

*Policing, Accountability and
the Black and Minority
Ethnic Communities in
Northern Ireland*

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INSTITUTE for CONFLICT RESEARCH

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Ireland

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Executive Summary

The Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) and the Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland (OPONI) commissioned the Institute for Conflict Research to undertake research on the attitudes towards, and experiences of, the new policing arrangements in Northern Ireland by individuals from the black and minority ethnic (BME) population. The research involved a variety of methodologies. These included a self-completion questionnaire, which was completed by 542 people from BME groups across Northern Ireland, 25 focus groups involving 207 participants and individual in-depth interviews with minority ethnic individuals. In-depth interviews were also conducted with representatives from key policing organisations and community organisations working with minority ethnic groups.

The main issues addressed are the BME population's attitudes towards and knowledge of the:

1. Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and their experience of engaging with the PSNI;
2. NIPB and District Policing Partnerships (DPPs); and
3. The role of OPONI and experience of making complaints to OPONI about the PSNI.

To date little has been written on the relationship between the PSNI and members of minority ethnic communities. There is, however, an extensive literature documenting the difficulties that exist in many other countries between the police and people from ethnic and racial minorities and the contributory role that racism and stereotyping by police officers can add to these problems.

The data from the 2001 Census of Population indicate that the numbers of individuals from minority ethnic backgrounds currently living in Northern Ireland are very small; 14,279 adults and children (0.85% of the population of Northern Ireland). However, these figures are contested by many from within the black and minority ethnic communities and it is likely that the population of those from minority ethnic, minority faith communities and those whose nationality is from outside the UK and Ireland is likely to be closer to 45,000 people.

Over recent years there has been a substantial increase in the number of racist incidents in Northern Ireland recorded on an annual basis. In 2004-2005, the PSNI recorded 813 racist incidents, an increase of 79.5%

on the previous year. Despite this, racist crime is not seen as a policing priority for people in Northern Ireland, just 2% of survey respondents in the District Policing Partnership Public Consultation Survey May 2004 placed it within their top five policing priorities.

Policing – main findings

Contact with the police

- 30% (161) of respondents had been in contact with the PSNI in the last 12 months, with the main reason being to report a crime. (28% of respondents in the NIPB module of the April 2005 Omnibus Survey had been in contact with the PSNI in the last 12 months to report a crime.)
- Those who were proficient in English were more likely to have been in contact with the police.
- 17% of respondents had been victims of crime in the past 12 months. (19% of respondents in the NIPB module of the April 2005 Omnibus Survey had been in contact with the PSNI within the last 12 months due to being a victim of crime.)
- Over half of these thought the crime was motivated by racism.
- Males were more likely to be the victims of crime than females.
- The majority (72%) of respondents who had been victims of crime in the past 12 months had reported the crime to the police.
- Half the respondents who had reported the crime to the police were either satisfied or very satisfied with the service they had from the PSNI, with a quarter being dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.
- Of those who had not reported the crime, the reason most frequently given was that the matter was too trivial, although around a third thought the police would ignore them because of their minority ethnic status.
- Only 9% of all respondents had ever experienced problems with the police, a third reporting that a police officer had been impolite or rude.
- Only 13% who had experienced problems actually lodged a complaint and none had complained to OPONI.
- The most frequent reason for not complaining was that the respondent thought nothing would be done.

Over half of those who had experienced problems with the police had done so in the last year. Respondents who gave their residential status as “asylum seeker”, “refugee” or “other” were more likely to report experiencing problems, while migrant workers were less likely to report

experiencing problems. A larger proportion of Traveller respondents reported experiencing problems with the PSNI than any other ethnic category.

Many of the problems experienced with the police were related to the quality of service. These included: a perceived failure by the police to take respondents seriously, unsatisfactory service, failing to keep respondents informed of progress or to follow up a call. Just under a third said that police officers had been rude or impolite to them and a fifth said that the police had discriminated against them because of their ethnic origin. About one in ten reported experiencing problems caused by language such as a lack of interpreters and of translated material.

Perceptions of the police

- Perceptions of the PSNI were mostly favourable, over half of respondents regarded the police as helpful, acceptable, professional and there for their protection.
- Large minorities thought that the police were honest and fair, but a majority of respondents were unable to say whether the police were racist, while a third thought that the police were not racist.
- Those aged over 35 were generally more likely to say that the police were honest, professional, fair, acceptable and there to protect them while those aged 35 and under were more likely to view the police as racist.
- Irish Travellers had the most negative perceptions about the PSNI.
- Respondents who had had contact with the police were most likely to view the police negatively and less likely to say the police were helpful, fair or for their protection.
- Respondents who had had contact with the PSNI were more likely to say the police were racist.

The focus groups showed that many people's attitudes toward policing were determined by respondents' level of direct contact with the PSNI, although they were also shaped by experiences of policing elsewhere, anecdotes and commonly shared understandings. Issues of sensitivity around how they or their communities are targeted by the police, cultural expectations and individual attitudes all play a role in how black and minority ethnic groups experience policing in Northern Ireland. For those who perceive their immigration status as insecure, there is also a fear of coming into contact with the police, resulting in many racist incidents going unreported. A number of respondents had experienced a lack of sensitivity on the part of some PSNI officers and others voiced

concerns about blatant and unacceptable racism within the PSNI involving offensive and inappropriate use of language. Serving PSNI officers from multiple heritage or non-visible minorities also acknowledged high levels of racism in the PSNI.

Although those in focus groups felt vulnerable to racist attack, it appears that it is unusual for victims of 'low level' racism, such as verbal abuse, to report to the police as some victims appear to face verbal abuse on a daily basis. There was also a belief that young people from minority ethnic groups are not engaging with the PSNI in any way. While visits from community police officers are welcomed by community groups, there was a widespread belief that there is a need for more policing work 'on the ground' among ethnic minorities.

Joining the police

- One quarter of respondents would consider joining the police.
- Approximately one in seven respondents thought they would be treated poorly in the PSNI because of their ethnic origin, the same proportion thought they would not be recruited because of their ethnic origin.
- Irish Travellers were more likely to support a family member joining the PSNI (47%) than consider joining themselves (6%).

There was a wide range of negative and sceptical attitudes and perceptions of the police among members of the BME population who were interviewed or who participated in focus groups. This suggests that although the PSNI have begun to address issues of racist harassment and racism more pro-actively, it will take some time before such changes have any impact on the attitudes of many within the wider BME population.

NIPB – main findings

- 25% of respondents had heard of the NIPB, (compared with 82% of respondents in the NIPB module of the April 2005 Omnibus Survey).
- Those who had heard of the NIPB were most likely to be aged 51 – 60 and/or permanent UK residents.
- 71% of respondents who had heard of the NIPB thought the NIPB was necessary.
- 23% of respondents who had heard of the NIPB did not know what its role was.
- Over half of respondents who had heard of the NIPB were unable to say whether the NIPB is racist or aware of issues relating to the BME population.

- The majority of those who felt able to judge did not think the NIPB was racist or unaware of BME issues.

DPPs – main findings

- Only 15% of respondents had heard of DPPs (compared with 58% of respondents in the NIPB module of the April 2005 Omnibus Survey).
- Those whose English was poor and those aged under 25 were least likely to have heard of DPPs.
- 56% of respondents who had heard of DPPs identified their major role as improving local policing (compared with 31% of respondents in the NIPB module of the April 2005 Omnibus Survey).
- 76% of respondents who had heard of DPPs thought DPPs are necessary.
- 19% of respondents who had heard of DPPs did not know what their role was.
- Over half of respondents who had heard of DPPs thought they are representative of the local community (compared with 39% of respondents in the DPP Public Consultation Survey May 2004 who were very confident/confident that the membership of their local DPP reflected the local area).
- 67% of respondents who had heard of DPPs thought DPPs should have more BME members.
- There was a low level of knowledge or interest in either NIPB or DPPs among respondents in focus groups.

OPONI – main findings

- 25% of respondents had heard of the Police Ombudsman (compared with 86% of respondents in the OPONI module of the March 2005 Omnibus Survey).
- 76% of respondents who had heard of OPONI thought OPONI was necessary.
- The majority of those who had heard of OPONI were aware of its role.
- 54% of respondents who had heard of OPONI viewed OPONI as being independent of the PSNI.
- Of those who felt able to judge, only 4% perceived OPONI as racist and 16% thought OPONI is unaware of issues relevant to the BME population.
- Only 9% of those who had heard of OPONI said they would go there to make a complaint against the PSNI with the highest proportion (25%) saying they would go to their local police station.

- 25% of respondents who had heard of OPONI did not know where to go if they wanted to make a complaint against the police.
- Those who took part in focus groups had little knowledge of the role of OPONI.

Comparison of the policing organisations

- Levels of awareness for NIPB and OPONI were the same at 25% respectively.
- The lowest level of awareness was recorded for DPPs at 15% of respondents.
- Even when the researchers provided some information, there was little interest in the various organisations that hold the police to account, nor in considering the possibility of applying for positions on one of the DPPs.
- The PSNI were most likely to be thought of as racist.

Recommendations

The following are a series of recommendations based on the research findings:

PSNI

Reporting

1. Victims and witnesses should be interviewed as soon as possible when racist incidents occur and within 24 hours of any racist crime.
2. The name and contact details of the Minority Liaison Officer(s) (MLO) in the PSNI District Command Unit (DCU) should be known to all PSNI officers, particularly those on desk duty.
3. An audit and evaluation should be undertaken of current third party reporting projects within Great Britain and Ireland.

Training and Recruitment

4. An audit of all anti-racist training (as opposed to cultural diversity training) should be undertaken which considers the work of both internal and external deliverers.
5. All PSNI staff, particularly desk staff and support workers, should receive cultural diversity, anti-discrimination and anti-racist training as a matter of urgency. This should incorporate delivery from accredited trainers from within the BME communities, including those who are refugees or who have sought asylum.
6. Where possible, training should be delivered by external accredited trainers. When training is provided by internal personnel there is a danger that, either intentionally or unintentionally, attitudes and stereotypical assumptions will be perpetuated.
7. The PSNI needs to monitor recruitment agencies working on their behalf to ensure they are conforming to PSNI policies and practices and that their data on BME support organisations are up to date and revised regularly.
8. Recruitment outcomes should be monitored to evaluate the impact of recent changes in aptitude testing and the effect of these for applicants from BME communities.
9. There is a need to increase the number of BME recruits to the PSNI. The current recruitment policy of 50% Catholics and 50% Other should be reviewed to consider its impact on the recruitment of people from the BME population.

10. Protocols must not only be in place to deal with racism within the PSNI, but be endorsed and enforced throughout all ranks.

Interpretation services

11. Appropriate translation and interpretation services must be in place, with particular sensitivity paid to a potential conflict of interest between the interpreter and their client that may occur based on the ethnicity, nationality, faith, gender and sexual orientation of both.
12. A protocol should be developed that ensures that children are not required to act as interpreters, nor to recount traumatic incidents and racially motivated crimes.
13. A protocol should be developed that recognises the inappropriateness of relying on the use of friends and relatives to act as interpreters and that is sensitive to the right to confidentiality for the interviewee.

PSNI Outreach work

14. The PSNI should fully recognise the key role played by MLOs. MLOs should receive adequate support from the DCU and their colleagues in understanding and endorsing their specific role requiring them to dedicate time to building relationships in the BME communities.
15. The PSNI should continue to work in partnership with other statutory agencies on issues of hate crime. There is a need for more pro-active work in educating the public about all forms of 'hate crime'. There needs to be a clear and sustained message to society that this type of crime will not be tolerated.
16. The PSNI's outreach work in schools could involve young people designing information posters and age specific awareness raising around equality and diversity.
17. BME PSNI officers (dependent on individual choice) should be involved in any outreach/recruitment/public relations work undertaken in the general community. Through consultation with the newly formed BME Police Association, members can contribute to strategies for outreach/education/ public relations work.
18. The PSNI should develop a template of how a report of a racist crime is processed and circulate this among BME organisations.

NIPB and DPPs

19. There is a clear need for DPPs to raise their profile among the BME population. This needs to be done through outreach work, building on the DPPs' existing knowledge and their relevance to the BME communities in the area.
20. DPPs should automatically include a target on 'hate crime' in local policing plans, as it may not emerge as an issue in consultation with the local community.
21. A code of conduct/terms of reference should be enshrined in the application and recruiting process for the NIPB and DPPs.
22. A form of screening/vetting should be developed for identifying racist attitudes and should become part of the recruitment process for the NIPB and DPPs.
23. Political parties should consider nominating BME members to the NIPB and DPPs.

OPONI

24. OPONI should provide cultural awareness and diversity training for all its staff, preferably from accredited external trainers. Mechanisms for evaluating the training should be put in place.
25. There is a clear need for OPONI to promote greater awareness among BME groups of their role and remit.
26. Information needs to be provided through outreach work with BME support groups of the procedures and options available for making a complaint about police conduct.
27. OPONI needs to up-date the ethnic classifications on its monitoring forms to include European accession states.

NIPB, DPPs and OPONI

28. The NIPB, DPPs and OPONI all need to raise their profile within the BME community.
29. Training needs to be developed in conjunction with community groups for the PSNI, DPPs and OPONI staff to understand the perceptions of BME victims of crime and the social and emotional impact on households as well as the victims.
30. The NIPB, DPPs and OPONI need to update their websites to include information in languages reflecting the current ethnic mix in Northern Ireland. For example, current languages on the OPONI website are Chinese, Irish and Ulster Scots.

1. Introduction

This report focuses on the attitudes towards and experiences of policing in Northern Ireland by individuals who describe themselves as being from a black and minority ethnic background. The six-month research project was commissioned by the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) and the Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland (OPONI) and explored both the attitudes and the experiences of individuals from a wide range of minority community backgrounds towards the new structures for policing and police accountability in Northern Ireland. This included their involvement with the police and their knowledge and experience of the NIPB, District Policing Partnerships (DPPs) and OPONI as:

- victims or perpetrators of crime;
- witnesses to crime;
- complainants about their experience of engagement with the PSNI;
- professionals working with policing organisations in a variety of capacities, such as interpreters and medics;
- asylum seekers and other non-nationals required to report; and
- residents of Northern Ireland.

The following are two accounts of the experiences individuals have had with the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI).

Asif, a practising Muslim, has been living in Northern Ireland for 15 years. A successful businessman with a number of interests, he notices a hardening of attitudes towards Muslims since September 11th 2001. He feels that the police are more vigilant of Muslims, but in a way that is neither justifiable nor able to be complained about. 'For example, my wife and I were driving a local woman who works for us home one night after the business (an unlicensed restaurant), closed. We waved goodbye to other workers as they drove off, and the police landrover pulled us over and asked me if I had been drinking? They kept me there for over 20 minutes while they checked so many things and were so in your face – it made me feel as though I should be guilty or ashamed of something. But when I have telephoned them in the past about difficulties from members of the public – they just don't come, or they turn up several hours later after the people have left. So how can I have confidence? There's nothing I can do.'

Lee has two shops (take away restaurants) in two different locations in Northern Ireland. In one he regularly serves the PSNI in uniform, in another he does not. 'There was an Indian shop had to close here – so I won't serve the

police in this one. PSNI can come in, but if you are seen to serve them, then you are in trouble and we have had warning that we will have to close. In X there is no problem, but in Y – we know we can stay open only if we don't serve them.'

These two quotations illustrate the diversity of experiences that members of the minority ethnic population have of the police and of dealing with the politically charged nature of policing in Northern Ireland. They also illustrate that while members of the minority ethnic population may have different historical relationships to policing than members of the majority communities, they have to negotiate a complex mosaic of attitudes and expectations from police officers and members of the majority communities.

1.1 The roots of police racism

To date little has been written on the relationship between the PSNI and members of minority ethnic communities. Some consideration had been given to the relationship between the minority ethnic communities and the RUC (Irwin and Dunn 1997; Jarman 1999, Mann Kler 1997, White 1998) and Mann Kler commented that her research 'highlights a lack of confidence in the police' (Mann Kler 1997:79). There is a long history and literature recording the oppressive policing of the minority ethnic communities in Great Britain. Black people in particular have often been stereotyped as potential criminals and consequently policed in a discriminatory and overzealous fashion. In 1979, the Institute of Race Relations recorded high levels of police abuse and brutality and the policing of "immigrants" has caused particular resentment (Gordon 1984). Minority communities have experienced both over-policing, especially of young black males, and under-policing, for example, in the victimisation of black people in racist attacks (Walklate 2000). Police response to racist violence has often been unsatisfactory, with officers frequently not taking complaints seriously and often being unwilling to ascribe a racist motivation to an attack even if this was the victim's belief (Bowling 1999). These deficient policing practices have created environments in which black communities in particular have come to display mistrust and non-acceptance of the police (Brogden, Jefferson and Walklate 1988; Jefferson and Walker 1993).

There is an extensive literature documenting both the difficulties that exist in many countries between the police and people from ethnic and racial minorities and how racism displayed by police officers contributes to these problems (Bosworth 2000; Antonopoulos 2003). Numerous

studies (Holdaway 1983, 1997; Junger 1989; Reiner 2000) suggest that while police culture is not monolithic, racism and racial prejudice are more widespread among police officers than they are in society as a whole. Evidence also suggests that police officers commonly use prejudices to classify people according to their ethnic origin; thus, for example, Asians are stereotyped as devious and suspected illegal immigrants and black people as potentially violent, aggressive and involved in drugs (Graef 1989; Reiner 1991, 2000; Holdaway 1995). The fact that police powers, while extensive, are frequently invoked at the discretion of the police officer with no clear guidelines or criteria for decision-making (Sanders and Young 2003), means there is considerable scope for bias in policing. This implies that discrimination can take place, and that the exercising of police powers may have a disproportionately adverse impact on certain groups (Bowling and Philips 2003). Thus, for example, although there is contradictory evidence (MVA and Miller 2000), it has frequently been claimed that police stop and search procedures are based on age, class, gender and racial stereotyping (Norris, Fielding, Kemp and Fielding 1992).

The Stephen Lawrence Report (Macpherson 1999) was highly critical of the Metropolitan Police, concluding that they were incapable of working effectively with minority ethnic communities. The many failings in the police's investigation of the murder of Stephen Lawrence were due to a combination of factors: professional incompetence and poor management were identified, but also the prevalence of institutional racism. The findings have been applied to address concerns and prevent similar developments in other police services. Of particular help has been Macpherson's definition of institutional racism, which was found to pervade every aspect of police work resulting in a fundamentally flawed institution:

'Institutional racism' consists of the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origins. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people.

While a number of major reforms in British policing and its governance have resulted from the recommendations contained within the report, significant problems still exist and much remains to be done to address them. Data from the British Crime Survey (Clancy, Hough, Aust and Kershaw 2001) illustrate a number of these issues:

- Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi people are more likely to be victims of crime than are other groups;
- People from minority ethnic communities are more likely to be victims of racially motivated offences;
- The police are less likely to identify suspects for homicides involving black victims;
- People from minority ethnic communities are less likely to be satisfied with the police response rate; and
- People from minority ethnic communities are more likely to be stopped, searched and arrested.

1.2 Minority ethnic people in Northern Ireland

Data from the 2001 Census of Population indicate that the numbers of individuals from minority ethnic backgrounds currently living in Northern Ireland are very small. Table 1.1 shows that just 0.85% of the inhabitants of Northern Ireland in 2001 were not white; the largest proportion of these was Chinese. In total, the Census recorded 14,279 adults and children as coming from minority ethnic communities. Table 1.2 indicates that 10,355 individuals (0.61% of the Northern Ireland population) were born in EU countries other than the UK and the Republic of Ireland, while 20,204 individuals (1.20% of the Northern Ireland population) were born elsewhere in the world. However, it is worth noting that these figures are contested by many from within the black and minority ethnic communities, in particular those organisations representing the Chinese communities, as reported in 'A Racial Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland 2005 – 2010' (OFMDFM, 2005)¹.

Furthermore, in recent years there have been a growing number of migrant workers arriving in Northern Ireland (Bell, Jarman and Lefebvre 2004), from the Philippines, South Asia, Portugal and since May 2004 from Eastern Europe. Therefore it should be understood that these figures are volatile, changing both seasonally and in light of economic demands. It is thus likely that the population of those from minority ethnic, minority faith communities and those whose nationality is from outside the UK and Ireland is likely to be closer to 45,000 people².

1 <http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/race-equality-strategy.pdf>

2 Minority ethnic representative groups have expressed concern that the Census of Population 2001 has not yielded accurate data in relation to certain minority ethnic groups because of low participation rates.

Table 1.1: Ethnic groups in Northern Ireland, 2001

Ethnic group	Number	%
White	1,670,988	99.15%
Chinese	4,145	0.25%
Mixed	3,319	0.20%
Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi	2,485	0.15%
Irish Traveller	1,710	0.10%
Black African	494	0.03%
Black Caribbean	255	0.02%
Other Black	387	0.02%
Other Asian	194	0.01%
Other	1,290	0.08%
Total	1,685,267	100%

Source: Census of Population 2001

Table 1.2: Birthplaces of persons in Northern Ireland not born in UK or RoI, 2001

Birthplace	Number	% of NI population
Other EU countries	10,355	0.61%
Asia	7,004	0.42%
North America/Caribbean	6,093	0.36%
Africa	3,116	0.18%
Oceania	2,166	0.13%
Eastern Europe, non-EU	707	0.04%
Western Europe, non-EU	515	0.03%
South America	374	0.02%
Other	229	0.01%
Total	30,559	1.81%

Source: Census of Population 2001

It should be noted that those born outside the United Kingdom or the Republic of Ireland are not necessarily recent arrivals to Northern Ireland.

1.3 Racially motivated crime in Northern Ireland

Data on the incidence of racially motivated crime in Northern Ireland have been recorded by the police since 1996 (Jarman 2001; Jarman and Monaghan 2004). Over recent years there has been a substantial increase in the number of incidents recorded by the police on an annual basis. Table 1.3 gives a breakdown of the categories of incidents recorded by the

PSNI between 1998-1999 and 2003-2004. The figures increased each year until 2000-2001 when 260 incidents were recorded, the numbers declined over the next two years before doubling in 2003-2004 to reach 453 incidents. A variety of incidents occurred, with verbal abuse, attacks on people's homes and allegations of physical assault comprising approximately three-quarters of all incidents.

Table 1.3: Numbers and types of racist incidents recorded by the PSNI, 1998/1999 to 2003/2004

Type of incident	1998/ 1999	1999/ 2000	2000/ 2001	2001/ 2002	2002/ 2003	2003/ 2004	Total	%
Verbal abuse/Threat	32	67	77	50	56	109	391	27%
Attack on home	13	53	49	38	59	148	360	25%
Physical assault	15	54	58	37	50	103	317	22%
Attack on property	20	37	45	33	39	57	231	16%
Graffiti	5	7	6	2	4	7	31	2%
Written material	1	4	1	4	3	10	23	2%
Other	7	15	24	21	15	19	101	7%
Total	93	237	260	185	226	453	1,454	100%

Note: Percentages do not add to 100% due to rounding.

One of the targets the NIPB set the PSNI in the 2003/2004 Annual Policing Plan was to establish an accurate baseline of the number of crimes and incidents of a racist and homophobic nature. Part B of the NIPB's Annual Report 2003/2004 contained a 'Report on Police Performance', this stated that the PSNI established a baseline of 453 reported racist incidents and 71 reported homophobic incidents during 2003/2004. The NIPB will continue to monitor, along with the PSNI, the PSNI response to tackling this type of crime.

In 2004 – 2005 the PSNI recorded 813 racist incidents, an increase of 79.5% on the previous year (these figures are not included in Table 1.3 due to changes in the system of recording racist incidents). There were a total of 634 racial crimes recorded during the period with an overall clearance rate of 15.9%, 322 of the crimes (50.8%) involved criminal damage and a further 187 (29.5%) were categorised as wounding or assaults.

Despite this increase, people in Northern Ireland do not see racist crime as a policing priority. Recent survey data (NIPB, 2004) suggest that just 2% of survey respondents in Northern Ireland as a whole placed this issue among their top five policing priorities. However, in the South Belfast District

Command Unit (DCU)³, 19% of respondents reported this as in their top five priorities. This is an area with a relatively large minority ethnic population and has received much media attention for racially motivated incidents.

In terms of complaints against the police, OPONI records 'Racial Discrimination' as a separate and distinct allegation category. From the establishment of OPONI in November 2000 to February 2005, 53 complaints were lodged in which allegations of racially discriminatory conduct were made⁴ (a total of 55 allegations – one complaint contained three allegations); this represents about 0.4% of all the complaints made during this period. These complaints stemmed from 19 of the 29 PSNI DCU areas, with the largest number (10 complaints) arising from the South Belfast DCU. No other DCU area gave rise to more than five complaints.

OPONI also monitors complainants' ethnic origin. During the period November 2000 to February 2005, complaints were received from 55 individuals identified as being from a minority ethnic background. Table 1.4 shows that the largest number (19) of these was Irish Travellers, with individuals from the Indian Sub-continent comprising the next largest number (14). Only three complaints were received from individuals of a Chinese background.

Table 1.4: Numbers of persons from minority ethnic backgrounds lodging complaints with OPONI, November 2000 to February 2005

Minority ethnic group	Number
Irish Traveller	19
Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi	14
Near-East	7
Chinese	3
Arabic	2
Black African	1
Black Caribbean	1
Mixed	4
Other	4
Total	55

3 PSNI District Command Unit (DCU) boundaries are identical to District Council boundaries with the exception of Belfast, which is split into the four DCUs of East Belfast, North Belfast, South Belfast and West Belfast.

4 At the time of writing, two complaints were under investigation, two were informally resolved, 11 were investigated and found not to be substantiated, 26 were withdrawn by the complainant or closed due to complainant non-cooperation and 12 were closed without investigation because they were ill-founded, vexatious, outside the Office's remit or disproportionate to investigate.

1.4 PSNI responses to 'hate crime'

The House of Commons Northern Ireland Affairs Committee (the Committee) launched an inquiry into 'hate crime' in February 2004. The subsequent report *'The Challenge of Diversity: Hate Crime in Northern Ireland'* (the Report) published in April 2005 was based on oral and written evidence presented to the Committee during Session 2004 – 2005 by interested parties in Northern Ireland. The Committee reported that:

Our inquiry has identified a lack of firm and effective leadership by the Government, the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), and the criminal justice agencies in Northern Ireland to tackle these appalling crimes.

The Committee lists a number of areas where improvements must be made. Those with a direct bearing on policing include:

- Urgent action by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) and the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) to improve the co-ordination of policies to counteract 'hate crime'⁵, publish their 'hate crime' strategies more quickly and ensure that policy work is carried through into clear improvements in the position of minority groups 'on the ground';
- A need for the PSNI to improve its clear up rates for homophobic and racial attacks and translate its revised 'hate crime' policy into practice quickly;
- A need for the PSNI to take all necessary measures to build increasingly effective relationships with the minority communities in an effort to improve general confidence in the reporting system, address reasons for under-reporting and encourage victims to come forward and report crimes;
- Police training to deal with homophobia must be improved and necessary steps to secure higher levels of recruitment from minority ethnic communities must be advanced;
- Local district councils' focus on sectarianism needs to be extended to encompass racism, homophobia and crimes against the disabled; and
- Support and community organisations, churches, and trade unions must continue their existing efforts to provide support and advice within the communities to the victims of 'hate crime'.

⁵ Currently in draft form.

Key conclusions and recommendations of the Report will be examined later in relation to policies and practices adopted by the policing organisations.

New legislation for Northern Ireland came into effect on 29th September 2004 in the shape of the *Criminal Justice (No: 2) (Northern Ireland) Order 2004*, enabling the courts to impose tougher sentences for offences defined as 'hate crimes'. Article 2(3) defines an offence as '*aggravated by hostility if, either at the time of the offence, immediately before or after its commission, the offender demonstrates hostility to the victim based on the victim's racial, religious or sexual orientation group, or on his/her disability.*'

Given the recommendations by the Committee and the NIPB, there is increased pressure on the PSNI to monitor and numerically evaluate its response to racism by the recording of incidents, crimes and clearances.

Whilst PSNI acknowledge an increase in 'hate crime' incidents generally, the significant increase in reporting is believed to be a combination of a rise in 'hate crime' and an increased willingness to report incidents to the PSNI. It is noteworthy that a recent PSNI 'Hate Crime is Wrong' poster campaign attempts to raise awareness of 'hate crime'. This can be seen to play some part in mainstreaming positive attitudes toward minority ethnic groups. ACC Judith Gillespie, speaking on BBC Radio Ulster on Tuesday 24th May 2005, commented on the fact that there are now more incidents being brought before the courts but '*less convictions than we would like.*' She also commented on the need for '*reassurance*' in the PSNI to be better developed.

The NIPB's Director of Planning told ICR he believes that the quarterly report by the Chief Constable to the NIPB on the PSNI's performance against targets set in the Northern Ireland Policing Plan, which includes monitoring the number of racist and homophobic crimes/incidents and increasing the clearance rate for racist/homophobic crimes, '*puts 'hate crime' firmly in the spotlight.*'

1.5 Recruitment to the PSNI from minority ethnic groups

We recommend that the PSNI and the Northern Ireland Policing Board take the necessary steps to secure higher levels of recruitment from the minority ethnic communities to the PSNI as a matter of priority. (Northern Ireland Affairs Committee 2005: para. 460)

The PSNI do not carry out recruitment directly, but commission Spengler Fox, a firm of recruitment consultants, to carry out recruitment campaigns on their behalf. From January 2002 until April 2005 there were 40,251 applications to join the PSNI including 589 applications (1.5%) from persons who declared that they were from an ethnic minority background. Of the 1,650 (4.1%) applicants who were selected, only ten (1.7%) were from an ethnic minority background.

In the eight recruitment competitions run since the PSNI was established, it has been found that the greatest proportion of those from minority ethnic groups failing to be selected were unsuccessful at the written test stage. To address any disadvantage to those for whom English is not their first language, 'Campaign 9', launched in March 2005 has included the removal of the spelling and grammar section. It is debateable whether it will be possible to evaluate the success of this measure until it has been in place for at least a year.

In relation to targeting advertising to the minority ethnic population in Northern Ireland, recruitment advertisements are placed in 50 local and national newspapers (12 are based in the Republic of Ireland and two are British national press). The nine websites targeted are also for general access. Therefore it would appear that there is currently no media advertising specifically targeting the minority ethnic population. However, PSNI recruitment advertisements on television and in newspapers have included actors and images of individuals from a range of ethnic communities.

Recruitment information and advertising is distributed to over 50 organisations in Northern Ireland supporting minority ethnic communities. The PSNI compiled their mailing list using information provided by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) and the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM) at the time of the first campaign. ICR found this mailing list to be largely out of date. A number of organisations or individuals contacted from the list had received no information about recruitment competitions.

When asked about recruitment, one PSNI officer from a minority ethnic background thought there was little reason for people from a minority ethnic background to have the confidence to apply to join the PSNI, suggesting that there was not enough targeting of community groups and that black officers should be out speaking to individuals and groups. Commenting on the low numbers of minority ethnic applicants who were successful, he felt that if there were an organisation for black and minority ethnic officers within the PSNI, there would be a support

network in place to help applicants right through the process from the initial application form.

A recommendation from the formal investigation of the Police Service in England and Wales (Commission for Racial Equality, 2005) is that Police Authorities ensure regular consultation with police support groups, including the Black Police Association, to get feedback on policing issues generally. An Ethnic Minority Police Association has been set up within the PSNI that is currently recruiting members and is affiliated to the Black Police Officer's Association. The organisers have received some financial resources (£2,000) to support their work and have access to a meeting room in the library, which is shared with the lesbian, gay and bisexual officers. To date there are no protocols in place to ensure that office bearers within the association receive duty credits for additional work carried out on behalf of the association, which aims to provide support both to its membership and to feed directly into PSNI's understanding of minority ethnic issues.

It would appear from evidence of the numbers who are appointed to serve in the PSNI from minority ethnic groups that the problem is not one of needing to raise the number of applications, but rather a need to discover why so few of those who apply are subsequently appointed. The Government Response (July 2005) to the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee Report argues that in percentage terms those from minority ethnic groups applying to join the PSNI exceeds applications from *'the white population on each of the recruitment campaigns'*. (p.12)

The NIPB's Director of Planning told ICR:

The Board has an oversight role in terms of recruitment to PSNI and we get regular monitoring figures through at all stages of the competitions as to not only the religious and gender split, but also the numbers of ethnic minorities. It really is a monitoring role through legislation, but if the Board wanted to set quotas or to lobby for quotas for ethnic minorities coming into PSNI they could do so. That hasn't happened so far and with the re-constitution of the Board in October⁶, that may become an issue.

6 At the time of this interview, the NIPB was due to be reconstituted in October 2005. The Secretary of State announced in August 2005 that the Board's life would be extended by up to 12 months.

1.6 PSNI training

'Without change, consultation is meaningless' (quote from a serving male PSNI officer from a multiple heritage background).

The 'Code of Ethics for the Police Service of Northern Ireland' published by the NIPB in 2003 states under Article 6.2 Equality:

In carrying out their duties police officers shall not discriminate on any of the following grounds, i.e. sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, disability, age, sexual orientation, property, birth or other status.

In response to a recommendation of the Stephen Lawrence Report (Macpherson 1999), anti-racism training has become mandatory for all criminal justice agencies in Great Britain, but this is not the case in Northern Ireland. Understanding the need for more robust cultural diversity, anti-racist and anti-discrimination training and recruitment practices within PSNI appears to be underway. In a presentation to the NIPB's Human Resources Committee, the Acting Director of the Northern Ireland Police College acknowledges:

Policing in Northern Ireland requires an understanding of an increasingly diverse community. Training on cultural issues, specific to the geographical area being policed is as essential as training on core policing skills (DPP News Spring 2005).

During the research period, it was evident that there was confusion among the PSNI's internal trainers and their external service providers as to what cultural diversity, anti-racist and anti-discrimination training was available and mandatory. Furthermore, there was no centralised body developing a service-wide joined-up approach to training, which provided a suitably rigorous package on racism that had been approved by both external and internal stakeholders. The Police College are currently undertaking such an audit and consideration is being given to the formation of a diversity training advisory group. To that end, it is worth noting that a number of new training initiatives are currently being developed. These include:

- the development of an innovative cross border training project to be rolled out jointly by PSNI and An Garda Síochána standardising a diversity training programme throughout both services;⁷

⁷ At the time of writing the amount of time to be dedicated to specific anti racist and black and minority ethnic modules remains undecided.

- a number of existing training packages for serving officers and support staff which draw on trainers from organisations from within the black and minority ethnic community;
- a new three-day training module for Student Officers attending the Police Training College at Garnerville run by Mediation NI to examine their understanding of 'community relations' and 'difference'; concepts that they are expected to encounter in fulfilling their duties; and
- an internal training audit is currently being carried out to identify what training is currently being delivered and by whom.

This recognition is welcomed by some serving officers from minority ethnic communities who currently have poorly resourced local support networks. One officer advocating a more rigorous, focused and continual service-wide training programme told ICR that there is a real need for specific anti-racist training for new recruits '*not the dross that they turn out which is diversity at its most wishy-washy and meaningless. It's time to push anti-racist training and the trainees out of the comfort zone.*'

The Northern Ireland Affairs Committee refers to the need for a coordinated training strategy for staff across the various criminal justice agencies:

...the agencies need to sustain a robust and coordinated approach in order to keep awareness of their staff high. We recommend that the NIO takes the lead in ensuring that all the training provided is founded on common principles; that there is collaboration between the agencies in delivering training; and, in particular, that this is developed in conjunction with representative bodies of the minority communities. (Northern Ireland Affairs Committee 2005, para. 55)

The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC, 2004) argues that if human rights training does not impact on attitudes and values it will be of little effect:

Police training must deal with issues of police culture and subculture to ensure that what is taught in a formal setting is not offset by the attitudes (subconscious or otherwise) of trainers or other police officers in the work situation. (NIHRC, 2004: Recommendation 7)

The recommendation was made after NIHRC researchers found that trainers, recruited internally from within the PSNI, were failing to question racist or sectarian comments and appeared to wish to identify with, rather than challenge, fellow officers they were training.

The NIPB's Director of Planning told ICR that the NIPB believes the policies and training of recruits are starting to have an effect in terms of recruits going to DCUs which have a high minority ethnic population, pointing in particular to the PSNI 'hate crime' poster campaigns, third party reporting on the PSNI website and the fact that new PSNI student officers "are now subject to a training course which is unparalleled anywhere". He did, however, have some reservations in relation to serving officers:

I think in terms of established officers there may be an issue there about training. I think we've got it right for recruits, I'm not sure about how the Diversity Unit has handled the existing officers and to my mind they're probably a more important group due to age, length of service and established views.

1.7 Minority Liaison Officers

Minority Liaison Officers (MLOs) provide a service across all 29 PSNI District Command Units in Northern Ireland. These officers were originally appointed in 1997 and specifically trained to offer support to victims of racial incidents. More recently their remit has been broadened to include other types of 'hate crime'. Following a racial incident the MLO will contact or visit the victim, unless contact has been declined, and provide advice and information on available support groups. The MLOs also pro-actively identify and engage with local minority groups in their DCUs. In carrying out this function, they liaise with support organisations and community groups. MLOs are 'District Resources' and therefore work to the District Commander of their DCU. Most are Community Safety Sergeants and, depending on priorities within the DCU, are involved in other safety initiatives. South Belfast DCU, with a high incidence of 'hate crime', has appointed five additional MLOs in each of the sectors within the District.

The PSNI's Community Safety Branch is responsible for the police response to 'hate incidents' and developing policy for 'hate crime'. MLOs also fall under its remit. In June 2003, the Branch developed a number of Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs) to specifically consult with minority groups on the development and implementation of policy. The current IAGs are minority ethnic, older people and those with disabilities. The IAG members will also be available to assist police when dealing with crime or incidents involving their communities. The Branch is in the process of identifying good practice across the 29 DCUs by asking MLOs to identify local good practice which can be circulated to all MLOs. However, one MLO interviewed said they would welcome the opportunity to meet with other MLOs to share good practice initiatives, rather than be informed by paper. The MLO suggested they would learn

best how to 'reach out' to individuals with no organised groups in the area by discussion and debate with other MLOs in the same position.

The role of MLO appeared to be welcomed by a number of those interviewed from minority ethnic communities. One individual who said he had complained to OPONI about police harassment in the past said that he felt that the MLO provided a better service. He said he had trust and confidence in the MLO as an individual, but felt that he was powerless to help.

At a meeting between the South Belfast District Policing Partnership and local minority ethnic organisations, one of the recurring issues was confidence in reporting to the police. One spokesperson felt there was a need for more MLOs, who would be visible and known by name to members of minority ethnic groups. While a number of participants in focus groups knew of the existence of MLOs, few knew the name of their MLO and a number had called the police exchange and local stations unsuccessfully when trying to establish who the MLO for their area was. It was suggested that the good work of the MLOs would be negated if not reinforced by the attitude of other officers in the area

The PSNI's Community Safety Branch said that new 'hate crime' policy is intended to strengthen the role of the MLO. *'The policy is about setting minimum standards that individuals can expect from the PSNI when they report such an incident.'*

1.8 Support for victims of crime

The PSNI's Community Safety Branch is currently writing a 'Victim's Policy' and recognises that:

'We've come a long way in the last eighteen months to two years. I think there is a long way to go. One of the things that is a challenge for us is that the detection rates aren't particularly high and that's a huge confidence issue. People want to see people brought to court.'

But equally, the Branch acknowledges that victims require particular support, which in turn feeds into confidence-building measures in police practices.

'It's about police officers going that bit extra at the time (of the incident) and explaining what support is available. Victim Support can also provide assistance to them and although the police work closely with Victim Support, they are independent.'

Victim Support is a charitable organisation working with victims of crime and while independent of the PSNI, they work closely on a system of referral. Victim Support receives core funding from the Northern Ireland Office's (NIO) Community Safety Unit. The Manager of Victim Support in Lurgan, when interviewed, said there was consensus between how they saw their role and how the Community Safety Branch saw it, in that it was important for the police officer on the scene to explain what services Victim Support could offer *'and seeing it as a part of their job.'*

Existing provision for minority ethnic victims of crime is provided by some minority ethnic organisations. For example, NICEM provides a Racial Harassment support, advice and advocacy service advertised on its website⁸ which is free of charge.

Strategies for supporting victims of 'hate crime' developed at an inter-agency level include simple security and safety measures in the home involving the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and the NIO's Community Safety Unit.

Other policies in development include Causeway, an IT project integrating all the criminal justice agencies throughout Northern Ireland. The benefits of Causeway will be to permit a prosecution to be tracked through from arrest to final disposal in the courts. This will allow the police to find out if someone who has been accused of a serious assault, domestic incident or 'hate crime', has been released from custody. In these cases it may be important for the victim to know that the accused is not in police custody.

One of the main challenges facing victims of crime from within the minority ethnic communities was the perception that nothing was being done about 'hate crime'. The PSNI Community Safety Branch feels that *'people have this perception in their mind about where policing has been with 'hate crime' and that it's not going to change. And I'll be absolutely straight and say I think we've come a long way in the last eighteen months to two years.'* Additional work was sometimes impaired by the low-level community politics among different groups claiming to represent the interest of minority communities: *'The key issue is representation, where there are a number of key people but we don't really know how representative they are.'* (PSNI Community Safety Branch)

8 <http://www.nicem.org.uk>

Summary

The issue of policing and minority ethnic communities in Great Britain was brought into sharp focus by the inquiry into the police investigation of the murder of Stephen Lawrence. The Stephen Lawrence Report (Macpherson 1999) found that 'institutional racism' pervaded every aspect of the police handling of the investigation.

There has been a steep rise in racist crime in Northern Ireland with reported incidents rising by 79.5% on the previous year in 2004/2005. The PSNI believe that the rise in reported incidents can be partly accounted for by an increased confidence among minority ethnic groups in reporting racist incidents to the police, based on improved relationships and backed up by legislation providing courts with powers to impose heavier sentences.

The NIPB and PSNI are aware that the training offered to new recruits and serving officers needs to reflect the diversity and higher visibility of minority groups in Northern Ireland. To this end, several new initiatives have been undertaken in relation to PSNI training.

MLOs, specifically trained to support victims of racial crime, now support victims of all 'hate crime'. While some individual MLOs were respected and trusted by minority ethnic groups, this did not appear to translate into a general confidence in the PSNI and it was felt that the MLO should have a higher profile in both the local police station, among their colleagues, wider DCU and in the community.

The PSNI's Community Safety Branch is currently working at an inter-agency level to develop policies and practices for dealing with victims of 'hate crime'. Independent Advisory Groups have been established to liaise with minority groups, including minority ethnic groups, on the implementation of policies.

2. Police Accountability in Northern Ireland

Speaking at a Conference in Belfast in 2003⁹, Hugh Orde, the Chief Constable of the PSNI, claimed he was “*the most accountable police chief in Europe*”. Radical changes have been made to policing structures in Northern Ireland since the report of the Independent Commission on Policing in Northern Ireland (the Patten Commission, 1999), including the disbanding of the RUC and the formation of the PSNI. The symbolic significance of transition from Constabulary to Service and the formation of organisations of accountability that have developed alongside this change have contributed to the perception of policing being more equitable in its responsibility to, as well as recruitment and treatment of, those from the Catholic, nationalist communities. These organisations, established to ensure the PSNI is fully accountable to the wider society, include the Northern Ireland Policing Board, the District Policing Partnerships and the Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland. They each play significant roles in police accountability and are now considered in turn.

2.1 Northern Ireland Policing Board

Policing and the arrangements for its governance have been contentious issues since the foundation of the Northern Ireland administration in 1921. The establishment in 1998 of the Independent Commission on Policing (the Patten Commission) led to a radical examination of the arrangements for police accountability in Northern Ireland, resulting in the abolition of the Police Authority for Northern Ireland and its replacement by the Northern Ireland Policing Board. The NIPB, composed of ten elected politicians (MLAs) and nine people independently appointed by the Secretary of State, held its first meeting in November 2001. Its various roles and responsibilities are clearly defined by the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000. It has responsibility for producing a policing plan that determines policing priorities and has to keep itself informed of trends and patterns in police recruitment and in complaints against the police. It is also required to monitor the performance of the PSNI in complying with the Human Rights Act 1998,

9 “Policing the Police” Conference organised by the Police Ombudsman’s Office in November 2003.

a responsibility unique amongst police oversight bodies in the UK (Northern Ireland Policing Board, 2005). However, the current refusal of Sinn Féin Assembly Members to take up their seats on the Board can be viewed as detracting somewhat from its representativeness. Of the current nineteen Board members, one is visibly a member of an ethnic minority.

Monitoring the number of racist and homophobic crimes and incidents and increasing the clearance rate for racist and homophobic crimes are targets included in the Northern Ireland Policing Plan for 2005 – 2006. The NIPB sets the targets following consultation with the Secretary of State, the NIO, Chief Constable, DPPs and the public. The NIPB's Director of Planning believes that the current approach to target setting puts the NIPB ahead of any other policing authority or policing service in Great Britain.

Furthermore, the NIPB jointly commissioned this research project in response to the rise in 'hate crime' incidents and also the NIPB's Equality Impact Assessment on its data collection policy. This discovered that the NIPB did not have enough information on the views of minority communities in Northern Ireland about policing issues. The NIPB's Director of Planning said:

We would see the research as certainly ground breaking in getting a handle on this growing problem and certainly using the recommendations from the N.I. Affairs Committee Report to carry out our oversight role of the Chief Constable. The big thing about the Policing Plan targets is that we receive a quarterly update from the Chief Constable in public on the performance of PSNI against policing plan targets. That puts 'hate crime' firmly in the spotlight because we asked to monitor the number of incidents. We also asked to increase clearance rates and this year we've asked for a base line to be set on sectarian incidents and crimes against the disabled and also clearance rates against both. We ensure we carry out our monitoring role of the PSNI by having three or four very detailed Policing Plan targets and a quarterly update in a public session of the Board.

2.2 District Policing Partnerships

The NIPB set up DPPs in 2003, acting on recommendations made in the Report of the Independent Commission on Policing and legislated for in Section 3 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000. DPPs comprise elected members of the local District Council and independent members drawn from the local community through a public advertisement. The

role of the DPPs is to prioritise local policing issues in consultation with the local community, contribute to the policies and priorities for policing in their area and monitor local police performance. There are 26 DPPs in Northern Ireland, one in each District Council Area. Belfast DPP is divided into four sub-groups to match the PSNI structure of East Belfast, North Belfast, South Belfast and West Belfast. This means that a DPP is in place to monitor local PSNI performance in each of the 29 DCUs.

Figures from the April 2005 Omnibus Survey (NIPB, 2005d) show that public awareness of DPPs has decreased since their founding. In October 2003 and April 2004, 66% of those surveyed said they had heard of DPPs, which dropped to 60% in October 2004, with a further fall to 58% in April 2005. Although fewer people are aware of the DPPs, there appears to be a growing confidence in their role, with 74% of those who had heard of DPPs in April 2005 having some, a lot or total confidence in their ability to help address local policing issues, compared to 66% in October 2004. However, this confidence might appear shallow, as under a third (31%) in April 2005 believed that their local DPP had helped to improve policing in their local area. This result does, however, show a steady improvement from 22% in April 2004 and 24% in October 2004. The Omnibus Survey figures do not correspond with those from the ICR survey, in which just 15% of respondents said that they had heard of DPPs.

There are a number of problems of representativeness on DPPs. Sinn Féin Councillors have refused to take up their seats and furthermore, most political appointments tend to be male. It is of interest to note that all nine independent members appointed to the Ards DPP were female in order to address the imbalance and ensure that the DPP represented the area's general population. At the time of writing, only five applicants and three appointments (0.7%) have been made (in Antrim, Coleraine and Omagh) from ethnic minorities to the total DPP membership of 455. The NIPB's Director of Planning explained that, according to the 2001 Census of Population, South Belfast has the largest minority ethnic population of any DPP area at 1.5%.

'In terms of true ethnic minority representation it would take almost 5% to justify a ring-fence post in the DPP and that is why it's discretionary.'

One concern for those wishing to ensure that members of minority communities are appointed to DPPs is about being able to demonstrate a commitment and understanding of a community within a particular geographical area. While there may be a central locus found in places of worship, community centres or welfare associations, these spaces do not

necessarily replicate the residential or business patterns of members of minority communities. Consequently members of minority communities within particular geographical areas may recognise that they are not representative of a particular interest group locally and are then reluctant to self-nominate. Minority ethnic organisations have also identified a need for capacity building within minority ethnic groups in order for them to have the confidence to consider applying for public appointments.

At the time of writing, the NIPB were recruiting Independent Members of the DPPs, as DPPs will be reformed in late 2005. The advertising campaign targeted women and younger people to achieve a balance where the *'vast majority of Elected Members are male and over the age of sixty, so we target younger people, we target females, we certainly target ethnic minorities.'* However, during the period of this research, at a meeting co-ordinated by the NIPB to encourage members of minority communities to apply, the NIPB's Vice Chairman, Denis Bradley, acknowledged the reluctance of some individuals to apply and that this required some additional confidence building on the part of the NIPB.

2.3 Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland

After a review of the complaints system in Northern Ireland, Maurice Hayes (1997) recommended the establishment of a fully independent Police Ombudsman to take over from the RUC the investigation of all complaints made by members of the public alleging police misconduct. The Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland (OPONI) was established in November 2000, and has, in the opinion of many, provided a robust system for the independent investigation of complaints against the police (Punch 2003; Seneviratne 2004; Wood and Punch 2004). OPONI (2004a) suggests it has achieved a high public profile, with survey evidence suggesting there are high levels of public knowledge (85%) and confidence (65%) in the Office (OPONI 2004). However, the largest proportion of survey respondents, 44% in 2004 (OPONI 2004), still say that they would go to their local police station in order to make a complaint against the police.

To date there have been 55 complaints registered from people from black and ethnic minorities. It is noteworthy that OPONI currently has a limited classification for recording and monitoring the ethnic background of complainants that does not cater for the recent European accession states¹⁰.

¹⁰ OPONI classify ethnic origin as: Bangladeshi, Black African, Black Caribbean, Chinese, Indian, Irish Travelling Community, Mixed Ethnic Group, Pakistani, and White.

OPONI is aware of reports from PSNI and the public of increasingly volatile relationships between some sections of the minority ethnic community and the police:

'I'm certainly aware that there is an increase in alleged violence from Eastern Bloc immigrants in Northern Ireland towards the police and the police towards them. So I think it's both ways.' (Director of Investigations, OPONI)

While OPONI has clearly conducted some outreach work by talking to minority organisations about their services, it acknowledges that there needs to be more emphasis on reaching these groups. It would appear that even very basic training provision for OPONI staff in relation to issues around minority ethnicity and racism are recognised by employees of the organisation as not yet satisfactory. OPONI's Director of Investigations said that training for staff was a key issue, in particular in relation to the high profile 'hate crime' has in the print and broadcast media:

'People must have the confidence if they come to us that we will deal with these things properly...it's awareness training that we need to have and we need to make sure that diversity is reflected in everything we do. It's a very wide issue and yes we have identified that we have a requirement to develop our staff more in respect of diversity.'

Summary

The NIPB have included 'hate crime' in the targets for the current Policing Plan and the PSNI's Community Safety Branch is currently writing a 'Victims' Policy'. Both organisations remain committed to placing a high profile on transmitting the message that racism and other forms of 'hate crime' are intolerable. It is acknowledged that clearance rates for 'hate crime' need to improve and it is hoped that this will be a contributing factor to improving relationships between policing organisations and minority ethnic community members.

There is currently an under-representation of those from minority ethnic communities on DPPs and increasing membership from this section of society would be a welcome development in highlighting issues of racist crime, currently not viewed as a priority issue among the general population. A need, identified by minority ethnic organisations, for capacity building to give those from ethnic minorities the confidence and knowledge to apply for public appointments is required.

OPONI acknowledges the need for cultural awareness training for its staff and for outreach work among minority ethnic communities. Surveys of the general population have shown that although awareness of the existence and role of OPONI is high, people are still more inclined to go to their local police station rather than directly to OPONI if they have a complaint about police conduct. This was consistent with ICR's findings for this research. Monitoring of complainants' ethnic background and the information provided on OPONI's website does not currently reflect the diversity of minority ethnic groups in Northern Ireland.

3. Methodology

Between February and August 2005, the Institute for Conflict Research carried out a broad based programme of research on the attitudes and experiences of minority ethnic and minority faith-based communities to the new policing arrangements in Northern Ireland. The research was supported by a steering group, with additional guidance from a number of stakeholders. The steering group was drawn from the NIPB, OPONI, PSNI and the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM), in addition to ICR staff. Stakeholders included individuals and representatives of organisations working specifically with or providing services to black and minority ethnic and faith based individuals and communities. The methods adopted were both quantitative (questionnaires) and qualitative (focus groups and interviews) to ensure a maximum response.

The main issues addressed throughout the research were respondents' experiences, attitudes to and perceptions of the police and police accountability organisations, including their interaction as victims or perpetrators of crime; witnesses to crime; complainants about their experience of engagement with the PSNI; professionals working with policing agencies in a variety of capacities such as interpreters and medics; asylum seekers and other non-nationals required to report; and residents of Northern Ireland.

The research involved a wide variety of methodologies, including:

- a self-completion questionnaire;
- focus groups, small group interviews and one-to-one interviews in urban and rural locations;
- one-to-one in-depth interviews with individuals;
- interviews with representatives from key policing organisations;
- interviews with representatives of community organisations working with black and minority ethnic communities and individuals;
- interviews with PSNI officers and support staff workers from visible minority communities; and
- a literature review of research and policy developments locally and internationally.

3.1 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire was designed by ICR in conjunction with NIPB and OPONI. Questions used in previous research carried out for the NIPB

and OPONI (Hamilton, Radford and Jarman 2003) and surveys previously administered by OPONI (Public Awareness of the Northern Ireland Police Complaints System 2000, 2001, 2002, 2004) were incorporated and/or amended as necessary. In addition, ICR convened a meeting of representatives from the Multi-Cultural Resource Centre, Refugee Action Group, Ballymena Ethnic Community Forum, Indian Community Centre, Chinese Welfare Association, Belfast Jewish Community, Business in the Community and the Overseas Students' Officer from Queen's University, Belfast, to review the draft questionnaire¹¹. Two alterations to the questionnaire were made on the advice of those who attended: responses were included that acknowledged the need for asylum seekers and others to register with or report to the PSNI and responses were included that acknowledged the residential status of participants.

It was also suggested that the length of the questionnaire might be off-putting for people working through an interpreter or in translation and who might be unfamiliar with the technical terminology. However, the steering group decided it was inappropriate to reduce the length of the questionnaire, as the data generated would mirror information already being recorded by the commissioning bodies in other contexts. The questionnaire (see Appendix 1) was subsequently translated into Chinese (traditional version), Chinese (simplified version), Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Slovakian and Tetum, by community representatives.

The research sample was designed primarily to explore the experiences of adult members of the minority ethnic and religious communities. Participants were initially contacted through umbrella and self-help organisations and snowballing was also used to make contact. This methodology relies on the collaboration between researcher and respondents working together, with respondents facilitating contact with a wider circle of potential respondents. There were a number of concerns and difficulties in accessing respondents, including the following:

- concerns among some members of the black and minority ethnic community about confidentiality, in particular from those seeking asylum or refugee status;
- some groups felt over-researched, while others had little interest in responding to consultations and research by statutory agencies and academic institutions;

¹¹ Other stakeholder organisations, An Munia Tober, Al Nisa, Belfast Islamic Centre, Latin America Unida. A number of other support organisation project workers were invited, but unable to attend.

- some gate-keeper or facilitating organisations and individuals were unwilling to engage with the research, either due to the contentious nature of policing in Northern Ireland or due to a lack of resources to support data collection by statutory bodies; and
- in some cases communities have outgrown the organisations which purport to represent them and therefore some organisations were unable to draw on the goodwill of volunteers and individuals.

In total, 67 minority ethnic organisations in Northern Ireland were contacted by telephone, letter and/or visit to encourage participation in the distribution of questionnaires and focus groups. Many of the groups that responded positively were drawn from the voluntary and community sector specifically servicing the minority ethnic sector. Others were drawn from the private enterprises and statutory agencies whose workforce included large numbers of individuals from minority ethnic communities.

In order to try to reach respondents who were not connected to established community groups, ICR also contacted individuals through English as a Second Language classes in a number of colleges of Further and Higher Education; commercial enterprises employing migrant labour; and a Health Trust, which recruits in the Philippines and India.

The PSNI sent the questionnaire to all people who had reported racist incidents during the period January – June 2005 and information about the research was circulated on the websites of a number of community and voluntary organisations. The questionnaire was also accessible on-line on the ICR website. Seven of the 542 questionnaires returned were completed on-line.

Every effort was made to ensure the sample was spread in terms of location, age, gender, community background and educational attainment. This was monitored throughout the data collection period and, when gaps were noted, various groups were targeted to rectify the imbalance.

The questionnaire responses were coded and manually input into SPSS, a statistical analysis software package for Microsoft Windows. A complete data sheet was produced and analyses, including frequencies and cross-tabulations, were conducted on SPSS.

The key limitation of the questionnaire was its length and content. Despite the translation into a number of other languages, there were a

number of concerns raised both about the level of technical knowledge required of respondents and also the length of the questionnaire. The focus on knowledge of policing organisations was described by some as being 'boring and technical', and this resulted in a number of spoiled questionnaires being returned without being completed. Some Chinese respondents also raised questions about aspects of the terminology, as they did not consider or recognise the racism that had been directed at them as crimes.

In other cases, some of the expressions were perceived to be loaded with meanings, which were only comprehensible to those with some familiarity with the contentious nature of policing in Northern Ireland, for example a number of participants asked '*what does 'acceptable' policing mean?*' Similarly, recent migrants had little awareness of the police reform programme or of the RUC. Consequently questions comparing the PSNI with the RUC proved challenging.

3.2 Focus Groups

The 67 organisations in Northern Ireland contacted by telephone, letter, and/or visits were selected because they had significant numbers of members, employees or service users who self-describe as coming from minority ethnic communities. Some of the groups that responded positively were part of the voluntary and community sector servicing black and minority ethnic groups and others were engaged in private enterprise and statutory service provision. Informal networks of refugee and asylum seekers from a variety of countries of origin proved helpful to sourcing individuals somewhat reluctant to connect with established community groups. Key organisations that did not respond to the initial request to take part were sent follow-up letters and/or e-mails. Facility payments were offered to focus group organisers or organisations to cover administrative and refreshment costs to participants.

Seventeen organisations were ultimately in a position to support the research by the co-ordination of one or more focus groups. Twenty-five focus groups were conducted with a total of 207 participants, 193 of whom were adults, while 14 participants were under the age of 18. Venues were chosen by the participants.

Respondents were asked how they would like their contributions to be acknowledged in this report and they chose to be identified by gender, geographical location and country of birth. For the purposes of adding a value to their comments, in some instances ICR further identified some

participants by their immigration status, job title, ethnicity, religion or age. Names, when used, have been changed. Many respondents saw the benefit of taking part in the research as an opportunity to strengthen appropriate relationships between the BME communities and the policing organisations. Others, noticeably those contacted through employers and colleges of Further and Higher Education, were keen to go on record to demonstrate their disinterest in being consulted on policy development issues. This appeared to be principally due to their commitment to living in Northern Ireland being time restricted and temporary.

The Chinese Welfare Association and the Indian Community Centre provided administrative support and interpreting services when facilitating focus groups, while interviews were also conducted with key staff and volunteers in both organisations. NICEM included information about the research in a newsletter sent to its network of interpreters asking interested parties to contact the researchers directly.

Interviews were also conducted with key workers, service users and individuals connected to the following organisations: An Tearmann; Baha'i Council for Northern Ireland; Black Youth Network; Contract and Casual Employment; Craigavon Traveller Support Committee; Grafton Recruitment; Mandarin Speakers Association; and North Down Institute for Further and Higher Education.

Focus groups were conducted within a mixed gender and multi-ethnic context whenever possible. Administrative and organisational constraints resulted in focus groups being larger and sometimes more unwieldy than the research team would ideally have liked. This hurdle was addressed through participants being offered the opportunity to discuss matters in more depth at another occasion and a number chose to take up this option.

ICR was originally commissioned to consider the views of adults. However, young people in Northern Ireland are acknowledged to have a substantial and growing level of uneasy relationships and engagement with the police (Hamilton et al 2003:13-15, Ellison 2001, McVeigh 1994). Furthermore, the level of mistrust and unsatisfactory engagement of young people from minority ethnic communities in Great Britain and Ireland has also been the subject of much academic and policy-related material. Within this context, it is relevant to note that 38% of the minority ethnic communities in Northern Ireland are children (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Adults and children from minority ethnic communities

Ethnicity	Adults	Children	Total
Chinese	2,788	1,357	4,145
Mixed	1,299	2,020	3,319
Irish Traveller	1,040	670	1,710
Indian	1,181	386	1,567
Other Ethnic Group	989	301	1,290
Pakistani	408	258	666
Black African	333	161	494
Other Black	292	95	387
Black Caribbean	195	60	255
Bangladeshi	150	102	252
Other Asian	153	41	194
Total	8,828	5,451	14,279

Source: Radford 2004, from 2001 Northern Ireland Census of Population

As adult Irish Travellers in both Coalisland and Belfast highlighted a history of young Irish Travellers specifically being harassed by the police, ICR responded by agreeing to conduct one focus group specifically comprising young Traveller women.

3.3 Confidentiality and sensitivity

Throughout the process of this research, ICR attempted to positively address the challenges faced by carrying out work on black and minority ethnic issues from within a majority community context. Consequently, the office where meetings and some key interviews were conducted prominently displayed a selection of anti-racist literature and posters, the research team comprised both men and women from a number of different community backgrounds and faiths. Issues of confidentiality were also considered, particularly in relation to concerns about the visibility and identification of participants in light of the small number of prosecutions and the low incidence of reporting among black and minority ethnic individuals.

3.4 Interviews with key personnel

A number of interviews were conducted with key personnel involved in policy development and practice-based work within the policing sector. These include: the NIPB's Director of Planning; managers of District Policing Partnerships in South Belfast, Ballymena and Limavady; an Inspector with PSNI's Community Safety Branch; a number of PSNI

Minority Liaison Officers (in South Belfast, Ballymena, Derry Londonderry, Dungannon and Limavady); and OPONI's Director of Investigations.

An in-depth interview was also carried out with the manager of Northern Ireland Victim Support in Lurgan. Victim Support is an independent charity that receives referrals from the PSNI from victims of crime who have indicated that they would like continuing support.

The areas were identified because they either had a high incidence of 'hate crime' or were used for comparison purposes to assess the implementation of policies and practices in areas where 'hate crime' is not seen to be an issue.

4. Demographic Breakdown of Survey Respondents

A total of 542 questionnaires were completed, 289 (53%) by females and 238 (44%) by males, in 15 cases (3%) gender was not specified. Table 4.1 shows that the largest proportion of respondents (40%) fell in the 26 to 35 age group, with a further 23% in the 36 to 50 group and 20% in the 18 to 25 group¹².

Table 4.1: Age groups of respondents

Age group	Number	%
Under 18	21	4%
18 - 25	110	20%
26 - 35	216	40%
36 - 50	123	23%
51 - 65	44	8%
Over 65	21	4%
Missing	7	1%
Total	542	100%

The questionnaire asked respondents to identify themselves by ethnicity, religion and by country of birth and citizenship. In relation to respondents' ethnic backgrounds, two-fifths (40%) said they were white (see Table 4.2). The largest groups of non-white respondents were Far-East Asians (19%) and Chinese (14%).

¹² Technical note:

- The percentages given in the following tables have been rounded to the nearest whole number, and thus may not add up to 100%.
- Missing responses have occasionally been excluded from the analyses and tables, so base numbers may not always be consistent.
- The following conventions are used: "0%": figure in cell is less than 0.5%; "-": cell is empty.

Table 4.2: Ethnic background of respondents

Ethnic background	Number	%
White	219	40%
Far-East Asian	103	19%
Chinese	76	14%
Indian sub-Continent	44	8%
Black African	33	6%
Irish Traveller	17	3%
Near-East	14	3%
Latin American	9	2%
Black Caribbean	7	1%
Arabic	6	1%
Mixed	13	2%
Other	1	0%
Total	542	100%

In terms of their religion, the largest proportion of respondents (44%) said they were Catholic. Just under a quarter of all respondents (22%) described themselves as having no religion (see Table 4.3).

Table 4.3: Religion of respondents

Religion	Number	%
Catholic	237	44%
None	119	22%
Other Christian	46	8%
Hindu	32	6%
Greek/Russian Orthodox	29	5%
Muslim	26	5%
Protestant	16	3%
Jewish	13	2%
Buddhist	8	1%
Baha'i	4	1%
Other	3	1%
Sikh	1	0%
Missing	8	2%
Total	542	100%

Table 4.4 shows respondents' country of birth and country of citizenship. The largest proportions of respondents were born in China (12%), the Philippines (12%), Lithuania (9%) and East Timor (7%). The most widely cited country of citizenship was the UK (17%), followed by Portugal (14%), the Philippines (12%) and Lithuania (9%).

Table 4.4: Country of birth and citizenship of respondents

Country	Country of Birth		Country of citizenship	
	Number	%	Number	%
Albania	1	0%	1	0%
Argentina	3	1%	3	1%
Australia	0	-	2	0%
Bangladesh	3	1%	3	1%
Belarus	2	0%	1	0%
Brazil	5	1%	5	1%
Bulgaria	4	1%	3	1%
Canada	0	-	1	0%
Chile	1	0%	1	0%
China	67	12%	18	3%
Colombia	1	0%	0	-
Cote D'Ivoire	1	0%	1	0%
Cuba	1	0%	1	0%
Czech Republic	13	2%	12	2%
East Timor	39	7%	1	0%
Ecuador	1	0%	1	0%
Ethiopia	1	0%	0	-
France	3	1%	2	0%
Georgia	1	0%	1	0%
Germany	5	1%	5	1%
Ghana	1	0%	1	0%
Guinea-Bissau	11	2%	0	-
Guyana	1	0%	1	0%
Hungary	1	0%	2	0%
India	31	6%	18	3%
Iran	6	1%	0	-
Iraq	2	0%	0	-
Ireland	12	2%	32	6%
Jamaica	1	0%	1	0%
Jordan	1	0%	0	-
Kenya	2	0%	2	0%
South Korea	1	0%	1	0%
Latvia	12	2%	12	2%
Lithuania	48	9%	48	9%
Malaysia	4	1%	4	1%
Mexico	2	0%	1	0%
Morocco	2	0%	2	0%
Mozambique	1	0%	1	0%
Netherlands	0	-	2	0%

Nigeria	4	1%	1	0%
Pakistan	1	0%	0	-
Palestine	1	0%	0	-
Philippines	65	12%	63	12%
Poland	21	4%	21	4%
Portugal	27	5%	78	14%
Romania	18	3%	15	3%
Russia	7	1%	4	1%
Saudi Arabia	1	0%	0	-
Senegal	1	0%	0	-
Serbia & Montenegro	1	0%	1	0%
Slovakia	27	5%	26	5%
South Africa	1	0%	0	-
Spain	4	1%	5	1%
Sri Lanka	5	1%	5	1%
Switzerland	1	0%	0	-
Thailand	5	1%	5	1%
Tunisia	1	0%	1	0%
Turkey	1	0%	1	0%
Ukraine	7	1%	7	1%
UK	33	6%	94	17%
USA	1	0%	1	0%
Vietnam	1	0%	1	0%
Zimbabwe	7	1%	6	1%
Dual citizenship	N/A	N/A	1	6%
Missing	10	2%	11	2%
Total	542	100%	542	100%

The areas in which the respondents lived in Northern Ireland were recorded by means of their postcodes. Table 4.5 shows that the largest proportion of respondents (35%) lived in the Belfast area (BT1 to BT17 inclusive), with a further 24% living in Dungannon (BT70 and BT71).

Table 4.5: Postal towns of respondents

Post town	Number	%
Belfast: BT1-17	188	35%
Dungannon: BT70-71	130	24%
Ballymena: BT42-44	38	7%
Bangor: BT19-20	28	5%
Omagh: BT78-79	18	3%
Newtownards: BT22-23	14	3%
Newtownabbey: BT36-37	13	2%
Craigavon: BT62-67	11	2%
Londonderry: BT47-48	10	2%
Enniskillen: BT74, 92-94	5	1%
Limavady: BT49	5	1%
Magherafelt: BT45	5	1%
Carrickfergus: BT38	4	1%
Banbridge: BT32	3	1%
Holywood: BT18	3	1%
Larne: BT40	3	1%
Antrim: BT41	2	0%
Ballymoney: BT53	2	0%
Coleraine: BT51-52	2	0%
Donaghadee: BT21	2	0%
Lisburn: BT27-28	2	0%
Newcastle: BT33	2	0%
Portstewart: BT55	2	0%
Strabane: BT82	2	0%
Armagh: BT60-61	1	0%
Augher: BT77	1	0%
Clogher: BT76	1	0%
Cookstown: BT80	1	0%
Newry: BT34-35	1	0%
Missing	43	8%
Total	542	100%

In terms of their residential status, the largest proportion of respondents (35%) said they were permanent UK residents; just over a quarter (27%) said they were residents of another EU country, and 26% said they were migrant workers holding work permits¹³ (see Table 4.6).

13 A Business and Commercial Work Permit can be issued up to 5 years (long-term permit) and a Sector-based Work Permit up to 12 months (short term permit).

Table 4.6: Residential status of respondents

Residential status	Number	%
Permanent UK resident	189	35%
Resident of EU country	148	27%
Migrant worker – long-term permit	91	17%
Migrant worker – short-term permit	51	9%
Resident of non-EU country	27	5%
Asylum seeker	14	3%
Refugee	6	1%
Other	6	1%
Missing	10	2%
Total	542	100%

Table 4.7 shows respondents' fluency in speaking and reading English. Large minorities said they were fluent in both speaking and reading English (43% and 47% respectively), yet about one in ten respondents said they could neither speak nor read English (8% and 11% respectively).

Table 4.7: Respondents' fluency in speaking and reading English

Fluency	Speaking English		Reading English	
	Number	%	Number	%
Fluent	231	43%	254	47%
Satisfactory	144	27%	120	22%
Poor	116	21%	102	19%
None	43	8%	61	11%
Missing	8	1%	5	1%
Total	542	100%	542	100%

Fluency in speaking and reading English varied significantly according to respondents' ethnic background (see Tables 4.8 and 4.9). Only minorities of Chinese respondents said that they were able to speak (45%) and read (44%) English fluently or satisfactorily, much lower proportions than any other ethnic grouping.

Table 4.8: Fluency in speaking English by ethnic background of respondents

Ethnic background	Fluency in speaking English	
	Fluent or satisfactory	Poor or not at all
Chinese	45%	55%
Black Caribbean	57%	43%
White	64%	36%
Black African	65%	35%
Mixed	75%	25%
Far-East Asian	76%	24%
Near-East	93%	7%
Indian sub-Continent	98%	2%
Arabic	100%	-
Irish Traveller	100%	-
Latin American	100%	-
Other	100%	-
Overall	69%	31%

Table 4.9: Fluency in reading English by ethnic background of respondents

Ethnic background	Fluency in reading English	
	Fluent or satisfactory	Poor or not at all
Chinese	44%	56%
Black Caribbean	57%	43%
Black African	64%	36%
White	66%	34%
Far-East Asian	78%	22%
Mixed	79%	21%
Near-East	86%	14%
Irish Traveller	88%	12%
Indian sub-Continent	89%	11%
Arabic	100%	-
Latin American	100%	-
Other	100%	-
Overall	69%	31%

Looking at respondents' economic activity (see Table 4.10), the great majority (71%) were working full or part-time.

Table 4.10: Economic activity of respondents

Economic activity	Number	%
Full-time or Part-time working	382	70%
Full-time carer	34	6%
Retired	33	6%
At school	21	4%
Unemployed	20	4%
Full-time University	17	3%
Full-time College	9	2%
Full-time training	9	2%
Unable to work - sick	6	1%
Other	4	1%
Missing	7	1%
Total	542	100%

5. Police Service of Northern Ireland: Survey Findings

This section reviews the findings from the survey in relation to respondents' attitudes to, and experiences of, the PSNI. This is followed by a more detailed discussion of the minority ethnic population's experiences of policing, based on the findings of the focus groups.

5.1 Contact with the police

One hundred and sixty-one respondents (30% of the total) said that they had been in contact with the police in the previous 12 months. Table 5.1 shows that the main reasons given for contacting the police were to report a crime (45% of those who had been in contact with the police) or that the respondents worked for or with the police (26%); this would normally be as an interpreter. NICEM provide the PSNI with interpreters when interviewing minority ethnic individuals whose English is poor.

Table 5.1: Reasons for being in contact with the police

Reasons for being in contact with the police	Number	%
Respondent reported a crime	73	45%
Respondent works for or with the police	42	26%
Respondent asked or was asked for some information	21	13%
Respondent registered with or reported to the police	19	12%
Respondent was required to produce their driving documents	12	7%
Respondent was involved in a traffic accident	11	7%
Respondent was stopped and questioned	9	6%
Respondent witnessed a crime	7	4%
Respondent was accused of committing a crime	5	3%
Respondent was asked to move on	5	3%
Respondent is or is related to a police officer	3	2%
Other reason	11	7%

(Note: Percentages add to more than 100% because of multiple responses)

Respondents aged between 25 and 65 tended to have more contact with the police than younger or older respondents, and respondents working in Northern Ireland on short or long-term work permits tended to have

less contact than those in other residential status categories. Fluent speakers and readers of English were significantly more likely to say that they had been in contact with the police than were less fluent respondents (42% compared to 21% for spoken English and 42% compared to 19% for reading English respectively; both $p < .001$).

5.2 Victimisation

Ninety (17%) of the 542 respondents said that they had been the victims of a crime in the previous 12 months. Respondents' age group, residential status, religion, ethnic background or economic activity did not significantly affect their chances of being victimised. However, males were significantly more likely to be victimised than were females (21% compared to 14%; Pearson Chi-Square = 5.91, $df = 1$, $p < .05$)¹⁴, and fluent speakers and readers of English were significantly more likely to say that they had been victimised than were less fluent respondents (22% compared to 13%, Pearson Chi-Square = 9.72, $df = 3$, $p < .05$ for spoken English and 24% compared to 13%, Pearson Chi-Square = 11.66, $df = 3$, $p < .01$ for reading English respectively). However, regression analysis¹⁵ revealed that respondents' gender was a stronger predictor of their likelihood of victimisation than was any other demographic variable.

The majority of these 90 respondents (48 respondents, equivalent to 53% of those who had been victimised and 9% of the total sample) said that they thought that the crime of which they had been a victim was racially motivated; 29 respondents thought that the crime was not racially motivated (32% of those that had been victimised), while the remaining 13 (14%) were unsure. The likelihood of respondents saying that the crime of which they had been a victim was racially motivated was not significantly affected by their age group, gender, residential status, religion, ethnic background, fluency in English or economic activity.

14 The chi-square test is a statistical methodology designed to determine whether, and by how much, an observed distribution of data differs from that which would be expected by chance or random variations. The statistic is calculated by using the raw data rather than a percentage calculated from them. A low value for chi-square indicates that the observed distribution is likely to have occurred by chance and thus provides evidence that some variable or factor is acting upon the data. The size of this effect is assessed using the concept of statistical significance: e.g. a value of < 0.01 indicates that there is less than one chance in a hundred of the observed distribution of the data occurring by chance and would be very strong evidence for an effect.

15 Regression analysis is a statistical methodology used in situations in which a number of variables might be influencing an observed distribution of data in order to assess the relative strengths of their effects.

Of the 90 respondents who had been the victims of a crime in the previous 12 months, the majority (65 respondents, equivalent to 72% of those who had been victimised and 12% of the total sample) said that they had reported the crime to the police; 25 respondents (28% of those who had been victimised) had not reported the crime. The likelihood of respondents saying that they had reported the incident to the police was not significantly affected by any demographic factor or by whether or not the crime was perceived as being racially motivated.

Half (50%) of those respondents who had reported the crime to the police said that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the way the police had dealt with the crime (Table 5.2); almost a quarter (24%) said that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Table 5.2: Victims of crime: satisfaction with police response

Satisfaction	Number	%
Very satisfied	18	28%
Satisfied	14	22%
Neither	13	20%
Dissatisfied	10	15%
Very dissatisfied	6	9%
Can't say	4	6%
Total	65	100%

Those respondents who had not reported the crime to the police were asked why they had not done so. Table 5.3 shows the reason that respondents most frequently gave for not reporting the crime was that they felt that the matter was too trivial to bother with (40% of respondents). A third (32%) of respondents did not report the matter because they felt that the police could not help, with a similar proportion not reporting because they felt that the police would ignore them because of their minority ethnic status.

Table 5.3: Victims of crime: reasons for not reporting crime to the police

Reasons for not reporting crime to the police	Number	%
The incident was too trivial	10	40%
Respondent felt the police couldn't help	8	32%
Respondent thought the police would ignore them because of their minority ethnic status	8	32%
Because of possible language difficulties	6	24%
Respondent was scared of provoking reprisal	5	20%
Respondent had had poor experience of the police previously	4	16%
Respondent thought the police would be hostile to them because of their minority ethnic status	4	16%
Respondent felt the police wouldn't be interested	3	12%
Respondent reported the incident to someone else	3	12%
Others discouraged the respondent	2	8%
Respondent did not know how to report incident	1	4%
Respondent does not support the current policing system	1	4%
Respondent felt that it was a private matter	1	4%
Other reason	1	4%

(Note: Percentages add to more than 100% because of multiple responses)

5.3 Problems with the police

Forty-seven respondents (9% of the total) said that they had experienced problems with the police at some time. The chances of respondents having problems with the police were not significantly affected by gender, age group or religion. However, although numbers are small, those respondents who gave their residential status as "asylum seeker", "refugee" or "other" were more likely to report experiencing problems than were other groups, while migrant workers were less likely to report experiencing problems (Table 5.4).

Table 5.4: Proportions of respondents experiencing problems with the police by residential status

Residential status	% of respondents experienced problems
Asylum seeker	20%
Other	17%
Refugee	17%
Permanent UK resident	16%
Resident of non-EU country	7%
Migrant worker – long-term permit	4%
Resident of EU country	4%
Migrant worker – short-term permit	2%

In terms of ethnic grouping, over a third (35%) of the Irish Travellers in the survey sample reported experiencing problems with the PSNI, a much larger proportion than any other category (Table 5.5 – these figures should be used with caution, due to the small number of respondents in many of the ethnic backgrounds).

Table 5.5: Proportions of respondents experiencing problems with the police by ethnic background

Ethnic background	Total number of respondents	Number of respondents experienced problems	% of respondents experienced problems
Irish Traveller	17	6	35%
Mixed	13	3	23%
Near-East	14	3	21%
Black Caribbean and Black African	40	7	18%
Arabic	6	1	17%
Chinese	76	12	16%
White	219	11	5%
Far-East Asian	103	3	3%
Indian sub-Continent	44	1	2%
Latin American	9	0	-
Other	1	0	-

Fluent speakers and readers of English were significantly more likely to say that they had experienced problems with the police than were less fluent respondents (13% compared to 6% for spoken English and 12%

compared to 6% for reading English respectively; both $p < .01$). However, regression analysis revealed that respondents' ethnic background was a stronger predictor of their likelihood of victimisation than was any other demographic variable.

Table 5.6 shows that the majority (55%) of those who had experienced a problem with the police had experienced this within the last year.

Table 5.6: When most recent problem with the police was experienced

When most recent problem experienced	Number	%
Within last year	26	55%
Between 1 and 3 years ago	10	21%
Between 3 and 5 years ago	5	11%
More than 5 years ago	3	6%
Can't say	3	6%
Total	47	100%

Table 5.7 shows that these respondents had experienced a great variety of problems with the police. Many of these were related to the service that they had received from the police: a perceived failure by the police to take respondents seriously (21 respondents, equivalent to 45% of those who had experienced problems and to 4% of the total sample), unsatisfactory service (38%), failing to keep respondents informed of progress (28%) or to follow up a call (23%). However, 30% of respondents said that police officers had been rude or impolite to them and 19% said that the police had discriminated against them because of their ethnic origin. About one in ten reported experiencing problems caused by language, such as a lack of interpreters and of translated material.

Table 5.7: Types of problem experienced with the police

Problem experienced	Number	%
Police didn't take respondent seriously	21	45%
Police service was unsatisfactory	18	38%
Officer was rude or impolite	14	30%
Police didn't keep respondent informed about progress	13	28%
Police didn't follow up a call	11	23%
Police did not carry out their duty properly	10	21%
Discrimination because of ethnic origin	9	19%
Problems caused by language barrier	6	13%
Lack of interpreters	5	11%
Lack of translated material	5	11%

Police refused to help	5	11%
Police did not follow proper procedures	4	9%
Police stopped or searched without reason	4	9%
Officer used racist language	3	6%
Police harassment	3	6%
Police took an item of respondent's property	2	4%
Police wrongly accused respondent of misbehaviour	2	4%
Discrimination on other grounds	1	2%
Officer used homophobic language	1	2%
Police behaved violently	1	2%
Police searched respondent's house without reason	1	2%
Other problem	1	2%

(Note: Percentages add to more than 100% because of multiple responses)

However, only six of the 47 respondents who had experienced a problem actually lodged a complaint about it; two had complained to the police, two to a Minority Ethnic support group and one each to a solicitor and a social worker. Less than half (44%) of those 41 respondents who had not lodged a complaint and who gave reasons for not doing so said that this was because they thought that nothing would be done about their complaint, and just under a quarter (22%) said that they hadn't complained because they thought their complaint would be ignored because of their ethnic origin (Table 5.8).

Table 5.8: Reasons for not complaining about problems with the police

Reason for not complaining	Number	%
Respondent thought nothing would be done about it	18	44%
Respondent thought their complaint would be disregarded because of their ethnic minority background	9	22%
Respondent didn't know how to complain	7	17%
The incident wasn't serious enough	7	17%
Respondent was scared of police reprisals	5	12%
Respondent couldn't be bothered	4	10%
Respondent didn't want to make trouble for the police	4	10%
Respondent didn't know to whom to complain	3	7%

Other people in respondent's community discouraged them	2	5%
Respondent doesn't support the current policing system here	1	2%

(Note: Percentages add to more than 100% because of multiple responses)

5.4 Perceptions of the police

Respondents were asked a series of nine questions regarding their perceptions of the police. The responses to these questions are summarised in Table 5.9. It should be noted that between 12% and 18% of respondents failed to answer these particular questions, and that these "missing" responses have been excluded. The large proportions of "Don't know" responses should also be noted. However, it can be seen that the police were generally perceived quite favourably, as being helpful (by 316 or 66% of respondents), acceptable (286 or 63% of respondents), professional (283 or 59% of respondents) and there for respondents' protection (288 or 61% of respondents). Large minorities thought that the police were honest (204 or 44% of respondents) and fair (193 or 42% of respondents). Most respondents were unable to assess whether the police had improved since the change of name from the RUC to the PSNI (377 or 85% of respondents giving a "Don't know" response), and a majority (261 or 58% of respondents) were also unable to say whether the police were racist. However, a third of respondents (145 or 32%) thought that the police were not racist compared to only 43 (10%) who thought they were. Finally, over half of all respondents (245 or 55%) were unable to say whether the police were aware of the issues relating to the minority ethnic community; of those who gave a response, more said that they thought the police were aware of these issues than said that they thought they were unaware (122 or 27%, compared to 80 or 18%).

Table 5.9: Respondents' perceptions of the police

Perceptions of the police	% of responses		
	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
Police are honest	44%	7%	49%
Police are professional	59%	7%	34%
Police are helpful	66%	7%	27%
Police are fair	42%	12%	46%
Police are there for your protection	61%	6%	32%
Police are acceptable	63%	6%	31%

Police have improved since name change	10%	5%	85%
Police are racist	10%	32%	58%
Police are aware of issues relating to the minority ethnic community	27%	18%	55%

Respondents' answers to this set of questions were significantly affected by a number of demographic factors. Firstly, respondents aged over 35 were generally more likely than those aged 35 and under to say that the police were honest, professional, fair, acceptable and for their protection, and less likely than younger respondents to say that the police were racist.

In terms of ethnic background, Irish Travellers were more likely to rate the police negatively than any other grouping on all perceptions. Thus, compared to other minority ethnic groups, they were less likely to agree with all the perceptions as shown in Table 5.9.

Those respondents whose levels of fluency in speaking and reading English were low were generally more likely to give "Don't know" responses to these questions than were those whose level of fluency was high. However, after excluding the "Don't know" responses, there were no differences in the proportions of respondents agreeing and disagreeing with the statements dependent upon fluency in speaking and reading English.

The experience of having had contact with the police had no bearing upon respondents' perceptions of them. However, those respondents who had been victims of crime tended to be more definite in their views of the police than did those that had not experienced a crime. Generally, victimised respondents had poorer perceptions of the police, and were:

- Less likely to say that the police were helpful;
- Less likely to say that the police were fair;
- Less likely to say that the police were there for their protection;
- Less likely to say that the police were acceptable; and
- More likely to say that the police were racist.

Those respondents who had experienced problems with the police, when compared to those respondents who had not experienced problems, tended to think along the same lines as victimised respondents. Their perceptions were the same as those shown above and they were also more likely to say that the police were not aware of the issues relating to the minority ethnic community.

5.5 Policing priorities

Respondents were asked what they thought the police's three main priorities should be; the results of this question are set out in Table 5.10. Again it should be noted that about 7% of respondents failed to answer these particular questions, and that these "missing" responses have been excluded. When asked about what they thought the police's priorities should be, nearly half (47%) of all respondents said that the police should concentrate on racist crime. A third (32%) said that dealing with assaults should be a priority, while other issues attracted smaller proportions of responses.

Table 5.10: Respondents' policing priorities

Police priority	Number	%
Racist crime	235	47%
Assaults	163	32%
Drug dealing	143	28%
Community safety	130	26%
Burglary	115	23%
Crime prevention	112	22%
Responding promptly to emergencies	88	18%
Car crime	81	16%
Drug use	57	11%
Public disorder	55	11%
Domestic violence	52	10%
Organised crime/racketeering	51	10%
Community education/training	44	9%
Muggings	42	8%
Paramilitary activity	38	8%
Sectarian crime	38	8%
Religious hate crime	33	7%
Road traffic policing	26	5%
Homophobic crime	21	4%
Trans-phobic crime	12	2%
Other	9	2%

(Note: Percentages add to more than 100% because of multiple responses)

5.6 Joining the police

One quarter of the 514 who responded (25%) said that they would consider joining the police service. Unwillingness to join the police was most prevalent amongst Black Caribbean and Irish Traveller respondents, with 100% and 94% respectively being unwilling (Table 5.11).

Table 5.11: Willingness to join the police by ethnic background

Ethnic background	% within ethnic group who would consider joining police		Total number of respondents
	Yes	No	
White	37%	63%	218
Black African	32%	68%	31
Mixed	23%	77%	13
Indian Sub-Continent	17%	83%	35
Arabic	17%	83%	6
Chinese	14%	86%	70
Far-Eastern Asian	15%	85%	95
Near-Eastern	14%	86%	14
Latin American	11%	89%	9
Irish traveller	6%	94%	16
Black Caribbean	0%	100%	6
Other	100%	0%	1
Total	26%	74%	514

The reason most frequently given by respondents for not wishing to join the police was because of their age (17%; see Table 5.12). Leaving this aside, however, 14% of respondents said they wouldn't join the police because they thought they would be treated poorly in the service as a result of their ethnic origin, and 14% felt that they wouldn't be chosen for the police because of their ethnic origin. Fear of attack upon themselves or upon their family were also significant factors (cited by 12% and 11% of respondents respectively) as was the disapproval of friends and family (8%).

Table 5.12: Respondents' reasons for not considering joining the police

Reason for not considering joining the police	Number	%
Because of age (too old or too young)	87	17%
Not treated well in the police because of ethnic origin	72	14%
Not chosen because of ethnic origin	70	14%
Fear attack on self	61	12%
Fear of attack on family	56	11%
Family/friends wouldn't approve	40	8%
Not interested	36	7%
Not chosen because of religion	24	5%
Because of gender	21	4%

Not treated well in the police because of religion	20	4%
Unable to maintain contact with family and friends	20	4%
Poor pay and working conditions in the police	14	3%
Don't support the police	13	3%
Prefer current job	11	2%
Not chosen because of sexual orientation	4	1%
Not treated well because of sexual orientation	3	1%
Other	40	8%

(Note: Percentages add to more than 100% because of multiple responses)

However, despite the personal antipathy against joining the police service expressed by the majority of respondents, two-thirds (66%) of the 500 respondents to this question said that they would support a member of their family joining the police service. Unwillingness to support a family member joining the police was most prevalent amongst Black Caribbean (57%), Far-Eastern Asian (56%) and Irish Traveller (53%) respondents (Table 5.13).

Table 5.13: Support for a family member joining the police by ethnic background

Ethnic Background	% of support within ethnic group for family member joining police		Total number of respondents
	Yes	No	
Black Caribbean	43%	57%	7
Far-Eastern Asian	44%	56%	94
Irish Traveller	47%	53%	15
Chinese	57%	43%	72
Black African	62%	38%	29
Arabic	67%	33%	6
Indian Sub-Continent	69%	31%	35
Near-Eastern	71%	29%	14
Latin American	78%	22%	9
White	80%	20%	206
Mixed	83%	17%	12
Other	100%	0%	1
Total	66%	34%	500

Of the 144 respondents who answered this question, the reasons most frequently given for not supporting a family member wishing to join the police were fear of attack upon the family member or upon the family

(cited by 38% and 29% respectively; see Table 5.14). Twenty-six percent said they would not support the person joining because they felt that the person would not be chosen for the police because of their ethnic origin and 24% thought they would be treated poorly in the police service as a result of their ethnic origin.

Table 5.14: Respondents’ reasons for not supporting family member joining the police

Reason for not supporting	Number	%
Fear attack on person	55	38%
Fear of attack on family	41	28%
Not chosen because of ethnic origin	38	26%
Not treated well in the police because of ethnic origin	34	24%
Family/friends wouldn’t approve	25	17%
Because of age (too old or too young)	13	9%
Don’t support the police	13	9%
Not chosen because of religion	10	7%
Poor pay and working conditions in the police	10	7%
Unable to maintain contact with family and friends	9	6%
Not treated well in the police because of religion	8	6%
Because of gender	1	1%
Other	22	15%

(Note: Percentages add to more than 100% because of multiple responses)

Summary

Just under a third of the respondents said that they had been in contact with the police in the previous 12 months, with the main reason being to report a crime. A quarter of respondents said they had contact with the police because they work with or for them, mainly as interpreters.

Seventeen percent of respondents said they had been victims of a crime in the previous 12 months, and over half of these thought that the crime was motivated by racism. Respondents’ age group, residential status, religion, ethnic background or economic activity did not effect the likelihood of them being victims of crime. However, males were more likely to be victims of crime than females. The majority of those respondents who had been victimised said they had reported the

incident to the police, and half of these said they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the way the police had dealt with the crime. The reasons that respondents most frequently gave for not reporting the crime were that the incident was too trivial, they felt the police couldn't help or they felt the police would ignore them because of their minority ethnic status.

Nine percent of respondents said that they had had problems with the police at some time, with over half of these experiencing a problem within the last year. Many of these problems related to not being taken seriously, unsatisfactory service or an officer being rude or impolite. However, only 13% of those who experienced a problem complained about it, as most non-complainants thought that nothing would be done about their complaint. The group most likely to have had problems with the police were Irish Travellers, with migrant workers least likely to have experienced problems.

When asked about what they thought the police's priorities should be, almost half of all respondents said that the police should concentrate on racist crime.

Respondents' perceptions of the police were diverse. Most thought that the police were helpful, acceptable, there for respondents' protection and professional. Large minorities also felt that the police were honest and fair, but over half of respondents were unable to say whether they thought the police were racist or whether they thought the police were aware of issues relating to the minority ethnic community. Those who did give an opinion thought the police were not racist and that they were aware of issues relating to the minority ethnic community.

Perceptions of the police were affected by the age of respondents with older respondents more likely to have positive perceptions of the police and less likely to say that the police are racist. Perceptions of the police were not affected by whether respondents had had contact with the police, although those who had been victims of crime had poorer perceptions of the police. In terms of ethnic background, Irish Travellers were most likely in general to view the police negatively.

Only a quarter of survey respondents said that they would be willing to consider joining the PSNI. Irish Travellers and Black Caribbean respondents were least likely to consider joining the PSNI. Approximately one in seven respondents felt that they would be treated poorly in the PSNI and a similar number felt they would not be chosen

because of their ethnic origin. However, fear of attack upon themselves or their family were also significant discouraging factors, as was the disapproval of family and friends. Despite this, 66% of respondents said they would be willing to support a family member joining the police, with Irish Travellers more supportive of family members joining the police (47%), than having a willingness to consider joining themselves (6%).

6. Experiences and Awareness of the PSNI: Focus Group Findings

Joao is Portuguese and has lived in Northern Ireland for 4 years, owning his own home. Last year his car was smashed and he was repeatedly attacked by neighbours wielding a hammer after he complained about their children shouting racist abuse. He was visited in hospital by PSNI officers who had identified and arrested 4 men. They dissuaded Joao from pressing charges. He was told by detectives 'These people have paramilitary connections, one of them is known to us. You're going to be alright, it's just a surface wound. If I was you I wouldn't do anything.' Joao has decided to leave Northern Ireland. 'The law doesn't help the police – police are scared of these people, even of taking them to court, criminals get away with anything in here. My wife is on anti-depressants and there's no place for us here, we will go back to Portugal when the school ends this year.'

6.1 Introduction

Participants in focus groups took part in open-ended discussions that were geared to gauge their knowledge and experience of the PSNI. For some from minority ethnic communities attempts at neutrality in the new policing arrangements appear to have done little to demonstrate inclusivity and accountability to the growing numbers of citizens from new migrant and established minority ethnic communities. One Kenyan Male interviewed for this research described Northern Ireland's policing as '*a democracy for the majorities*'. This sentiment was echoed in a number of focus groups where police preoccupation with measurable and quantifiable outcomes over good relations appeared to be a recurrent concern: '*In their booklets PSNI talk about their administrative targets and not enough about justice or building good relations*' (Zimbabwean, Female, Belfast).

Issues raised in this report will have been debated in a number of, if not all, focus groups. Throughout this section, quotations from one contributor that captures these generalised views are provided for the purposes of presenting a snapshot of the discussions.

6.2 General understanding of policing

Respondents' general understanding of policing was determined by their individual need for, and level of, direct contact with the PSNI and the changing political context of policing. Within these contexts, issues of sensitivity, how they or their communities are targeted by the police and particular issues relating to both racism and to youth were considered of importance and will be discussed below. A number of situations provided the principal reasons for respondents coming into contact with the PSNI. These included registering with the PSNI; driving offences; reporting crime; and providing professional services.

Registering with PSNI

Individuals' immigration status or nationality provides a key point of engagement for some with the PSNI. An obligation on the part of some employers to inform the PSNI when particular contracts have terminated sometimes proved to be participants' only or principal contact with the police.

A small number of participants reported that they had been required to register with the PSNI when travelling out of Northern Ireland with children who are not their birth children. More frequently, raised in particular by Slovaks and those from the Czech Republic, was the need to register when moving from one address to another. Many participants were used to carrying identity cards. Some looked to the police to provide them with evidence of residency to show to the authorities in their countries of origin:

'I don't mind registering with the police, we are used to this, but I wish they would provide me with documents to prove I am living here because it would be useful to show back home' (Ukrainian, Female, Dungannon).

Asylum seekers are obliged to sign in at police stations each week and they often voiced concern about the lack of flexibility over the time they have to register and the way the police respond to latecomers:

'Sometimes I have to walk for an hour in the soaking rain to get there for 12 o'clock and if you're late they straight away call immigration and say this girl didn't come on time. I am so scared because perhaps I could be taken away any time.' (Asylum Seeker, Female, Belfast).

Some report having had more positive experiences:

'It's all in the body language, the gestures that they give you. I've had some officers sign my petition and three of them are always so good asking 'any word yet?' It makes me know that they do care and one of the senior officers put a note in my file for them to be flexible with the time because of when I must to go and pick up my children from school.' (Asylum Seeker, Male, Belfast).

Clearly cultural expectations as well as individuals' attitudes play a role in how those registering with PSNI experience the process.

Driving offences

A high number of Lithuanians and Latvians reported a number of positive experiences with the police, which occurred when they had been stopped for committing driving offences that did not involve other vehicles, passengers or pedestrians. Several respondents from Portugal also reported that they had been stopped and tested for alcohol related driving offences. In general these encounters were reported as being good-natured. They were understood by the offenders to be the result of a lack of knowledge of the law and cultural differences in acceptable levels of alcohol consumption and serving PSNI officers spoken with concurred with this view.

Irish Travellers

The satisfactory nature and tolerant attitudes described in the reporting of these encounters were in direct contrast to those recounted in all of the focus groups and interviews that took place with Irish Travellers. The regularity with which male and female Irish Travellers were stopped and approached for traffic offences proved a heated and key topic of conversation and a clear bone of contention. Irrespective of their housing status, many Irish Travellers demonstrated a commitment to moving between one or more jurisdictions. It has been well documented how this has impacted on statutory service provision within education, health and housing, and it clearly presents challenges in relation to law enforcement. Irish Travellers reported that encounters with the police over driving offences frequently left them feeling mistrusted and denigrated and that they did not take into consideration a culture of itinerancy, movement and migration:

'If you have a southern licence and only a provisional one in Northern Ireland they'll tell you 'this isn't worth the paper it's written on' and when I produce my insurance I'll be told 'this is a dud'. There's never no acceptance of your point of view at all.' (Irish Traveller, Male, Coalisland)

'If you're stopped at a checkpoint it's routine they ask you for licence, insurance, tax, whatever, but if you're from the settled community and you're stopped it's a completely different situation. They'll just talk to you. Not keep on checking you out and opening your boot when it isn't necessary. There's one police officer and every time he'd see me it would be the same routine and I'd have to go down to Woodbourne to produce.' (Irish Traveller, Female, Belfast)

But some Irish Travellers were keen to highlight improvements in their relationships with the police:

'They used to come in here years ago and while you'd still get the smart alocs, it's a small minority now. One guy in Newry would always pull up outside the door with the 'I'll make you do this' talk, but mostly they leave us alone.' (Irish Traveller, Male, Cookstown)

The PSNI and Driver Vehicle Licensing Northern Ireland (DVLNI) have produced a booklet in different languages giving information for minority ethnic groups on driving regulations and requirements in Northern Ireland. The PSNI, DVLNI and employers of migrant workers distribute the booklets. They are also available in G.P. surgeries, advice centres and through support organisations working with minority ethnic groups and migrant workers.

Reporting crimes

The reporting of crimes provides a key point of contact for some members of minority ethnic communities. Racially motivated crimes warrant particular attention and will be explored in more detail below. In addition to these specific 'hate crimes', it is crucial to acknowledge that there are many instances where participants have experienced policing within the context of opportunistic crime:

'Our car was damaged when a shop on the Albertbridge Road was burgled. PSNI said they could not take statement from witness because they were our family members – I have given up all hope on police.' (Chinese, Male, Belfast)

The ripple effect that can be caused from such an experience is less than satisfactory for relationships between the PSNI and the communities in which they work. This is particularly so for members of marginalised communities which draw on small networks of support for information dissemination. In these communities, dismissive attitudes from within the statutory service providers impact more widely than on the individual victim and can very quickly colour whole communities' willingness to engage with particular service providers.

Providing professional services

Individuals from black and minority ethnic communities provide a range of services to the PSNI and the policing organisations. The organisation providing the PSNI with local interpretation services was unable to facilitate a focus group for the purposes of this report; however in a number of focus groups that were convened, individuals providing a court interpreting service had had very limited experiences with PSNI officers. A number of medics working directly with PSNI commented on their satisfactory dealings with PSNI under trying circumstances and reported that their ethnicity is not and had never been an issue in their engagements. One serving officer and one PSNI support worker, both from visible minority communities were interviewed for the purposes of this report. Both had reservations about their colleagues' and the organisation's commitment to anti-racism:

'PSNI needs a dedicated support organisation for BME members that can be drawn on to validate any policies and procedures they intend putting in place.' (Black-British, Male, Newtownards).

'There's no point in doing a couple of hours training on this stuff – it requires a real commitment and buy-in from the communities themselves' (Sikh, Male, Belfast)

Policing in a changing context

'PSNI must understand that Black people's relationship with the police is carried as baggage from other countries and is a barrier to them connecting with PSNI, just as the history of the RUC is a barrier for some in this country. But saying that, even though my experience of policing back home is not positive, police here are doing a tremendous job.' (Nigerian, Male, Belfast)

For many members of black and minority ethnic communities who are migrants to Northern Ireland, their attitudes to policing may be influenced and tempered by experiences elsewhere. This has, on occasion, affected their readiness to engage with the PSNI:

'Police in my country are corrupt, here it seems they are very polite and considerate, but I did not know this before I went to them.' (Ukrainian, Female, Ballymena)

Irrespective of experiences of policing in their countries of origin, there is at best a fear of coming into contact with the PSNI for those whose

immigration status is insecure. This is particularly so in the case of those who are asylum seekers or who are undocumented and their reluctance is increased when issues around literacy and language are brought into the picture. Consequently, many crimes go unreported for fear of what the repercussions might be for some of the most vulnerable members of society.

The fact that policing in Northern Ireland remains at best contentious, can create further resistance to engage:

'Even though I come from the Rossmore area which is meant to be mixed and quite safe I am afraid to cause more trouble by saying something I shouldn't. So it's better if I just ignore and don't talk to police.' (Chinese, Female, Dungannon)

Focus group facilitators found potential participants reluctant:

'People have a strange view of me when I asked them to come and talk with you about PSNI. Even when they have no experience of PSNI they seem to get very agitated, so I asked them and they say it is because they are told not to talk to police. Police is bad.' (Asylum Seeker, Male, focus group co-ordinator)

A publication welcoming migrants to West Belfast from the West Against Racism Network (WARN) dissuades members of minority ethnic communities from engaging with the PSNI. The document received much media attention during the research period and its advice could be seen to be quickly passing through neighbourhoods affecting the confidence of those in minority ethnic communities who wished to engage with the police:

'We have got this booklet, we have been told by our neighbours to only ask them for help – they say local people here have much more power than PSNI and that children will ignore police.' (Chinese, Female, Belfast)

Perhaps of equal concern was the fact that a number of participants in focus groups from a variety of different ethnic backgrounds, suggested that the police themselves feed into a culture of non-reporting in areas where policing was unacceptable:

'My children are at ... school, and when I reported to PSNI about other children at their school – PSNI told me 'It will be worse for you if we go to the families – you should go to the school principal.' (Ugandan, Female, Belfast)

'When we lived on the Falls Road, children put water balloons through the door. The police told us, the more you report it to us, the more they will do this to you. So we chased them ourselves, even tried taking photographs but we were not successful. Now we have moved, but still my girl cries through the night, she is so unsettled that we have a social worker for her.' (Chinese, Female, Belfast)

Members of the Travelling Community were reluctant to comment on their views of policing in a changing political context, but one man commented: *'In this part of the world, the PSNI should fix their relations with the rest of the community and they then can start with the Irish Travellers'* (Irish Traveller, Male, Coalisland).

What appeared to be of greater interest in the focus groups and interviews carried out with Irish Travellers and their extended families was the fact that they were frequently investigated and their premises and persons searched by a number of different law enforcement agencies. Several voiced confusion about the role and interrelation between the Assets Recovery Agency, the Criminal Assets Bureau¹⁶, the PSNI and An Garda Síochána in relation to their need to comply with requests and their rights to make complaints about these agencies. A number sought clarity from the researchers as to the appropriate route to make a complaint about all of these organisations.

Targeting or Over-Policing?

Vigilance by the police was taken to be an unwelcome intrusion for some members in focus groups and who were interviewed. Again this was particularly raised as an issue for Irish Travellers:

'They always come up for a nose about, to check on receipts – in my eyes, they always assume everything you have is stolen, especially Christmas when all the quads and them are out.' (Irish Traveller, Female, Belfast)

Even when the object of the police's attention was not on their community, some Irish Travellers reported feeling compromised by the police basing themselves in their area when concentrating on other issues. At one site close to derelict flats being used by drug dealers, the

¹⁶ Within Northern Ireland the Assets Recovery Agency (ARA) and within the Republic of Ireland the Criminal Assets Bureau were set up to support the police, Customs and other agencies in conducting financial investigations and to use criminal or civil action

police were in the habit of circling the camp and then parking behind the trailers, using them for cover while watching for dealers' activity. Irish Travellers felt that they were being compromised in this process and already existing conflict between themselves and the residents in the flats was being built up and added to by the police tactics:

'They park behind the trailers and knock us out of bed before they'd go and then do a raid on the flats so it looks as though we'd phoned them or we were squealing.' (Irish Traveller, Male, Craigavon)

The history of disproportionate levels of stops and searches and the crucial role this practice has in building or breaking confidence between black communities and the police has been well documented with regard to the Metropolitan and other Police Services in England. However, as demographics within Northern Ireland greatly differ from those areas, it is not appropriate to provide any comparative analysis of this practice. Yet while some suggested that the PSNI is perceived to have a 'better regard' for Black people 'than some in England, in terms of stigma, random searching etc.' (Black-British, Female, Ballymena) this view did not encapsulate the experiences of some Black men in Belfast who reported regular contact with PSNI over suspected drug offences:

'I was driving with my friends in the car, and the police saw someone was rolling a cigarette – they stopped us and searched the car for drugs. Now are you going to tell me that they would do that to some Irish builder going to work with his mates? I don't think so!' (Jamaican, Male, Belfast)

A perceived targeting of Black men and women who associated with Black men was also reported on a number of occasions feeding into a concern from some women that the police made judgement calls based on the colour of their or their partners' skin:

'They are dead on with me when I am with a white guy, but whenever I'm with any of my friends who are black, then they start.' (Zimbabwean, Female, Belfast)

'If I'm out without him (Black Jamaican Partner) and with my friends they don't ever look at me, but when we're out together they'll always make that connection' (White Northern Irish, Female, Belfast)

Sensitivity

'It's small things that matter to people, not just the big things.' (Indian, Male, Antrim)

'Usually when police come to your house, they never knock. They don't introduce themselves – but they say stupid things like "I don't know where you are all from..." What's that for? I reported it to a senior officer, but I was not very happy with the outcome. Because there was no outcome.' (Black-British, Female, Belfast)

The process of engaging with those officers who are insensitive, and in some instances prejudicial, reinforces a feeling of power imbalance between civilians and the police. As discussed earlier, this is particularly so for those who may be seeking, or have previously sought, asylum. For many people conversations about national identity and allegiance are intrusive, unwelcome and more complex than appropriate to a single word answer. The experience of displacement, frequent migration and refugee status can also bring with them issues of confidentiality and privacy:

'When they see you first time, they bound to ask you what's your origin, background. Why do you ask me this? I am British, I am here. End of story. You see these issues to some people are sensitive. Why are you asking? I am resident here and that's that.' (Muslim Refugee, Male, Belfast)

A number of respondents recorded concerns about the lack of sensitivity demonstrated by certain PSNI officers when dealing with members of minority ethnic communities. They reported this as being a deterrent in their willingness to further report:

'I had a petrol bomb put through my door, I had eggs thrown at my window, I had graffiti onto my door. For six months not a single day when we didn't have unpleasantness. We closed our blinds and sat in the dark. Police encouraged me to move out of the area. I was quite annoyed about that. Is this the solution that they see?' (Zimbabwean, Female, Belfast)

The police were seen by some respondents to be careless and this affected their confidence at being dealt with in a sensitive matter at a time when they were most vulnerable:

'When we were burgled, they broke into the kitchen. Police blamed us for making the footprints. I was surprised and angry that a trained professional should be acting like this. We were not taken seriously enough.' (Chinese, Female, Belfast)

The gender and culturally insensitive behaviour of police officers was raised within the focus group of Muslim males. *'They come in with shoes*

on, and some people are very particular about this and think that at the door you should take off your shoes, which I appreciate. And shaking hands with women, some families are particular, they shouldn't come to the house when the men are not there, some people are very strict about this, it is very critical. But a woman police officer would be OK'.

Racism in the PSNI

Issues around inappropriate familiarity with victims might be addressed through both a more robust anti-racist training policy and a public and transparent debate that addressed the level of understanding within the PSNI as to what constitutes racism and what is a lack of cultural awareness. However, there is also a clear concern being voiced by some members of the minority ethnic communities about blatant and unacceptable racism within the PSNI:

'I went to report an incident at Short Strand and I heard him talking to another officer behind the desk saying 'The Chinky's had a car accident' (Chinese, Male, Belfast).

Experiences of racism from PSNI officers took a variety of forms. Offensive and inappropriate use of language was frequently reported – and so too were more subtle forms of discrimination:

Two Chinese men were set upon by a group of white local youths here on the estate where they all lived. The girlfriend of one of the perpetrators called the police. When they arrived, they only arrested the Chinese men and took them to Lurgan. When they protested their innocence, the PSNI justified the arrest by saying 'whoever called PSNI first was trying to stop the fight.' When their innocence was established, no apology was made by the police. (Chinese, community worker, Craigavon)

In each focus group, bar one conducted with elderly Chinese, someone recounted an example of how police officers were perceived to automatically take the side of a local person in an inter-ethnic argument. For some people who are visibly distinguishable as coming from an ethnic minority, there was a firm belief that their ethnicity shaped even the most minimal engagement with the police:

'I've been living in Northern Ireland for over 50 years and in the same place since 1967. Recently I was stopped for driving too close to a lorry, it was my fault entirely, but instead of just accepting my driving licence, the police then asked if I had my passport. What was that for? What was the point in that?

What do you think that made me feel like' (Indian, Male, Belfast)

For some others, the police were perceived to display racist tendencies towards other minority ethnic communities but not the one they belonged to:

'We reported our cars had been damaged and scratched at Station Road, and the police said it was probably the Travellers who had done it.' (Lithuanian, Male, Coalisland)

Members of a pan-African focus group debated the amount of racism they had encountered within Northern Ireland and the PSNI in comparison with that from other jurisdictions, police forces and services. The unanimous conclusion of that group was summed up by one participant:

'We expect racism in the community and that includes the police – for us it is a foregone conclusion.' (Kenyan, Male, Belfast)

Racism in the PSNI was frequently experienced by some of its employees. This included inappropriate use of language:

'Six months ago a guy came back from holiday to XX – in the canteen someone commented "he looks like a nigger" and the second most senior officer in the station giggled and didn't challenge it. Now that's unacceptable.' (PSNI Serving Officer)

'I know one guy who is the same ethnic mix as myself but who passes for white – and anytime he watches football on the television with colleagues, he counts the number of racist remarks others make casually. Senior ranks should know better, they must learn to emphasise the unacceptability of this across the board.' (PSNI Serving Officer)

Racism appears to some officers to warrant less attention than sectarianism does and it was commented on how swiftly senior officers act on verbalised sectarianism but completely ignore racism:

'Sectarian issues seem to subvert all others.' (PSNI Serving Officer)

Serving officers from multiple heritage or non-visible minorities were keen to acknowledge the high levels of racism in the service. 'If you're black, you can be driving along in a 30mph bubble - you maybe don't get to hear as much racism as is out there because people can see that you're from an ethnic minority but if you pass for white then you can hear it going on' (PSNI Serving Officer)

Youth issues

For some young people from minority ethnic communities, the discrimination they reported or feared appeared to be based on both their age and their ethnicity. Young Irish Travellers, their families and those working with them reported limited experience with PSNI but felt that both they and the police had prejudices about one another:

'Police have very negative connotation here – the only time they're seen here is when they're coming in uniform, kicking in the trailer to lift your father, or when they're brought in by the social services.' (Irish Traveller, female, Belfast)

'I swear to God I hate going into the shops with the others, it's all right on my own, but if there's 3 or 4 of us, we get followed and the police called.' (Young Irish Traveller, Female, Belfast)

Previous research (Jarman 2003) shows that many racist incidents are conducted against young people and are often perpetrated by young people. For those young people who took part in focus groups for this research, there was an over-riding feeling that young people from minority ethnic communities are not engaging with the PSNI in any way:

'They don't come into our school, they've never been to my youth group and I've never been in trouble with the police, so I don't know anything about them. I don't know whether or not I would like to join them because I don't know anything about them, just what other people tell me about them.' (Black-British, Female, Belfast)

6.3 Racist incidents

'When we came back from holiday, our cars had been damaged with chemicals. PSNI came and took a statement, but they didn't talk to the person that we think done it. I know it was because we are Chinese – I know who is a bad neighbour. But police didn't report it as racially motivated, they didn't ask me questions about it and they just didn't respond to my concerns. I did not know that I could report it as racially motivated until later on.' (Chinese, Female, Belfast)

Many members of black and minority ethnic groups who took part in focus groups felt vulnerable to the likelihood of racism within Northern Ireland. Much of this racism they felt was what was described by both themselves and the PSNI as 'minor' and 'low-level'. In the context of this

report, the terms 'low level' and 'minor' are used as they were by participants when referring to verbal abuse, graffiti, and in a few cases, easily repairable damage to property:

'I was pushing the buggy and when he was driving by, he did like monkey to me. I went home and cried and thought God bless him – he's only white. Police can't do anything about what he did or what I thought.' (Mozambiquean, Female, Tyrone)

It appears that it is unusual for victims of such abuse to report to the police as some victims appear to face verbal abuse on a daily basis. Even when such incidents were recorded, the PSNI did not appear to treat this form of racism with the consideration that victims would like. Several participants experienced what they perceived to be dismissive responses from the police about their fears or when reporting racial abuse. They were reluctant to engage further with the police:

'I've reported things to the police where people have said bad words to my wife, and they've said 'that happens' - and that's all they do – so why bother reporting?' (Indian, Male, Belfast)

Given the large increase in the reporting of racially motivated crime, it is perhaps unsurprising that some participants felt that there was a particularly proactive thrust coming from the PSNI encouraging and willing those who were unsure of motives to record incidents as racist incidents:

'Children were throwing stones at our windows and police called it racist. But we didn't think it was. They were doing it all down the street.' (Lithuanian, Male, Dungannon)

For others, however, this was not the case, and a number of complaints were mentioned that drew attention to poor police response rates and the failure to keep victims informed of the progress of investigations:

'I work within the Civil Service and I have first hand experience of dealing with people in PSNI over Community Relations matters and of dealing with racial incidents. My boyfriend is Jamaican, and approximately 6 months ago our cars were damaged outside the house – tyres slashed, scrapes down the panels and graffiti. When we woke, we reported this to PSNI as a racial attack and as of yet, nothing has happened. We asked them to come out and they said there was no one available as they were under-resourced. They told me to ring xx station to get a crime scene reference number. They assumed we would want to do this

only for insurance purposes. I explained I wasn't interested in that, that I wanted to record it specifically as a racially motivated incident. We received a letter saying they had investigated it further and giving us crime reference numbers, but to date, nothing has happened. We decided that since nothing had happened that no-one would take the matter seriously enough and so we moved, and that was that.' (White Northern Irish, Female, Belfast)

Respondents also felt that the police frequently used a get-out clause that they were not in a position to challenge:

Every time it's a resource issue – they say 'unfortunately we have to prioritise', or 'we do not have anyone available.' (Chinese, Community Worker, Banbridge)

Other frequently cited perceptions in focus groups, particularly those comprising of members of the Chinese community and those with limited English language abilities, was that their experiences were subordinate to others in the eyes of the police:

'The people who were counter staff and not Chinese received politeness and compensation from the PSNI – but then they told us that my wife's file was lost.' (Chinese, Male, Restaurant Owner, Belfast)

Reluctance to report racist incidents

Members of minority communities and faith-based organisations recognise the value in monitoring and analysing data on racist incidents and crimes and criminal convictions for racially motivated crimes. However there were a variety of reasons discussed in focus groups that acted as a barrier to those who would otherwise report a racist incident. These included a lack of confidence in policing arrangements, fears, cultural expectations and language barriers.

A number of incidents were discussed that individuals had previously not reported but that could now be dealt with under changes in legislation. However, due to a lack of legal knowledge, participants were ill informed of their rights. Other reasons given for unwillingness to report included:

- Police's inability and/or reluctance to pursue the perpetrators of verbal abuse:

'I ran an after-school club for a year for children from minority communities. Two kids were beaten up by youngsters of between 16 and 20 so the owner asked

us to vacate the premises when our contract was up for renewal. He said it was due to racist tensions developing around the programme and that we were unwelcome. But what's the point in reporting that to the police? There's nothing that would be done by them to this racism?' (Brazilian, Female, Tyrone)

- Police's inability to deal sensitively with victims of abuse:
'They came alright, they came straight away, but they asked my wife where we lived and the officer repeated it so loudly that they easily heard my home address.' (Iranian, Male, Belfast)

- Visibility of the victim and fear of further racism:
'Because people can recognise me and because the police would know me – but I don't know any of them – I wouldn't bother reporting things or taking them any further in case it comes back on you.' (Indian, Female, Belfast)

- Willingness/wish to deal with issues without involving the police:
'So many times I get called names, or people being abusive – but I should be able to sort it out myself. I'm not a child – I don't need to report everything.' (Palestinian, Male, Belfast)

'It is not within Chinese culture to bring a complaint against officialdom' (Chinese, Community Worker, Belfast)

- Immigration Status:
'Right now I am restrained by my visa – I want to work in Canada or USA next time so I don't want to do anything that would show that I might not be a good worker.' (Slovak, Male, Ballymena)

'If people are seeking asylum very often this in-between situation would prevent them reporting the police's bad actions as they would have fear of anything that might highlight them as a trouble maker.' (Zimbabwean, Male, Belfast)

Those who are failed asylum seekers awaiting removal are particularly vulnerable, given that there is no legislation in place to protect them and no statutory service providers are in a position to support their health, housing and education rights:

'One client of mine was so badly beaten by neighbours that he could no longer stay in the flat and required hospitalisation for a number of days. But because of his immigration status he did not want to bring this incident to the attention of the police because he could be removed at any time.' (Chinese Support Worker, Belfast)

- Unsatisfactory previous experiences:

At least one individual in each of the focus groups recorded disappointment with what they perceived to be the PSNI's low response rates when being called out to crimes and, in addition, their failure to keep victims informed of progress on cases. Unless emergency numbers were called, the police response time was frequently considered unsatisfactory:

'They didn't come for two hours. Well of course they'd gone by that time – what's the point in calling them out if they're not going to come immediately?' (Bangladeshi, Male)

- Police were considered unwilling or unlikely to follow up minor incidents:

'They lazy, they can't be bothered to talk to the parents. I know who put sparklers through door – I know who shouts names, I show police but they do nothing.' (Chinese, Female, Craigavon)

'When people refuse to serve you in shops or neighbours drunk and rude – you can't expect the police to come and stand up for you.' (Hong Kong, Female, Newry)

'On my estate there is an Irish lady who puts her rubbish on my car. PSNI came and say that can't do nothing. Why not?' (Vietnamese, Female, Banbridge)

- Language Barriers:

'Because of the language barrier I didn't report for a long time and even with interpreter I feel stupid to have someone else say my words about small matters.' (Chinese, Male, Derry Londonderry)

Community-based policing support initiatives

'Based on the wishes of our users, Chinese Welfare Association have just started up a project to allow those who do not feel confident reporting to the PSNI for whatever reason, the opportunity to come in and have the incident logged and Chinese Welfare then undertake to inform the police on their behalf.' (Chinese Community Worker, Belfast)

Drawing on a number of successfully piloted and recent initiatives in England and Wales, a number of umbrella community and voluntary organisations have indicated a willingness to represent the interests of individuals from black and minority ethnic communities through the provision of a third party reporting facility. Within the context of

policing, some are keen to play a key role in working directly with the PSNI through reporting and pursuing convictions, others see their own role as more proactively taking the lead on resolving community tensions thereby avoiding any contact with PSNI:

'In Brighton Street teenagers throw stones and bottles at us. We are afraid they will come back again. Colleagues advise us not to go to police but to report to Falls Community Council. I do not want to upset colleagues so I do what they say, but I do not want to talk to people I want to talk to police.' (Filipino, Male, Belfast)

While the subject of CCTV remains a contentious issue in Northern Ireland, a number of respondents who had been subjected to racially motivated incidents felt that CCTV cameras were a useful deterrent and provided welcome support to those who were vulnerable:

'I was in a hit and run in, the police saw it on CCTV and responded without even being called.' (Portuguese, Male, Cookstown)

The issue of CCTV encroaching on civil liberties did not occur within any of the focus groups.

To have access to the policing alarm list, whereby the company who install and monitor a premise's security system notify the police when a customer's alarm goes off, is considered of value by some working in community centres that cater specifically for minorities:

'At the moment we've been taken off their list because when we updated our alarm system, it was so sensitive that even the wind would put it off and we had so many false alarms. But I hope they will put us back on before it comes up to the high holidays. We have good relations with them and they come quickly when we have had racist incidents and burglaries, but usually they can do nothing because they cannot see who has done it.' (Jewish Community Worker, Female, Belfast).

Support for victims of crime

There appeared to be a degree of confusion within focus groups about the PSNI's role in the provision of support to victims and its relationship with the charity Victim Support. Many respondents felt that detectives did not begin to conduct their investigations from the premise that victims are individuals but rather were a crime statistic. This they felt fed into a feeling of dehumanisation and looked for a more pro-active

support role from investigating or other officers. Some groups, in particular Irish Travellers, recorded the lack of victim support provided to them by PSNI:

'There was this one time a year or so ago when a horse got shot by people who didn't want us here. There must have been about 25 kids all under 12 there when it happened. There was no victim support at all. No-one ever visited that family at all.' (Traveller, Male, Banbridge)

A hand count and overview of responses from those within focus groups revealed that the majority of victims of racist incidents preferred women officers to be present at initial interviews. When questioned on this, they acknowledged that this was in part due to a conservative and gendered view of women as nurturers and men being perceived to be more interested in maintaining a dominant position of authority. Groups displayed mixed levels of concern that investigating officers should be identified as coming from a minority ethnic or faith community. In a small number of focus groups issues were raised by some about the appropriateness of those providing support to be in uniform – at one level this appeared to be because of concern for both the victims of crime and for the police when visiting victims in particular areas where the police were unwelcome. For others, irrespective of the gender or ethnicity of the PSNI, many felt that those offering support to be in uniform undermined their ability to be empathetic. Connecting with victims either in person or by letter was the most important issue:

'My daughter was followed by a man in a car, she gave descriptions and details but for months nothing happened. Then months later for a few weeks they constantly came to our house asking for us to sign this permission slip, and other papers, but still they didn't catch him, it was a nuisance and they just wanted their paperwork sorted out.' (Belarussian, Female, Antrim)

'Just when I was getting over the whole thing – they came back again to say that they hadn't got anybody for it.' (Chinese, Female, Belfast)

Some people felt that when they spoke with PSNI and Victim Support, the workers and volunteers were under the impression that people reported specifically because of a potential compensation claim. This undermined the victim's confidence in the organisations:

'I went to tell them a cheque was missing and it had been cashed. Compensation is nothing to me, but my view didn't carry any weight, they just tossed me around, go here, go there. I expect them to take action and interest not spend months over paperwork.' (Nigerian, Male, Belfast)

6.4 Engaging with communities

The various attempts by the PSNI to conduct outreach was more welcomed in some groups than in others:

'There'll always be a bit of a wedge – they let on they like yous and they want to go rallying with 4 x 4s, but that's so they can say they know a Traveller. It's all hypocrisy. You can see it when they're with someone they put their hand up to me if I drive by in the town, but they don't if they're on their own.' (Traveller, Male, Cookstown)

Visits to community offices were welcomed, but further work on the ground by police officers was considered essential by some:

'Police can't just expect groups to come to them, they need to meet people informally as much as possible and to work with them on issues that concern them however small.' (Chinese, Female, Belfast)

Some respondents felt that the police should be more pro-active in building up relationships with individuals from minority ethnic and minority faith communities and less with community leaders or self-appointed spokespersons:

'It would be better if police would drive round the community more often and stop off and chat to people at their homes, then they would get a look at what is going on, not just coming in here to the office for a cup of tea.' (Vietnamese, Male, Craigavon)

Others, for example members of the Omagh Ethnic Community Support Network, reported that one way this was being established was by the use of the PSNI community outreach 'Blue Lamp Bus' which enabled community groups to access a mini-bus for an annual trip.

A number of respondents felt that PSNI could easily demonstrate a more committed outreach programme if they were to improve their administration practices:

'We have a good relationship if we go to them, but they don't update their databases. They're always writing out to the wrong people. It makes you feel like they don't really care – if you're going to do something, do it properly, quickly, efficiently.' (Chinese, Female, Bangor)

Interpreting services

Language barriers fed into the fear identified earlier for some respondents with limited or no English that the police would favour local people's perspectives:

'My husband was in a car accident near Conlig. Because PSNI knew driver of other car they were helpful to him even though he had not details. My husband's English is poor, they did not provide him with translation and he felt that they thought it was his fault when it wasn't.' (Chinese, Female, Belfast)

The lack of, or delay in provision of appropriately skilled interpreters was a cause for concern for many respondents and proved responsible for a number of unsuccessful encounters. After a particularly violent incident at a party of Poles and Ukrainians, one guest was stabbed and his teeth knocked out. The police were credited for behaving with respect and for their advice that resulted in the perpetrators' work visas being cancelled, but the length of time it took them to access an interpreter was of concern:

'You shouldn't have to wait three days to get an interpreter after such a situation. That's a disaster.' (Ukrainian, Male, Ballymena,)

The inappropriate use of families to provide interpreting services was a recurrent theme despite the PSNI having an extensive set of interpreting facilities and resources:

'Men came into the shop with guns and when police came, they had a delay in taking my statement, and my daughter was asked to interpret for us. When they came for a second statement, they didn't offer an interpreter either. This is not good for her to see us so upset and to have to explain why.' (Chinese, Female, Restaurant Owner, Castlereagh)

Other respondents, however, were able to say that the police used mobile phones to access translators for immediate assistance. Yet there still appeared to be an over-reliance on local witnesses to provide information after an incident:

'They are more enthusiastic with local people, they listen to what they say. They don't ask me questions, just look at me and wait for me to speak.' (Chinese, Male, Belfast)

The immediate access to an experienced bi-lingual interpreter with appropriate skills was valued by victims of crime and by interpreters themselves though a need for a highly specialised use of terminology was recognised. Interpreters are not directly employed by the PSNI; rather the PSNI access them through NICEM.

'I have just started working with the police, and it is very interesting work, but I do not think that I am really equipped to deal with this job yet. I am not always available when people need help and I need more experience before I can provide an all-round professional service and knowledge. I have only been living here a short while myself.' (Police Interpreter, Female, Belfast)

The need to have access to adequately skilled and nationally accredited interpreters at all times was raised by a number of victims of racist crimes who felt that delays in being able to relate their experience were not helpful to their cases.

'I went to a meeting last year at the xx Hotel – there was a poor standard of interpretation and the technical terms are not easy for people to understand in either English or Chinese.' (Chinese, Male, Craigavon)

Minority Liaison Officers

While every focus group conducted had at least one member who had heard of the role of the Minority Liaison Officer (MLO) – only those who were community workers or who had had reason to be visited by the MLO knew of them by name. Unsolicited visits by MLOs to organisations appear in the main to be welcome and it is noteworthy that during three of the focus groups that were held on community activist's premises, MLOs turned up or phoned by coincidence.

Many demonstrated a keen interest in the community's traditions and cultural practices, but some respondents were keen that the MLOs should receive a more intensive cultural awareness training and that their roles should be dedicated posts rather than part of a greater work-load:

'I discussed cultural misunderstandings with him. He was complaining that he was always being asked for letters and things. He did not realise that in Slovakia or Czech Republic you have to register when you move from one location to another. Because you don't carry identity cards here, that's why they were always asking him to give a new proof of address.' (Czech, Male, Ballymena)

Others felt that on-going training should be mandatory for anyone dealing with minority ethnic communities given the lack of insight and ill-informed use of language by some MLOs, however well-intentioned:

'One MLO came here and he told me he was interested in 'Oriental' - things and that's why he'd been picked for the job.' (Chinese, Community Worker, Belfast)

One MLO interviewed felt there would be benefit in initiating a system where MLOs were enabled to meet on a regular basis to share good practice initiatives. Interviews with six MLOs serving in different areas of Northern Ireland demonstrated a variety of approaches employed and required of officers as well as their accessibility, visibility and approachability. While one MLO enjoyed attending social and family events with minority ethnic groups in the area, feeling that he was viewed as someone to be trusted, another found it difficult to find the time to establish relationships due to other work pressures and was also concerned about personal safety issues when addressed by people while off-duty in the local area:

I don't mind going out to see a group or having them into the station, but I don't like it when they come up to me in the town centre when I'm out shopping.'

Another said *'there's not enough work in it, it's just another branch of what I deal with. The job just needs to be processed appropriately and that's what I do.'*

Recruitment

A number of participants in focus groups had unsuccessfully applied for posts within PSNI or as support workers. Other participants were surprised to learn that they could apply and indicated a willingness to join, in particular because they were concerned about the lack of visibility of officers from minority communities. Participants from a group of elderly Chinese community members who had very restricted English language skills urged PSNI to recruit more Chinese officers:

'I would be safer if someone spoke to me in Cantonese – not an interpreter, but a policeman. Then I know he understands directly what I say, not what someone tells him I say.' (Chinese, Female, Belfast)

A number of respondents felt that young people in their community would relate better to police officers from their own ethnic or faith based background:

'Of course if they saw someone who was also Indian, Sikh, whatever, they would be more encouraged to join and to feel that they had something to offer.' (Indian, Male, Belfast)

Some felt that this would go some way to addressing racism within the service:

'The more Chinese there are in the police, the more the other officers will understand that racial harassment is not a good thing and will not be tolerated, that it's not just about putting up a few posters.' (Chinese, Male, Belfast)

This view was echoed by one serving PSNI officer from a minority ethnic background:

'I can't think of anything worse than so many people having had the courage to apply, then to be turned away. It's ludicrous, it sends the wrong message – it's cataclysmic – nobody's going to bother applying.' (Black British, Male, Serving PSNI Officer)

This view seemed to be echoed by other individuals from minority ethnic backgrounds already working within the PSNI. When asked about recruitment a PSNI officer from a minority ethnic background thought there was little reason for people from a minority ethnic background to have the confidence to apply to join the PSNI. He argued that there was not enough targeting of groups and that black officers should be actively encouraged to speak to individuals and groups. Commenting on the low numbers of minority ethnic applicants who were successful, he felt that an organisation for black and minority ethnic officers within PSNI would provide a support network to help applicants right through the process from the initial application form.

Training

The issue of training arose spontaneously in many focus groups. A number of those connected to community organisations were keen for a more sustained and continued commitment to ongoing practical and theoretical training for both new recruits and existing PSNI staff. A need to ensure that PSNI officers and support staff are aware of the importance of language was a particularly sensitive issue for many respondents:

'Police never know what words to use, what language is offensive. Adults get frightened because their knowledge is limited and this inhibits them when they talk to black people.' (Ugandan, Male, Belfast)

Many respondents acknowledged the role the PSNI could play in addressing direct and indirect racism and prejudice by working more closely with community groups:

'Northern Ireland has not much experience of Black People – it is up to the police and the black community to get together with give and take on both sides, to inform the wider community about the harm that racism can do. That way the police will commit themselves to learning about the issue and racism in the police.' (Black British, Community Support Worker, Ballymoney)

Those providing ad hoc external training services to PSNI had clear ideas about the limitations of the service they were able to provide:

'Support for training new recruits has improved. I think perhaps they're dealing with the situation better now through role play. But they've got a long way to go on training those who are dealing with victims of crimes and you can't learn this stuff in a two hour slot. Anti-racist training just can't be delivered successfully that way. This is about box ticking, not about a commitment to learning.' (Trainer, Female, Belfast)

Summary

The focus groups and follow-up in-depth interviews with those from the black and minority ethnic community provided evidence that there is a reluctance to report racist crime for a variety of reasons. Some of the reasons are based on perceptions, while others are based on experiences where respondents felt that they did not receive the treatment they were entitled to expect from the police. In some instances, perceptions were based on a lack of communication and misunderstandings and in others they were based on intentional and unintentional racism from individual police officers.

Many from minority ethnic communities appear to be reluctant to engage with the PSNI and other policing organisations due to poor experiences of policing in their country of origin. Another frequently cited deterrent is due to feelings of insecurity around residency. This occurs not only for those seeking asylum and thus reluctant to engage with policing organisations, but also those who do not wish to draw attention to themselves for fear of having their work permit either withdrawn or not renewed. There is often a prevailing desire to be as inconspicuous as possible despite verbal and other forms of racial abuse being a daily occurrence, which they and their families are resigned to. Some who have reported incidents in the past felt that the police were

dismissive and this perception was exacerbated by language barriers. Many felt that the police were more likely to relate to the local community where there was a dispute of any kind.

There was an acknowledgement from serving PSNI officers that there are high levels of racism within the PSNI. This was evident at all ranks and there did not appear to be any commitment to addressing the issue. In some cases it was so endemic in general discourse that it took place even when those from black and minority ethnic backgrounds were present and was not regarded as racism. Serving officers did not feel that there were adequate measures in place that would encourage those from black and minority ethnic communities to join the PSNI. It was also acknowledged that there was an urgent need for more intensive training on black and minority ethnic issues and culture within the PSNI, extending to serving officers as well as new recruits to ensure that a 'zero tolerance' approach to racism is embedded with policing organisations.

There was a desire in focus groups for MLOs to be more visible, engaging directly with the communities rather than through black and minority ethnic support organisations. It was felt that while many black and minority ethnic community workers knew the local MLO and how to contact them, this was less true for those individuals who were not connected to community organisations. There was also felt to be a need for MLOs to have a higher profile among their colleagues in the police station (and local DCU) as in a number of cases police on the public desk did not know who the MLO was when a member of the black and minority ethnic community asked to speak to them.

7. Police Accountability: the Northern Ireland Policing Board and District Policing Partnerships

The respondents to the questionnaires and participants in the focus groups were also asked a series of questions to determine their knowledge, experiences of, and attitudes towards the organisations forming part of the new policing arrangements in Northern Ireland - the Northern Ireland Policing Board, District Policing Partnerships and the Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland. This section reviews the knowledge and experience of the NIPB and the DPPs, the next section focuses on OPONI.

7.1 Awareness of the NIPB – Survey findings

Overall, a quarter of respondents (25%) said that they had heard of the NIPB (compared with 82% of respondents in the NIPB module of the April 2005 Omnibus Survey). Those aged 26 and over and those who were permanent UK residents were more likely to have heard of the NIPB. Those aged between 51 and 60 were most likely to have heard of the NIPB (43%). Again, awareness was significantly lower in those respondents whose levels of fluency in spoken and written English was low. The largest proportion of respondents (45%) who had heard of the NIPB had done so on television (Table 7.1).

Table 7.1: Means by which respondents had heard of NIPB

Means	Number	%
On television	59	45%
In a newspaper or magazine	40	31%
On the radio	30	23%
On a leaflet or poster	25	19%
From friends or family	24	18%
Through work	24	18%
Through a community group	22	17%
By word of mouth	14	11%
Through school/college/university	4	3%
Other	2	1%

(Note: Percentages add to more than 100% because of multiple responses)

The largest proportions of respondents thought that the NIPB's major roles are to improve policing (48%), to set policing priorities (44%) and to inform the public about policing issues (38%; see Table 7.2). Just 24% of respondents who had heard of the NIPB knew of its actual role, which is to hold the Chief Constable to account. Some misconceptions were also apparent, however, as 18% of respondents thought that the NIPB tells the police what to do and 19% thought that it investigates complaints against the police. Finally, 23% of respondents said they didn't know what the NIPB's role is.

Table 7.2: Respondents' knowledge of the role of the NIPB

Role of the NIPB	Number	% of respondents heard of the NIPB	% of all respondents
Improve policing	62	48%	11%
Set policing priorities	57	44%	10%
Inform public about policing issues	49	38%	9%
Set policing targets	45	35%	8%
Enquire into police policies	35	27%	6%
Hold Chief Constable to account	31	24%	6%
Investigate complaints against the police by the public	25	19%	5%
Tell the police what to do	23	18%	4%
Control police spending	14	11%	3%
Tell the Chief Constable what to do	12	9%	2%
Don't know	30	23%	5%

As far as minority ethnic representation on the NIPB was concerned, the majority (63%) of those respondents who were aware of the NIPB thought that it should have more minority ethnic Members. Twelve percent thought that it didn't matter one way or the other, while 5% thought there should be the same number as now and 4% thought there should be no such representation. Sixteen percent could not make a judgement on the issue.

7.2 Perceptions of the NIPB

Respondents were asked a series of questions regarding their perceptions of the NIPB; the responses to these questions are summarised in Table 7.3. Majorities of respondents agreed that the NIPB is necessary (71%),

that it will help the police do a good job (69%), make the police more acceptable (61%) and that it can help change the police (59%). Fewer respondents were able to make an assessment of the NIPB's relationship with the minority ethnic community, with over half being unable to say whether the NIPB was racist or aware of the issues relating to the community (57% and 52% respectively). However, those respondents who were able to make a judgement on these issues were more likely to disagree that the NIPB is racist than to agree (37% compared to 6%), and to agree that it is aware of issues relating to the minority ethnic community than to disagree (36% compared to 12%).

Table 7.3: Respondents' perceptions of the NIPB

Perceptions of the NIPB	% of responses		
	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
NIPB is impartial	36%	9%	55%
NIPB will help the police do a good job	69%	4%	26%
NIPB is independent of the police	44%	13%	43%
NIPB has made policing more effective	39%	7%	54%
NIPB is necessary	71%	3%	26%
NIPB can help change the police	59%	3%	38%
NIPB can help make the police more acceptable	61%	6%	33%
NIPB is racist	6%	37%	57%
NIPB is aware of issues relating to the minority ethnic community	36%	12%	52%

7.3 Awareness of the District Policing Partnerships

Overall, just 15% of respondents said that they had heard of DPPs (compared with 58% of respondents in the NIPB module of the April 2005 Omnibus Survey). Respondents aged between 26 and 50 and those who were permanent UK residents were more likely to have heard of the DPPs than were younger respondents and those in other residential categories. Again, predictably, awareness was significantly lower in those respondents whose levels of fluency in spoken and written English were low. The largest proportion of respondents (40%) who had heard of the DPPs had done so through reading about them in newspapers (Table 7.4).

Table 7.4: Methods by which respondents had heard of DPPs

Method	Number	%
In a newspaper or magazine	32	40%
On television	29	36%
On a leaflet or poster	22	27%
Through work	22	27%
On the radio	21	26%
Through a community group	15	19%
From friends or family	14	17%
By word of mouth	10	12%
Through school/college/university	2	2%
Other	1	1%

(Note: Percentages add to more than 100% because of multiple responses)

The majority of respondents (56%) thought that one of the major roles of the DPPs is to improve local policing (see Table 7.5), and large proportions thought that they also oversee policing at a local level (44%) and set local policing priorities (41%). Again there were some misconceptions about the DPP's role; for example, 15% of respondents thought that they investigate complaints against the police. Finally, 19% of respondents said they did not know what the DPPs' role is.

Table 7.5: Respondents' knowledge of the role of the DPPs

Role of the DPPs	Number	% of respondents heard of the DPPs	% of all respondents
Improve local policing	46	56%	8%
Oversee policing at a local level	36	44%	7%
Set local policing priorities	34	41%	6%
Inform public about local policing issues	28	34%	6%
Enquire into local police policies	25	30%	5%
Set local policing targets	24	29%	4%
Investigate complaints against police	12	15%	2%
Tell District Commander what to do	7	8%	1%
Tell the local police what to do	7	8%	1%
Other	2	2%	1%
Don't know	16	19%	3%

As far as minority ethnic representation on the DPPs was concerned, 67% of those respondents who were aware of the DPPs thought that they should have more minority ethnic Members. Twelve percent thought that it didn't matter one way or the other, while 7% thought there should be the same number as now and 1% thought there should be no such representation. Thirteen percent could not make a judgement on the issue.

7.4 Perceptions of the DPPs

Respondents were asked a series of questions regarding their perceptions of the DPPs, and the responses to these questions are summarised in Table 7.6. Majorities of respondents agreed that the DPPs are necessary (76%), that they will help the police do a good job (71%), make the police more acceptable (60%), help change the police (60%), and that they are representative of the local community (52%, compared with 39% of respondents in the DPP Public Consultation Survey May 2004 who were very confident/confident that the membership of their local DPP reflected the local area). Fewer respondents were able to make an assessment of the DPPs' relationships with the minority ethnic community, with over half being unable to say whether the DPPs were racist or aware of the issues relating to the community (56% and 49% respectively). However, those respondents who were able to make a judgement on these issues were more likely to disagree that the DPPs are racist than to agree (41% compared to 3%), and to agree that they are aware of issues relating to the minority ethnic community than to disagree (31% compared to 21%).

Table 7.6: Respondents' perceptions of the DPPs

Perceptions of the DPPs	% of responses		
	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
DPPs are impartial	41%	12%	47%
DPPs will help the police do a good job	71%	7%	22%
DPPs are independent of the police	44%	16%	40%
DPPs have made policing more effective	45%	7%	48%
DPPs are representative of their local communities	52%	15%	33%
DPPs are necessary	76%	5%	18%
DPPs can help change the police	60%	8%	32%
DPPs can help make the police more acceptable	60%	7%	33%
DPPs are racist	3%	41%	56%
DPPs are aware of issues relating to the minority ethnic community	31%	21%	49%

7.5 Knowledge of the NIPB and the DPPs - Focus group findings

'People don't realise that Black People are here to contribute to society, not to take away from it.' (Nigerian, Male, Belfast)

There was little knowledge of or interest in the role of the NIPB or the DPPs among any of the participants in the focus groups. Even when some information was provided by the researchers there was little interest in these organisations that hold the PSNI to account, nor in considering the possibility of, for example, applying for positions on one of the DPPs. Some migrant workers on short-term permits were surprised by the suggestion that they would even consider applying:

'Why would I want to spend my time this way? I am here for making money before I return to College. I have house and family back home. I am here to make as much overtime as I can.' (Ukrainian, Male, Ballymena)

One Asylum seeker who had been in Northern Ireland for three years had been encouraged by umbrella organisations to attend a number of meetings with the police:

'I go to show I am a good citizen, a volunteer – but it doesn't really do me any benefit.' (Asylum Seeker, Male, Belfast)

Some who had heard of the NIPB and the DPPs considered their programme of contacting and engaging with people from minority communities to be shortsighted:

'Police make the mistake of expecting the community to be interested in them, but they have to not expect us to come to them but to go out instead to meet people.' (Indian, Male, Doctor)

Others who voiced an interest in contributing to civic society thought that applying to be a member of a DPP would not appeal to members of minority communities as very often those communities were not based around geographical areas. Consequently, individuals were not in a strong position to provide a voice from within a particular group:

'There's no point at the moment – but maybe after the review of public administration and the council boundaries are redrawn, people might be more responsive. But it's just not something that rings any bells for me.' (Jewish, Female, North Down)

A fear of being seen to be partisan and to engage in matters that might cause problems in areas where people lived was also cited:

'We have difficulties in the area about police matters. So I am not sure what the best approach is, but we do need to find a way through this if we want to stay in Northern Ireland and bring our children up here.' (Filipino, Female, Belfast)

Summary

A quarter of survey respondents said they had heard of the NIPB. Awareness was higher among those who were older and those who were permanent UK residents and lower among those whose English was poor. Of those who had heard of the NIPB, the majority had heard via the television.

The majority thought that one of the NIPB's major roles is to improve policing, and large proportions thought that it also sets policing priorities and informs the public about policing issues. Almost a quarter of respondents were not aware of what the role of the NIPB actually is.

The majority of those who were aware of the NIPB thought that it should have more minority ethnic members. Over half of respondents were unable to say whether the Board were racist or aware of issues relating to BME groups. However, those who were able to make a judgement were more likely to disagree that the Board was racist and more likely to feel that the Board was aware of BME issues.

Only fifteen percent of survey respondents had heard of District Policing Partnerships (DPPs). Awareness was higher among older respondents and those who were permanent UK residents and lower among those whose standard of English was poor. Most respondents with a level of awareness knew about DPPs through the media.

Most respondents thought that one of the major roles of DPPs is to improve local policing and large proportions thought that DPPs oversee policing at a local level and set local policing priorities. Again there were some misconceptions about the role of DPPs with a small minority thinking that they investigate complaints against the police.

Perceptions of the DPPs were favourable with the majority thinking they were necessary and that they could help the police to do a good job. Respondents found it harder to comment on the relationship DPPs have

with the minority ethnic community, with around half unable to say whether or not DPPs are racist and whether they are aware of issues relating to the minority ethnic community. The majority of respondents who were aware of DPPs thought they should have more members from ethnic minorities.

Among participants in the focus groups there was a lack of interest in the accountability organisations. Few had experiences or knowledge of the NIPB and none had considered becoming a member of a DPP even if they had heard of them. For the majority of migrant workers, aiming to stay in Northern Ireland for finite periods, their motivation was to work and they did not have sufficient time or inclination to commit their spare time to engaging with statutory services on anything other than a needs-must basis. For others, their lack of interest was grounded in a lack of confidence. For those who demonstrated any knowledge of the DPPs, it appeared that not belonging to a geographically based community of interest affected individuals' ability or confidence to put themselves forward for membership of such organisations.

8. Police Accountability: the Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland

8.1 Awareness of the Police Ombudsman – Survey findings

Overall, a quarter of respondents (25%) said that they had heard of the Police Ombudsman (compared with 86% of respondents in the OPONI module of the March 2005 Omnibus Survey). The two most significant factors related to awareness were respondents' age and residential status. Thus awareness was significantly higher among respondents aged between 36 and 65, with about 40% having heard of the Police Ombudsman, compared to 11% of those aged under 26. Similarly, respondents who were permanent UK residents were over twice as likely to have heard of the Police Ombudsman than were respondents in any other residential category. Perhaps predictably, awareness was significantly lower in those respondents whose levels of fluency in spoken and written English was low. Most respondents (53%) who had heard of the Police Ombudsman had done so on television (see Table 8.1).

Table 8.1: Means by which respondents had heard of OPONI

Means	Number	%
On television	70	53%
In a newspaper or magazine	54	41%
On the radio	33	25%
From friends or family	28	21%
Through work	26	20%
On a leaflet or poster	23	17%
Through a community group	22	17%
By word of mouth	12	9%
Other	7	5%
Attended a presentation	5	4%
Through school/college/university	3	2%

(Note: Percentages add to more than 100% because of multiple responses)

Most respondents knew that one of the major roles of the Police Ombudsman is to investigate complaints against the police made by members of the public (78% of those respondents who had heard of the Police Ombudsman, equivalent to 19% of all respondents; (see Table 8.2). Large proportions thought that the Police Ombudsman would help to improve policing (38%) and report findings to the public (32%). However, almost a quarter of respondents (24%) mistakenly thought that one of the roles of the Police Ombudsman is to investigate complaints against the police made by other police officers.

Table 8.2: Respondents’ knowledge of the role of the Police Ombudsman

Role of the Police Ombudsman	Number	% of respondents heard of the PO	% of all respondents
Investigate complaints against the police made by the public	102	78%	19%
Improve policing	50	38%	9%
Report findings to the public	42	32%	8%
Investigate complaints against the police by other police officers	32	24%	6%
Enquire into police policies	21	16%	4%
Manage internal discipline within the police	20	15%	4%
Punish guilty police officers	17	13%	3%
Prosecute police officers	15	11%	3%
Protect the police from investigation	3	2%	1%
Tell the Chief Constable what to do	3	2%	1%
Other	1	1%	0%
Don't know	12	9%	2%

(Note: Percentages add to more than 100% because of multiple responses)

Only seven respondents had ever contacted OPONI, and five of these said they were happy with the service they had received. The unhappiness expressed by the two remaining respondents was related to perceived slowness in service and unhelpfulness of staff.

8.2 Perceptions of OPONI

Respondents were asked a series of 11 questions regarding their perceptions of OPONI. The responses to these questions are summarised in Table 8.3. It can be seen that clear majorities thought that OPONI is necessary (76%), can help change the police (59%), help the police do a good job (59%) and make the police more acceptable (51%). Majorities

also thought that OPONI is independent of the police (54%) and that it treats the public and the police equally (52%). Few respondents were able to make an assessment of OPONI's relationship with the minority ethnic community, with 58% being unable to say whether OPONI was aware of the issues relating to it. However, those respondents who did make a judgement were more likely to agree that OPONI was aware of these issues than to disagree (26% compared to 16%). Only 4% of respondents thought that OPONI was racist, with 44% disagreeing.

Table 8.3: Respondents' perceptions of OPONI

Perceptions of OPONI	% of responses		
	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
OPONI is impartial	36%	6%	58%
OPONI will help the police do a good job	59%	9%	32%
OPONI is independent of the police	54%	9%	37%
OPONI treats the public and the police equally	52%	8%	40%
OPONI treats the person complaining fairly	48%	3%	48%
OPONI treats the police officer being investigated fairly	42%	1%	57%
OPONI is necessary	76%	3%	21%
OPONI can help change the police	59%	4%	37%
OPONI can help make the police more acceptable	51%	4%	46%
OPONI is racist	4%	44%	51%
OPONI is aware of issues relating to the minority ethnic community	26%	16%	58%

8.3 Complaining about the police

Respondents were asked where they would go first of all if they wanted to make a complaint against the police. Table 8.4 shows that the largest proportion (25%) said they would go to their local police station. Nine percent said they would go to OPONI; this represents 36% of those respondents who said they were aware of OPONI. However, it should be noted that 25% of respondents said that they wouldn't know where to go to make a complaint.

Table 8.4: Where respondents would go to make a complaint against the police

Location	Number	%
Local police station	127	25%
Police Ombudsman	48	9%
Citizen's Advice Bureau	47	9%
Minority ethnic representative group	32	6%
The Chief Constable	31	6%
Solicitor	25	5%
Community Advice centre	18	4%
Policing Board	12	2%
School teacher/Youth worker	8	2%
Priest/minister/religious leader	6	1%
MP/MLA/Councillor	4	1%
Social worker	3	1%
Political party office	2	0%
Other	16	3%
Don't know	125	25%
Total	504	100%

8.4 Knowledge and experience of the Police Ombudsman - Focus group findings

Most participants in the focus groups did not have any knowledge of the work or role of the Police Ombudsman:

'One time my engine stopped at 4 am in the morning. My baby was one year old and wouldn't sleep so I was driving her round. The police opened the window at the police station, but would not let me phone. He said to go to a phone box. In the end a security man coming home from work helped me and my baby and took us home. I didn't know I could make a complaint to anyone.' (Vietnamese, Female, Craigavon)

For many however, this was not perhaps surprising, as they had had no interaction with the police. However, there were those who had heard of the Ombudsman but were reluctant to report officers who behaved unacceptably:

'Traveller people would just rather let it go. I swear to God they'd harass you back again and again. Nobody wants to get too friendly with the police – and if you go complaining about them they're never off your back.' (Irish Traveller, Female, Belfast)

'I didn't report police because do I know anybody here? Enemies I already have in the community with those neighbours who attack me – do I want enemies with police too?' (Portuguese, Male, Bangor)

'One of our support group had no English. He was involved in a fight after the police were called to a party and was taken to a police station. The police called an interpreter from their personal mobile not using the proper procedure and the translator told the man to agree with everything the police said 'to make it easy on himself.' No information was given to him about a lawyer, no police doctor saw him and he was sent to Antrim Hospital. The minority liaison officer was informed but not present. He was afraid that he would be jailed so he pleads guilty and did not think that he could complain because nobody would believe him.' (Romanian, Female Support Worker, Ballymena)

A perceived targeting of Irish Travellers by the Criminal Assets Bureau as well as by the PSNI was seen to impact on their confidence and some Irish Travellers were unclear of the limitations of the Police Ombudsman's reach:

'When I was in Germany, the cops from the Criminal Assets had my daughters strip searched, and they went through my wife's underwear drawers. No local cops would do that – but who can you complain to – does the Ombudsman deal with them or not?' (Irish Traveller, Male, Armagh)

Concern was also voiced that OPONI would back up the PSNI in disputed cases:

'If you do disagree with police no one will back you up. They can charge me for wasting their time. But I can't charge them for wasting my time – and if I report them for this, I am wasting even more time on them for no purpose.' (Irish Traveller, Male, Coalisland)

This issue of wasting time by reporting PSNI and how productive this would be was reflected in a number of groups:

'For Chinese Community, time is money, we can't wait around. First thing they say to you when you go to do a translation is 'You'll only be here for 1/2 an hour' – 3 hours later you're still waiting.' (Chinese, Female, Derry Londonderry)

Summary

A quarter of survey respondents said they had heard of the Police Ombudsman, although awareness was significantly higher among older respondents and those who were permanent UK residents. Awareness was lower among those whose standard of English was poor and most respondents had heard of the Police Ombudsman via the television. Most respondents knew that one of the major roles of OPONI is to investigate complaints against the police made by members of the public.

Perceptions of OPONI were favourable with a clear majority thinking that OPONI is necessary. A majority of respondents also felt that OPONI could help change the police, help the police do a good job and make the police more acceptable. Few respondents were able to say whether OPONI was aware of issues relating to the minority ethnic community, although only 4% of respondents thought the Office was racist.

A quarter of respondents said they would not know where to go if they wanted to make a complaint against the police and of those who stated where they would go in the first instance, the majority said they would go to their local police station (25%), with OPONI and the Citizen's Advice Bureau being the next most favoured options with 9% of respondents respectively. Only seven respondents had contacted OPONI and five of these respondents were happy with the service they had received.

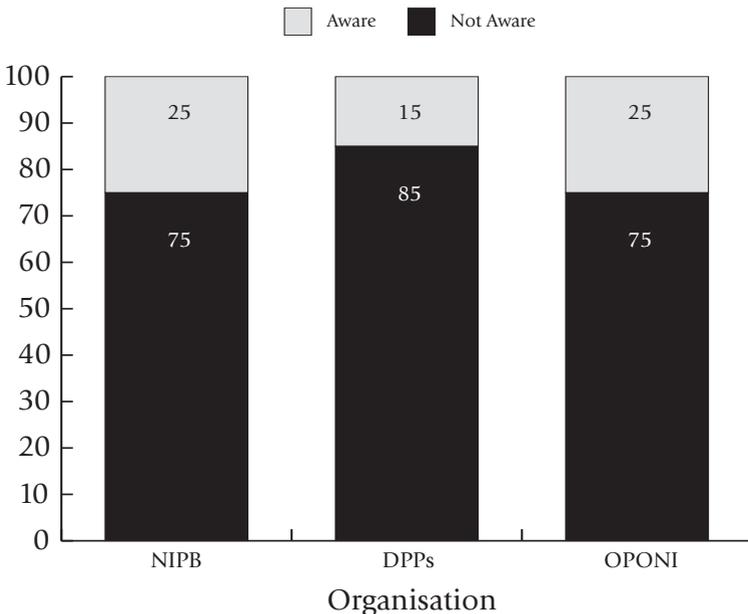
There was a lack of interest shown about the OPONI among participants in the focus groups. For many this was due to a lack of confidence in OPONI that their complaint would be dealt with impartially. A fear of retaliation in the form of harassment by the PSNI if they were to complain about them was also expressed by Irish Travellers. For others, a lack of knowledge about the complaints procedure, fear of antagonising authority and a feeling of having no support in an unfamiliar country led them to dismiss the option of using the services of OPONI. Some simply saw it as a waste of their time, with no guarantee that there would be a productive outcome.

This illustrates the need for OPONI to raise its public profile through greater engagement with the BME population.

9. A comparison of the organisations forming part of the new policing arrangements in Northern Ireland

Levels of awareness for the NIPB and OPONI were similar with a quarter of respondents having heard of both organisations (see Figure 9.1). However, there was a lower level of awareness among the minority ethnic community in relation to DPPs, with just 15% of respondents being aware of them.

Figure 9.1: Respondents' awareness of NIPB, DPPs and OPONI



A comparison of respondents' attitudes to the three organisations about which they were questioned reveals that generally they received similar levels of positive responses (see Figures 9.2 and 9.3).

Figure 9.2: Respondents' attitudes to the NIPB, DPPs and OPONI

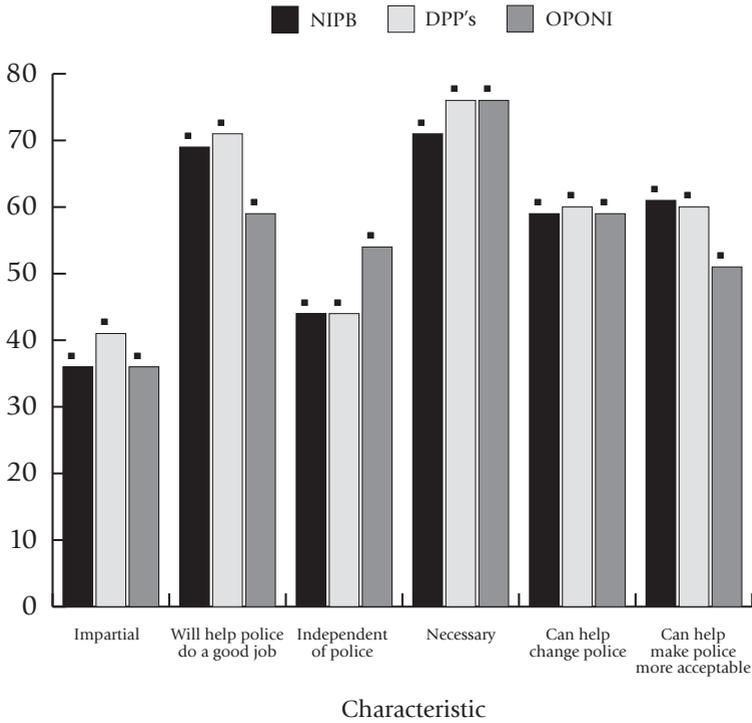
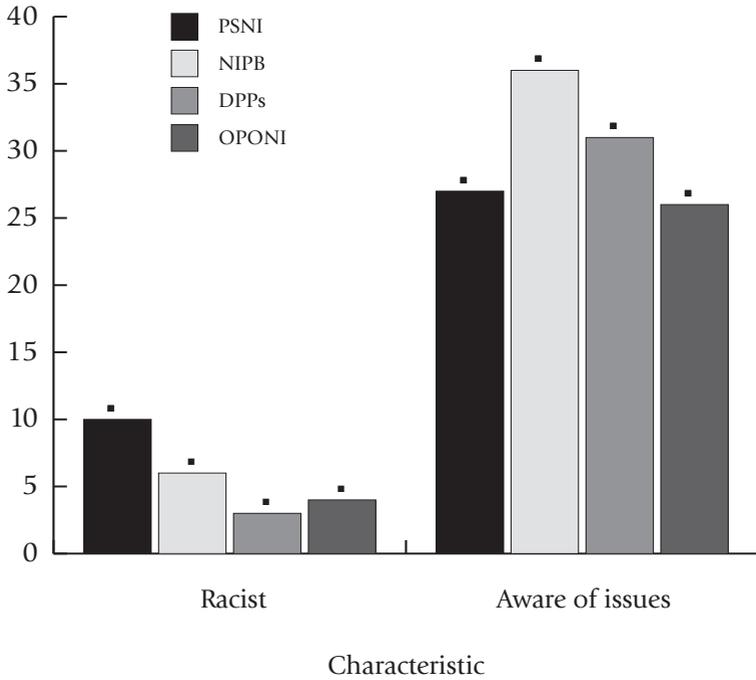


Figure 9.3: Respondents' perceptions of the attitudes of the PSNI, NIPB, DPPs and OPONI



Conclusion

The PSNI, NIPB, DPPs and OPONI came into existence as a result of the introduction of the new policing arrangements in Northern Ireland. All of these organisations have begun to conduct outreach with and provide support services to those individuals from minority ethnic communities and minority faiths.

Within the PSNI, there is currently a variety of good practice measures being developed and supported by particular individuals in a number of District Command Units throughout Northern Ireland. These are particularly evident in relation to community policing, liaison and outreach with members of minority ethnic communities, whether these are communities of long-standing citizens from Northern Ireland, or more recent migrants. However, all DCUs could benefit from a more consistent approach to embedding anti-racist, anti-discrimination and culturally diverse practices within their workforce and daily procedures. Therefore it is recommended that the development of a number of protocols and procedures would ensure that anti-racist messages are being mainstreamed and reinforced within each DCU and in all associated policing organisations. This is particularly pertinent in light of the recent and rapid increase in the reporting of racist 'hate crime'.

Those responsible for training and recruitment sections within all policing organisations have identified a number of deficiencies within their service provision to their own staff and to individuals and communities representing the interests of members of minority ethnic and minority faith-based organisations. Attempts are being made to address these deficits with the implementation of more rigorous programmes and levels of accountability, but these practices and procedures need to be closely monitored.

The needs, expectations and readiness to engage with those from policing organisations varies for all individuals, and particularly so for those from minority ethnic communities. Their willingness and attitude can be influenced by a number of factors including (but not exclusively) individuals' age, gender, previous experiences of policing, residential status, length and proposed length of stay in Northern Ireland, language and literacy skills and networks of contacts. According to the findings of this research, policing organisations are understood and expected to build on their responsibility to develop good relations with those most vulnerable to marginalisation as well as to foster current confidences and trusts in the service of those whose ethnicity or faith renders them a statistical minority.

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Appendix 1:

Questionnaire: minority ethnic communities and the police

This is a survey designed to assess the attitudes of individuals from the minority ethnic communities towards the Police Service for Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Policing Board, the District Policing Partnerships and the Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland. Please read the following questions carefully and answer according to your own views and experiences. The survey has been designed by the Institute for Conflict Research and is funded by NIPB and OPONI. Please note that all your answers to these questions will be treated as confidential.

Section A: Your Personal details

1. How old are you?

<input type="checkbox"/> Under 18	<input type="checkbox"/> 18-25	<input type="checkbox"/> 26-35
<input type="checkbox"/> 36-50	<input type="checkbox"/> 51-65	<input type="checkbox"/> Over 65

2. Are you:

<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Female
-------------------------------	---------------------------------

3. Are you a parent, a step-parent or a co-parent?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
------------------------------	-----------------------------

4. Where do you live? – please write in the first half of your postcode (for example BT95): BT

5. In terms of your residential status, are you: (tick one)

<input type="checkbox"/> Permanent UK resident
<input type="checkbox"/> Resident of another EU country
<input type="checkbox"/> Resident of a non-EU country
<input type="checkbox"/> Migrant worker on a long-term work permit
<input type="checkbox"/> Migrant worker on a short-term work permit
<input type="checkbox"/> Asylum seeker
<input type="checkbox"/> Refugee

- Other (please state) _____
- 6. In terms of your religion, are you: (tick one)
 - Baha'i
 - Buddhist
 - Catholic
 - Hindu
 - Jewish
 - Muslim
 - Orthodox (Greek/Russian/Armenian)
 - Protestant
 - Other Christian
 - Sikh
 - Other (please state) _____
 - None
- 7. How do you perceive your ethnic background: (tick one)
 - Arabic (North African/Saudi/Gulf States, UAE)
 - Black African
 - Black Caribbean
 - Chinese
 - Far-East (Malay, Japanese, Thai, Filipino)
 - Indian/Pakistani/Bangladeshi/Sri Lankan
 - Irish Traveller
 - Latin American
 - Near-East (Turkish, Syrian, Iranian, Israeli)
 - White
 - Mixed ethnic group (please state)
 - Other (please state)
- 8. In which country were you born? – please write in
.....
- 9. What is your citizenship? – please write in
.....

10. In terms of your ability to speak English, are you: (tick one)
- Able to speak English fluently
 - Able to speak English satisfactorily
 - Able to speak English only poorly
 - Not able to speak English at all
11. In terms of your ability to read English, are you: (tick one)
- Able to read English fluently
 - Able to read English satisfactorily
 - Able to read English only poorly
 - Not able to read English at all
12. Are you currently: (tick one)
- At school
 - At college (full-time)
 - At university (full-time)
 - Working (full- or part-time)
 - In full time training
 - Unemployed
 - Full-time carer for family/other dependents
 - Unable to work because of illness
 - Retired
 - Other (please state)
13. Have you been the victim of a crime in the past 12 months?
- Yes (now go to Question 14)
 - No (now go to Question 18)
14. Do you think that any of the crime that you've been a victim of in the last 12 months was motivated by racism?
- Yes
 - No
 - Don't know
15. Did you report the crime to the police? (If you've been the victim of more than one crime, please think about the most recent one)
- Yes (now go to Question 16)
 - No (now go to Question 17)

16. Overall, how satisfied were you with how the police dealt with the crime?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Can't say

Now go to Question 18

17. Why didn't you report this crime to the police? (tick all that apply)

- You thought the police would ignore you because of your ethnic origin
- You thought the police would be hostile to you because of your ethnic origin
- You felt the police couldn't help
- Because of possible language difficulties
- You felt the police wouldn't be interested
- You were scared that the police would arrest/deport you
- You didn't know how to report it
- You reported the incident to some other person or agency
- You'd had poor experience of the police previously
- Other people in your community discouraged you
- You don't support the current policing system here
- You were scared of provoking reprisal
- It was a private/personal/family matter
- You were too upset
- The incident was too trivial
- Other (please state)

18. Have you had any contact with the police in the past 12 months?

- Yes (now go to Question 19)
- No (now go to Question 20)

19. What form did this contact take? (tick all that apply)
- You reported a crime
 - You witnessed a crime
 - You were required to produce your driving documents
 - You were accused of committing a crime
 - You were stopped and questioned
 - You were asked to move on
 - You asked for some information
 - You were involved in a road traffic accident
 - You had to register with or report to the police
 - You are or are related to a police officer
 - You work for or with the police
 - Other (please state)
20. Have you ever experienced any problems with the police?
- Yes (now go to Question 21)
 - No (now go to Question 26)
21. When did you last experience these problems with the police?
- Within the last year
 - Between 1 and 3 years ago
 - Between 3 and 5 years ago
 - More than 5 years ago
 - Don't know / can't remember
22. What types of problems have you experienced with the police? (tick all that apply)
- The police's service was unsatisfactory
 - The police refused to help you
 - The police didn't follow up a call you made
 - The police didn't keep you informed about developments
 - The police didn't take you seriously
 - An officer was rude or impolite to you
 - The police harassed you
 - The police did not follow proper procedures
 - The police stopped or searched you without reason
 - Problems caused by language barrier
 - Lack of translated material

- Lack of interpreters
- The police discriminated against you due to your ethnic origin
- The police discriminated against you due to your sexual orientation
- The police discriminated against you on other grounds (age/gender/disability)
- An officer used homophobic language to you
- An officer used sectarian language to you
- An officer used racist language to you
- An officer used sexist language to you
- The police wrongly accused you of misbehaviour
- The police behaved violently to you
- The police did not carry out their duty properly
- The police searched your house without reason
- The police took an item of your property
- Other (please state) _____

23. Did you make a complaint about any of these incidents?

- Yes (now go to Question 24)
- No (now go to Question 25)

24. Who did you go to first about your complaint? (If you've made more than one complaint, please describe the most recent)

- Chief Constable
- Citizen's Advice Bureau
- Community Advice centre
- Independent Commission for Police Complaints
- Ethnic minority representative group
- Local police station
- Local priest/minister/religious leader
- MP/MLA/Councillor
- Police Ombudsman
- Policing Board
- Political party office
- School teacher/Youth worker
- Social worker
- Solicitor
- Other (please state)

Now go to Question 26

25. If you've had problems with the police but didn't complain, why didn't you do so? (tick all that apply)

- You thought nothing would be done about it
- The incident wasn't serious enough
- You couldn't be bothered
- You were scared of police reprisals
- You didn't want to make trouble for the police
- You didn't know how to complain
- Other people in your community discouraged you
- You don't support the current policing system here
- You didn't know who to complain to
- You thought your complaint would be disregarded because of your ethnic origin
- Other (please state)

26. Overall, do you think the police:

Are honest Yes No Don't know

Are professional Yes No Don't know

Are helpful Yes No Don't know

Are fair Yes No Don't know

Are there for your protection
 Yes No Don't know

Are acceptable Yes No Don't know

Have improved since the RUC became the PSNI
 Yes No Don't know

Are racist Yes No Don't know

Are aware of issues relating to minority ethnic communities
 Yes No Don't know

27. Please tick 3 priority activities that you think the police should be concentrating on: (tick three only)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assaults | <input type="checkbox"/> Community education/training |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Car crime | <input type="checkbox"/> Community safety |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drug dealing | <input type="checkbox"/> Crime prevention |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drug use | <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic violence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Muggings | <input type="checkbox"/> Homophobic crime |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Burglary | <input type="checkbox"/> Organised crime/racketeering |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public disorder | <input type="checkbox"/> Paramilitary activity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Racist crime | <input type="checkbox"/> Road traffic policing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sectarian crime | <input type="checkbox"/> Trans-phobic crime |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Responding promptly to emergencies | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Religious hate crime (e.g. Islamophobic) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please state) | |

28. Have you heard of the Police Ombudsman?

- Yes (now go to Question 29)
- No (now go to Question 35)

29. How have you heard of the Police Ombudsman? (tick all that apply)

- From friends or family
- Through a community group
- On a leaflet or poster
- In a newspaper or magazine
- On the radio
- Through school/college/university
- On television
- By word of mouth
- Through work
- You attended a presentation
- Other (please state)

30. What do you think the role of the Police Ombudsman is? (tick all that apply)

- To investigate complaints against the police made by members of the public
- To investigate complaints against the police made by other police officers

- To protect the police from investigation
- To prosecute police officers
- To punish guilty police officers
- To report findings to the public
- To manage internal discipline within the police
- To tell the Chief Constable what to do
- To enquire into police policies
- To improve policing
- Other (please state)
- Don't know

31. Have you ever contacted the Police Ombudsman's Office?

- Yes (now go to Question 32)
- No (now go to Question 34)

32. Were you happy with the service you received when you contacted the Police Ombudsman's Office?

- Yes (now go to Question 34)
- No (now go to Question 33)

33. Why were you not happy with the service you received? (tick all that apply)

- The Office was slow to respond
- The process took a long time
- The Office didn't take your complaint seriously
- Problems caused by language barrier
- Lack of translated material
- Lack of interpreters
- You didn't hear anything after making your complaint
- The Office didn't follow up your complaint
- The information you asked for was not supplied
- Your complaint was dismissed
- The Office staff weren't helpful
- The Office staff displayed racist attitudes
- Other (please state)

34. Overall, do you think the Police Ombudsman's Office:

Is impartial Yes No Don't know

Will help the police do a good job
 Yes No Don't know

Is independent of the police
 Yes No Don't know

Treats the public and the police equally
 Yes No Don't know

Treats the person complaining fairly
 Yes No Don't know

Treats the police officer being investigated fairly
 Yes No Don't know

Is necessary Yes No Don't know

Can help change the police
 Yes No Don't know

Can help make the police more acceptable
 Yes No Don't know

Is racist Yes No Don't know

Is aware of issues relating to minority ethnic communities
 Yes No Don't know

35. If you wanted to make a complaint against the police, where would be the first place you would go to do this? (tick one)

- To the Chief Constable
- To a Citizen's Advice Bureau
- To a Community Advice centre
- To an ethnic minority representative group
- To your local police station
- To your local priest/minister/religious leader

- To your MP/MLA/Councillor
 - To the Police Ombudsman
 - To the Policing Board
 - To a Political Party
 - To a school teacher/Youth worker
 - To a social worker
 - To a solicitor
 - Don't know
 - Somewhere else (please state)
-

36. Have you heard of the Northern Ireland Policing Board?

- Yes (now go to Question 37)
- No (now go to Question 41)

37. How have you heard of the Policing Board? (tick all that apply)

- From friends or family
- Through a community group
- On a leaflet or poster
- In a newspaper or magazine
- On the radio
- Through school/college/university
- On television
- By word of mouth
- Through work
- Other (please state)

38. What do you think the role of the Policing Board is? (tick all that apply)

- To tell the police what to do
- To tell the Chief Constable what to do
- To set policing priorities
- To set policing targets
- To control police spending
- To oversee policing by holding the Chief Constable to account
- To investigate complaints against the police
- To inform the public about policing issues
- To enquire into police policies

- To improve policing
- Other (please state) _____
- Don't know

39. 1 of the 19 Members of the Board is from a minority ethnic community. Do you think that there should be:

- More Members from minority ethnic communities
- The same number as there is now
- Fewer Members from minority ethnic communities
- Doesn't matter one way or the other
- Don't know

40. Overall, do you think the Policing Board:

Is impartial Yes No Don't know

Will help the police do a good job
 Yes No Don't know

Is independent of the police
 Yes No Don't know

Has made policing more effective
 Yes No Don't know

Is necessary Yes No Don't know

Can help change the police
 Yes No Don't know

Can help make the police more acceptable
 Yes No Don't know

Is racist Yes No Don't know

Is aware of issues relating to minority ethnic communities
 Yes No Don't know

41. Have you heard of District Policing Partnerships (DPPs)?
- Yes (now go to Question 42)
 - No (now go to Question 46)
42. How have you heard of the DPPs? (tick all that apply)
- From friends or family
 - Through a community group
 - On a leaflet or poster
 - In a newspaper or magazine
 - On the radio
 - Through school/college/university
 - On television
 - By word of mouth
 - Through work
 - Other (please state) _____
43. What do you think the role of the DPPs is? (tick all that apply)
- To tell the local police what to do
 - To tell the District Commander what to do
 - To oversee policing at a local level
 - To set local policing priorities
 - To set local policing targets
 - To investigate complaints against the police
 - To inform the public about local policing issues
 - To enquire into local police policies
 - To improve local policing
 - Other (please state) _____
 - Don't know
44. There are 26 DPPs with 455 Members. 3 of these 455 Members are from minority ethnic communities. Do you think that there should be:
- More Members from minority ethnic communities
 - The same number as there is now
 - Fewer Members from minority ethnic communities
 - Doesn't matter one way or the other
 - Don't know

45. Overall, do you think the DPPs:

Are impartial Yes No Don't know

Will help the police do a good job

Yes No Don't know

Are independent of the police

Yes No Don't know

Have made policing more effective

Yes No Don't know

Are representative of their local communities

Yes No Don't know

Are necessary

Yes No Don't know

Can help change the police

Yes No Don't know

Can help make the police more acceptable

Yes No Don't know

Are racist

Yes No Don't know

Are aware of issues relating to minority ethnic communities

Yes No Don't know

46. Would you consider joining the police service?

Yes (now go to Question 48)

No (now go to Q47)

47. Why wouldn't you consider joining the police service? (tick all that apply)

You wouldn't be chosen because of your ethnic origin

You wouldn't be treated well in the police because of your ethnic origin

You wouldn't be chosen because of your religion

You wouldn't be treated well in the police because of your religion

- You wouldn't be chosen because of your sexual orientation
- You wouldn't be treated well in the police because of your sexual orientation
- Your family/friends wouldn't approve
- You'd fear attack on yourself
- You'd fear attack on your family
- You wouldn't be able to maintain contact with your family and friends
- Poor pay and working conditions in the police
- You don't support the police
- Because of your age (too old or too young)
- Because of your gender
- Other (please state)

48. Would you support a member of your family joining the police service?

- Yes (the end!)
- No (now go to Question 49)

49. Why wouldn't you support a member of your family joining the police service? (tick all that apply)

- They wouldn't be chosen because of their ethnic origin
- They wouldn't be treated well in the police because of their ethnic origin
- They wouldn't be chosen because of their religion
- They wouldn't be treated well in the police because of their religion
- Their family/friends wouldn't approve
- They might be attacked
- Their family might be attacked
- They wouldn't be able to maintain contact with their family and friends
- Poor pay and working conditions in the police
- They don't support the police
- Because of their age (too old or too young)
- Because of their gender
- Other (please state)

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

The ICR is an independent research organisation and a recognised charity. If you would like more information about this project or the work of the ICR please contact us on (028) 9074 2682 or at www.conflictresearch.org.uk

Appendix 2:

Focus Groups

Organisation	Number of Participants	Gender	Community Background	Age
1 African Community Support Network NI	13 Adults 3 Children	6 M 10 F	Afro-Caribbean & Sub-Saharan African	20-40 <18
2 An Munia Tober	7 Adults	1 M 6 F	Irish Traveller	20-60
3 An Munia Tober	9 Children	9 F	Irish Traveller	14-18
4 Ballymena Inter-Ethnic Community Forum	7 Adults	6 M 1 F	Czech, Slovak, Romanian	20-60
5 Ballymena Inter-Ethnic Community Forum	5 Adults	2 M 3 F	Belarus, Romanian Slovak	20-40
6 Bangor Women's Multi-Cultural Group	12 Adults	12 F	Chinese, Ethiopian, Russian	20-60
7 Belfast Jewish Community	5 Adults	5 F	Jewish	<50
8 Chinese Welfare Association	17 Adults	5 M 12 F	Chinese	>65
9 Chinese Welfare Association	13 Adults	7 M 6 F	Chinese	20-60
10 Chrysalis Women's Centre	7 Adults	2 M 5 F	Chinese Asylum Seekers	20-70
11 Craigavon Vietnamese Club	6 Adults	4 M 2 F	Vietnamese	20-60
12 Dungannon & East Tyrone FHE College	14 Adults	8 M 6 F	East Timor, Portugal, Czech, Poland, Latvia, Slovak	20
13 Dungannon & East Tyrone FHE College	19 Adults	7 M 12 F	Guinea Bissau, Lithuania, Mozambique, Portugal, Slovak	20-30
14 Indian Community Centre	6 Adults	6 M	India (Sikh and Hindu)	>40
15 Indian Community Centre	6 Adults	4 M 2 F	India (Sikh and Hindu)	>30
16 NI Council for Refugees and Asylum Seekers	4 Adults 2 Children	3 M 3 F	Sri Lanka	16-50
17 NI Muslim Families Association	3 Adults	3 M	Muslim	>50
18 O'Kanes Factory, Ballymena	6 Adults	4 M 2 F	Czech, Romanian, Slovak	<30
19 O'Kanes Factory, Ballymena	4 Adults	2 M 2 F	Romanian, Slovak, Ukraine	<30

20 O'Kanes Factory, Ballymena	4	3 M 1 F	Romanian, Slovak	<30
21 O'Kanes Factory, Ballymena	5	1 M 4 F	Slovak, Ukraine	<30
22 Omagh Ethnic Community Support Group	12	5 M 7 F	East Timor, Ecuador, India, Iran, Philippines, Thailand	20-70
23 Royal Hospitals Trust	5	1 M 4 F	Philippines	>40
24 Sai Pak Chinese Welfare Association	5 Adults	5 F	China Mainland, Hong Kong	>20
25 Zimbabwe Support Group	8 Adults	4 M 4 F	Zimbabwe	20-50

Appendix 3:

Focus Group Discussion Themes

- Experiences of racism in Northern Ireland.

Experiences of policing:

- Non-confrontational, for example family or friends who are or have been police officers.
- Experiences of police providing advice, help or protection.
- Victim of a racist incident or crime?
- Willingness to report racist incidents/crimes to the police.
- Language/cultural barriers.
- Treatment from the police when reporting racist incidents/crimes.
- Experiences of what was perceived as inappropriate language/behaviour of police officers in relation to ethnicity/faith.
- Visibility of policing among BME community – protection or harassment?
- BME community input to training of police.
- Positive changes in policing and the BME community they would like to see.

NIPB

- Awareness of existence and role.
- Representation on NIPB.

DPPs:

- Awareness of existence and role of DPPs.
- Usefulness of DPPs.
- Applying to join a DPP.

OPONI:

- Complaining about negative policing experiences.
- Awareness of the existence and role of OPONI and willingness to use OPONI's services.
- Satisfaction with services offered by OPONI.

Policing Organisations:

- Training of staff in policing organisations.

ICR REPORTS

The following is a list of the most recent research reports that have been produced by ICR. Wherever possible reports are made available on our website, some however remain the property of the commissioning body and are retained as internal documents. A full list of reports, papers and articles can be found on our website.

Troubled Youth? Young People, Violence and Disorder in Northern Ireland. Ulf Hansson, (2005) Funded by EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation.

Interface Violence in East Belfast during 2002: The impact on residents of Short Strand and Inner East Belfast. Jonny Byrne, (2005) Funded by EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation.

Interface Issues: An Annotated Bibliography. Mary Conway and Jonny Byrne, (2005) Commissioned by Belfast Interface Project.

New Migrant Communities in East Tyrone. Jennifer Betts and Jennifer Hamilton, (2005) Commissioned by East Tyrone College of Further and Higher Education.

No Longer a Problem? Sectarian Violence in Northern Ireland. Neil Jarman, (2005) Commissioned by Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.

Ballysillan Residents' Attitudes towards Church Participation, Community Involvement and Neighbourhood Safety. Mary Conway, (2005). Ballysillan Bridgebuilding Forum and ICR.

Young People's Attitudes and Experiences of Policing, Violence and Community Safety in North Belfast. Jonny Byrne, Mary Conway and Malcolm Ostermeyer, (2005). Commissioned by the Northern Ireland Policing Board.

Young People in Community Conflict. Jonny Byrne, Jennifer Hamilton and Ulf Hansson, (2005). Commissioned by Northern Health and Social Services Board.

Sectarian and Racist Chill Factors in Armagh College. Jennifer Hamilton, (2005). Commissioned by Armagh College of Further and Higher Education.

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This report draws on the findings of a survey of 542 people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, 25 focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with representatives from key policing and black and minority ethnic community organisations across Northern Ireland. The report explores the attitudes of the black and minority ethnic population toward policing structures in Northern Ireland and their awareness of the roles of the Northern Ireland Policing Board and the Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland. The research was commissioned by the Northern Ireland Policing Board and the Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland

The report reveals that almost a third of respondents had been in contact with the police in the previous year with the main reason being to report a crime. The majority of those reporting a crime had been a victim of crime and most were satisfied with the service they had received. A quarter of all respondents said they would be prepared to consider joining the PSNI. A quarter of black and minority ethnic people surveyed were aware of the Northern Ireland Policing Board, but few were aware of its role. Similarly, a quarter of those surveyed were aware of the Office of the Police Ombudsman, but many of those who indicated they were aware of the Office still said they did not know where to go if they wanted to make a complaint about the police.



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