand their responsibilities under race relations legislation. In order to meet employers' demands for guidance, the Department of Trade and Industry is providing £2 million for the next two years (to 2006) to support projects run by the voluntary and community sector that raise awareness of the legislation outlawing discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief. Later this year, the Commission for Racial Equality will publish an updated *Code of Practice for Employers*, to help employers ensure that workplace practices are not discriminatory. The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) will continue to work with organisations that have over 150 employees, and

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6 [www.cre.gov.uk](http://www.cre.gov.uk)

will provide practical guidance on developing equality and diversity policies and how they can be mainstreamed into the business process.

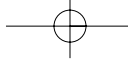
48. The business community has also taken up the challenge of providing advice and support to promote race equality. The Race for Opportunity Campaign is a Business in The Community campaign that works on a one-to-one basis with 180 organisations, providing specialist advice and support to meet their race and diversity objectives.

### **Promoting race equality through a new single body: the Commission for Equality and Human Rights**

49. To strengthen the effective implementation and enforcement of equality legislation, the Government has announced the creation of a new single equalities body, the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR), which by 2009 will incorporate the Commission for Racial Equality, the Disability Rights Commission and the Equal Opportunities Commission. It will also support the new rights against discrimination on grounds of religion and belief, age and sexual orientation, and promote human rights.
50. The CEHR will build on the work of the existing equality commissions, promoting equality, human rights and cohesion as core values for a fair society. It will work to enforce the law and place as much emphasis as before (or more) on tackling specific issues and barriers affecting race, faith, gender, disability and other groups. The CEHR will inherit the Commission for Racial Equality's responsibilities for promoting good race relations between different communities and will be equipped with new powers to combat prejudice and tackle crime. The CEHR's powers will fully match those of the existing Commissions but with increased breadth and flexibility where needed, for example in updated inquiry and investigation powers and more effective tools to improve compliance with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act duty. The CEHR will have a duty to track systematically society's progress towards better equality and human rights outcomes and develop a powerful evidence base to support this.

### **Extending protection against religious discrimination**

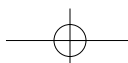
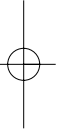
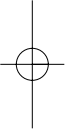
51. There has been growing concern that discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief has become more widespread. In 2003, the Government provided protection from such discrimination in the areas of employment and vocational training through the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003.
52. We now intend to go further, by introducing legislation against religious discrimination in the provision of goods and services. This answers calls in the *Strength in Diversity* consultation and the consultation for the *Fairness for All*

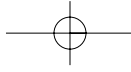


White Paper. Currently, some groups such as Jewish people and Sikhs are protected from discrimination in the provision of goods and services through case law on the Race Relations Act. However, people belonging to multi-ethnic religions, such as people of the Muslim, Christian and Hindu faiths, and people with no religious beliefs, do not have this protection.

53. The new provisions will ban:

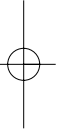
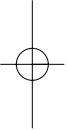
- direct discrimination, where a person is treated less favourably than another on the grounds of his or her religion or belief, such as where a shopkeeper refuses to serve someone because of his or her religion, or a landlord refuses to rent accommodation to a person because of their faith, or a hotel allocates the worst rooms to those of a particular religion;
- indirect discrimination, where a requirement or practice has the effect of putting people of a particular religion or belief at a disadvantage that cannot be justified, for example where an entertainment venue sets unreasonable dress restrictions; and
- victimisation, where someone is treated less favourably than others because, for example, they have complained of discrimination or have assisted someone else in a complaint.

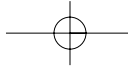




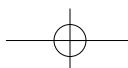
## Chapter 4

# Building community cohesion





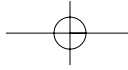
1. An underlying sense of cohesion within society is essential if people are to come together to make progress across a range of social and economic challenges. Britain needs to be a country in which people from all backgrounds join one another in creating leading edge companies, improving neighbourhoods, participating in democratic decision-making and exchanging ideas in every field of work, from arts and culture to science and business. Without this basic sense of common identity and commitment to participation, not only are these opportunities missed but, at worst, fear and conflict can develop. Achieving such cohesion is therefore important for all sections of society – Black and minority ethnic and majority populations.
2. Ensuring life chances for all is a fundamental element of building a cohesive society. Lack of opportunities and poverty undermine people's sense of having a stake in society and can fuel resentment of others, as we saw in some towns in the North of England which experienced disturbances in the summer of 2001. The Government's focus on combating disadvantage is therefore not just important for the individuals involved, it is also essential for building strong, cohesive communities.
3. But a cohesive society in which people work together relies on more than equal opportunities for individuals. It also relies on a host of social and cultural conditions: people from different backgrounds knowing and understanding each other; their sense of common identity and belonging; and a culture characterised by tolerance and fairness rather than prejudice or hate. Fundamentally, national cohesion rests on an inclusive sense of Britishness which couples the offer of fair, mutual support – from security to health to education – with the expectation that people will play their part in society and will respect others. It is important that people feel that this approach works in practice, for everyone in society. When a community feels that some groups are not contributing, divisions will increase. That is one of the reasons why, for example, we have made clearer the expectations we have of new British citizens, including language skills and a test of knowledge of life in the UK.
4. In a diverse society, inevitably there will be differences in values and ambitions. Our respect for freedom means that no one set of cultural values should be privileged more than another. With the exception of the values of respect for others and the rule of law, including tolerance and mutual obligations between citizens, which we consider are essential elements of Britishness, differences in values and customs need to be resolved through negotiation.
5. This chapter therefore sets out a range of ways in which the Government will work with partners to help build cohesive communities, in addition to increasing opportunities and reducing inequalities. We aim to help more young people grow up with a sense of inclusion and understanding of others, and



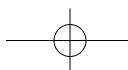
help new immigrants integrate into British society. We intend to offer opportunities for people to participate more widely in civic society, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. We plan to help foster a sense of national and local identity, including through helping people understand and celebrate the range of cultures and heritage which contribute to our communities and country. We are determined that racism should be unacceptable in Britain today and extremists who promote hatred should be marginalised. Because it is often best to work with local communities and civic organisations in order to effectively respond to the challenges faced by each particular area, many of the individual measures will be small scale, and vary from place to place. But together, they represent a significant commitment by the Government to do more to strengthen the fabric of local and national society.

### Helping young people from different communities grow up with a sense of common belonging

6. Young people already often lead the way in coming together from different backgrounds to improve their communities. The roots of more cohesive communities will lie in more young people having a greater understanding of their common stake in British society and experience of working together. We therefore aim to step up the opportunities for young people to develop a sense of inclusive British citizenship and to better understand and work with people from other ethnic and religious backgrounds.
7. We will continue to embed citizenship education as a foundation for young people in order to develop their understanding of and participation in society, following its introduction into the National Curriculum. Measures will include:
  - encouragement and advice for more schools to develop *Active Citizens in Schools* schemes and the development of other opportunities for volunteering and helping their local community;
  - advice and examples to help teachers and others provide engaging citizenship activities;
  - learning from pilots to test approaches to encouraging young people to become active citizens in the 16–19 non-compulsory phase of education, with decisions on citizenship education post-16 taken on the basis of these pilots;
  - piloting in 2005 a programme of the certification of citizenship teaching to support teachers' professional development in the subject; and
  - helping young people to better understand the UK constitution, such as through more accessible information in the form of a pocket-size guide.



8. Through our new framework for the teaching of religious education, we are seeking to increase young people's understanding of the full range of faiths held in Britain today. The framework, developed in partnership with all major British faith organisations, aims to improve the quality of religious teaching and understanding.
9. The transition to adulthood is a time in which there is great potential for young people to develop a stronger sense of belonging to society, bringing with it the right to vote and fuller social and economic independence. Some countries formally mark the significance of citizenship, such as Affirmation Ceremonies in Australia and Citizenship Days in some parts of the US. Over the next nine months we will work with partners to explore options for celebrating the transition to adulthood in this country.
10. More broadly, we are committed to increasing the opportunities for all young people to participate in society, particularly those from more disadvantaged communities. Following consultation in autumn 2004, the Russell Commission will make proposals in spring 2005 on youth volunteering.
11. We will help young people from different backgrounds to learn and socialise together. Foundation partnerships, supporting collaboration between schools in an area, will enable greater exchange between pupils of different backgrounds from schools across the group. Extended schools – which provide a range of extended services and facilities to pupils, parents and the wider community – can also help bring together different community groups.
12. The Government intends to bring forward proposals for providing better services for young people outside of school. Promoting inclusion and reducing segregation will be important principles for the new and existing youth activities proposed in the Government's forthcoming consultation paper on young people. Our vision is of teenagers from all the diverse backgrounds and communities across the country having access to a range of enriching opportunities, including sports, arts, culture, mentoring and wider community involvement. The paper will suggest ways in which teenagers from different communities can come together to participate in activities.
13. Creative Partnerships, sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), are aimed at giving a range of young people aged 5–19 in areas of economic and cultural deprivation the opportunity to work with their teachers on projects with local creative organisations and individuals. With community cohesion as one of its overarching themes for future funding, the Big Lottery Fund also expects that, as it considers funding for young people's programmes, it will provide opportunities for young people from different backgrounds to come together.



## Helping immigrants to integrate into our communities

14. Immigrants have enriched our society throughout our history, and we continue to reap economic and social benefits from well-managed migration. For those settling in Britain, the Government has a clear expectation that they will integrate into our society and economy because all the evidence indicates that this benefits them and the country as a whole. For example, those with English language fluency are over 20 per cent more likely to be in employment, and likely to be earning around 18–20 per cent more than those without good English.<sup>1</sup> For the reasons we noted at the start of this chapter, we consider that it is important for all citizens to have a sense of inclusive British identity. This does not mean that people need to choose between Britishness and other cultural identities, nor should they sacrifice their particular lifestyles, customs and beliefs. They should be proud of both.
15. Since February 2004, citizenship ceremonies have reinforced that sense of British citizenship as the final stage of the process of naturalisation for new immigrants. These have been welcomed by participants and we will continue to embed these ceremonies in the naturalisation process. We will continue to complement this celebratory aspect with useful information for new immigrants on life in Britain and with encouragement and support for improving English language. As a first stage, new regulations came into force in July 2004 to require people applying for British citizenship to demonstrate a basic to moderate standard of English, for example, being able to hold a conversation on a familiar topic. The Department for Education and Skills is currently reviewing the provision of learning of English for speakers of other languages.
16. People granted refugee status, having fled the risk of persecution, often have some of the greatest challenges to the start of their settled life in the UK. The Government's forthcoming Refugee Integration Strategy will set out our aims to promote and support the integration of refugees. A key part of the strategy, the Sunrise Programme, will be piloted in three areas from spring 2005, offering intensive one-to-one work to help those recently granted refugee status to develop and monitor a Personal Integration Plan. Sunrise caseworkers will ensure that refugees are aware of Refugee Integration Loans, which will also become available in 2005. We will also continue to support projects such as Time Together, which matches UK citizens in one-to-one mentoring relationships with refugees, and we will look to develop new forms of mentoring and informal support.

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<sup>1</sup> Language Proficiency and Labour Market Performance of Immigrants in the UK, *The Economic Journal*, Christian Dustmann and Francesca Fabbri, July 2003.

## Helping people from all sections of society to understand and celebrate the contribution made by a range of cultures to Britain

17. Bringing people together is an important part of fostering cohesion. Sports and cultural events have an excellent track record in bringing people from all backgrounds including young and old together, from engaging in international events such as the Olympics to participating in local sports activities or cultural events. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport is committed to working with their partners in promoting activities that increase participation in culture and sport by people from a diverse set of backgrounds and to helping people develop a sense of belonging. We expect that, by 2008, cultural and sporting activities will play an increasing role in promoting an understanding of, and celebrating, the diverse elements in our local and national life. We have developed a range of measures to achieve this objective:
  - The Government has set an overall target to increase the take-up of sporting and cultural opportunities by 2008, particularly from among those from socially excluded backgrounds and people from Black and minority ethnic communities. Delivering this target will include, for example: investment in grass-roots football; investing £30 million a year (from April 2005) in improvements to Regional Hub museums so that they are better able to serve local communities and schools; and increasing access to historic buildings and sites, such as through the free education visits to historic sites that reached nearly half a million in 2004.
  - With our partners, we are committed to help people develop a sense of belonging by celebrating their local and national identities. For example, the Big Lottery Fund is currently consulting on using its funding to help celebrate community identity, culture, diversity and achievements to support the bridging of communities of interest and identity. The Young Roots grant programme, managed by the Heritage Lottery Fund in conjunction with the National Youth Agency, distributes £5 million each year to projects helping young people to find out about and celebrate their heritage and background.
  - We plan to pilot a Citizenship Day to act as a focal point for activities that promote inclusive citizenship. We intend to hold the first Citizenship Day in October 2005 and to develop it further on the basis of evaluation.
18. Community organisations themselves also have an important role in helping to promote understanding of the different cultures that contribute to British life today. We will support groups to play this role, for example through a new £3 million programme to help faith communities. This is not a programme to promote particular faiths. It is to encourage dialogue and understanding between faith groups and others in the community so that they can work in

partnership for the good of all. It will also help build leadership in faith groups in a way that contributes to good race and faith relations.

### Increasing opportunities to participate in civic life

19. Community cohesion relies on all groups having a stake in society: being able to influence political decisions that affect their lives; being able to make a difference in their neighbourhood; helping to shape the delivery of local public services. Data suggest that people who participate in at least one voluntary organisation are more likely to be positive about the effects of diversity in their area.<sup>2</sup> Over the last few years, the Government has engaged in a major programme of providing greater encouragement and opportunities for active participation in society, such as through volunteering and engagement with local public services. The initial signs are encouraging. The number of people active in their communities at least once a month rose by over one million between 2001 and 2003. But people living in inner city areas, with few qualifications and from particular minority ethnic communities, are still less likely to engage in some formal types of participation in particular.
20. The Government will now particularly focus on encouraging voluntary and community engagement among these groups. Our aim is to increase participation by these groups at risk of social exclusion by at least 5 per cent by 2008. Measures to achieve this goal and increase participation more widely will include:
  - greater volunteering opportunities, such as through the Volunteering Recruitment Fund which is already providing around £4 million over two years for diverse groups and as part of the 2005 Year of the Volunteer;
  - greater opportunities to participate in local decision-making and to influence local public services, by encouraging neighbourhood participation – a key element of the 10 Year Vision for Local Government.<sup>3</sup> The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will be publishing proposals on this in early 2005;
  - further opportunities to engage in shaping local public services and to develop the skills that will help people to do so. This will be achieved through programmes such as the Active Learning for Active Citizenship initiative, the *Together We Can* action plan for civil renewal that will drive the implementation of a range of community engagement initiatives across

2 Research by nVision Europe based on the European Social Survey on 2,000 people aged 15+ in the UK.

3 You can find out more about the 10 Year Vision for Local Government and how to get involved at: [http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm\\_localgov/documents/divisionhomepage/029981.hcsp](http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_localgov/documents/divisionhomepage/029981.hcsp)

government, the policing White Paper, *Building Communities, Beating Crime* (2004), and the Firm Foundations Framework for building the capacity of communities to improve their areas;

- the *Working Together* project, which will provide particular opportunities to improve consultation with faith communities on local and national policies. In addition, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will be setting up a network of officials in the 50 local authority areas which are most diverse in terms of faith. The network will be co-ordinated through Government Regional Offices. While its detailed tasks have yet to be agreed, it is envisaged that the network will facilitate better understanding of the role of faith communities in public life so that, for example, the contribution of local faith groups to cohesion can be maximised;
- continued objectives for government departments and other public bodies in the appointment of underrepresented groups, including to oversight bodies and the senior civil service. The Commissioner for Public Appointments plays an important role in regulating, monitoring and reporting on appointments to the bodies that oversee public services, public corporations and nationalised industries to ensure that this opportunity to contribute to the community is open to everyone regardless of background; and
- encouraging more democratic engagement; with less than half of members of Black and minority ethnic groups participating in the last general election we will continue to support specific initiatives such as Operation Black Vote. More widely, the aims of the Government's Electoral Modernisation Programme are to ensure more people are engaged with the electoral process, in order to make it easier to vote as well as to maintain the security of the voting system.

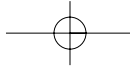
## Helping ensure that racism is unacceptable

21. Freedom from racism and prejudice is fundamental to fostering a cohesive society, as well as to ensuring people's individual wellbeing. As we set out in Chapter 2, racially motivated incidents are down and self-reported prejudice is falling over the long term. When people see blatant racism in other countries, the vast majority are appalled. The next three years provide an opportunity to accelerate the progress we have made as a society. In Chapter 3, we set out some of the ways in which we will work to ensure the public services, such as the police, do not discriminate against particular communities. In this section, we outline measures to address racism more widely.

22. The Government's first priority is to keep people safe, and so we will step up our work to further reduce racially motivated incidents, which stood at just over 200,000 last year.<sup>4</sup> We will:
- *improve the way in which the police and other agencies handle reports of racist or religiously motivated incidents.* By April 2005, all police forces are committed to complying with recently issued detailed guidance and best practice advice, and they will be assessed on their performance by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary.
  - *improve the reporting of racially motivated incidents*, including ensuring that everyone in Britain has access to an effective racist incident helpline. We have asked the Stephen Lawrence Steering Group to provide proposals, by June 2005, for the extension and improvement of helplines nationwide.
  - *ensure vigorous prosecution of racially and religiously aggravated offences.* The Crown Prosecution Service has already reduced the number of racially aggravated cases in which the racial aspect was inappropriately removed from the charge<sup>5</sup> and is committed to ensuring that further progress is made on embedding improvements in the prosecution of Racist and Religious Crime through a range of initiatives, including piloting the involvement of independent community representatives in scrutinising prosecution decisions.
  - *reduce racist re-offending* by increasing the effectiveness of behavioural programmes which challenge racist attitudes among offenders and developing a comprehensive new overall strategy on working with racially motivated offenders covering intervention programmes, training and partnership working between agencies.
  - *provide greater support for victims and witnesses.* The new Victims' Code of Practice will set out national standards of care for all victims and an enhanced service for victims of hate crime because they are recognised as particularly 'vulnerable victims' under the Code, such as particular support from Witness Care Units. Victims of hate crime will also be a priority group for support from the new Victims' Fund, which has already collected £4 million for distribution over the next two years.
23. Overall progress relies on the work of a number of different agencies, so to drive progress we will increase co-ordination for tackling hate crime within Government, including other kinds of hate crime, for example that motivated by homophobia or prejudice against people with disabilities. We are also committed to renewed action to confront criminally racist material on the internet.

4 This data is a British Crime Survey estimate for 2002/03 and includes incidents which do not reach the criminal threshold.

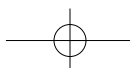
5 Of the small minority of cases where the racial aspect was removed from the charge, in 2002 this was found to be done inappropriately in 28 per cent of cases, compared to 21 per cent in 2004.



24. Alongside tackling racially motivated crime, we will help address the underlying drivers of racist behaviour – working with civic organisations, schools, businesses and others to challenge prejudice and racism. Much has already been achieved through this approach – for example in football, where the work of football clubs and authorities, the police, supporters groups, charities such as Kick It Out and the Government helped to promote a culture in which racism at matches is widely seen as socially unacceptable and incidents are dealt with swiftly.
25. Over the next three years, we intend to particularly focus on working with young people. Government guidance recommends that all schools subscribe to the anti-bullying charter which highlights the need to counter all types of bullying including racist bullying, and the Department for Education and Skills will continue to support school governors to help them take a lead in combating racism in schools. As part of our overall development of services for young people out of school, we will work with key partners to ensure that youth work that tackles hate and prejudice is properly supported. We will continue to work with the voluntary sector to challenge racist attitudes and promote understanding, as for example through the Unity Project in Peterborough, which with Home Office funding brings together young people from different ethnic backgrounds to increase greater mutual understanding and respect, with the ultimate aim of reducing racial incidents involving young people.
26. We also fully recognise the importance of media reporting on influencing levels of racism and prejudice. In early 2005, the Society of Editors and Media Trust will publish guidance for journalists on reporting on faith, race and cohesion, enabled by funding from the Home Office. We are also working with the Society of Editors and other media groups to develop a 'concordat' between local authorities and the media to promote understanding and media involvement in strengthening community cohesion in their areas. As part of the BBC Charter Review process, one of the key areas of work is to look at the role of the BBC in the representation of nations, regions and communities.

### **Marginalising extremists who stir up hatred**

27. While their influence should not be overstated, extremist organisations – whether political or religious – can undermine inclusion and generate fear.
28. Free speech is a bedrock of being British and an important part of our commitment to tolerance. But this should never be licence to incite hatred against anyone. The offence of incitement to racial hatred, introduced in 1986, protects ethnic groups and these include faith groups who, for the purposes of the legislation, can be defined as an ethnic group – such as Jewish people and Sikhs. However, in recent years racist organisations in



Britain have increasingly targeted other faith groups, producing offensive and dangerous literature which, if it were aimed at an ethnic group, would be criminal.

29. We have introduced legislation that will make it an offence to stir up hatred against religious groups, carrying a maximum penalty of seven years. The offence will have the same high threshold for prosecution as incitement to racial hatred, and charges may only be brought with the consent of the Attorney General. It will target those who stir up hatred against groups defined by their religious beliefs or lack of religious beliefs, whether this is done by members of racist organisations, or religious extremists. Simple criticism of or telling jokes about religions would not be offences under the legislation. Such criticism and humour is a proud part of our British culture and nothing we plan will undermine this tradition.
30. We will also clarify the requirements of the existing offence of incitement to racial hatred to ensure that it can be more effectively used in our work against hate crime. We will clarify that the offence only requires that it be likely, rather than proven, that the offending material would have been seen by someone in whom it is likely to stir up religious or racial hatred.
31. Combating extremists is not, however, simply a matter of legislation. Effective local political and community leadership is also crucial. Hesitant leadership or actions that play into the hands of racist organisations can allow extremists to gain a hold within communities and spread hate.
32. The Government is committed to improving the overall quality of local leadership. Over the next year the Home Office, in partnership with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister as appropriate, will strengthen the leadership skills of those in local government to tackle racism and extremism, particularly by disseminating existing good practice to areas facing the greatest challenges from racism and extremism. This work will include:
  - i. supporting local partners to hold discussions with communities on difficult issues such as asylum, economic migration and crime. Good practice will be drawn from evidence in the Community Cohesion Pathfinder programme as well as the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit's Community Facilitation programme;
  - ii. supporting local authorities to communicate improvements in local public services where these have been a factor in disengagement and dissatisfaction within communities and have led to tensions; and
  - iii. supporting local authorities in establishing media and communications strategies that speedily respond to myths, involve communities in change in their neighbourhood and include a role for elected leaders, faith groups and voluntary and community sectors in acting as spokespersons.

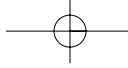
33. Further capacity-building work will continue to be carried out by the Safe Communities Initiative, run by the Commission for Racial Equality, which is supporting individuals and organisations to work to reduce community tensions and resolve conflicts.
34. Faith leaders can make a particularly significant contribution to fostering good community relations, and we will continue to support leadership training for faith leaders in order to strengthen their capacity to deal with challenges facing their communities, counter divisive and extremist influences, and provide role models for young people. An approach was piloted in 2004 by the Learning and Skills Council, and our current plan is to use the results to inform or, where appropriate, adapt mainstream leadership programmes. In order to ensure that those faith leaders coming from overseas can also make such contributions, legislation has been passed to require ministers of religion applying for entry to the UK to demonstrate acceptable levels of spoken English and we will consult with faith communities on the possibility of new skills requirements for these entrants, to ensure that they have the necessary skills and qualifications to provide support to their community and contribute towards community cohesion.

### Promoting cohesion at local level

35. The broad measures outlined above to eradicate racism and tackle extremism, to build participation and sense of belonging among young people, immigrants and the population as a whole will be matched by action by public services to promote good race relations at local level.
36. Through the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, all 43,000 public bodies now have an obligation to promote good race relations. To back up the legislation, the Commission for Racial Equality will develop a way to monitor the application of, and compliance with, this duty, by:
  - providing clear direction, by summer 2005, to public authorities as to how they can promote good race relations, including publishing examples of initiatives that they can undertake and guidance on their responsibilities; and
  - following this, developing a tool to monitor public bodies' compliance with the duty to promote good race relations, without imposing significant bureaucratic burdens on services.
37. Much good work is already going on to bring communities together, particularly following disturbances in some towns in the North of England in the summer of 2001. Over the last two years the focus of our work has been to identify and support such good practice, such as through the £6 million Community Cohesion Pathfinder Programme that provided support to 14

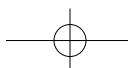
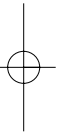
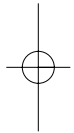
areas and the Beacon Council Scheme. Over the next three years our focus will shift to disseminating and mainstreaming such good practice. For example, Government Offices will be facilitating regional action learning groups.

38. Local government has a particularly important role to play here. From this year, therefore, the Audit Commission proposes to assess single-tier and county local authorities on their ability to create safer and stronger communities, which will include an assessment of their community cohesion work. The results of this assessment will contribute to the overall Comprehensive Performance Analysis score and local authorities that perform well will, as now, have increased freedom and flexibility. This also allows government to identify the areas that are performing less well, so that it can work with local authorities to drive forward improvements that will work locally. The Local Government Association, working with government, will also provide updated Strategic Guidance on promoting community cohesion later this year. Where it is a local priority, community cohesion is also an issue that can be tackled in Local Area Agreements between government and local authorities, which are currently being piloted in 21 areas, and through the new Safer and Stronger Communities Fund.
39. In addition to these generic measures to promote community cohesion, we will take forward a number of specific actions:
- We are committed to further developing communities' ability to cope with and respond to tensions between different sections of communities, if these do arise. This will involve training in conflict resolution for community leaders, building on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's (ODPM) Community Facilitation Programme. The Home Office will give extra support to areas which may be experiencing particularly significant challenges to cohesion.
  - We will recognise and encourage the role of the voluntary and community sector in promoting good race relations, including by making it an objective of the £80 million ChangeUp grant programme for building the capacity of the sector.
  - The ODPM will continue to make community cohesion a core element of regeneration activity. We are working to ensure that promoting community cohesion is an integral part of Housing Market Renewal Pathfinders schemes which are tackling low housing demand and abandonment.
  - From mid-2005, the ODPM will also develop new ways to promote community cohesion in delivering policy on housing management. This will be complemented by action to encourage social landlords to develop more balanced communities.



Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society: The Government's strategy to increase race equality and community cohesion

- We will promote cohesion through policing, including the National Centre for Policing Excellence providing advice on good practice and, from this year, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary including cohesion issues as part of routine inspections.
40. To help hold the Government accountable for our part in progress on building cohesion, we will measure perceptions of cohesion in a selection of geographical areas, and use this to assess our performance in meeting the overall Public Service Agreement target of reducing race inequalities and building community cohesion.



# Related Publications

The Government is committed to monitoring and publishing information on our progress to increase race equality and to help build more cohesive communities.

Alongside this strategy we are publishing:

- *Race Equality in Public Services*, bringing together race equality performance data for key public service areas and providing the statistical background to this strategy and for our Public Service Agreement targets to tackle inequalities in public services.
- *Summary of Responses to Strength in Diversity: towards a community cohesion and race equality strategy*, setting out responses to the consultation in 2004.
- Home Office documents which include:
  - *Overarching Home Office Race Equality Scheme* and *The Core (non-IND) Home Office Associate Race Equality Scheme*, setting out how the Home Office will meet the duties set out in the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and associated secondary legislation.
  - *Race Equality – the Home Secretary’s Employment Targets*, detailing progress against the targets set in 1999 to measure the recruitment, retention and career progression of minority ethnic staff in the Department and its agencies.
  - *The Home Office Diversity & Equal Opportunities Report 2003/2004*, the findings from a range of diversity monitoring processes to provide a comprehensive picture of the diversity of Home Office staff.

These can be found on the Home Office website at [www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk)

