

**a public hearing**  
minority experiences  
in Derry Londonderry

(4 photographs)

**Templegrove Action  
Research Limited**

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Written by Dave Duggan  
Typeset by Pauline Collins, Ruth Moore and Marie Smyth  
Photographs by Allen Kennedy  
Drawing and final editing by Marie Smyth

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A REPORT OF A PUBLIC HEARING

on

THE EXPERIENCES OF MINORITIES  
IN DERRY LONDONDERRY

in

The Minor Hall, The Guildhall

February 21, 1996

Facilitator and Organiser  
DAVE DUGGAN

in collaboration with  
RUTH MOORE and PAULINE COLLINS

Project Director  
and final editor  
MARIE SMYTH

TEMPLEGROVE ACTION RESEARCH LIMITED  
Derry Londonderry

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## BACKGROUND

In September 1994, Templegrove Action Research Limited began a two year project which was to investigate aspects of the shifting population balance between Protestants and Catholics in Derry Londonderry. As part of that investigation, research was conducted in two enclave areas, Gobnascale (Catholic) and The Fountain (Protestant) in which some of the central questions were directed at uncovering the reasons why people remain living in certain areas, whilst others move out; what is the quality of life for those who remain; and how people perceive themselves on the majority-minority axis.

In terms of politics with a large "P", Derry Londonderry is a city in which the usual Northern Ireland Protestant majority/Catholic minority dynamic is invented. Discovering ways in which majorities facilitate, and respect minorities is crucial to political progress in every political arena, if the dominant-subordinate dynamic of the past is not to be replicated. It was with this in mind, that Templegrove Action Research embarked on organising a public hearing in which the diversity of minority experience in the city could be explored.

Templegrove Action Research Limited decided to proceed with the setting up of a minorities hearing in the summer of 1995. Funds were sought and secured from the Community Relations Council, Derry City Council, the Inter-Church Reconciliation Fund for Ireland and the Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust.

When administering a questionnaire in Gobnascale, one woman told us that she didn't fit in to any of the categories of Unionism or Nationalism in our questionnaire because she was profoundly deaf and therefore politically marginalised. This woman's marginalisation from what is perceived to be "real politics" - or politics with a large "P"- in Northern Ireland, was, we suspected, not unique.

Our public hearing, held, as it was, in the Guildhall at the heart of the city's political life, was our contribution to bringing the diversity of minority experience in from the margins. We propose to disseminate the material contained in this report as widely as possible. We invite voluntary, statutory and business organisations to consider its contents with a view to reviewing their policies and practices in the light of the observations and recommendations made here.

Templegrove Action Research Limited decided to employ Dave Duggan to organise the hearing, facilitate groups and individuals wishing to make submissions, and to prepare the draft report. The decision was a good one. I would like to record our thanks to Dave for his energy, commitment and skill in carrying out this work. We enjoyed having him as part of our team.

Marie Smyth,  
Project Director,  
March 1996.

## Executive Summary

On February 21, 1996, Templegrove Action Research, a community-based research organisation, held a public hearing in the Minor Hall, The Guildhall, Derry Londonderry on the experiences of minorities in the city. The hearing had been widely advertised in the local press and broadcast media. Written or verbal submissions were invited from individuals or groups who considered themselves to be a minority for whatever reason, and wished to make a public statement about their experience of life in the city. Individuals and groups who were intending to make a submission were asked to be brief, and to make recommendations for changes which they would like to see in policy and practice in the city. They were asked to respond to the question, "What kind of city do we want?"

A panel was formed to hear the submissions, composed of: Christine Bell, The Queen's University and Committee on the Administration of Justice; Mary Mulholland, Rights Now and North East Forum on Disability; and Patrick Yu, Black Perspectives Committee, Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work and Chair and a founding member of the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities.

Templegrove had employed Dave Duggan specifically to facilitate the hearing and to encourage and support groups and individuals in preparing their submissions. Initially, responses were received from a number of groups, and these groups prepared and submitted written submissions in advance of the hearing. Dave approached a number of other groups, such as the Traveller's Support Group who did not respond to the advertisement, but who were clearly within the remit of the hearing. For the most part, however, those who made a submission were defining themselves as minorities, rather than Templegrove imposing that definition on them. Support, in the form of typing and duplicating, discussion and preparation was offered to groups and individuals preparing submissions. The facility to make an anonymous submission, which would be read by Templegrove staff at the hearing, was available, and this facility was used by one or two people.

Public bodies and policy makers were asked to send observers to the hearing, and the press were notified through a series of press releases. Ensuring wheelchair access, the installation of a loop system and the securing of the services of an ISL signer were part of the process of establishing the hearing.

In all, twenty submission were presented at the hearing and the text of these submissions and the responses of the panel are contained in chapter 3 of this report. A further six submissions were received after the hearing and these are also contained in chapter 3.

The hearing was a vibrant, moving and fascinating occasion, which was well attended by the public and other interested groups. A list of those who signed the attendance sheet is included as Appendix 1. A full evaluation of the hearing is contained in chapter 4. The main value of the hearing was in gathering evidence about the situation of minorities, empowering groups and individuals to prepare and present public statements on their situation, and the emergence of the beginnings of common themes and experiences across a range of groups. Some of the experiences which were common to more than one group were: fear and a sense of threat; actual violence; lack of access to public spaces and amenities; language difficulties; lack of separate provision for separate identity groups including education; health and social services and leisure facilities; having the needs of the group ignored by policy makers and planners; and a sense of invisibility in the city. A series of recommendations arose out of the submission presented and these, together with Templegrove's recommendations, are contained in chapter

## INTRODUCTION

The multiplicity of experiences of people in our city are often submerged in the seemingly overwhelming urgency of the 'green/orange' debate. The pervasiveness and the priority given to this debate means that other concerns are ignored, other voices are often drowned in to the seemingly endless racket of the often bloody disputes about national identity. Those drowned voices are lost and unheard, and this is our loss. This loss is the loss of the wisdom, insight and experience which those voices have to offer. It is also a loss of our own ability to bear witness to the pain of marginalisation, on which no one minority group or section of the community has a monopoly.

A mechanism for addressing this loss involves widespread consultation, full inclusion and a ritualised space within which the voices can be heard. To create such a mechanism was the task undertaken by Templegrove Action Research, when it decided to develop a public hearing process for minorities in the city.

The rationale and brief of the hearing was the desire to promote social inclusion and raise awareness of the responsibilities of majorities towards minorities. This involved contact with, and seeking submissions from, members of minorities in the city. The context of the sectarian division is ever present and the question "What kind of city do we want?" was designed to provoke a wide range of views and recommendations. The process of organising the hearing and the contents of the hearing would then be written up in a comprehensive published report for wide dissemination.

The key element in this process was the use of the discourse of 'minorities' at a hearing day. This language gave permission to a diverse range of utterances to be made in public. Individuals and groups were enabled to formalise their concerns and their desires and present them in a supportive environment created by the attentive listening of the panel members and the formal process of a public hearing.

This process presented a challenge and an opportunity through which considerable empowerment occurred. Increased confidence and clarity resulted, so that the hearing day itself was a celebration of the richness and diversity of experiences of people in the city.

The Board and Staff of Templegrove Action Research are pleased to have contributed towards a richer, more complicated view of our city. This more complicated view is of concern and interest to all citizens, but particularly to those among us charged with developing policies and visions for the future.



### The international context of the work

The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 10th December 1948 opens with Article 1:

"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.  
They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act  
towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."

This declaration, coming as it did at the end of an horrific war in which mass murder on the basis of a vision of racial purity played an important part, has particular resonance. And in the years that followed further assertions and commitments have been made internationally, so that it is increasingly possible to talk about the development of a "human rights culture" in the world.

"Over the years, further and more detailed provisions have been adopted in such fields as the prevention of discrimination; the rights of women; the rights of the child; prevention of slavery, servitude and forced labour; human rights and the administration of justice; freedom of information; freedom of association; equality and non-discrimination in employment; human rights related to family, marriage and youth; social welfare, progress and development; the right to enjoy culture; human rights related to nationality, statelessness and asylum; prevention, prohibition and punishment of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including genocide, and humanitarian law in armed conflict." (1)

The process of establishing Article 1 as a reality is far from over, and while many advances have been made, much development is still called for. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights focuses on the particular rights of minorities in a number of articles.

Relevant for minorities are, for instance, the provisions on freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Universal Declaration Article 18). Members of any religious group are entitled to manifest, in public as well as in private, their religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance. Equally relevant is the right to freedom of opinion and expression (Universal Declaration Article 19), which includes the right to seek, receive and impart information through any media and regardless of frontiers. This right clearly includes the right to use one's own mother tongue and to receive and to give information in that language; on this basis, minority groups can assert their right to protect their own language. The right to freedom of assembly and association is outlined in (Universal Declaration Article 20): Minority groups are entitled to organize for the promotion of their interests and values by forming their own associations. Furthermore, everyone has the right to participate in the cultural life of the community (Universal Declaration Article 27). This implies, also, that members of minority groups have the right to carry on their particular group culture. (2)

### The local context

Specific factors in our own society impinge on the possibility of human rights. The most obvious of these is the major political and social conflict which exists in Northern Ireland and which is manifest in a variety of ways, including violence. This conflict has had the effect of reducing the

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multiplicity of experience and narrowing the political agenda to the exclusion of everything but the "national" question. This is illustrated by the question put to a local person, "Are you a Catholic Hindu or a Protestant Hindu?" (3)

It is significant that this work happened at a time when considerable political change was under way and political uncertainty prevailed. A number of large scale consultation and visioning projects are being undertaken by, for example the City Partnership Board, into which the outcomes of the minorities hearing can be fed. A seemingly new willingness to address marginalised groups has become apparent. For example the "Outline Strategy proposals 1996-1999 : Urban regeneration in Londonderry" state:

"special emphasis will be placed on involving those most socially excluded in the design and implementation of projects seeking to meet their needs" (4)

It is within this broader context, and that of Templegrove's other work on sectarian segregation, that, in late 1995, a decision was taken to undertake an investigation into the experience of minorities in the city. It was decided to employ the mechanism of consultation and a public hearing. The outcomes of this investigation are situated alongside the main outcomes of the work of Templegrove Action Research.

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## METHODOLOGY

As an action-research project Templegrove Action Research locates its work within the community, while utilising good academic practice in a manner that acknowledges research as a tool for increasing social awareness and achieving social change. In practical terms, this means that the manner in which the research is conducted, the methods used, the approach adopted - namely the process - is regarded as of great importance. Traditionally, research has focussed more on the results, -the content of what people say - or the product. Our approach is to balance these two, process and product.

A commitment to the dynamic of process and product informed the way we set about organising the hearing. It seemed clear that if we were to simply announce a public hearing in the press and turn up on the day, that many of those whom we wished to consult or hear from would not participate. The effects of years of marginalisation, difficulty in accessing resources, lack of confidence, language difficulties and many other factors could, - and do - prevent people from participating in such events. We recognised the importance of providing encouragement, support and back-up for individuals and groups who wished to make a submission. We adopted the following strategy:

- engaging with the citizens of the city through the public media, focussed mailings and personal contact;
- supporting individuals and groups who wished to participate
- seeking advice and support from relevant agencies with experience of minority issues

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- incorporating features to ensure maximum participation and accessibility, for example.....
- designing an occasion which was formal, yet welcoming; rigorous yet non-threatening
- appointing members of a panel who had relevant experience and knowledge in the field who could offer us attentive listening and generous reflection.
- to record the proceedings of the day and the submissions presented
- to make the outcomes of the day available to the public through a published report
- to seek to engage with policy makers in the city to ensure that the outcomes of the process are considered by policy makers in the city and beyond.

Our commitment to the individuals and groups who made submissions was that their views would be received in public at a formal hearing and forwarded to policy makers in the city.

We asked those submitting presentations to be concise - to produce a two page document which expressed their current concerns and their recommendations for policy or action.

### Informing Principles

Essential to the success of the whole process was the commitment to openness and inclusion. This was made evident in all public communications in which we indicated a willingness to receive submissions in any and all forms, inviting people with special needs for translation, or physical access for example, to make them known to us so that we could ensure that all such needs were met as thoroughly as possible. The advice of individuals and bodies such as the Sensory Support Service was crucial in assisting us to carry out this work.

The issue of who was defined as a "minority" was dealt with by the adoption of a strategy which allowed individuals and groups to define themselves as minorities, rather than us imposing the definition on them. When the hearing was advertised, the wording of the advertisement was broad, and the publicity aimed at attracting submissions emphasised inclusiveness, so that, without exception, those who made submissions had made a definition of themselves as a minority. This was a relatively easy task for some individuals and groups and more complex, even controversial for others.

## **A PUBLIC PLATFORM FOR MINORITY EXPERIENCES IN THIS CITY**

**Have you ever asked yourself how minorities feel about the city? Perhaps you've always had opinions about this and would welcome an opportunity to go public with these opinions. Templegrove Action Research invites you to prepare and make a formal submission.**

**A public hearing for minorities to express current concerns and to make formal recommendations to policy makers in this city is planned for the Guildhall on the 21st February 1996. The aim is that the process will focus public and civic**

attention on the concerns of minorities. The submissions will be received by a panel of distinguished individuals with a working background in this field. The outcomes of the hearing will be presented to policy and decision making bodies.

If you are interested in making a submission and require further information and assistance, contact Dave Duggan. TEL/FAX 01504 374556. If you will require translation or technical assistance on the day, contact immediately.

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The hearing created an opportunity for groups in the community to use this platform for a purposeful expression of their views and experiences. An excerpt from a press release illustrates the approach.

"as the next phase of their work on sectarian division and segregation Templegrove Action Research will hold public hearings where groups who perceive themselves to be minority groups can make presentations. This hearing will provide a platform for all minority groups to present their experiences and views about living in the city. The aim of this is to promote social inclusion by raising awareness of the responsibilities of majorities to minorities."

This open and inclusive stance presented a challenge both to the citizens of the city and to the project itself, by locating the work firmly in the contested area of rights and privileges situated in our own unique historical and political circumstances. It aimed to ensure that the work was relevant to local realities, in a way which was not prescriptive and which potentially related to other political tensions and debates.

Minorities in the city were invited to address the question, 'What kind of city do we want?' In this way we hoped to encourage the emergence of a newness in visions for the city that had not previously been heard.

### Practicalities

Using this approach, we began to organise a hearing in the Minor Hall of the Guildhall on Wednesday 21st February 1996. Phone, mail and personal contact with individuals and groups who responded to the call for submissions ultimately led to 15 submissions being presented in advance of the day, 5 submissions being presented on the day and 6 coming in after the event.

The choice of venue was significant for a number of reasons. the venue chosen had to be perceived as available to everyone. It had to have status which would add weight to the event, and it had also to be accessible to a wide variety of people with special needs. The Minor Hall of the Guildhall proved to be the most satisfactory venue available. Guildhall staff were familiar with the requirements of such an event and dealt very professionally and sensitively with the demands we placed on them.

On the advice of the Sensory Support Service, we sought an interpreter competent in Irish Sign Language for the deaf. Currently no one is employed in the city in this capacity and, though staff in the Royal National Institute for the Deaf in Belfast were very helpful, they were unable to direct us to an interpreter. Attempts to get an interpreter from Dublin were similarly unsuccessful. We were fortunate, in the end, to find Gloria McGinley, a trainee interpreter, whose work on the day was greatly appreciated by a section of the audience.

With the assistance of the Sensory Advice Centre and Lorcan McLaughlin, our sound technician, we installed a 'loop system', which enhances microphone sound through a public address system. This was used by people in the audience wearing hearing aids. We also offered translation support to a group who wished to make their submission in Irish.

The layout of the hall was designed so that the submitters were facing the three person panel.

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The public in attendance could hear presenters through a public address system, a loop system and could read presenters through the ISL signer. These arrangements marked the event as a hearing rather than a debate, and ensured the primacy of the role of listening rather than debating. This was important in order to provide an atmosphere of safety for those who were 'going public' for the first time. The formality of the setting and the process served to convey value and importance on the submissions being made.

### map of hall

Seating was designated for the public and served by the loop system, and separate seating was designated for observers from official bodies. As part of the public address system a tape-recording of the hearing was made. These were then transcribed and integrated into the body of this report.

On the advice of the Board of Directors and Advisory Group of Templegrove Action Research, a number of individuals were invited to sit on the three-person panel. It was decided to invite people from outside the city with a broad experience of issues facing minorities. This was intended to afford a wider field of reflection and broaden our vision beyond the confines of the city. We were fortunate in securing the services of three individuals who brought a wealth of diverse experience to the day, and whose participation we have greatly appreciated.

### The panelists

**Christine Bell**, who chaired the panel, is a Lecturer in Law at The Queen's University of Belfast. She is the Chairperson of the Committee for the Administration of Justice, and a well known speaker and writer on issues of human rights and women's rights both locally and internationally.

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**Mary Mulholland** is the Chairperson of the North East Forum on Disability and the treasurer of Rights Now Northern Ireland. She first got involved in the disability movement in 1990 and was an office bearer in the Motherwell District Disability Forum in her native Scotland, before moving to Northern Ireland in 1993. Mary has experience of multiple sclerosis in her immediate family, and she herself has used a wheelchair since 1992, as a result of an osteo-arthritis diagnosis made in 1968.

**Patrick Yu** is an awaiting trainee solicitor, and a former senior social worker. He has an LLB from The Queen's University of Belfast, and a Diploma in Social Work from Hong Kong Baptist College. Patrick is a member of the Black Perspectives Committee of the Central Council on the Education and Training of Social Work, UK, and founder member and Chairperson of the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities. He also sits on the management committees of both the Chinese Welfare Association and the Chinese Chamber of Commerce (Belfast). He has served as an Executive Committee member on the Justice and Peace Commission of the Hong Kong Catholic Diocese and worked as Executive Secretary to the Commission. He was also Chairperson of the Social Security Sub-Committee of the Social Security Committee of the Hong Kong Council of Social Services, and a member of the Social Welfare White Paper Committee appointed by the Secretary of Health and Social Welfare of the Hong Kong government.

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### OUTCOMES

We see the outcomes of this work as twofold: the process and the product.

#### The Process

It is typical of a project such as this that significant knowledge is gathered in the 'doing' of the work which underpins the formal outcomes in the submissions themselves. It was intended from the start that focus on the 'process' outcomes would be a valuable element of the project.

Many individuals and groups spoke about the benefits of the process in that it provided them with a challenge to formulate their thinking in a concise and focussed manner. We are left with a sense that considerable personal and group development occurred in preparatory work for the hearing. At it's most concrete, this manifested itself in the fact that a number of individuals and groups 'went public' for the first time at the hearing. Thus, one real outcome of the process is increased confidence and clarity among some of the minorities as well as the enrichment of the public discourse by the inclusion of these previously unheard voices.

We learned a great deal about the practicalities of organising such events. Issues which we

confronted were, for example the lack of wheelchair accessible restaurants in the city centre and the difficulty in obtaining a sign language interpreter.

Yet the benefits of overcoming these difficulties, and staging the hearing are plain. As a result of the hearing, the experience of minorities in the city came to wider public notice. We succeeded in getting considerable media attention in the local press and radio. Good publicity in advance of the hearing and coverage of the event meant that the submissions reached a wide audience.

At the hearing, we were struck by the energy and the excitement of the process. In situations

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where voices have been marginalised, formal and supportive settings which facilitate the hearing of voices which are rarely heard is a powerful experience.

The learning also confirmed the value of the involvement of a community based research organisation utilising academic resources in bringing minority issues to official and public attention.

## **The Product**

### **Proceedings of the Hearing**

#### **Written Submission read by Dr. A. M. Siddiqui on behalf of the Muslim Community**

First of all I need to introduce myself. I arrived in Derry in 1974 and since then I have been based at Gransha Hospital as a Specialist in Psychiatry which involves me doing liaison work at Altnagelvin Area Hospital 5 days per week.

I try to keep myself involved with the community as well as profession. I am Ex President of the Islamic Centre, Belfast and Ex Trustee of the Islamic Centre, Belfast. I am also President of the Overseas Doctors Association N.I. Division as well as Honorary Secretary of the British Medical Association N.W. and Derry Division and a member of B.M.A. Northern Ireland Council, Belfast.

I am happy to say that as a member of a minority community, living in Derry myself and my family feel very happy and we have never had any problem whatsoever in living a normal and happy life practising our religion and keeping to our social customs. All my children are educated in Derry - one is now a qualified Clinical Psychologist living in the States USA one is a qualified medical doctor working in Altnagelvin Hospital and the youngest two are studying at Foyle College.

The number of people of our faith are not many in Derry, but there is a considerable number of people practising Islamic faith in N.I. and we have an Islamic Centre in Belfast. In Derry although we have no place of our own for congregational prayer I am happy to say the local hospital provides us a place to perform congregational prayer on Friday and evening prayer during the month of fasting (Ramadan). For annual congregational prayer we all go to Belfast.

Initially we faced difficulties in getting Halal meat but once again we appreciated the local abattoir and butcher helping us to meet our requirements and now even in local supermarkets, we are able to get Halal meat imported from New Zealand.

We do appreciate that the local population is very helpful in making us feel welcome and happy. However we feel that our number is small and most of the doctors come and go as they change jobs in hospital. Those who are permanent residents in Derry feel that their children need some form of religious education and some form of social outlet. I know and appreciate that it is not easy or may not be feasible with the small number of this minority community but I feel encouraged by your effort to gather ideas and feelings in this respect.

May I suggest that the Western Library & Education Board can play an important part in providing certain facilities like providing books which may help children to gain knowledge about Islam. Such books are published in English and are available in the United Kingdom.

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We may provide a list of books that may be useful in this respect.

Also a place in any school may be allocated to hold classes on Islamic education one day a week and we may organise voluntary help for teaching for a couple of hours on a Saturday or Sunday. Derry City Council may consider helping us in establishing a Community Centre for social get together and educational activities and people from different dominations interested in acquiring knowledge about Islamic faith will be welcome. This may provide an opportunity of healthy dialogue between different faiths and promote goodwill. We urgently require a burial place for the Muslim Community in Derry as at present no provision is available and again Derry City Council may give this important issue a priority.

A M SIDDIQUI

***Response from the panel to Dr. A. M. Siddiqui***

*Patrick Yu - I have no further questions. I understand very well the problem faced by the Muslim community in Derry City. In particular I think I tried to address the issue because in Northern Ireland we have separate rules and legislation in which the ethnic minority people cannot practice their own religious conviction in our school system. Possibly the local people they didn't realise under the Educational Reform Order Northern Ireland 1989, the religious education in our province only has the religious programme for Christianity. It must be compulsory once a week. I think it is time now to voice the issue to the public and let them speak on the issue on behalf of our people. Thank you so much, Dr. Siddiqui.*

**Written Submission read by Sheila Deery - The needs of young adults with learning difficulties**

Dear Panel

As a mother of an adult with a mild learning difficulty, I have, for some years, been involved in setting up support groups for such adults in Derry. I will briefly mention my experiences in order to identify some primary concerns and recommendations to put before the panel today.

A few years ago, myself and others were successful in establishing a pilot educational scheme for adults with mild learning disabilities in Derry's technical college. Although the scheme lasted for two years, the problems that were encountered could, in my opinion, have easily been remedied by a greater demand. People were not aware of what was on offer. The education board provided encouragement and support for the programme, but, like myself, were disappointed in the low attendance. I believe parents and carers were not made adequately aware of the resources on offer.



More recently I have become involved with DAWN (Disability Action Awareness Now) and we have been able to re-establish support classes. However, although these classes were initially promoted as a meeting place for adults with a mild disability, individuals with more severe disabilities have been welcomed. As a result, I feel that the original aim of the classes, i.e. to benefit adults with a mild disability, has been detracted from. I therefore feel that adults with a mild learning disability must be identified as a separate minority group with their own distinct needs.

As a direct result of my involvement and contact with parents and teachers over the years, I am very much aware of a deepening sadness that many young adults are being disregarded upon leaving full time education. I feel that this may, in part, be addressed by the development of a referral scheme to identify those adults who may benefit from the

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resources and support available locally.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To increase and promote awareness of the resources available locally for adults with mild learning disabilities.
2. To actively encourage the identification of young adults with mild learning disabilities as a separate minority group with their own distinct needs.
3. To set up a referral scheme to facilitate entry of young adults with a mild learning disability into local groups and agencies.

SHEILA DEERY

#### *Response from the panel to Sheila Deery*

*Mary Mulholland - I have a few questions actually. I'm from the disability angle myself. I know the problems involved with people with learning disabilities trying to get awareness and information through to them at times, it doesn't always filter through. And I'm just wondering if you yourself, Sheila, and the rest of you know about things like Disability Action in the setting up of the disability forums in the area. Have you ever received any information on that? Because I know for myself with my own forum in the North East where the problems of trying to filter the information through is always a hard one. I think there is a greater need for networking as well amongst the disability organisations themselves. I hope that we can all encourage each other to help each other along the way.*

*Christine Bell - Thank you very much for making the submission. That in itself plays a part in helping create the awareness that you are talking about. Thank you.*

#### WRITTEN STATEMENT FROM FOYLE HOMELESS

The extent of homelessness in the North West has been described by the statutory and voluntary sector as an area of high activity. Over 20 years ago housing was on the social and political agenda. Sadly today public sector housing is still suffering, being subject to budget cuts and depletion as a result of social policy changes and new legislation.

#### CURRENT HOUSING ORDER

In 1988 legislation was introduced in Northern Ireland giving responsibility to the Housing Executive to house certain groups of homeless people (The Housing Order Northern Ireland 1988). Under this legislation there are strict priority need categories including women who

are pregnant; those with dependents; those who are vulnerable as a result of age, disability etc; those at risk of violence or sexual or financial exploitation. However, there is particular discrimination within this framework excluding the vast majority of those finding themselves homeless, e.g. the young single able bodied person with no fixed abode would be deemed not to be in priority and would be subject to long term homelessness.

Between April 1994 and March 1995, 10,068 households presented to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive as homeless: this represents a rise of 3.5% on the previous year's figure. The total households presented to the Housing Executive could constitute to approximately 20,000 people. Housing legislation and social policy will be undergoing major changes in the near future. The introduction of the housing policy review has taken into consideration many aspects of current homeless legislation and housing policy. There will be fundamental changes for homeless households who are waiting to be housed or in

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priority e.g. housing will have a duty to provide temporary accommodation only for twelve months to homeless people in "priority need" and who are not "intentionally" homeless. There will also be a move towards increasing levels of "right to buy" making available or continuing to promote a voluntary purchase scheme for housing association tenants.

Changes to housing benefit will only compound and contribute to the current homelessness problem. Housing benefit to single tenants under 25 years of age will be limited to the average cost of non self contained accommodation in the locality. This means housing benefit for the under 25's will be reduced to the equivalent of single room rent which will be fixed by local rent officers. The future prognosis for single homeless people in housing need is bleak. The current legislation affords little hope in accessing meaningful housing, quite often experiencing discrimination eg. "No D.H.S.S. Professionals only".

Derry is a city of young people, these people will come of age and will make demands on the public sector housing movement. For many people in Northern Ireland, public sector housing is the only viable housing option available. With increased demand and high levels of unemployed, this will only lead to people becoming more marginalised in regards to housing. Housing policy should take in what homelessness means as in definition (a homeless person has been described as someone who does not live in a place where individuals and families can be themselves for better or worse, can obtain peace and security and can flourish both mentally and physically. It should be an effective base for family life, providing relaxation and the strength to participate in our highly pressurised and competitive society. I would argue that it is a basic human right to have a place to live which is affordable, safe and secure.) The tragedy of homelessness is one of a daily occurrence within our city for which we should be working to eradicate, by providing secure platforms in enabling the excluded to be included.

#### **Verbal submission made by Gerry Coates and Eileen Best - Foyle Homeless**

Hello, my name is Gerry Coates, I'm the Co-ordinator of the Foyle Homeless Action and Advice Service.

My name is Eileen Best, I'm the deputy co-ordinator of Foyle Homeless.

**Gerry Coates** - Firstly I would just like to raise the issue of homelessness. I'm representing homeless people, I'm not homeless myself, so I'll make that quite clear. I would like to say firstly about the extent of homelessness within the Foyle region and in the North West and just point to facts hopefully. that the extent of homelessness in the North West has been

described by the statutory and voluntary sector as an area of high activity. Over 20 years ago housing was on the social and political agenda. Sadly today, public sector housing is still suffering, being subject to Government cuts and depletion as a result of social policy changes and new legislation. I'm going to come on to some figures and then Eileen is going to say a little bit about the current legislation. Between April 1994 and March 1995 10,068 households presented to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive as homeless. This represents a rise of 3.5% on previous years figures. The total households presented to housing could be cost sheeted to approximately 20,000 people.

I'll just explain what a household is. A household could be a single person or a family or a single parent. Obviously single parents are families as well. Housing legislation social policy is under-going major changes in the near future. The introduction of the Housing Policy Review has taken into consideration many aspects of current homelessness legislation and housing policy. There will be fundamental changes as homeless households are awaiting

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to be housed and/or are in priority to be housed. Housing will only have a duty to provide temporary accommodation for a 12 month period and after that may be subject to resolving their own homelessness problem. There will be also a move to increase "right to buy" levels, thus reducing housing stock within this region and continuing to promote what you call voluntary purchase schemes, which, if housing stock is not being replaced, at the current rate then it will disperse rapidly. I think the previous year 700 units were sold through "right to buy" legislation. That's the equivalent to 2 very large housing estates. Eileen is going to say something about the current legislation.

**Eileen Best** - The current legislation is covered by what is known as the 1988 Homeless Persons (Northern Ireland) Order. Under this legislation when it was introduced, it gives responsibility to the Housing Executive to house certain groups of homeless people. Under the legislation there are strict priority need categories including women who are pregnant, those with dependants, those who are vulnerable as a result of age, disability etc., those at risk of violence or sexual or financial exploitation. However, there is particular discrimination within this framework, excluding the vast majority of those finding themselves homeless. For example, young single, able-bodied persons with no fixed abode would be deemed not to be in priority and would be subject to long term homelessness. As Housing Adviser, I find it increasingly difficult to find accommodation for young single people. They mainly have to resort to the private rented sector, where they often find that there is high rents and, in many instances, insecure accommodation.

**Gerry Coates** - I mentioned something called the Housing Policy Review which will have devastating effects in Northern Ireland generally, and in the North West, if it is implemented. There will also be changes to Housing Benefit for people who cannot afford to buy their own homes and are in a position to have to claim Housing Benefit. Changes to Housing Benefit will only compound and contribute to the current homelessness problem. Housing Benefit to single tenants under 25 years of age will be limited to the average costs of non-self contained accommodation in the locality. This mean Housing Benefit for the under 25's will be reduced to the equivalent of single room to rent, which will be fixed by a local rent officer. The future prognosis for single homeless people in housing need is bleak. The current legislation affords little hope in accessing meaningful housing quite often in the private sector, experiencing discrimination. For example you will see in the local press "No DHSS. Professionals only." I'd like to also point out about the demographics of the city and the future need. Derry City is a city of young people. These people will come of age and will make demands on the public sector housing movement. For many people in Northern Ireland public sector housing is the only viable housing option available. With increased demands and

high levels of unemployment, this will only lead to people becoming more marginalised in regards to housing. Housing policy should take in what homelessness means as a definition and this is the definition that we do have here:

A homeless person has been described as someone who does not live in a place where individuals and families can be themselves for better or worse, can obtain peace and security and can flourish both mentally and physically. It should be an effective base for family life, providing relaxation and the strength to participate in our highly pressurised and competitive society.

I would argue that it is a basic human right to have a place to live which is affordable, safe and secure. The tragedy of homelessness is one of a daily occurrence within our city for which we should be working to eradicate by providing secure platforms enabling the excluded to be included. Thank you.

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*Response from the panel to Gerry Coates and Eileen Best*

*Christine Bell - You talked a bit about young single people and about the demographics of the city and I wondered if you could have given us an idea as to what age group people are homeless from.*

*Gerry Coates- Well, if we just look at the demographics of the city, 56% are below the age of 30 and 30% are below the age of 16. Those, as I said, those people are coming of age intending to make demands on public sector housing. Unfortunately, the rate of housing is diminishing rapidly and by virtue of that the demand is going to be greater. We dealt with 2000 enquiries last year of which 62% were below the age of 25.*

*Christine Bell - And would there be many people under the age of 18 considered homeless at the minute?*

*Eileen Best- At the present time we do have some people under the age of 18 considered homeless. They are mainly coming out of children's institutions at this moment in time. But we have single people who would approach our organisation on a direct access basis who are suffering family break down, just break down from within the family for one reason or another.*

*Gerry Coates - The largest cause of homelessness, the two major causes, one is marital breakdown, as it is said, and also family break down, which would be the main cause of homelessness within the city at the moment.*

*Christine Bell - And I also wondered, do we have written materials from you here?*

*Gerry Coates - I have just my written submission, but we can give you written information.*

*Christine Bell - Well it was really, I think the definition that you gave at the end, although it was specific to homelessness, in many ways it seemed to me to sum up what a lot of the, you know a kind of definition for what minorities of different types would be wanting to achieve in terms of their ability to express themselves and live a family life that is their choice of family life. I thought that was a really interesting definition and something that would be, you know, worth exploring as how it applies to different minority groups so it would be good if at least that. if we could have that.*

*Patrick Yu - I have a question in relation to the housing stock or housing provision. Has the Housing Executive some kind of special accommodation for the single people? Like I know that we have a lot of sheltered housing for this age of people. But do they build any special accommodation for the young people, like a youth hostel or?*

*Gerry Coates- There's two areas which the Housing Executive are tied by legislation and controlled by Government as by legislation. The Housing Executive will only provide accommodation to people who are in priority to be housed as deemed by the legislation, and temporary accommodation will be provided. Here is no particular duty under the legislation to provide for people who are not in priority, which seems to be the largest group presenting, that would be single people. However, the housing Executive have, and have supported, voluntary sector agencies to supply that temporary accommodation facility, which is highly expensive. We would argue that to resolve it is to stop reducing the housing*

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*stock, build more houses, invest in housing, look at the future demands of the new type of tenant, a mixed culture of housing within the city, a variety of tenure types, so that people can be integrated and live together instead of people becoming highly ... and constantly needing to live in hostel life as opposed to living a real life.*

*Patrick Yu - The reason I raised the question was because the issue is just like the chicken and the egg because if you don't have single people accommodation then those young people will not fall into the ..... Because the Housing Executive, they build the houses more on the family home basis. But they build a very small amount of single people accommodation.*

*Gerry Coates- Only 10% of the housing stock in Northern Ireland would be for single people. What we would argue is that the demographics are now demanding that housing stock should represent the populace as such and represent the demand that has been made. Yes, houses are very important to single parent families but also single people as well. We would argue they are all important and that they should be represented, through legislation, and through social policy, the kind of quality housing that people want. And people should be consulted on that to find out their points of view, in terms of what kind of houses that they would like to live in for the future.*

Written submission in braille read by Sally Morrison and William  
Mc Morris of THE NORTH WEST VISUALLY IMPAIRED ASSOCIATION

### **1. Shopping**

Supermarket and other shops should provide improved layouts in store to assist the visually impaired e.g. Products placed or provide a member of staff to guide and assist visually impaired shoppers.

### **2. Transport**

Visually impaired people experience barriers to social inclusion as a direct result of poor transport provision. All groups/agencies within the city should consider, when planning services and or events, how transport can be provided to the visually impaired.

### **3. Public Transport**

Public transport vehicles should be more accessible e.g. steps are too high.

#### 4. Public Information

All public information should be available in suitable format, current campaigns should address this immediately i.e. "Vision for the City" and fluoridation consultations e.g. braille and large print audio tape.

#### 5. Banking

Cheque books should be in larger print for partially sighted customers.

#### 6. Prescriptions

Information on back of prescriptions cannot be read by visually impaired people. The section for signing should be made larger.

#### 7. Traffic Lights

Appropriate signalling should be provided at all traffic light junctions to enable visually impaired and blind people to use the junction safely. It should be remembered that many visually impaired people also have a hearing impairment.

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#### 8. Public Highway / Footpaths

Public highways, footpaths should be kept free from obstruction. Shop owners should be prohibited from planning signage etc. on footpaths.

Motorists should be prohibited from parking on footpaths. Where laws exist they should be enforced.

#### *Response from the panel to the submission from Sally Morrison and William McMorris*

*Patrick Yu - I have a question on the transport. I come from Hong Kong, in my experience of Hong Kong we try to encourage those disability people to take the transport. We create a kind of voucher system to encourage the people to take a taxi or other transport by paying free or at a very low rate of subsidy. I don't know whether this can be helpful to the situation here so that you are more accessible to other .....or to other social inclusion or social life in your situation.*

*Mary Mulholland - One, on the public transport, has there been any consultation with your own group on the 10, -no I think it's actually less than 10- of the new wheelchair accessible buses that are coming into Derry this year as part of the package that Ulsterbus are buying? Has there been any consultation regarding the colour contrast and so forth, with your own group and any other impaired group in the city?*

*Reply - No I don't think so, no.*

*Mary Mulholland - I'll give you the name of the contact person to deal with that. And the other one, with regard signage, I presume by this you are meaning the "A" boards that, I know the problems these cause. My husband himself had a problem yesterday in Coleraine. We have piping along the road at the moment and I as a wheelchair user can see that and he just physically picked up the board and carried it into the shop. Now it's easy enough for me to see and I am sure they don't only encroach what they say is their own area I believe anymore, I believe they encroach further and further out as each day goes past, making it much more harder. I think that's all I would like to say, Christine.*

*Christine Bell - I suppose I would like to just comment on the submission that you know, I think it was 10 points, are very practical but through those points what struck me was very much the image of the world and of the life we live from your perspective and how much you begin to see that everything from the shops down to cheque books are really structured around a certain set of assumptions that often don't apply and that was really very interesting. Thank you very much.*

Written submission produced by Sean Morrin and Malachy Kyle and read by Malachy Kyle from Rainbow Trust

## HIV/AIDS IN THE NORTH WEST IS A REALITY TODAY

The aim of Rainbow Project is to,

EDUCATE GAY AND BISEXUAL MEN ON MATTERS OF SEXUAL HEALTH IN AN ATTEMPT TO STOP THE SPREAD OF HIV THROUGHOUT OUR COMMUNITY IN NORTHERN IRELAND.

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Gay and bisexual people suffer from discrimination on a daily basis and in every aspect of their lives. Whether it be in social, political, religious or cultural spheres, they are denied equality of rights and opportunities particularly in employment and education.

One of the biggest prejudices that gay and bisexual men suffer from is the stigma that HIV/AIDS and homosexuality go hand and glove. This of course is a myth, however the stigma is a real situation for gay and bisexual men and discrimination is a fact of life in the North West.

People who are living with HIV/AIDS and their families, are well aware of the prejudices that may occur after it becoming public knowledge. We are aware of families who have decided to say their sons have died from other illnesses such as cancer as opposed to an AIDS related illness. We know of situations where people have been diagnosed in other countries and have decided to remain there for the duration of the illness.

As a result of this, families and friends of gay or bisexual men are living with HIV or AIDS or who have died from an AIDS related illness have not been given the opportunities that others may have been given, to come to terms or to grieve in a dignified manner.

As members of a minority group, we endeavour to educate people that the HIV virus is not unique to us. Indeed recent statistics show that 40% of people tested and known to be infected by the virus in N. Ireland are not gay or bisexual.

People living with HIV/ AIDS in the North West have issues that need to be addressed in a constructive manner. These people need to feel safe about talking about their illness without fear, prejudices and discrimination in their workplace, in their local communities, and indeed in their everyday lives.

Education of the general community is of vital importance. A number of organisations in the North West do attempt to do this. However, resources are limited and it appears money available from the Government has dwindled in recent years for education and research into this virus.

Responsibility for education should not only be with these organisations but with every person in our community. We should all share rights and responsibilities. People should be made aware that this virus is with us in the North West and transmission is a real possibility. People still believe condoms are only to avoid pregnancy. Avoiding pregnancies is of course of immense importance, however sexually transmitted diseases and HIV are still being transmitted.

As well as education, prevention work is of extreme importance. The Rainbow Project's target group is the gay and bisexual community. We target social venues where this group of people meet and offer outreach work with safer sex packs and information around HIV/AIDS/Safer Sex and other sexually transmitted diseases. Other projects include a referral point for other services and workshops around sexual health.

So far other organisations have been very supportive to the kind of work we do. This again is of vital importance and necessary to meet the needs of our service users.

We will continue with our aims and to have the knowledge that we may save a life will keep us striding towards our goal.

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#### **Recommendations:**

Proper resources to enable the continuation and expansion of education at home, school, social venues and the workplace.

Research into the effects HIV/AIDS have on people affected in the North West. This could possibly include a forum whereby family and carers of people living with HIV/AIDS or who may have experienced a loss due to an AIDS related illness can come together and share experiences.

Certain institutions would need to waver the line they have adopted regarding the spread of HIV/AIDS virus.

Funding should be made available for research into safe sexual practices in the wider community.

More networking with statutory, voluntary, community and other minority groups who share the same aims and objectives on prevention, education and research into the HIV virus.

For further information, please contact  
The Rainbow Project N. Ireland  
56-58 Strand Road  
Derry BT48 7AJ

#### **Response of the panel**

*Patrick Yu - I would like to ask you more about the kind of prejudice of HIV people, can you tell us more about what kind of prejudice, how...?*

*Malachy Kivle- What a lot of people experience at the minute is. first of all. within the last*



10 years we have been informed of at least 9 to 10 people within the North West area who have died in London. They will not come home for fear of the stigma, first of all, that HIV attracts. Secondly, we mentioned about quite a few of these people being gay, right. Up until the last few years in Derry, it was you know, it wasn't accepted that you be gay. I myself have worked with people who have actually died from AIDS related illnesses and I've experienced whereby these people, even walking along the street, the ignorance there you know where people be; "hello" but they don't touch you know and, people would "well what about ye?" and you see the fear in peoples faces you know and it's just that, to me it's ignorance. Within the health service what I do have to say is the health service are learning in the Derry area, and I have to give them credit in the last year for what they have done, but they are still learning. There was situations whereby people were dying, one particular guy was lying in Altnagelvin Hospital and some of the nursing staff would not attend him. They actually asked to be removed you know, from having to attend him. They wouldn't touch him. Ambulance staff that were actually about to lift, they were using gloves and at one stage were wearing masks. Now, this is our health service here, some of the people from within the health service you know. So, these are the things that are surrounding HIV and Aids today, you know, in the North West.

**Christine Bell** - One of your recommendations was about certain institutions wavering the line. Could you expand on that at all?

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**Malachy Kyle**- What we were actually directing that towards was the church authorities of today. First of all, it is a sin within the eyes of the Catholic church to be gay, well not to actually be gay, but don't practice homosexual acts, you know. And then it's the abomination, you know, when you contract HIV or, you know, AIDS. And what we are trying to say is we believe, not just the Catholic church, other churches, would need to sit down and rethink their policy and their strategy and to provide some kind of situation whereby, you know, you can go in and people can experience and enjoy a lifestyle whereby the church would be included you know.

Written submission from a Lesbian/Bisexual perspective  
Produced by Helen Quigley, read by Dave Duggan

Living in Derry as a woman is pretty scary most of the time. Living in Derry as a Lesbian/Bisexual woman is scarier still. The Gay Community does its best to provide support and understanding for those of us in same sex relationships, but the wider community does little, in the way of showing basic respect or tolerance.

The Cease-fire, such as it was, gave us all the impression that tolerance of others, irrespective of class, creed or indeed gender would be on everybody's agenda. That to live in peace in Northern Ireland we would first need to be at peace with our neighbours, family and friends. The increase in gay bashings in the past 12 months has shown the opposite to be true. Instead of carrying out attacks on someone because they go to a different church, or support a different political party, our young citizens took to bashing people because of their sexual preference. These attacks don't arouse anger or fury from the general public, because homosexuals are not treated as ordinary members of society anyway. We are already marginalised, pitied and even despised in some quarters.

My hopes for the near future would be that some kind of homophobia training takes place, within the police force, civil service, health authorities and education authority, amongst the staff who would come into contact with gay people everyday in their jobs. This would help

increase their awareness of the gay community, and in turn educate the general public and inform them that we exist in all walks of life. The secrecy around homosexuality has been forced onto us. We cannot show affection to our partners in public for fear of being attacked verbally or physically, and sometimes the fear of coming out can lead to suicide or mental health problems. Somehow the citizens of Derry have to be made aware that they live alongside gay people, and that we deserve the respect that they give others. They should be outraged when we are attacked, to the same degree as they are outraged when old people are abused in their homes or when people are beaten up outside pubs.

Security, ie: a community police force should be introduced into the city to discourage thuggish behaviour by the more violent and insecure members of the public who, for reasons best known to themselves like nothing more on a Saturday night than to beat up the local gay person and throw bricks through his/her windows. These kind of attacks have to be taken seriously and not brushed under carpets, because that won't make them or us go away.

***Response of the panel***

***Christine Bell*** - *I mean just to comment on the submission. One of the things that was raised at the start was the question of people who weren't here would have made submissions and I mean that submission is interesting, does bring many questions to mind and I think it is a significant thing that you know, the fear that is talked about in the submission means that these things can't be addressed often you know, as effectively. And that's something that has to be borne in mind by people seeking to change things in relation to this area.*

by Patricia Bray

The World Health Organisation states that during your adult life you have a 98% chance of having some form of disability, be it temporary or permanent e.g. broken leg or spell in hospital. The Public Policy Research Unit states that in Northern Ireland there are 201,000 disabled people i.e. 1 in 6 people in Northern Ireland have a disability. This is a large percentage of the population, yet there are many areas where people with disabilities are socially excluded e.g. 1. Employment: in Northern Ireland disabled people are 5 times more likely to be unemployed and when employed it is usually in a low paid job, have poorer promotion prospects and working conditions than non disabled people. 2. Access to the built environment - how many buildings are accessible for sport and leisure, and entertainment e.g. How many pubs in Derry are accessible? 3. Access to information is another very important area. Are all meetings provided with a loop system or interpreter? People can't attend and therefore can't access the information they need to make an informed decision. Other areas of social exclusion are housing, education, transport, in other words every aspect of daily life. The North West Forum of People With Disabilities recommend that:

1. The Department of Environment improve access to the built environment and provide a public transport system for all citizens.

2. Derry City Council review their service provision e.g. sport and leisure amenities.

3. Western Education and Library Board provide inclusive education for all.

4. Western Health and Social Services Board improve their service to people with

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disabilities. e.g. Shorten the time span on Occupational Therapist waiting lists for aids and equipment and to provide services locally so people with disabilities do not have to travel to Belfast for consultations.

5. Training and Employment Agency should ensure that people with disabilities are not discriminated against in employment. Also T&EA should provide services to assist people with disabilities to compete equally on the open labour market.

6. The Department of Health And Social Services should provide their information in a manner that's accessible to all i.e. large print, audio cassette, computer disk, braille, video tape for deaf people, appropriate language for people with learning disabilities. They should also promote their services to everyone.

7. Northern Ireland Housing Executive should provide more inclusive accessible housing for people with disabilities.

#### ***Response of the panel***

***Mary Mulholland*** - Patricia, do you think that the new Disability Discrimination Act will do anything to enhance the lives of the disabled?

***Patricia Bray***- No, I don't. I think it has got some provisions within it and it has got recognition from the government to decide to do something. But without a commission, as for the equal opportunity and the fair employment , it is nothing. It has no powers enforcement at all.

*Mary Mulholland - And the other thing is how do you feel about, maybe I know I've seen areas of bad house keeping in Northern Ireland Housing Executive stock, where a disabled person might move out of a house and it is then, all the adaptations are pulled out and it is put back into main stream stock, when it should be kept.*

*Patricia Bray - It should be kept, it should be. I mean it is so obvious that it should be kept because they are away adapting somewhere else or partially. Of course it should be kept.*

*Christine Bell - Just, you know, an observation, the statistics that you gave at the beginning were really interesting and what it was suggesting to me was, I mean, we have the title of minorities and clearly there's a whole politics around, you know, what term that we use. But I mean, what you were really suggesting and I think it's come through from a lot of the presentation is that it is not a minority at all. It is something...*

*Patricia Bray- It is not a minority at all, that is correct. There would be only a minority of people out speaking on behalf of people with disabilities and this should not be. It should be people with disabilities should be out there speaking for themselves, you know.*

**Submission from Ken Rooney, Fountain Area Partnership written on the day**

My name is Ken Rooney and I am the Co-ordinator of the Fountain Area Partnership, an inner city urban regeneration programme.

May I first of all mention my appreciation of being allowed to speak at this public hearing. Secondly, many will say why am I speaking at this hearing for minority groups when Protestants are in the majority in N.I.? I will respond by saying that the people of the Fountain are in the minority on the West Bank of this city.

I represent the people of the Fountain in this city. At present there are only about 450 Protestants left in this area. According to the 1991 Census there are only some 1400 Protestants on the West Bank. Population on the West Bank is about 55,000 i.e. less than 1% of the people on this side of the water.

Dr. A.M. Siddiqui stated that he has had no problem practicing his faith in the city or living in it. I am glad for him and others who are welcomed in the city. However, the same cannot be said for the people of the Fountain.

Since the outbreak of the Troubles in 1969 the people of The Fountain have experienced persistent violations of their human and civil right to live in a part of this city which they have an innate right to coexist alongside all groups within the city. Some will say that the Unionist led governments of the past exploited Nationalists in many areas of N.I., therefore if Protestants have been or are now being treated adversely, that they either deserve it or it will do them good to experience the effects of injustice which was doled out to Catholics in the past.

I would suggest that such logic is perverse and does nothing to advance the process whereby we can one day live along side one another in harmony. Many of our older citizens can still vividly remember the days when this was the case and when there was respect for differing traditions.

Working in this environment one sees similar areas to the Fountain in other areas of N.I. both Protestant and Catholic, so our problems within this city are not unique. So why do

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these situations arise? And what can be done to redress the disadvantages and injustices suffered by the area and its people?

A recent campaign of support to welcome people back to the Fountain was a heartening first step to redress the imbalances of the past and present. However, the 1500 perceived nationalists who supported the campaign are not the people who are perceived as a threat by the people of the area.

Until more hard line Nationalists in neighbouring working class estates accept that the people of the Fountain and other Protestants in the city have an innate right to live in the cityside in peace, then the problems of the past will continue into the future. After all, had it not been for the activities of a well known small group of Protestants over 300 years ago, then this city would not be reaping the economic benefits of its historic past.

This point came to a high point on 12th August 1995 with severe opposition to the rights of Protestants to march peacefully in the city, when only 3 days later the AOH marched through the city with no opposition.

I would also like to address the statutory agencies present in that in our regeneration strategy, which will be published shortly, our projects which are relatively small and all in all will probably be available elsewhere in the city within walking distance. However the people who wish to use these facilities are not comfortable in walking to places where such services

are available i.e. community centres, sports complexes, Adult Learning Centres as they are in Nationalist areas, i.e. the post office incident, whereby two women residents were jostled and informed that they had no right to be here on this side of the river.

Therefore, funding for projects which come before them in the near future should be addressed with a sympathetic view to this problem and decisions about a schemes viability not be based on a "bums on seats" basis.

Finally, I hope this has not been viewed as a party political submission, as it is not intended to be. Rather it be viewed as an address by a section of our community who wish to be socially included into plans for this city in the future.

#### *Panel's response*

*Patrick Yu - I have two questions. Firstly, I would like to know about the unemployment rate in your area.*

*Ken Rooney - It's 65% for the actual area.*

*Patrick Yu - Second question is can you tell me what kind of basic facility is in your area, this is public facility?*

*Ken Rooney - Well I just address social facilities here. For instance, there isn't one person in the area, one child in grammar school education. So, and a lot of the parents aren't even able to supervise primary 6 and primary 7 homeworks, so however, that's filtering down through the system. So it's re-training, adult education, child-care provision and parenting skills, all those types of things by, you'd only get 8 - 12 people wanting to attend them and to make that financially viable is an impossibility. So therefore, in the past they have never had it, but they do need it.*

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*Christine Bell - I mean, I don't have any questions. It is interesting and I suppose again, what you are calling a minority too that's an interesting analysis and I think it was great that you...*

*Ken Rooney - That's why I wasn't going to give a submission initially, but then it was after I came in....*

*Christine Bell - Well I'm glad that you did because in many ways some of the areas you are talking about and some of the difficult questions as regards accommodation and conflict that you're raising have been raised throughout the morning. It's just maybe that we haven't, we don't always maybe expect to perceive these sort of problems in the area you are raising. And we don't even see the problems in some of the other areas and I think it's quite good to take them across the board.*

*Ken Rooney - The thing about perception too, the social problems we experience are exactly the same social problems that are experienced in the Bogside or the Creggan or wherever. It's just this welcoming aspect that they have a problem with, that they don't feel wanted here. That's the main difference.*

*Christine Bell - Although that again is something that has been very much a theme of earlier submissions too. you know. from very different perspectives. So I think there's a lot*

*of food for thought on that. And again coming back to how we think of what are minorities and majorities and how do we treat people that we perceive as different from us from wherever we are standing. So it's very much at the heart of the issues that are being looked at here. Thank you.*

Written submission from a young Protestant woman - living in a majority Catholic city, read by Dave Duggan.

"The experience of being a Protestant minority in a majority Catholic area".

1. For my parents and family the fact that they never get to call the city of Londonderry by the term they find acceptable is a constant annoyance to them and they feel that their identity is being insulted and undermined. When they do, they get shouted at and abused with things like, it's not Londonderry it's Derry.

2. The fact that Nationalist flags are flying in the area and there is no consideration for the viewpoint of a different tradition.

3. Even when we go to football matches to support our local team the fact that the Irish flag of green white and orange is constantly being waved causes upset. We do not see what the flag of the Irish Republic has to do with the game of football.

4. Being afraid in your home for your personal safety especially at periods of heightened inter communal tension in the city which has been renewed again with the end of the IRA cease-fire.

5. When you have visitors, that fact that neighbours call you names e.g. Jaffa, Protestant slag, Why don't you go back to England, etc. makes you scared and embarrassed for visitors to your home. These people may not be of the same religion but are targeted because of their association with a Protestant in a majority Catholic area.

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6. Having to be careful of where you go, when you go and who you go with is a constant fear, e.g. nightclub. Told things like you shouldn't be here, this is the Westbank. You shouldn't be here in this nightclub. Having your life threatened in a Nightclub and knowing you belong to the minority community in the Westbank and know that no-one will stand up for you in this environment.

7. Having people throwing stones at your windows because of what you are i.e. Protestant living in the West Bank.

8. Having eggs thrown at you when you walk down the road and constantly being called names (type already mentioned above).

#### Things wanted changed with this city

1. Recognition that the city is called Londonderry as well as Derry.

2. The right to be able to walk the streets without being called names.

3. The right to go to nightclubs without fear of retaliation because of my religion.

4. For people in this society to recognise that Protestants are no different to them, as we don't consider them any different to ourselves.

5. To be able to live at home with my family without fear that one day there will be a knock at the door and something bad will happen due to our religious beliefs.

6. To generally be able to live in peace and to be able to go anywhere we want to without being harassed or threatened and constantly looking over your shoulder to see who's behind you and what they're doing because you're so scared every day of your life.

***Response of the panel***

***Christine Bell*** - *Again I think that there are interesting parallels between that and the other submission which Dave read where the person didn't feel able to read it themselves, and the theme of fear that underlined both those submissions is remarkably similar although the reasons for the fear are very different. I think the last two submissions may be touching on, if you like, political territory, what we perceive as political being in the news, in ways maybe immediately raise more controversy for us. But the controversy in that is something that I feel very strongly that we shouldn't be scared of and scared of addressing in that at the heart of all these issues which are really about how we deal with difference, there are very personal things at stake and very, very difficult issues to be resolved. You know, and people beginning to have a voice around what those are, is certainly the start of dealing with them.*

**Written submission read by Mrs. Elizabeth Ward on behalf of Hearing Concern**  
I would like to thank you for the opportunity provided by Templegrove Action Research to highlight the difficulties associated with hearing impairment.

As introduced I am Elizabeth Ward, Northern Ireland's representative for Hearing Concern and I'm a lip reading tutor. I trained as a lip-reading tutor in 1990 in recognition of the lack of professional help needed by this minority group - the hard of hearing.

I could quote various statistics, but in the Western Board's Area, which stretches from

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Enniskillen to Limavady, there are over 40,000 adults with varying degrees of loss of hearing.

Hard of hearing people have the same aspirations, interests and abilities as their hearing counterparts. They are most definitely discriminated against especially in places of education, work places, socially and within the family. They are declared stupid and consideration is rarely bestowed on them in places of worship, work, leisure or hospitals. They are isolated and withdrawn in many cases.

Raising an awareness is essential and some suggestions I would suggest is graphic advertising, loop-systems in public places and more appropriate professional help sought, and existing professionals used appropriately and with wider financial structure.

The majority in the hearing world would need regular reminding of what is expected of them - better communication skills used regularly, more funding as highlighted and an understanding of the varying degrees of this invisible disability - the majority must also recognise the difference between deafness and a hearing loss and take note of that difference.



The hard of hearing have completely different needs and it's of the utmost importance these needs are addressed separately. Indeed, many deaf people do not understand the plight of the hard of hearing.

I therefore beseech you to consider most seriously the information I have delivered to you this afternoon and if there are areas of confusion, of which I am sure there will be, then please do not hesitate to contact me.

In conclusion, I, too, am severely hearing impaired - I need good hearing aids working at all times, need a good lip speaking facility, need loop in public places especially the railway station and other public transport outlets, church etc., bank, cinema. You may well think I manage very well - remember most people are not as fortunate as I am - most do not have their own transport therefore are missing out on the benefits of meeting other hearing impaired people. Most do not have my educational background and most do not have my confidence.

#### ***Response of the panel***

**Mary Mulholland** - *Just one question actually Elizabeth, how easy would it be for somebody who has no connection with anybody hearing impaired to find out about sign language classes or lip reading classes or anything in that field?*

**Elizabeth Ward** - *So the question is how would people find out about these things? Well I obviously am the source of information for lip reading classes because I don't work with deaf people. I can't answer about sign language classes because they would primarily probably be more deaf people or people who are going to work with the deaf. The Sensory Support in Bishop Street should have information. The local libraries should have information and all the places whereby people would go to find out, Citizens Advice Bureau etc., all areas open to the public, they should have this sort of information.*

**Christine Bell** - *Maybe you also could explain more the difference between, you know, your own needs for lip reading as opposed to sign language and needs of deaf people.*

**Elizabeth Ward** - *Well the difference is, I have an acquired hearing loss and most adults that I work with have an acquired hearing loss. In other words they have been born with*

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*hearing or some degree of hearing, and along the line they have lost it. So they have speech and a memory of sound and it is that memory of speech and sound that we work on. We keep them in the hearing community because that's what they are. They are hearing people, but it has been damaged. And if I could just explain to the audience, it's a bit like your television set that is in a situation where it is going on and off and on and off, it's terribly annoying and when that happens all the time, which it does to a hard of hearing person. For example this lady on the left is sitting with her back to the light and therefore her face is in shadow and I'm having difficulty just in that situation. So these are grave disadvantages to someone who is hard of hearing. But if the situation is right and the person who is sitting opposite to me knows that you have a hearing loss or speaks clearly and doesn't cover their mouth etc. then it's not too great a difficulty. Obviously I can't lip read in the dark so that's a grave disadvantage and, like I said, if someone is covering their mouth or they're more than 6 foot away from me, I would have great difficulty communicating and that is why I say in a railway station or an airport or whatever, because the tannoy system, I've only got the hearing aids to pick up what is going on. I haven't got a face to back up that information. So lip reading is essential for someone who is hard of*

*hearing because it's not everyone that needs a hearing aid. If it's a slight hearing loss, they don't need a hearing aid. Just the difference is, it keeps them in the community and a hard of hearing person can go to the post office and pick up their own pension or go to the supermarket etc. if they've got lip reading skills. But most importantly of all, if they have the confidence to go, and lots of them are very, very withdrawn, and that's why they need classes and they need other meeting places where there are hard of hearing people to give them the support.*

#### Closing remarks for morning session

##### Marie Smyth of Templegrove Action Research

For those of you who weren't here earlier, my name is Marie Smyth, Director of Templegrove Action Research and I would just like to echo what Elizabeth has just said in relation to acquiring facilities for deaf and hard of hearing people and I would like to tell you the story of Gloria here who is signing. We were committed to providing signing and a loop system here today and the difficulty that we had in finding a signer to be here was enormous. We were going to have to fly someone in from Dublin and pay quite a substantial fee until we very happily met with Gloria and we are very glad that she is with us here today. But just to say that even when an organisation such as our own is committed to providing the resources, it is extremely difficult to get them locally here in the city, and, in fact, Gloria isn't from the city, she's from outside the city. Similarly the point was mentioned over here, the Sensory Support Service, the point was made that the deaf and hard of hearing people don't necessarily know that the Sensory Support Service means support for them. So I think there are enormous problems about accessing these services, even when they are here and what we found out was, in fact, that they are not here.

I would like to conclude this morning by thanking all the people who have come up here to the front and spoken, and all of the people who have written submissions, which were read out by Dave this morning. I think we are delighted that people have been able to come forward.

We've heard from a wide range of interest groups and individuals from disablement, sensory impairment, learning difficulties, from the Rainbow Project about HIV and Aids, from again Lesbian perspective and so on and we are very pleased. We will be incorporating those submissions into our published report. And can we just wind up this morning by thanking you, by reminding you that we are re-convening at 2 o'clock. You are all very welcome to come back and we would encourage you to do so. The tea and the coffee and the excellent biscuits will also be there this afternoon. Can I also thank our official observers here to my right who have sat patiently through the morning and particular thanks to the panel. The panel will re-convene at 2 o'clock and you will hear they will not only be digesting their

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lunch over lunchtime, they will also be digesting this morning's session. So we will open this afternoon by allowing some time for comments from the panel and they will be feeding back to you what their impressions are so far, and then will proceed with the submissions for the afternoon. Thank you all very much and we look forward to seeing you again at 2 o'clock.

#### Opening remarks afternoon session

Mary Mulholland - Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. I've just a few things to say. One thing that comes across very strongly is that discrimination is still very much around. And even though all groups may find that it comes at them differently, in all shapes and forms, and speaking generally on the disability side, which is my own field and which I know probably more about than anything else, that each of these cases, the stance of discrimination at all levels, housing, social services, schooling and transport and I hope if nothing else comes from this meeting today, that we can all liaise with each other and try and find a way around our problems because even though they might be different, there's still a basic route. We can all find a common cause to deal with these problems and maybe increase our networking powers about how we go about finding information and passing them on. I'd

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just like to hand back to Christine.

Patrick Yu - Good afternoon, everyone. I will just try to make a few points. Firstly, this public hearing is a dialogue to draw the public's attention to the problems faced by different minority groups in Derry. So this morning we heard the submissions from the groups like ethnic minority, learning difficulty, homeless, vision impaired, political minority groups, Lesbian/gay and Bi-sexual group, disability and deaf group as well. And as you are aware from this morning those problems that arose from different groups are similar. They are some kind of discrimination against each group but manifest in different forms and/or on different situation. And this public hearing is very important because it also provides a support. As you are aware each group's problem and their struggle is not alone. We must

build on a broader alliance, try to combat this discrimination. In order to combat this discrimination as I hear this morning, there must be some kind of policy or a list at the policy end of the legislative level in particular regarding resources allocation to meet the specific needs of each minority group. This is my general comment for this mornings session. Thank you.

**Christine Bell** - I just I suppose wanted to address the different thoughts on hearing the presentations. And I think one of the things, although we've been hearing a lot about discrimination and people's very bad experiences of life in the city, in a funny way, I've found it a very positive thing being here today and I have a great sense of hope out of hearing the submissions this morning. And part of it is that through the submissions and people giving their different pictures of the world, I think you get a glimpse of what society could be like and what an inclusive society would mean. And often when you have meetings, you focus on one type of exclusion or inclusion and, you know, worry away at that and I know coming from a Human Rights field, often you are looking at divisions along a Unionist/Nationalist line and that again is often, sort of, media perspective on division but I think what we are looking at today is a very broad thing. And to me that gives me a sense of hope because, really, if we are talking about rights and people's rights and the sort of society that we want, we need to start looking at who is doing the talking, why are they talking, and are they being given a space to talk. So I felt a very positive feeling in being here and particularly maybe even in the context where we have had a whole media thing about cease-fires and break down of cease-fires, and yet feeling that there is a whole other agenda. And it is here in this room, many other agendas that need addressed and they need addressed before we can have, any of us can have, you know, peace in a very personal sense, and participation in a personal sense.

So, I mean, I would like to thank Templegrove Action Research for involving me in this and also for this opportunity because it is essentially an exciting thing and the other thing I wanted to just say was probably striking for everybody here, has been how they've had their own assumptions challenged. I know I've realised how ignorant I am of so many different things of how people's disabilities do affect them, of how excluded people feel, of their fears, all those different things. I think there's been things in every presentation that has made me think a different way and made me challenge my own thoughts and the way I see things. And one thing that strikes me is how much whenever, how much there are different languages for talking about things, and often the main language is that people who are different, that first of all that they're not, people themselves aren't defining their difference. Whereas in the room this morning has been very much about people themselves, -very positively- labelling themselves. Because when other people label you it's often to say that you are worse somehow. Often there's two things, there's a normal and an abnormal and the abnormal itself connotes something worse than the normal. And I think a lot of the people have been

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coming forward and have been saying, "what I experience is legitimate and this is the way I experience it. Not the way you experience it or ignore it or deal with it." And I think that's very subversive in a powerful way and that's why it's important that people speak and if they don't feel able to speak here now, it has been important that there at least has been a mechanism for them to have their statement read out and in that sense I feel it has been worthwhile because we have to be able to change the language, you know, to change the way things are. Thanks.

Written submission by Pauline Collins, Ellen Weaver, John Nelis & Barney Devine: From a Secular Perspective; read by Pauline Collins

First of all we would like to take this opportunity to thank Templegrove Action Research for creating the space to enable minority groups to be heard. We very much feel as if we don't exist in this society which seeks to silence minority groups such as ours.

We refer to those of us who do not subscribe to any religious belief, calling for the separation of religion and civil authority and legislative initiatives as a positive step towards a more secular society.

In a supposedly Christian dominated culture, there are many assumptions made, which inevitably neglects the respect of other beliefs, Christians claiming exclusive credit for morality, failing to recognise ethical, moral principals as distinct from religion.

We have morals and moral obligations to the communities in which we live and society as a whole. We have the utmost respect for humankind and the values and beliefs of all who embrace diversity, equality and anti-discrimination locally, nationally and globally.

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Within this supposedly Christian culture prevails an arrogant imposition of Christianity as the belief of all, presuming that we are non-practicing rather than humanists/atheists/secularists through informed choice, having chosen not to follow the religious beliefs of our parents.

We see such attitudes heighten at times of celebration e.g. Christmas/winter solstice, births, deaths, rites of passage into adulthood and marriage. The church has taken over these ancient, natural social events which go back to pre-Christian times. We reserve the right to rituals and celebrations. but feel this increasingly difficult because of Christian

interpretation.

In a country where religion carries such importance and significance rare in Western society, the church has not attempted to embrace humanism. Religion should not have the powerful social influence it has on society. Clergy here should not be permitted to exercise such authority which their counterparts in other societies could not aspire to.

The church has influenced politics and other major social institutions for generations, the family a prime example. People have been persecuted because of pronouncements from clergy on matters relating to birth control, divorce, abortion and sexuality, all of which are private matters for the individuals concerned.

Another is education. Those of us who are teachers by profession come up against the CCMS, (the Catholic Council for Maintained Schools), who, whilst claiming to be an equal opportunities employer, reserve the right to employ only those believers of the Catholic ethos.

Those of us who would like our children to be educated through Irish language schools are also faced with the fact that, in this city, that too is church controlled and whilst non-Catholics are not refused entry, they will be made to feel different, excluded, as the majority of children are prepared for first communion and other Catholic rituals. And as I'm sure you can appreciate, being different is very, very difficult for a child and may have a traumatic effect on them, which no parent wants to see.

Children should learn to embrace diversity and respect the beliefs of others. The education system should be the responsibility of the state and not the church. Children should be encouraged to integrate naturally and not be labelled and separated according to the religious beliefs of their families.

Religion and religious belief systems contribute to the social and political division in society. Faith, any faith, is private and should be the responsibility of parents. We recommend:

1. an integrated state education system and a return of religion as a private matter, the responsibility of parents.
2. that individuals, voluntary and state sectors seek to acknowledge the presence of humanism as a valuable part of communities.
3. that the presumption of "Christianity" be avoided.
4. that facilities for non-religious ceremonies/celebrations be made available (i.e.) a crematorium.

Written submission from Foyle Friends produced and read by James Grant

"Gypsies steal children. Jews eat them. Homosexuals pervert them."

Myths surround all minorities; the most outrageous slander is reserved for those who are not only mistrusted, but seen as dangerous. We need no reminding of the things people say about us; having had our anger dismissed too often as unjustified, we know that majorities need constant reminding.

However, we'll let bygones be bygones and talk about the place that I, as a gay man, would like to live in. It is quite simply a place where lesbian and gay people are seen, admired, respected and loved.

Nothing less will do. I have no doubt that the reason we are not admired, respected and loved is because we are not seen. Indeed, the constant struggle for gay and lesbian people is to achieve visibility. The reality is that lesbian and gay people are denied a presence in society as surely as if they did not exist at all. Locally, the decision influencing constituents of our society be they church, government, media or industry, replicate their national counterparts by behaving as if ten per cent of the population never happened. The problem before the lesbian and gay community in this part of the world, as everywhere else, is that we are constrained to live in a majority community that is openly hostile towards us, very often to the point of visceral disgust. It is a disgust that is learned at a very early age, usually in the school playground, by all be they straight or gay. To most people, homosexuality is an unpleasant matter and one which they would rather not talk about. Most of us would rather not own up to our sense of disgust either. Consequently, and fortunately

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for the majority community, someone thought of a way around the problem. The solution has come to be known as "the closet" and it returns me to the theme of visibility.

The politics of the closet run thus; homosexuality may exist, but it should not be talked about, it should not be seen and it should not be acknowledged. This closet is a windowless and doorless place wherein the sense of isolation is complete. It condemns lesbian and gay people to re-breathe the stale, lifeless air of their own exile until the point where lives are blighted by loneliness. fear and meaninglessness. Love is that human emotion that opens

the door to the highest level of happiness that we, as human beings, can know. It does not come to everyone, be they straight or gay, but a heterosexual is not denied the chance of love, the chance to love. The closet takes away that chance from lesbian and gay people. Everything else follows on from this. Self-esteem collapses, life becomes purposeless and empty whilst escaping via drugs and alcohol leads to substance abuse, often accompanied by destructive

sexual behaviour. The closet is the sinister construction of the heterosexual in every one of us, whether that heterosexual be real or merely wished for. Fortunately, it lies within the power of every gay person to destroy it.

The destruction of the closet is, of course, bound to be profoundly disturbing for the majority, for whom, as we have already said, homosexuality is a very unpleasant matter. Thus it is very difficult to break out of the closet. It seems to me that people would be encouraged to break out of their closet if they thought they could cope with the consequences. If they lived in a society where violence was totally unacceptable, no matter what the reason, (most gay people have endured both physical and verbal violence), if they grew up in a culture that nurtured difference and diversity and that sponsored attempts at "cross-nurturing", then perhaps the trauma of "coming out" to family and friends would be a challenge worth taking up. That, of course, is why we are here today.

When I speak in such broad terms, it becomes apparent that the problems facing the lesbian and gay community are very much analogous to those facing all other minority groups, if not our community as a whole. We all have common cause, it seems. We all have reason to make that change. Yet, each minority group represented here today has probably come, as I have, to that most painful realisation of all whereby we accept how slow we all are to embrace change, to take on new information and to reassess ideas and notions long considered to be inherently true. Yet if we are here today for any reason then it must be to attempt to give impetus to the changes desired. Personally, I have found it very difficult to articulate formal recommendations whose aim is to change attitudes and behaviour, in a forum where we will be attempting to influence policy making purely on a local level. It is my personal opinion that the two changes most urgently required today to make a difference to the lives of lesbian and gay people are an equal age of consent and an equal access to civil marriage. No other minority group, that I am aware of, is denied such basic human rights and I would set down that their denial to lesbian and gay people is the most public affront possible to our public equality. Further discussion would be for a different forum and it is clear that we are not attempting, here today, to influence directly the debate on such matters. I do, however, have three proposals to put before you:

#### 1) INVITE REPRESENTATIVES OF LESBIAN AND GAY GROUPS TO ADDRESS THE ORGANISATION TO WHICH YOU BELONG

Each of the policy making bodies that is to receive a copy of the report eventually to be published might consider inviting representatives of local lesbian and gay organisations to come and address them. Invite us to address your charity, your workers group, your city council or your voluntary organisation. The proposal requires no further explanation.

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Experience has taught me a little of how ignorant, prejudiced and even bigoted people can be on issues surrounding homosexuality. Personal experience has shown me that even listening to the subject being discussed can be too much, so I suggest we all need to start there.

#### 2) MAKE A SPACE FOR THE LESBIAN AND GAY COMMUNITY



Policy makers might consider sponsoring the creation of a building that would be home to local lesbian and gay voluntary groups. Such a place would provide a meeting place for gay people (there are no commercial gay venues anywhere in the North West) and would act as a focal point for the lesbian and gay community. Such an act, especially if it were to include a commitment of public funds to the project, -funds to which lesbian and gay people have contributed, it should be remembered, -would demonstrate that the majority respects its minority community in a very fundamental way. Unless and until such respect is given, no growth can be possible and it seems to me that there can be no more tangible expression of respect than that a space should be made especially for our community.

### 3) A PUBLIC AWARENESS STRATEGY

A public awareness strategy would also have as its dynamic the desire for visibility. It is anticipated that such a strategy would involve a comprehensive, ongoing attempt to provoke discussion, influence opinion and challenge prejudice surrounding lesbian and gay issues throughout this area. We have already given much thought and effort to the possible implementation of such a strategy, but would be delighted to have policy makers and other decision takers backing us in this. Indeed, we feel that many other minority groups already benefit from such assistance and we are impatient to take our rightful place at that table.

In conclusion, I would propose that we work towards persuading central government to commit public monies to a campaign to promote the social inclusion of lesbian and gay people in the same way that public funds are already used to promote healthier attitudes to alcohol or to discourage people from smoking. I would look forward to the day when a campaign would be mounted for such an honourable purpose, just as I would look forward to the day when it would no longer be needed.

#### *Response of the panel*

*Christine Bell - I suppose, I don't know if you can answer this but I mean what sort of things supports somebody that's trying to make a step from being invisible and not prepared to identify themselves and you know, to come in out of the closet?*

*James Grant- Well the best answer I can give to that is to talk about Foyle Friends, basically which exists as an organisation to help people to come out. That's its primary purpose, but recently we've been developing many others, we've expanded our role greatly. As a telephone service, what happens is that people telephone us. They get our number in local newspapers if we have managed to place an advertisement with them, telephone us, we act as both a befriending service both over the phone and will, should the person at the other end of the line wish it, go on to meet the person personally. We've been through that experience. There are a number of volunteers, -there are 8, 9, 10 of us at the moment. We have been through the experience of coming out. Many of us don't have formal qualifications but it is not something for which I think you could have a formal qualification anyway. That's the most support we can give people at the moment. And what we are trying to do at the moment, or one of our major goals is to promote Foyle Friend as widely as possible, to publicise the fact that we are there, that help exists. So many people have no idea that there is help there. I know I didn't for years. That would be part of it and that would also tie in*

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*with the public awareness strategy that I mentioned.*

*Christine Bell - Thanks. The other thing was I don't know. I think it's worth mentioning*

anyway about, do you know anything about the Policy Appraisal on Fair Treatment PAFT guide-lines. It's a thing that I know we've worked with through the CAJ. The government have actually put out, I don't really know why, but they've put out guide-lines that all policy decisions and legislation is meant to be checked against a guide-line for how it impacts on all different groups of people, minorities and it's very wide ranging. It includes out of the Catholic, Protestant, it included poverty and things. It actually includes sexual orientation and women, there's a whole list of things and a lot of groups now are looking at this. We wrote off to all the government departments to see, you know saying, this policy, how did you check that against PAFT and of course the response came back that they weren't really sure what PAFT was about or they didn't see it as applying to them. Or the PAFT report itself is quite interesting in 1994/5 they've put out an annual report of PAFT saying oh yes, all these things were checked against it and they were fine. And yet even a lot of the evidence today has shown how many policies aren't fine for people. But I think it is a thing that's worth trying to find out a bit more about and certainly the CAJ has information. Because if they are going to put these things down on paper, they have to be prepared for the fact that people are going to try to use them and already there's been one case brought by one of the Unions arguing that, I think it was on grounds of women, that a policy hadn't given fair treatment, but it is one of the very few things where sexual orientation is included in the list.

*James Grant* - Well I must thank you for that and make it my business to find out a little bit more about PAFT. I know that we have had people approach us through the phone line and one of their main concerns is their job and losing their job if they do become....

*Christine Bell* - Now it wouldn't really apply directly to jobs, it's more applying to actual decisions, unless it was a public body again. You know there may be a way of using PAFT in that. So it's not a solution by any means, but it's at least one other little thing that you can use, you know, in lobbying. And in a whole range of the things that have been talked about today but...

*James Grant* - Every little helps.

*Patrick Yu* - A parting from the path is the government policy. Do you have any suggestion like any legislative protection on the right of gay and lesbian.

*James Grant* - Personally no I don't. I'm not sure at all, now I'm speaking very personally here, I'm not sure at all that legislation to protect the rights of lesbian and gay people is actually the route that we should follow. That's a personal opinion. I'm not at all comfortable with legislation, for example, in the field of employment that on the one hand protects or bolsters the rights on the position of lesbian and gay people but at the same time impinges upon or impairs the freedom or the liberty of the employer for example. In the short time I can see this as having great many benefits, but I'm not sure in the long term that it will actually help us to achieve the acceptance, rather than the tolerance that we are looking for. Although it's something about which I have a very open mind but at this present time, I'm not at all sure that that is the route that we should go.

In an environment where communal strife and sectarian issues are the centre of discussion, many social issues have been left on the back burner. Issues relating to disability are just one such example.

As a parent of a child with a disability, I and my family have experienced the feelings of a minority group on a daily basis. This feeling has been accentuated by the attitude of our "able bodied" society. Generally people believe that the needs of the disabled are being well addressed by the health service and support groups. Often this is just not true.

## THE ISSUES

What are the issues? They are varied ranging from the attitudes that label people disabled, thus focussing on their inabilities, to the lack of adequate provision locally. This city is inaccessible, most people know this, but little has been done to rectify the situation. Not only modern new building facilities have to be accessible, but also shops and buildings that have been here years.

There is no true integration in education. Children with disabilities either go to a Special School or have to fit into mainstream. Should there not be provision where "able bodied" children have to fit in with children with disabilities, in an inclusive atmosphere in a truly integrated school?

Housing provision is inadequate, particularly in the private sector. The grant structure, with its mean test, puts undue financial pressure on many families, and often the time it takes to implement plans is unduly lengthened due to unreasonable bureaucracy. Despite assurances to the contrary, public bodies are not co-operating on disability issues. Their response is often fragmented and alienating. Many families feel isolated, excluded and financially disadvantaged in conjunction with living daily with disability, as if this is not enough.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

There has to be a greater emphasis on ability rather than the converse. Non-disabled people have to appreciate the implications of language and perceptions on formulating negative attitudes.

People with disabilities have to learn to articulate their needs, and families have to come to the fore in supporting them in this. Those most affected with disabilities have to become more involved with groups that perceive themselves to be working on their behalf.

Locally provision has to be made for people with disabilities in areas such as housing, education, access, transport, finance, health and welfare, and facilities for leisure and sport cannot be overlooked. To ensure this is carried out, someone should be appointed from the public bodies to monitor and implement anything relating to disability.

Too often, lip service has been paid to disability issues. Sometimes provision is made but it is inadequate. Society has to decide for itself, are those most affected by disability to be included or not? If the answer is yes, then these recommendations and many more must be

implemented. If the answer is no, then you may find that those most affected by disability will set their own agenda and the issues swept under the carpet for many years will come to

the fore to haunt all of us who choose not to act.

The minority groups in this town cannot be ignored. If anything is to be learned from our recent history, then it must at least be this. To ignore a problem, does not mean it will go away. For the sake of our child and many like him, without a voice, we all have to act, and act now. Derry cannot prosper in peace and unity if we choose to ignore some people who have every right to live here. This is the challenge. Have we the courage and commitment to face up to it. The choice is yours.

**Verbal submission by Brendan McKeever - a parent of a child with disability**

My submission is as a parent of a child with a disability. And that is the first point that I would like to emphasise. I'm the parent of a child with a disability and not the parent of a child who is disabled. And one of the main points I want to make today is, the language we use to put people in minorities sometimes means that they end up being treated as minorities. And I think it is very, very important that we learn how to use language when we are dealing with people. Now I think it's, I'm not going away from the text, I'm trying to tie it in. Basically, if people with disabilities feel themselves isolated in a minority, then parents of such children are in a double minority because they feel themselves as parents, that they should be able to articulate, influence and develop services for their children. But because so much is put against them and so much authority, so much bureaucracy is there, that they are actually frustrated in that process. And because they feel they should be doing more, that frustration builds up. So the first point is basically how we determine people and call them and label them as disabled people has a great influence on the way we treat them. So if we want to give people with disabilities more rights, more equality, then we should first look at the language we use.

As a parent I feel very angry when people refer to my child as handicapped. I could never understand why, but there is something in the gut that says ... And then when you read around subjects you realise it comes from a time when people were treated in a certain way, and, as I say, if you group people together in minorities I think they have a danger staying in a minority. In other words, I am a parent of a child with a disability. I'm the parent of a child who happens to have a disability. Turning on from that I think people with disabilities, if they are to influence the society that they live in, I hope they do, they have to become involved with the groups that are working on behalf of people with disabilities. I'm glad there's somebody from Rights Now! I feel that it is very, very important that that is appreciated because even as the parent of a child, I have great difficulty identifying with groups who see themselves as acting on our behalf, and yet I don't see any physical disability among them. I've talked to other parents too who sometimes feel the same. It's like if we had a man campaigning for women's rights, I think there would be an uproar somewhere but it's the same. The more that those with disabilities identify the needs of disabled people and start working on their behalf, I think the better it would be for all.

And a step further than that then again, is that all the minorities that come to light over the years through time, there is somebody appointed to look after those rights. So we have women's officers, we have racial equality officers, and we have such things, I think the time has come, and it is long, long overdue, when we have a disability rights officer in the town -and more than one, perhaps, who looks at the issues of education, housing, access, all the major issues that affect families and try and address those type of issues in our society and make our society a more equal place. And I think as time evolves, we do see that there are

small groups of people with disabilities who are actually taking control of the issues, and I think this is a very, very good thing. This is separate from the other issues that I brought up

but if disabled people themselves are campaigning for themselves, then I think they have to be listened to. I can't speak as a disabled person. I have a difficulty with that because it is our child. But as I say I feel more frustrated because it is our child. But yea, I listen to people who are articulate and who are considered not disabled, but they cannot see the issues that we see. And I have to admit that at this stage, until our child was diagnosed five years ago, disability and such issues were alien to myself. It was only because it affected our family that I could start seeing some of the basic things that are always around us but which were never addressed. And the theme of the conference about minorities also has to be taken in context.

I am aware that Templegrove Action Research, well maybe this is a misconception, initially Templegrove Action Research seen themselves in the light of minority groups as in Protestant and Catholic. I think that whole troubles situation, this social strife has hidden for twenty-five to thirty years all the major issues, -the social issues that probably have evolved in this conference today. And I think it's sad that because of the troubles, we are disadvantaged even more. In other words, you seen during the cease-fire that the news coverage changed a lot more to social issues and some of those were actually discussed and maybe even addressed but the troubles have hidden this for a long, long time. And that is another area that media coverage, I think, has to address is how important is such issues? Is it that an issue that is here today, gone tomorrow is more important than an issue that has been there for a long number of years and has been left unaddressed?

And I would then like to reflect on what we call the able-bodied society. I think that I'm not wrong in saying that most people who consider themselves able-bodied feel that those who are disabled are having their needs met. So, when the government says this is a Disability Living Allowance, everybody thinks well, all the disabled people get the Disability Living Allowance. They are all well off, everything's grand. What people are forgotten to be told is that there are criteria for meeting that and there is also procedures for trying to get that. And when no one thing is set out as a card, for those who are considered disabled, there is all these things in between that is preventing them from actually getting the very thing that they are entitled to. And I think that is a misconception that a lot of able-bodied people feel is, but there are social workers, there are health visitors, there are welfare officers. Certainly there are all those things and a lot of them are very, very good, but when policies and the whole structure is not working on behalf of disabled people, you can give disabled people, whatever you perceive they need but that doesn't necessarily mean that you are meeting their needs.

I'd just like to, in conclusion, cover briefly just a few issues like housing. Housing, access, are in the one boat. We have public housing in the town here which is provided quite well and the facilities for disabled people through Habinteg, the Housing Association and Housing Executive are quite good I would say. I'm not in the field, so I don't know. But when it comes to people like myself who are living in the private housing field, there are all the procedures with grants, the disabled facilities grants and at one stage we were actually trying to press quite a high level, the question of why such grant aid for making a new house accessible was not available. But we were always told, and we took it to a very high level, that there was no policy on such matters. In other words, you can argue that the house you're in is entitled to a grant, and if you are means tested and you've got the money, you can get it. But if you want to go and provide a better house, with better facilities all in-built from the beginning, there is no such aid available. Now that's just an anomaly, but that anomaly crops up over and over again, and one of the final points is in regard to education,

main stream education and special education. If your child has a disability, they can go to special education or we can try and fit them in in main stream education. And that fitting in is called integration. I would challenge that misconception. Our child is the only child in his school in a wheelchair. That's not integration. Our child is fitting in to a main stream education. And I think it is a very, very important, we are always trying to fit in to everybody else's plan. Why is not everybody trying to fit in to our plan. You cannot separate a school and have an integrated school with 2 or 3 children with disabilities and call it an integrated school. If they are going to give us choice, let them give us real choice.

And just finally I would like to say this is a very personal view point. It is a viewpoint of a parent. But I feel, I heard on the radio at dinner time that not everybody can come to the conference, not everybody feels articulate and some people are frightened of the issues involved. I think I recognise that, but I think if the conference is to mean anything then something has to evolve, as time goes, that the issues addressed today will continue to be addressed in the society in general and the people who work in this building and work in other public bodies in this town will take on board what people are saying. And that's all really I have to say. Thank you very much.

***Response of the panel***

***Mary Mulholland*** - I'm very glad to see you hear today Brendan to put it forward yourself. I actually had the pleasure of listening to Brendan get up and speak very articulately at the European Day of the Disabled and again he was saying that he was only a parent advocate. Those parent advocates of disabled people, children with disabilities, or disabled children, as some parents like to call them, have got to be listened to. The social workers and the powers that be must listen to them. And for those of you out there that don't know what Brendan was talking about when he said organisations for disabled. He was meaning the big 6, what us disabled see as the big 6, Spastic Society which is now Scope, the Royal National Institute for the Deaf, The Royal National Institute for the Blind. Those are the organisations that never listen to the grass root members and it is about time they did. I'm very glad you raised those issues Brendan, thank you.

***Patrick Yu*** - I just have some kind of feeling, I must praise your courage to come to this forum. I have been working with some disability person when I was in Hong Kong. I understand very much how the family feels about when you have a disability children and I must say to the floor tonight, today here, when you have a disability children, this is not his or her problem, it becomes a problem of the whole family and this stress and pressure is not only on the children alone, it will share the whole family. And I understand very much what you're feeling and how the people labelling you or have very different treatment against you. And finally, I'm so glad to hear your submission today and we will try our best to write in our report. Thank you.

***Christine Bell*** - I just want to add that you were stressing that it was a personal submission and I know you just came in, but it seemed to me that the issues you raised were totally going to the heart of many of the things that we're looking at today -language and how it's defined. In ways, I was trying to sum up earlier on, before you came in, on what had gone on in the morning session and I felt that you just put it really clearly and eloquently, you know, many of the things that I was trying to turn over in my mind having heard all the different submissions in the morning. So thank you very much. It was really valuable.

## **Written submission from the Baha'i community**

This submission is made by the Spiritual Assembly, the elected administrative body for the members of the Baha'i Faith in the local government district of Londonderry. It is based not only on the experiences of these members but on the key beliefs of the world-wide Baha'i religious community.

These beliefs include: the oneness of humankind, the essential spiritual unity of the world's religions, and a social vision of humanity as one body, in which the health of the whole cannot be guaranteed as long as any part of it is disadvantaged, deprived, or suffering.

Our submission has three key elements:

-Being part of a religion which is neither Protestant nor Catholic, and being aware of the richness of religious diversity in this district, and of the need to see beyond the two major branches of Christianity, we propose that the work and responsibility of the Community Relations resources of Derry City Council specifically take into account this wider religious diversity, a move which would be to the benefit of all the people of the district, including those of the two major traditions.

-Knowing that local government is supposed to be consulting with the people they represent as part of the U.N. post-Global Summit programme to which the British government has subscribed, with a view to establishing a "Local Agenda 21" to carry the development of Derry into the 21st century, we call on Derry City Council to embark on this consultative process as a matter of urgency and in a way which will lead to that genuine grassroots empowerment of communities which is a key element of the Agenda 21 process.

-Believing that the oneness of humankind must be understood before genuine tolerance and social justice can be established, we call on the Education authorities to include the teaching of world citizenship as a part of the school curriculum from an early stage.

## **Verbal submission by Ina Cantrell - a perspective from the Baha'i Community**

Ina Cantrell - Well, this submission is made by the spiritual assembly of the Baha'i community in Derry and the spiritual assembly is the elected administrative body for the members of the Baha'i faith. It is based not only on the experiences of these members but on the key beliefs of the world wide Baha'i religious community. These beliefs include the oneness of humankind, the essential spiritual unity of the worlds religions, and a social vision of humanity as one body in which the health of the whole cannot be guaranteed as long as any part of it is disadvantaged, deprived or suffering. Our submission had 3 key elements, being part of a religion which is neither Protestant or Catholic, and being aware of the religious diversity in this district and of the need to see beyond the 2 major branches of Christianity. We propose that the work and responsibility of the community relations resources of Derry City Council specifically take into account this wider religious diversity, a move which would be to the benefit of all the people of the district, including those of the 2 major traditions. Number 2, knowing that local government is supposed to be consulting with the people they represent, as part of the United Nations post global summit programme, to which the British Government has subscribed with a view to establishing a local agenda 21 to carry the development of Derry into the 21st Century. We call on Derry City Council to embark on this consultative process as a matter of urgency and in a way which will lead to that genuine grass roots empowerment of communities which is a key element of the agenda

21 process. And number 3, believing that the oneness of humankind must be understood before genuine tolerance and social justice can be established we call on the education authorities to include the teaching of world citizenship as a part of the school curriculum from an early stage.

### *Response of the panel*

*Patrick Yu - As we respond to the Muslim community this morning, in particular relation to the third point in your recommendation, I think some of the floor people they did not appear in the morning session, I think we are aware of the Religious Reform Order N.I. 1989 which imposes compulsory religious education in our school once a week. I think it is already totally ..... those in the national law in which the U.K. Government signed a treaty like International Convention For The Elimination Of Racial Discrimination. As I told the Muslim community this morning, the U.K. Government they will examine their report by March, next month, on the 4th and 5th of March in Geneva. C.E.N. N.I. (Council for Ethnic Minority), we will send a delegation team to Geneva and will be including this point in our submission paper. This is one thing. Second thing, I'm quite concerned about, you know, the resources in particular to the religious and other education programme. Maybe we are not aware, in England, Wales and Scotland we have separate legislation in which religious education is not compulsory, and also in the schools in England, Wales and Scotland, they have opportunity to have minority religious programme in the school curriculum. I think in U.K. as a whole, we must have the same kind of practice and policy which is extended to Northern Ireland. This is my comment on your submission. Thank you.*

*Ina Cantrell - Well the Baha'i belief also would be the hope that integrated schools will actually be a result in Northern Ireland because only when you integrate can you really become tolerant of one another and grow up knowing each other's culture.*

### **Verbal submission by Dr. Nooshin Proudman, N.I. Council for Ethnic Equality**

I would like to read the background of NIC. A number of organisations and individuals from both majority and minority ethnic communities living in the north of Ireland approached multi-cultural resources centre to investigate the idea of formally establishing an independent network of communication between agencies and individuals who are concerned to ensure equality of treatment and equality of opportunity for all those who live, work and study in this country. The meeting was held on the 11th of June 1994 to discuss the concept of establishing a council for ethnic equality, North of Ireland. It was proposed and agreed by the vast majority of participants for a steering committee to be set up to move forward the idea of such a council. On the 13th of May 1995, the North of Ireland Council for Ethnic Equality was launched following the call for its establishment. Now, the purpose of the council would be to value and sustain ethnic difference, to ensure that North of Ireland has appropriate anti-racist legislation, to ensure that anti-racist training and education is available to promote the dissemination of advice and information about ethnic and ethnic equality, to seek wider understanding of concern in the field of ethnic equality. Other objectives would be to improve the quality of life among minorities, to engage in, advise or direct research which will have a positive impact on the lives of minorities, to provide and/or facilitate advocacy support for minority and ethnic individuals, to support victims of racial harassment, to develop and implement an effective system to monitor and address incidents of racial harassment.



**Verbal submission by Donnie Sweeney - the Men's Action Network**

I must say I came along this morning really as an observer and I didn't think that I was going to speak at all. I suppose I wondered how a 40 year old married man, who has a job, and who is a Catholic as well, could be considered a minority in Derry. But I must say, as the morning went on I began to find that there was lots of things said by many of the previous speakers that I felt some sort of, that I felt akin to. So I decided at the last minute to say something. And I am speaking as in individual, but as a member of the Men's Action Network or M.A.N., as we call it. And can I also say at the outset that we don't meet on the top of the Donegal hills and beat drums. We meet locally in one of the local voluntary sector offices and we meet once a week to discuss personal health and well being. M.A.N. was set up in October 1995 and maintains an open door policy with a friendly welcome to any man who wishes to come along. Our aims and objectives are as follows

1. To stimulate the growth of community self help initiatives among men in the North West area.
2. To facilitate communication between men on issues relating to their health, well-being and changing role in society and to help establish such facilities or services deemed necessary.
3. To seek to create new services to meet the current emotional, physical and mental health needs of men.
4. To seek to create pre-emptive support as well as active response to men experiencing crisis.
5. To provide information on issues relating directly to men's health and well-being.
6. To explore and attempt to understand the nature of disadvantage, damage and pain currently experienced, as well as inflicted, by men in our society.
7. To focus and build upon men's desire for useful change to the current male role.
8. To help promote the holistic well-being of society through the participation of men in self-help scenarios which foster respect for both men and women equally. And finally
9. to work in conjunction with women's organisations and other relevant groups towards mutual understanding, social inclusion and equality.

I think we came together as a group of men for a number of reasons. I suppose, when we looked at some of the statistics about men's health we were appalled. Some of those statistics are, that men die on average 5 to 6 years younger than women. They are twice as likely as women to die before the age of 65, four times as likely to die prematurely from that biggest killer of all heart-attack. And twice as likely to die from lung cancer. 75% of suicide victims are men. Most drug addicts, homeless and inhabitants of mental hospitals are men. As a group we really want to challenge the stereotypical roles of men. I refer to the heart- attack and the number of people that die from heart-attacks. I think the statistic is something like 10% of those men who die from a heart-attack could actually have been saved if they had called the doctor, something like 10 or 15 minutes earlier. We don't do it. We don't look after ourselves. Macho man is killing us. I said I wasn't sure about whether I was in a minority or not. I suppose at the moment the Men's Action Network feels like a minority but I suppose some of us hope that sometime in the future we will become a majority. Thank you very much.

***Response of the panel***

***Christine Bell - I have a question really about in what ways have you worked with women's organisations and how have you found that relationship?***

*Donnie Sweeney - I think a lot of us are actually led by the women's movement. I think we have, as I say, just come together in October of last year. I myself work in the voluntary*

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*sector, as a number of us do, and we have always been, I don't know, maybe envious of the women's movement and how far it has come and certainly we would see us working closely with and along the same lines, almost, as the women's movement. I think we are struggling with what that means to us as men, but, I mean, that's what we are about.*

*Christine Bell - I'm glad you did decide to speak because I think it is an interesting perspective and in ways you know, when we are looking at ways of inclusiveness, you know one of the things that has been coming out has been, if you like, the need for people who are defined maybe as majorities to change. And maybe that at the minute means that you are a minority within a majority. You know, that's positive in itself.*

**Verbal submission by Mary Kay Mullan of the Travellers Support Group**

Hello, how are you doing? I'm here as a member of the Derry Travellers Support Group. I'm not speaking for members of the travelling community, who are not here today. I'm working, the Derry Travellers Support Group is formed to support travellers to come to develop their community action for themselves. And we provide, our aim is to provide resources, education and training and support for travellers to organise within their own communities. And one reason there's no traveller here is just the time it would take to encourage travellers to come to speak. As well as that, since travellers have not yet organised in community groups, individual travellers would be speaking for themselves and would feel it difficult to speak for their community. But as a member of the Derry Travellers Support Group we value the contribution of travellers to our society and we recognise them as a separate ethnic group.

At the moment one of our biggest problems we are facing is that travellers aren't even going to be, you know, at the moment we are fighting for travellers to be included in the new Race Relations Act. The government doesn't even want to recognise travellers as a separate ethnic group within the remit of the Race Relations Act. Issues for travellers in Derry are issue of accommodation, issues of discrimination by the settled community, and issues of access to education and training and also issues of poverty and exclusion. And that leaves travellers outside of the community and without the support and also as targets for any racial slurs that people wish to put on them. We have a report here from the conference we organised called "Travelling On" addressing the needs of the travelling community, an inter-agency conference held here in the Guildhall last April 1995. So we want to submit that. From that, there was traveller input into that conference as well, and there was recommendations from it. And we recently held a workshop for travellers and members of the support group to come together and to discuss how the support group could be supportive to travellers and how travellers could maybe get involved in the support group. Out of that, demands came that we could have a centre, a premises for travellers where they could establish their own identity and give them independence and have a place from which to organise. They also want, travellers were also keen to have facilities for children and child-care and education for both men and women within the city and a youth club so that young people could have somewhere to go. Because my observation at the moment, young people, well one of the big issues for travellers was exclusion from pubs and social places in Derry just because they were travellers in general. And young people not feeling able to go to venues in the city, like other youth clubs or to night-spots or things like that. feeling on the outside of our society. So that's at the moment what I would say on

behalf of Derry Travellers Support Group.

**Panel's response**

**Patrick Yu** - I have a few questions. First one I would like to ask about, is there any

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support from the local council in relation to the travellers' problem in Derry.

**Mary Kay Mullan** - Well the traveller, -the council sees their role as providing site accommodation for travellers in Derry and they have done that by providing 2 sites, one at Daisyfield on the Letterkenny Road and one at Ballyarnett Park outside the city and this operation is controlled from the City Engineers Department and it's the only department that has anything to do with housing and people and I don't feel they are equipped to deal with that. And the sites are, on the Daisyfield site there is just toilets, cold water and a shower provision in a small unit beside the hard top, where they put the caravans. And it's a very restricted space within that site and there really isn't any room for providing a place for, we cannot provide the pre-school child care that we want because we can't get, you know we'd need a very small portacabin to put on it and we haven't had the space within that site for any development. So it's a very closed site. On the Ballyarnett site, it's a lot bigger but it's half houses, where you have a kitchen and a bathroom with a bath and you have a solid fuel heater with, so they can heat water as well. But half houses also mean that travellers need a caravan for their families to sleep in and all. And it hasn't been very satisfactory and there has been problems about the maintenance and running of that site. And at the moment, there's also a big problem of travellers travelling around in Derry or in Ireland, where they can go to get facilities and there actually are travellers on that site at the moment who are travelling around. They are called the carpet people. But I don't think at that site there was no provision for a stand pipe for water or for toilet provision for families coming there, you know, just to stay for a week or over-night you know. So I think there's a problem with accommodation and is very, very problematic. There's lots of problems and it becomes also a

problem where the rate payers won't stand for this if anything goes wrong, or anything. So it's a very, very difficult situation. And also we have been pushing that the Housing Executive should be or -Housing Association- should be responsible for housing and that they should provide some travellers who move around in small family units, would like a small housing unit you know, where there would be a few houses together for travellers to live in. The ideal that they would like.

**Patrick Yu** - Another question I would like to ask. I am aware some of the councillors, maybe not in Derry, in other district areas, some of the councillors quite racist. And quite often they make some very racist remarks on travellers. Is there any situation in Derry?

**Mary Kay Mullan** - Oh yes. Well, I think it reflects the general community that travellers are seen as a problem. The start is, this is a problem. This is something the rate payers won't stand for, so therefore councillors are also pressurised in the fact that they have pressure from, you know, their constituency. And also that it is seen as a problem, and they have to deal with this problem and why should they have to deal with this when there's other things they need to get on with. So travellers are really on the margin again. And when you see something as a problem then all you do is complain about the problems rather than... We are trying to create a creative, positive approach to sorting out some sort of accommodation for travellers in Derry. Many travellers do live in houses in the Derry area as well, but they still want to retain their traditional cultural ways of living as well.

**Christine Bell** - I just had a question. You spoke a little bit about the barriers for a

*traveller wanting to come and speak and present at something like this, I wondered could you speak a little more about that just briefly?*

*Mary Kay Mullan- Well, I feel, from our point of view, we'd have to support the traveller to come and talk. And also that since travellers in Derry haven't yet organised a kind of a traveller group as such, you know, that they would be feeling that they were coming*

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*talking as an individual, maybe rather than representing the whole community. We have worked with one traveller or two travellers to go and talk in schools, you know. A young traveller who's working with us, have supported her in coming along and going to talk in schools to smaller groups about their experience both in the society and in schooling, which is usually very, been very negative with a lot of discrimination. So, also with the short time involved, we hadn't time to do that.*

Written submission from Meanscoil Dhoire in Irish read by  
Tomas O Doughaile, translated by Dave Duggan

Information concerning our School:

Since 1984 children have received an excellent primary education through the medium of Irish in Bunscoil Cholmcille which is located in the Steelstown area of the city. However on completion of their primary schooling, these children were compelled to attend English medium secondary schools, despite the fact that most would have preferred to continue their education through the medium of Irish. This failure of the Department of Education to provide continuity into secondary level resulted in parents taking the initiative to ensure that their children receive an education suitable to their age, needs and abilities. Parents and supporters of Irish medium education established Meanscoil Dhoire to provide secondary education through the medium of the Irish language. Meanscoil Dhoire began on the first of September 1994 and continues to provide instruction of the full curriculum as prescribed by D.E.N.I.

The advantages to Irish medium Education:

In the Parent's Charter it is stated "It is your duty to ensure that your child receives full time education suitable to his or her age, ability and aptitude, and any special educational needs which he or she might have. In most cases this is achieved through the child's attendance at school." We believe that all parents have a right to state a preference for the school that they would like their child to attend.

Any child provided the opportunity of education through the Irish language has a very special ability shared by few other children at that age. They have a level of fluency and confidence in a second language that immediately gives them an advantage educationally and socially. This advantage should be nurtured and built upon by continuing their education in an Irish medium secondary school. Too many children have lost this advantage already.

70% of the children of Europe speak two or more languages fluently. A child, as one of this number, can claim his/her rightful place as a full citizen of Europe, confident and assured in their own identity and culture but also open and appreciative of other people's cultures and traditions. These children are not part of some isolated minority. Indeed it is monolingual children who form the minority.

In Ireland today children are receiving their total education through the medium of Irish in both primary and secondary schools. Obviously then for a child who has spent 7 years in Irish medium primary education, the natural choice is for them to continue their secondary education through Gaeilge... Meanscoil Dhoire provides this opportunity.

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#### Funding and Exclusion:

The 15 subjects of the N.I. Curriculum are taught to all secondary school children in Derry. This means that up until the age of 16 every child, irrespective of whether they attend grammar or secondary school will be taught a common body of skill and knowledge. In a Gaeilge medium secondary school, the same curriculum is adhered to but with the added advantage of being taught through Gaeilge, therefore constantly enhancing linguistic ability.

While it is the curriculum, as laid down by the Department of Education for Northern Ireland (D.E.N.I.) that is taught in the Meanscoil, and while we are liable to inspection by the same body, they still refuse to provide funding of any kind. Our only funding being provided entirely by a Management Support group, parents and the public. This is a heavy financial burden considering the staffing and facilities required to accommodate a modern secondary school.

Teachers' salaries

Classroom accommodation

Heating / Lighting

All books, equipment and materials

All transport and travel costs

Even grants for school uniforms, meals and transport have been withdrawn from pupils who enrolled in Meanscoil Dhoire. What we find particularly regrettable about the Northern Ireland Department of Education's attitude towards our efforts to provide a high standard of education through Irish, is not only their refusal to co-operate with us, but their ability to block other sources of funding, as we found to our cost when we approached various bodies at both home and abroad seeking financial aid, only to be told that this funding was not available as we fell under an *educational remit*. We believe that most can understand our dismay and disbelief at this refusal from groups whose aim is to aid the improvement and development of Irish society, on the grounds that the Education Dept. has denied us their official support. It would seem that we are locally to be denied the right of choice itself in our own children's education

#### Conclusion:

We hope that we have expressed clearly both the importance of education through Irish and our obvious need for financial support. As to the Dept. of Education's reluctance to fund us, we find their complete lack of recognition hard to accept given that we meet all the necessary requirements (including their own curriculum and inspection). We feel that we are providing an essential and effective facility for children to enrich themselves both culturally and linguistically.

Although we fail to comprehend the lack of official provision or recognition for a secondary school which obviously meets the Education Board's standards, we certainly acknowledge and greatly appreciate the support we receive from the Derry community, without whom the existence and continuance of our school would have been impossible. It is our wish to repav

that support by not only maintaining the present high standard of Irish medium education for young people, strengthening family and school links, but also constantly improving and modernising our facilities, thus enabling us to involve the community as a whole. There is perhaps a glimmer of light on the horizon, as we look at the recent D.E.N.I. funding given to the Fountain Primary school through the Londonderry Initiative, this to be applauded and welcomed as perhaps a sign of changing attitudes towards the needs within our community.

While we see the Irish language as a means of granting children a greater opportunity to

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develop educationally to their full potential and of creating an atmosphere that minimises disaffection and marginalisation, we also view it as an important development of the cultural identity of the community in general. The proper understanding of autonomous culture is surely the most basic step in the promotion of tolerance within a diverse community. Only through a mutual respect and comprehension of these diverse cultures can reconciliation truly blossom.

***Response of the panel***

***Patrick Yu*** - *I have a question about how many student at the moment in your school?*

***Tomas O Doughaile*** *replies in Irish*

***Dave Duggan*** *translates: Twenty five.*

***Christine Bell*** - *It was just to say I know that the Newry Bun Scoil, are at least looking at the possibility of taking a European case to the European Court of Human Rights and I don't know if that's something that you have or would consider. It's a very slow thing to do so it's not like it provides an instant solution but you know, it's another way of lobbying and certainly the organisation that I work with the CAJ, we are providing assistance to the Newry Bun Scoil people as regards that and if you did want any advice on that I can give you the phone number and you can talk to the lawyer there.*

***Tomas O Doughaile*** *replies in Irish*

***Dave Duggan*** *translates:-Thomas appreciates the offer of any help but notes that himself and his colleagues at the Irish language secondary school are so busy running the school and keeping the school running that engaging in processes of law is probably down their agenda. But they welcome the offer of help.*

**Written submission from The Women's Centre - read by Clionagh Boyle**

This submission is based on the North West Women's Consultation Research Report on the Urban Regeneration Outline Strategy Proposal. The researchers consulted externally throughout the various women's groups in and around the city. We feel that the issues outlined in the research reflect a contemporary picture for local women. The report was prepared by Helena Schlindwein and Theresa Kelly.

The Women's Centre is an organisation dedicated to promoting education and empowerment for local women. It is around these issues of education and participation in public life that we have chosen to focus.

The United Nations Women's Conference was held in Beijing last year. Out of this conference a number of key issues were raised in relation to women's rights. Women's right to equality and participation in public policy was emphasised and agreed. The governments of Britain

and Ireland were both participants in the conference where it was agreed that 40% representation of either gender should be the goal of all public bodies.

Both governments have now signed the Beijing Declaration which recognises women's need for empowerment and equal rights.

Although these sound familiar and very basic social principles women's contribution is still not reflected in their level of public representation. In the regard in spite of being a statistical majority they are still accorded minority status in terms of access and

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representation. Many local women experience this as invisibility. They feel that both individually and collectively women and women's groups are not listened to and their work is undervalued. Their experience and social contribution is discounted and marginalised. The Womens Centre therefore welcomes Templegrove Action Research's consultation process as we see community consultation as essential to social inclusion.

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

It has been proven that women work well in alternative educational settings such as those provided by the Women's Movement. It is essential that this work is valued and appropriately accredited.

There is a lack of statutory support for personal development work for women. We see this as an essential first step in educational provision to counteract the low self-esteem experienced by many women. Self esteem is related to class, education, levels of poverty, work and job opportunities. We believe that support for personal development work is essential to women's social inclusion.

In order for women to avail of educational opportunities, childcare provision is necessary and should be provided free and on the same premises. This is a statutory responsibility.

Centre with adult education classes and creche provision are critically under resourced.

Special education for adult women with learning difficulties such as dyslexia and literacy problems is under resourced.

A major issue for women was getting work placements that provide education and training with realistic work experience.

Young single parents are blatantly discriminated against by the education system. This issue needs to be taken on board by educational institutions and procedures put in place e.g. childcare provision whereby education can continue uninterrupted.

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Women now expect to be invited to participate in decision making processes on the new bodies. Gender-proofing policies should be strongly enforced on all partnership boards and public bodies.

Groups within the voluntary/community sector who provide resources and promote the development of women should be represented on panels, boards and government departments. It is essential that these bodies who make decisions on the provision of

education, training and childcare are accountable.

These steps are essential to develop a vision that is diverse and inclusive.

We have chosen to focus on education and public participation in this submission simply because the scope of the issues affecting women locally is so expansive. Our work and concern of course extends to a much wider range of issues including personal safety and violence against women, discrimination against lesbian and bisexual women, discrimination against single parents. We have chosen to highlight certain issues rather than others with an awareness that some of these are already represented by other groups at the hearing today.

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### *Response of the panel*

*Christine Bell - I suppose as you have chosen to focus on public participation in Northern Ireland particularly, women don't seem to be visible at all in government. It's a very vague question but I wondered if you could have given us your thoughts on how much the barriers to women in say the political parties here are barriers of access and how much it's barriers of not really seeing the parties as meeting their needs. You know how much it's sort of theoretical barriers to feeling not included in that politics.*

*Clionagh Boyle - I think there are a couple of issues there. I think participation in public life in general is very difficult and a life in politics is very demanding particularly if you've got children and other responsibilities. So I think there are very simple issues like that. I think also there is the issue of whether women should go forward within the parties or go forward on a single issue on a feminist agenda. And like, I think that is being discussed as well. But I think political parties, some political parties are taking steps, more steps should be taken to promote the inclusion of women and the accommodation of women within political structures.*

*Christine Bell - And what's been the sort of discussion around, within your group around women going forward on a single agenda?*

*Clionagh Boyle - Well actually we are going to have a debate on that during International Women's week around where is common ground. Is it possible to go forward on a women's agenda? And that is I think on the 11th of March.*

Written submission read by Mrs. Winnie McClements from the NW Hard of Hearing Club

We would like to thank Templegrove Action Research Limited for providing a forum through which our views may be expressed.

The North West Hard of Hearing Group was established in 1989. The group came together in recognition of the lack of representation of this minority. It has a membership of 73 people and the elected committee meets monthly to discuss and explore issues relating to the problems arising from being hard of hearing.

Seventy three people may appear to be a very small minority but let us set these in the wider context. There are about 7.5 million people in the U.K. with some degree of hearing



loss - that's 17% of the population; at least three quarters of them are over 60 years old. Approximately 3 in every 1,000 children are born with some degree of deafness and it is estimated that 1 in every 1,000 children is born with a severe or profound hearing loss. The most common cause of deafness is simply the ageing process.

Here in Northern Ireland 25% of the population are hard of hearing. In normal

circumstances 25% of the population would not be viewed as a minority but this condition is not really perceived by the public at large as a serious disability.

Hard of hearing people have the same abilities, interests and aspirations as anyone else but they continually face social barriers such as discrimination and communication difficulties.

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However, these barriers can often be overcome through greater awareness of hard of hearing people's needs and the use of technical and human support.

There are a number of approaches to the removal of such barriers:

1. Perhaps City Council and a number of other statutory bodies throughout the Derry City area could adopt a "raising of awareness" policy and undertake the promotion of this policy to the wider community in an attempt to have the needs of hard of hearing people more widely understood and appreciated.

2. Certainly the problems of the hard of hearing community could be improved dramatically by the introduction of some simple technical devices in public places. For example, the "Loop System".\* When installed in public areas this enables someone with a hearing aid to tune into specifically what they want to hear without the interference of background noise. This is a particularly valuable asset to the hard of hearing in places like cinemas, leisure centres, theatres, banks, post offices and churches.

For your information, we enclose a table giving estimates relating to adults in Great Britain, based on Institute of Hearing Research Statistics and outlining degrees of deafness and how prevalence of hearing loss relates to age.

In conclusion, given that the most common cause of deafness is simply the ageing process we would like to offer a timely reminder to the entire population that this is a disability which will, in all probability, come to us all. Any measures which are taken to improve the lot of the hard of hearing can only be an investment, for all, for the future.

\*A Loop System comprises of a loop of wire, an amplifier, and either a microphone or direct connection to a sound source. If a hearing aid is switched to its "T" setting, a tiny coil within the aid responds to the magnetic waves sent out from the loop.

#### DEGREES OF DEAFNESS

Description of hearing loss	dBH L better ear average	No. of adults (approx)	% of total adult pop (approx)
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Mild hearing loss	25-40	5.0 million	11.33%
Moderate hearing loss	41-70	2.2 million	4.99%
Severe hearing loss	71-95	0.24 million	0.54%
Profound hearing loss	96+	0.24 million	0.14%
Total		7.5 million	17%

*Estimates relating to adults in Great Britain, based on Institute of Hearing Research Statistics.*

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#### HOW PREVALENCE OF HEARING LOSS RELATES TO AGE

Age group	% prevalence of hearing loss (audiometrically measured)
17-30	1.8
31-40	2.8
41 -50	8.2
51 -60	18.9
61 -70	36.8
71 -80	60.2

#### *Response of the panel*

*Mary Mulholland - Just two points I'd like to bring up Winnie. Do you think it's the possibility that some of the organisations don't realise that the loop induction system or some of the statutory bodies don't think of the value they would get back from the loop induction system installed as a problem?*

*Winnie McClements- Well that's quite possible but we are hoping to get a campaign of education in the public generally and businesses and perhaps the local council, DoE people who have a way of introducing this sort of thing to the public you know. But we are hoping to start a campaign generally to make everybody aware that we're behind in that respect yes.*

*Mary Mulholland - And do you think enough is being done by the statutory bodies who do have such facilities to publicise those facilities?*

*Winnie McClements - No, I don't think so. No. Because there is just too many people who don't know how to handle a deaf person or a hard of hearing person. So I think that education really, it must be stemmed from there, I think.*

*Christine Bell - I apologise for my ignorance here but I wondered what does a lip speaker actually do? Is it anyone who is speaking that's within disability or do you have a special person?*

*Winnie McClements - Well, we are in the process of training a lip-speaker now for the North West Education Area you know. She has good hearing. She has full hearing but she will be able to communicate by just speaking what a hearing person is talking about. We wouldn't hear perhaps what somebody is talking about on a stage. But she will hear and sit and just lip speak to us. We can lip read her but we cannot hear what the person is saying. So it is a great advantage to have a lip speaker at any group meetings or that sort of thing you know.*

#### Closing remarks from panel

Patrick Yu - I will just make a few points. Firstly, I am so glad to hear different groups make their submission today in relation to their problem. I think it is vital that in Derry City or in the whole of Northern Ireland we have different groups of people suffering from different problems. And because of the submissions today, and also because of the Public Hearing today, I find that I am not alone. I am working with ethnic minorities, in particular with my Chinese community. We have been fighting for years and years for legislative protection for social policy changes, in other similar problems in other groups we deliberate this morning and this afternoon. And I found that this kind of forum can make us aware our

struggle is not alone. After today's public meeting I think one of my main tasks to do is to make contact with other ethnic groups so that maybe we can work together even though we have different issues. As I make my comment in the afternoon remarks, it creates a kind of broad alliance on the minority issue. As I told this afternoon, the problem manifest are on the discrimination side but in different forms. So each group may already suffer various degrees of discrimination and I'm quite keen, in particular those international standards to eradicate those discrimination. And as you are aware all those international standards are based on the International law on the principal of equality to all and equity of treatment. And this international standard, they base on and also they set the limits of both the majority rules and also how to protect the minority rights. I think today is a very good situation, every group can make their own voice. Every group can raise their own problem so that the panel have a very good opportunity to put everything into our report and your submission will be very fruitful and will help us to enrich our report. And today is only the starting and I still hope more and more other people will voice their problem so that we can support each other. Thank you very much.

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**Mary Mulholland** - I would just like to add a few things to what Patrick said. I came into today with great anticipation never having done such a thing before and coming from a disability background I find that I've listened to everybody today, discrimination is very, very rife throughout the whole of Ireland still and throughout the whole of the world to a great degree. I think, speaking on behalf of one of the largest majority minority groups, as Patricia Bray said this morning 201,000 people are physically disabled. That does not include the visually disabled or the hearing disabled and that is only adult percentage of the population. There is over a quarter of the people of Northern Ireland with some form of disability and it is about time everybody's voice, not just the disabled's voice, but everybody's voice is listened to, and listened and taken heed of, and I would like to close on that remark.

**Christine Bell** - Well it's quite difficult to just reflect quickly after hearing such a diversity of point of views throughout the day and so much new information, so many things that maybe we knew put in different ways has been very thought provoking. I suppose one thing that I am involved with that seems to me to be quite relevant to this is campaigning for a bill of rights and although it sounds like quite a legal thing, it seems to me that a lot of what people are addressing here is some sort of, the need for some sort of mechanism to have their concerns addressed and where they can question things and debate things. But really, in conclusion, I wanted to go back and just read a definition that came out of the presentation of the Foyle Homeless on behalf of Foyle Homeless because although it's put forward as a definition of a homeless person, it struck me that the sort of idea that it was putting forward was something that everybody was in their way saying. They said:

"A homeless person has been described as someone who does not live in a place where individuals and families can be themselves for better or worse, can obtain peace and security and can flourish both mentally and physically. It should be an effective base for family life, for providing relaxation and the strength to participate in our highly pressurised and competitive society. I would argue that it is a basic human right to have a place to live which is affordable safe and secure."

And with that I'll finish.

## Closing Remarks from Marie Smyth, Director, Templegrove Action Research

It has fallen to me to finish today's proceedings as the Projects Director of Templegrove Action Research. And to conclude I'd just like to reflect back to you some of the things that we have been listening to here today. First of all when we launched this Public Hearing, I was not aware of the vibrancy, the energy, the enthusiasm and the anger that there is in the disability community in this city. I am left in no doubt and I think the people who have been sitting here today are left in no doubt that there is a great deal of energy, vitality, anger, just anger and all sorts of other things there. And I am very impressed by the range and the diversity and the depth of the submissions we've had to day and our final report will reflect that.

The second thing I would like to say is we have had a number of different groups coming forward who we have not normally heard from, certainly under the roof of the Guildhall.

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We've had people talking about the difficulties faced by people living with HIV and AIDS. We've had people talking about the difficulties contained within the Muslim community and with other religious minorities such as the Baha'i community. We have also had Pauline Collins talking to us about the difficulties faced by those who do not wish to live within a religious community at all but wish to live as secular people in a secular society. And we have also been delighted to have submissions from the Protestant community speaking about the difficulties they face living in a society, in a city, which is predominantly Catholic, and particularly Ken Rooney's submission from the Fountain Area Partnership. We have also had people talking about the gay and lesbian issues faced by people living in the city in that capacity, and towards the end of the day we have had submissions from the linguistic minorities, namely the Irish language community, on the difficulties faced by them.

Our report will contain and elaborate on those themes and we will have the benefit and the wisdom of the panel to add to those and we will be publishing that report and presenting it to the statutory bodies, all of whom were invited to attend here today. Very few have managed to make it but we will make sure that the views and the opinions that were expressed here today are placed on their desks for their urgent attention.

The themes that have emerged and the feelings that have come up have been many. When I was listening I could hear nervousness, but I could also hear a lot of anger. I could hear a great deal of sadness and I was very moved by what people had to say. And certainly some of you who were sitting down there listening were also moved and were moved to put pen to paper and to come up here, some of you for the first time to speak on behalf of yourselves and people who you live with or who you are connected with in some way. Our aim was to empower people to do just precisely that and I hope that you feel like we do, that there has been some measure of success in empowering people to do this.

As Patrick, I think, has said, one of the difficulties faced by people living in minority situations is that of isolation. Hopefully today, people have been able to come out and recognise the similarities between their situation and other peoples situations, even though they may not share the same situation in terms of disability or religion or political view or whatever, there are certain common themes and we look forward to teasing those out with the panel over the next number of days and including those in our final report.

Where do we go from here? I'm going to issue you with an invitation now. We are back in

the Guildhall from the 18th to the 20th of June in this room and we will be launching our final reports, amongst which will be the report of today's proceedings. You are all more than welcome to come back and talk to us again, meet us again and we will be also inviting the City Council and all the other public bodies to come and receive what we have found out over the last 2 years work.

I am indebted to Brendan McKeever who pointed out that in this city, and indeed in this country, when you mention minorities and when you mention minority rights, very often people have come to think of that, simply as a matter of sectarianism, the sectarian division and the Northern Ireland problem. And I think today has been a very powerful illustration of how, underneath that large agenda there are other agendas that have been squashed and disallowed. Hopefully today we have gone somewhat towards "complicating" the picture but also enriching it and allowing voices to be heard. So please come back and meet us on the 18th of June right through to the 20th and we will be glad to see you.

Finally, I need to give out some thanks to some of the people who have made today possible. First of all, Lorcan is wiping his head down there at the back and he has been sitting very

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patiently on the sound desk. He has been operating the loop system, which is what you see on the floor in front of you, and he has also been tape recording our proceedings which we will transcribe and turn them into our final report. Gloria is now in the position of having to sign what I'm saying and I'm talking about her. But Gloria has been standing here signing very patiently all day and doing a great job in ISL and we are very grateful to her coming all the way from Buncrana and she didn't bring her passport. Next to Gloria we have Chuck Mikity sitting on the desk here with the overhead projector. He has been writing people's names and their organisation titles and projecting them up onto the screen for us. We have Allen Kennedy sitting at the back with his camera and he has been moving around taking photographs and we are very grateful to him for doing that. We have Pauline Collins sitting on the desk who has been receiving you, hopefully issuing you with badges as you came in the door. And Ruth Moore standing beside her, who has been giving psychological support to people before they came up and picking them up off the floor after they have been up at the front. Can we thank our observers who have travelled all the way from Portadown and we are very glad to have them here and we will be collaborating with them. Hopefully they are thinking about doing something similar in their area and we would be very glad to help them and advise them in any way we can and we look forward to a return invitation to Portadown to a Public Hearing there. Can we thank Joe O'Brien who has stayed with us and who actually is the only official observer who has stayed with us throughout the whole day, from the Western Health and Social Services Council. Joe, thank you. And I think we really are at the end of today, so I will finish by thanking the people who gave us the money to organise today, that is Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust in Belfast, the Community Relations Council, Belfast, the Inter-Church Reconciliation Fund for Ireland and Derry City Council who provided us funding. Again, thank you all for coming, and you can look forward to reading the published report of today's proceedings in the near future. Thank you all.

Submissions received after the hearing

Submission 1

**GINGERBREAD NORTHERN IRELAND  
SUPPORTING LONE PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN**

In October 1995 the Derry Regional Office of Gingerbread NI was opened to offer advice and support to lone parents and their children.

Becoming a lone parent can happen in a number of ways. Many people immediately think of young single mothers when lone parents are mentioned. While single (unmarried parenthood does account for a significant number of one parent families (27.8%), it is not the only situation. Male lone parents and widows also account for a significant number, divorced and separated parents account for the largest proportion of lone parents in Northern Ireland today(61.1%).

An example of a person from the latter group could be a 30 year old working woman who has paid full tax and National Insurance contributions and as a result of the breakdown of her marriage finds herself and her children in temporary hostel accommodation. Present hostel accommodation is not suitable for those who are forced to give up the privacy and security of their own home and have to live in one room with their children.

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We recommend that self contained flats and houses, which are more appropriate, are provided. This would give the person a more dignified change to their situation which would allow them the space to assess their lives. This would also relieve the added burden of stereotypical attitudes.

Another main concern is the lack of child care facilities within the area. If a lone parent was considering going back to the work place or training they would face many dilemmas. These would consist of long waiting lists and high creche fees. The issues in connections with Registered Childminders also present similar drawbacks. The only other alternative for lone parents is to depend on their families for child care but this is not always available. Because of the problems relating to the child care issue, avenues and opportunities for employment and further education are blocked causing the lone parent to be caught up in the poverty trap.

Our recommendation for child care would be that the voluntary, statutory and private sectors should provide more facilities using the sliding fee scale. After school and holiday creches should also be considered. In their forward planning considerations, the City Council should make child care a high priority on their agenda. Applications for funding from the Lottery and Peace and Reconciliation should also be considered by organisations as a high priority. We also recommend that Social Services should be more enthusiastic in compiling a list of Registered Childminders. Another recommendation is that lone parents should be encouraged to use Registered Childminders, as this could have some financial benefits.

There are so many concerns affecting lone parents so we are unable to mention them all in this paper. The two that we have mentioned are those that have severe detrimental effects on the issues of lone parents.

Siobhan Edwards, Michelle Clarke, Fionnuala Breslin, Marie Curran

## AWARE

People suffering from depression and manic depression form a significant minority in this city. A recent survey by AWARE, a nationwide organisation helping defeat depression, revealed that 1 out of every 3 people either had suffered from depression or had a close family member treated for it. Depression is far from a minor ailment: it can kill. 15% of those suffering from depression take their own lives - a rate thirty times higher than that of the general population. In Ireland, suicide kills more people annually than road accidents.

Approximately one in ten men and 1 in 5 women will suffer from depression sometime in their lives. On average, one person with depression will present at every GPs surgery - yet these people will attend 8.3 times before their illness is recognised.

Despite depression being the most common psychiatric illness, it is a hidden disease. Only one out of ten suffering from depression ever get treatment. People are wary of the stigma associated with "mental illness" - sometimes too frightened to seek help.

To suffer depression is a lonely, isolating, often frightening experience. The first experience of depression can be terrifying - not just the experience itself, but the fear that you're "going mad" and might not recover. Depression may return repeatedly throughout

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life, or be a one-off event. The person may live in dread of a re-occurrence. Those who maintain their usual occupations despite the illness worry about losing a job or a partner in the future. One out of 2 workers suffering from depression hide it from employers and work colleagues. With a broken leg, one's pain and incapacity is visible. Depression is not only invisible, but often its very existence is denied by friends and family, with the sufferer told bluntly to "pull themselves together." This lack of awareness of the serious nature of the illness does nothing to help; it often makes the sufferer feel guilty for what is beyond their control.

Derry as a community needs more resources for dealing with this major public health problem. Although information is a key factor in helping people successfully survive this illness, sufferers and carers alike complain about being poorly informed about their illness and medications. Carers - families/friends who support us through our illness - are an important group within the depressed minority. Depression can wreck havoc with family life. Family members need information about the illness and what to expect from medications. Children especially can be frightened at a parent's illness, and even blame themselves for the changes in family life. They are often left out of the equation when dealing with the illness. In terms of support, carers are probably worse off than sufferers.

Depression is a treatable illness. No one need suffer it alone. Treatment varies with the type of depression, whether it is a reaction to a life-event such as grief, or triggered by an imbalance in the body's brain biochemistry. It can be treated by medication, counselling therapy, self-help groups or a combination of these. But recovery can be slow. If medication is used, it often takes several weeks to work. Often a variety of medications will be tried before success is found. For the 25% of the population who suffer manic-depression, a lifelong and recurrent illness, treatment does not always maintain health.

Sufferers themselves and their families are key fighters in the battle to defeat depression. In recent years an AWARE group has been formed in Derry which offers support groups for both carers and sufferers. It also provides factual information through literature, audio-visual material and extremely well-attended public lectures. One of its main aims is to increase



public awareness of depression and its consequences. At a national level AWARE support research into the aspects of depression. Work is also underway to establish an advocacy network for people using the mental health services. To this end, a conference is being held in the city from February 29 -March 1st, bringing together mental health care users, professionals and "purchasers" of mental health care services.

Although sufferers in Derry experience difficulties due to the profound lack of information about depression, and the stigma still associated with all mental illness, we are also extremely heartened by the public's response to awareness events which have been organised. You will be hearing from AWARE in the future as we continue to fight depression and help ourselves cope with this illness and our lives successfully.

Martha McClelland  
Tel. 263933

Any questions about AWARE, Derry  
Contact Gerry Ward, N. I. Regional Organiser, 21 Ardnashee Park, Derry  
Tel 260194

### Submission 3

#### Derry Well Woman

The original reasons for Derry Well Woman becoming established were to recognise and deal with problems that many women have in accessing existing health care services. The ethos of the centre being to recognise the experience of women in the North West recognising that women in society are oppressed, whether by class, race, ethnic origin or political and religious belief. The aims of the Well Woman Centre include:

- a) To provide a comprehensive and accessible service encompassing a range of women's health issues in a relaxed non clinical atmosphere.
  - b) To seek more effective ways of preventing and meeting women's health problems through research.
  - c) To encourage actively the formation of self help and support groups.
- Derry Well Woman support any submissions which aim to empower marginalised groups within the community whether such groups are marginalised because of gender, class, origin or religious belief.

A person's physical and mental health is related to the environment in which he or she lives, the environment includes the condition of one's housing, levels of unemployment, as well as individual habits such as smoking, healthy eating, alcohol consumption and so on as such. The health of any individual is related to society generally as well as individual habit.

As such we would like to suggest that medical services in Derry continue to strive to extend their understanding of the specific health needs of women.

Empowering women to understand the health needs of their bodies and minds and their

partners and/or children's health needs can only do good for the health of our community.

#### Submission 4

##### SUBMISSION BY DERRY CHINESE COMMUNITY

There is not such a big Chinese population in Derry. We estimate around 200 Chinese who mainly engage in the catering industry at around 11 Chinese restaurant and takeaways, And of course, their families.

Our main problem is language barrier. Most of us cannot speak fluent English or daily English. We have extreme difficulty in getting access to public services, such as health and social services, benefit agency, housing application, etc. It is, thus, not uncommon for a young teenager to assist their parents, by means of interpretation, in order to get access to the services. Moreover, we do not know most of the services because they have no translated material on those service provisions.

Due to the Race Relations Act 1976 which enforces in England, Wales and Scotland, does not apply to Northern Ireland, the DHSS, the local council and other government departments, etc. are not obliged to provide interpret and/or translated material on service provisions. We do hope that the Derry Council and the Western Health and Social Service Board can

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provide a Chinese interpreter for our community so that we can have the same service rights as the majority in Derry.

Thank you.

Contact person: Johnny Cheung, c/o Chinese Welfare Association (N.I.), 17 Eblana Street, Belfast, BT7 1LD.

#### Submission 5

##### THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS LONDONDERRY BRANCH

##### Education

1. Students complain of verbal abuse when people find out that they belong to our church and not the main churches. This results in some of our young people not mentioning what religion they belong to when they are asked. Although the majority of this "abuse" would come from other students it has been known to come from teachers as well, who really should know better.

2. In religious education classes I have been informed of several situations of concern. There have been incidents where students have "failed" their R.E. exam because they gave answers as we understand them. Indeed one girl told me that when she was at school she was sent from the classroom when she gave a "Mormon" answer. Another young girl at a local grammar school says that she has to give the answers that the teacher wants to hear! I have also been told that our church has been examined in secondary schools, probably as part of the curriculum. Unfortunately the reports I have received are that the information

passed on to the students are mainly inaccurate. In an attempt to solve this predicament I have written to all the secondary schools in Derry asking if we can help with their courses either to consult with the teachers, give presentations, have question and answer sessions or give them any literature that they might need. To date I have had a very poor response with those who have responded saying that their teachers can give a balanced lesson even though, from our point of view, we have evidence to the contrary. A continuation of this "education" of the children in our area will continue to leave a new generation with a jaundiced view of our church.

Recommendations :1. Integrated schools and colleges are obviously a good idea although there are a lack of places for such schooling in Derry. Perhaps a better understanding of all churches could be taught in schools if not in R.E. classes then, perhaps, in General Studies. As a parent I certainly would have no problems with my children getting a better understanding of other faiths especially if it meant listening to a representative of each church. It should only lead to a better relationship, one with another. The worst that could happen is that someone who has a problem with people from another religion e.g. Catholics "hating" someone because they are Protestant or vice versa, at least they have a reason why, rather than just plain bigotry! If proper Christian principles are emphasised then this scenario should never happen.

2. It has been my experience that a lot of information being taught about our church, and probably with other minority churches, has been gleaned from publications written, invariably, by, in our case, anti-Mormon critics. To me, it is a shame that any Church being discussed are not given the basic right and courtesy to reply. Personally, if a church is willing to contribute (at no cost) to the education process in the manner outlined above I

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see absolutely no reason why such a resource is not utilised. It could only result in a better and proper understanding for all concerned.

### Employment

At this point in time we are pleased to report that we have not, as far as we are aware, not been subjected to any discrimination in this area. One point we would like to bring out is the practice of asking which primary school people attend in determining the religion of a person. This, seemingly, decides whether a person is Catholic or Protestant. I don't need to point out that there are more than Catholics and Protestants, of which we are neither, living in the area.

Recommendation. We would much rather the simple question of "What religion are you?" be asked.

### Vandalism

Unfortunately our church land and building are continually on the receiving end of mindless vandalism. We get graffiti on the walls which results in us having to repaint the building at a considerable cost. It is to be repainted again shortly but how long will it remain graffiti? The tiles on our roof are the target quite often for young people to pull off and smash. Two repercussions of this are that rain has got into the building a) ruining part of the roof and b) completely wrecking the wooden recreation hall floor. Lastly, hardly a Sunday goes by but we have to sweep away glass from broken bottles which have been thrown onto our driveway and car park. Many of our people now park outside the building rather than risk the chance of burst tyres.

Recommendation. I'm not sure what can be done about vandals (Perhaps the re-education

talked about earlier would lead to a reduction of the problem some time in the future). On a more practical note, would the council be prepared to use one of its vehicles to clean the glass from the drive and car park from time to time?

### Community Interaction

1. Our members regularly get involved with charities in the area, knitting blankets for the children's wards in hospitals, helping with flag days or whatever, and do not seem to have any problems being accepted by the charities. The same cannot be said for the missionaries which we have in Derry. For example, we have an elderly couple here from California for a short while. They are expected to give service on a voluntary basis to the community while they are here. They approached a local organisation who were urgently looking for volunteers to help out. Initially the organisation were very happy to see them. However when they gave their names as "Elder and Sister" from our Church they received a phone call a couple of days later saying that they were not wanted because of the church connection. Our younger missionaries have had similar problems trying to give service in the area. These 19 and 20 year olds have been told they were not wanted when they were simply trying to be of service. We feel sure this was because they were "Mormon missionaries".

2. Our members have found that when they have tried to serve in various community committees that these have been very "Catholic" or "Protestant" biased. Consequently they have left as they felt they were "banging their heads against a brick wall". Our members are happy to work with others in their communities. Unfortunately these committees are what politicians would call pluralistic in nature, i.e. dominated by the main churches. There is no doubt that organisations such as the Churches Trust do a wonderful job but I am sure I speak for all the minority churches when I say that we too would like to contribute and be involved in community affairs and concerns. 3. Some of our members have commented on the lack of

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non drinking, non-smoking family oriented recreational facilities in the area.

Recommendations: Encourage council, community and other organisations to be more aware of minority interests in their area and perhaps offer the opportunity of input via personnel on a committee or written submissions to the decision making process. Regarding point 3; perhaps the planning department could encourage and be more sympathetic to plans for such amenities.

### Other Religions

1. Elsewhere in the world and particularly in the U.S.A. we have an excellent relationship with other churches. For example in Salt Lake City where our church has its headquarters (incidentally there are now more Catholics in Salt Lake City than "Mormons"), leaders from the various churches interact together at the highest level and give support to one another. Our President and other leaders can often be seen sat next to the Catholic Cardinal and other church dignitaries at civic and religiously oriented meetings. Our Church donated \$1 million dollars towards building the Catholic Cathedral there. The Jewish people wanted to hold a special meeting there recently but their buildings were not large enough. Our church let them have use of one of our buildings as a gesture of friendship and co-operation. We do not find the same type of interaction here, probably due to our minority status. Again we would welcome the opportunity to get involved with other churches, hopefully to our mutual benefit.

2. As a missionary oriented church (we have over 50,000 missionaries world-wide) we have

young men and women in the area whose job it is, to teach people what we believe in. I don't suppose that we will ever totally eradicate the problem they have of having doors slammed in their faces or the verbal abuse they get. However, sometimes when they have taught someone about our church and they decide that they want to join, they can be put under enormous pressure from their minister to prevent them from getting baptised into our church. In itself, there is nothing wrong with that. Our objection is when our church is slandered in the attempt. Instead of reasoning from a doctrinal point of view, which would be our method, our church gets pilloried and, for want of a euphemism, lies are told in an effort to put the people off their decision to join us .

3. Our members do a lot of genealogical research. Some ministers will not allow our members to look through their records of christening, marriages and burials. Other people are permitted but not "Mormons"

Recommendations: Where appropriate, encourage main church ministers to consider approaching minority church leaders with an invitation to join in meetings to discuss issues of mutual interest, similar to the way the 4 churches interact. Church ministers to encourage their clerics to be more open minded and tolerant if any of their parishioners decide that they want to become members of another church. Church ministers to be encouraged not to discriminate between people when asked to open their records for consultation.

#### Press

In the past there have been occasions when we submitted stories to the press for inclusion in their paper which have been turned down with the excuse that there wasn't room in a particular edition. This may well be true(?) on the odd occurrence but the articles were never printed on subsequent editions. We wondered about this situation! Consequently, I suppose wrongly in our case, we don't submit stories anymore to the publications in question.

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Recommendations: The press to be more sympathetic to minorities submitting stories. In relation to what has been said throughout this submission, perhaps one or more of the local papers might print a series of articles on all the churches in the Derry area outlining their history and some of their beliefs. We would be happy to work with the papers to collate information and articles for them from the various churches and present it to them for final editing and publishing. This would be a great opportunity for the people of Derry/Londonderry to come to a better understanding of one another.

Joe McGeady  
Branch President

#### Submission 6

Noel McCloskey, Sensory Support Service User  
and member of the Deaf Community.

As part of a deaf community and on behalf of the deaf community, we have experiences which can be very painful and isolating. Deafness is an invisible handicap until communication comes into play, it makes deafness a significant handicap.

A lot of people have mental health problems. Hearing people have many more resources, more information and can discuss things with their G.P. or their family more easily than many

deaf people can. It is important that deaf people have access to good communication when they go to their G.P. There is no easy communication at all but communication is the key to diagnosis and to helping any mental health problem. So there is the communication issue itself but also there is a question of privacy. People can take an interpreter but that may not be totally satisfactory and taking a relative may make the situation very difficult. People need to have a private understanding and private counselling and that can't be done if there is no communicating language.

There is a problem of mis-diagnosis for deaf people and in past led deaf people into the back wards of big hospitals for many years, with no proper diagnosis or communication. What happens now seems to be the diagnosis is missed. When deaf people have an illness like schizophrenia because doctors and psychiatrists have so little knowledge of the deaf language, culture and experience it is easy for them to dismiss a deaf person who is very troubled as well. They are deaf and that is it. Unfortunately, a lot of doctors and psychiatrists have served deaf people quite badly because they are not aware of the cultural and linguistic issues of deaf people's experience. They see it purely as a medical problem.

I spend a lot of time with groups of psychiatrists and doctors about deaf issues - the video is just part of a whole pattern of outreach and educational awareness work we are trying to do.

### Education

We have to ask what do we really mean by the bi-lingual. We mean that the deaf should be free to use all the communication methods. Fortunately some teachers could use sign language and that is how I gained my knowledge. I believe that it should be compulsory to use sign language. I believe teachers should be able to get more practice in being bi-lingual, because it is much easier and relaxing for the children to learn. It is a strain for the children to lip read - it is for the parents benefit and not for the children.

More school leavers courses should be run, for example courses on drama, leadership and computer technology. Deaf people can lead a full life and hope for better education, for new

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pride in their culture, their language and their community.

### Work

Deaf people can do almost any job, but when they get one, they are often relegated to semi-skilled and unskilled work

## **Panelist's written reflections**

### **Christine Bell**

The public hearing on minorities was fascinating, with many diverse individuals and groups giving eloquent and succinct submissions. Some raised a number of important practical suggestions, such as Sally Morrison reading from her Braille text who advocated for the removal of obstacles on the pavement, and large print cheque books and prescriptions. Others, such as in the presentation of a young gay man, sketched out an imaginative picture of how they would like society to be different. Both types of presentation dramatically conveyed the different visions of the world which exist, challenging the idea that we must accept some sort of defining vision as determined by the simple numerical majority/minority

considerations. This point was forcefully made by Brendan McKeever in his very moving submission on his role as a parent of a child with a disability. He explained how his relationship with his child had changed his view of the world right down to his use of language around disability. I particularly welcomed his assertion that the need to assimilate to the majority vision is not what true social inclusion means.

While the issues raised were diverse, there were uniting themes, such as the fear from violence of certain minority groups, the experience of discrimination, and the lack of accessible information and services. One idea which could be explored as a possible starting point in creating a more inclusive society is that of a Bill of Rights. While it would not answer all problems, it would provide a starting framework. Furthermore, as the public hearing itself demonstrates, a wide ranging consultation process around its content would help to give shape to a different type of society and a pluralism of voices that are often excluded from conventional political debates. For many of the people making submissions, the fact of having a public forum was important, and the day represented a celebration of difference and of a wide but often obscured activism.

In conclusion the definition of a "homeless person" which I referred to in my closing remarks in the submission from Foyle Homeless Action and Advice came close to articulating an embrative vision of inclusion and esteem.

Such a place, such a city, would indeed be the kind of city we would want.

**Patrick Yu**

The public hearing highlights the following issues:

- (1) There is a huge unmet social need in each of the minority groups in Derry.
- (2) Both the PAFT (Policy Appraisal on Fair Treatment) and TSN (Targeting Social Needs) have not addressed those issues highlighted by each minority group in the hearing. We must request the Northern Ireland Office to re-examine the impact of PAFT and TSN

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towards the minority's needs and further request the government to develop concrete policy with the consultation and participation from minority groups.

- (3) We must also request the Derry City Council and any other government and non-government agencies, organisations, etc. which have direct work in Derry to implement PAFT guide-lines and TSN.

- (4) In relation to discrimination against gay and lesbian group by the majority in Derry, the church should take a more positive step to listen to their problems in conjunction with reconciliation.

- (5) In relation to discrimination against the minority protestant community in Derry, the Catholic community must listen to their problems, fears; and must recognise their tradition and cultural right.

- (6) If equality to all and equality of treatment are our underlying principals, those discrimination against each minority group must be redressed in terms of resources allocation to the minority groups, educate the public, policy documents, and grassroot consultation and participation from the minority groups.

**Mary Mulholland**

First of all may I say thank you to Templegrove Action Research Limited for the opportunity it gave me to sit on the panel at Wednesday's meeting. My thoughts and conclusions are as follows:

Starting with the three religious minorities, one main factor came across very strongly and that was the need for total integration in our schools. For all of us to have a knowledge of other people's religions, and for us all to have a better tolerance of other's religions. The way this could be achieved is as stated by integrated schooling and for children to be taught that there is not just Catholic or Protestant religions in this country, but that there are many more. One thing brought up in the submission from the Church of Jesus Christ Latter-day Saints, is that on employment application forms one is asked which primary school did you go to. I would strongly support President McCready's recommendation that the question should be re-worded to ask what is your religion, as in the rest of the U.K. After all when we go into hospital and they wish to know your religion, the question is what religion are you, not what school did you go to.

Now to the minority with the largest majority in this country - the people with disabilities. 17.4% of the adult population of this country has some form of physical disability, this does not include children with a physical disability or those with sensory impairment or mental impairment known as learning disabilities. The 17.4% of the adult population relates in real terms to 201,000. We should not forget in real terms if we included the children and those with learning disabilities and sensory disabilities, this would account for over 300,000 individuals. But if the M.P.'s and town planners, those who plan housing services and any other service provider look at it in a realistic manner, it is 300,000 family units that would be effected and that is over a quarter of the population of the province.

All planners need to take this into account. For instance, if those in the private housing market would start building lifetime homes which could adapt as needed, for example, are built without steps, (as are already being built in other parts of the U.K.), think how much easier it is for a mother with a young family and a baby in a pram to get the children in and

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out of the houses. Each of these homes are built with a downstairs wheelchair accessible toilet, all door widths are 900mm wide, it would so much easier to move furniture around. If somebody wished to purchase such a house and later became somebody who needed to use a wheelchair it would be so much easier to put a through floor lift into such a home. These homes are being bought by ordinary every day young couples thinking of starting a family, although nobody in the family, is at present living with a disability.

As we go about our every day lives we must learn to accept that not everyone has the same opinion as ourselves and we all need to live together in this country as best as we can. So a great part of this tolerance is down to education, whether it be in the home or at school, through integrated schooling or through the parents. We as a society have a part to play, to teach our children that there is no need to hate somebody because of what religion they are or how they look, because children learn from their peers, no matter whether they are family or not, and we must ensure that the bigoted attitudes of the past must no longer continue.



### Public Comments

(collected at the hearing in comment books which were located throughout the hall.)

Traffic in Littlewoods and Wellworth's area do not sound their horns for the deaf or the blind to let them know they are behind them. **Anonymous**

It's been fab! **Anonymous**

It's been great to see so many of us here. I hope we have it more often in Derry. Thank you. **Rainbow.**

Good to hear other people's thoughts, feelings and points of view. Very informative. **Anonymous**

A great idea - contributes to progressive societal change towards radical pluralism.-  
**P. Shanahan**

Very well organised, some powerful submissions, an exercise in people power - give people a voice.- Congratulations.  
**David Holloway, Project Portadown.**

I found the hearing to be a very positive event from beginning to end. It was wonderful to hear groups raising issues that so often escape the agenda in social, political, industrial situations. I hope that the diversity in discrimination that was reflected will produce the impetus to strive for a society that appreciates differences in religion, political belief, age, ability, sexuality and race. Thank you for allowing these often undervalued groups the opportunity to voice their concerns.  
**Catherine McNee Family Centre, Gobnascale**

### EVALUATION

At this stage, only a preliminary evaluation of the Public Hearing on Minorities is possible, since the medium and long term outcomes of the hearing and of the dissemination of this report are not yet known. It is likely that an external evaluation of the entire work of Templegrove Action Research, including an evaluation of the impact of the minorities hearing, will be conducted by external evaluators some time after September 1996. At that time, those evaluators will be better placed to conduct a thorough evaluation of the effects and outcomes of this hearing. In the interim, we will begin the evaluation process here.

#### What was achieved?

A hearing of evidence and views from those who consider themselves to be in a minority in the city took place in a public civic place. Potentially, this event could open up a longer and more

extensive public discussion about the position of minorities in the city. The hearing established a broader range of groups, all defining themselves as minorities, than had been envisaged until that point. All those who made submissions came from groups or interests which could be said to have been under-represented in the public arena. The hearing, and associated report has afforded these groups and individuals a public opportunity to make their case to a wider city audience.

The process of preparing submissions, and delivering them at the hearing was an opportunity to make causes and views known. It stimulated some groups to formalise their positions, and other individuals to get together in groups and put forward a common position. Two individuals, after listening to other submissions at the hearing, decided to prepare and make submissions, having come to the hearing not intending to do so. Therefore, there is some evidence of the empowerment of participating groups and individuals. At very least, the report of the hearing provides a resource by collecting together under one cover the views and positions of a disparate collection of interests, all of which consider themselves to be in the minority.

The examination of the minority-majority dynamic in a broader way, introduces a new perspective on the relationship between the "two main communities" in the city. This examination points to a series of principles which can apply to the relationship between minorities and majorities such as the need for safeguards and tolerance for minority cultures and views. It also points to another dimension for application of the consideration of the situation of minorities.

Through the medium of a public hearing, the civic debate on "minorities" was informed in a manner which broadened it beyond the narrow and typical "orange and green" sectarian limit, yet still included sectarian issues. It is significant that two submissions raised the issue of the position of the Protestant community in the city. These submissions marked a departure from the "orthodox" discourse in which Protestant/Catholic relations are usually discussed. Also significant that these two submissions, together with a third - that of Donnie Sweeney - raised the position of the "minority within the majority" and by default, the "double minority" experience in Northern Ireland.

The use of the hearing to raise the issue of the Protestant minority in the city made the connection between minority rights and the mainstream political discourse in Northern Ireland. Some of those who made submissions had commented that they steered clear of "politics", and felt alienated by sectarian discourses. The two submissions from members of the Protestant

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community potentially carried the emotional weight of this alienation. These submissions, therefore, represented the most potentially contested area of the hearing, highlighting the 'double minorities' aspect of the political conflict in Ireland, whereby the Catholic community is a minority in Northern Ireland and the Protestant community is a minority in the whole of Ireland. Yet these submissions sat alongside other submissions coherently, and common themes could be discerned.

The value of examining local majority/minority issues was appreciated beyond the city boundary and the presence of people from Project Portadown as observers at the hearing was designed to further their plan to attempt to the process in their own town, where the minority-majority situation is reversed. Potentially, the hearing provided ideas for other groups seeking mechanisms to deal with sectarian situations elsewhere.

The attempt to inform civic debate from within the framework of majority/minority dynamics has hopefully made one step in advancing the possibilities of social inclusion in the city. The use of action research methods has meant that not only was data on minorities in the city collected, and the potential policy impact of this data maximised, but that the research intervention was a positive and empowering experience for the participating groups and individuals. The success of the project in facilitating a total of 26 submissions to a public hearing was gratifying within the resources available. The budget for the project is presented as Appendix 3. The human resources of the project (four people) were deployed very efficiently and the flexible, creative talents of a small team employed to capacity.

The reality of the breadth of social exclusion has now begun to be documented. It is now a matter of public record that there exists a wide range of individuals and groups who feel that their particular minority view should be included.

### **What could have been better?**

The project was achieved within modest financial and human resources. However, Templegrove Action Research succeeded in raising the budget it aimed for. In retrospect, a slightly larger scale project would have allowed more time to be spent with groups to support their own development towards making a public statement. It would also perhaps have ensured the participation of more individuals and groups.

Similarly, longer notice to the public bodies and policy makers and their inclusion at the planning stage would have potentially increased their participation and thereby their sense of ownership of the findings. As it was, the attendance of official observers was disappointing. Only a few agencies, a representative from the Northern Health and Social Services Council, Western Education and Library Board Educational Welfare Officers, the Community Relations Officer of Derry City Council managed to attend. One political party, Sinn Féin, was formally represented.

Other observers were present, including local students, individuals working in sectors who have a particular interest in minorities, and a group from Portadown. The hearing occurred at the start of a major public planning hearing on the Sainsbury Proposals and more notice could have been given to the public agencies. This requires Templegrove Action Research to attempt to engage the public agencies and policy makers in responding to the publication of the report.

An opportunity to confirm the connection with mainstream agenda is offered at the publication of this report. Templegrove's commitment to those who made submissions was that the material

gathered at the hearings would be tabled with policy makers in the city, and that commitment can now be met at the point of publication of the report. .

In conclusion, the success of this process is that it succeeded in galvanising responses from such a range of groups. It has confirmed the usefulness of a discourse of minority rights when planning for the city's future. The content of the submissions enriched the understanding of the diversity of the city and provided a base of information about that diversity as plans are made for the future. The focus on minorities has underlined the complicated and diverse natures of the experience of life in the city, even as monolithic identities tend to be imposed on this same city by the political conflict.

"...(T)he recognition that these two sides are fragile constructions, that within them there are individuals who feel drawn to all sorts of views or practices that transcend the boundaries of the

community identity into which they are constantly interpellated.....There are not two traditions in Northern Ireland but a plethora of inter-related, combining, conflicting, competing and aligning attitudes and cultures." (6)

We hope this report will contribute towards deepening the knowledge of the range of differences that exist in Derry Londonderry and will substantiate the challenge to build social inclusion as a cornerstone in visions and policy for the future.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are the focussed recommendations which we consider have emerged, and which we have extracted from the submissions made during the hearing.

Recommendations

From a Muslim perspective.

1-The Western Library & Education Board should provide books and other educational materials which may help children to gain knowledge about Islam.

2 - That provision is made for classes on Islam as an option for children and adults

3 - That Derry City Council provide assistance in establishing a Community Centre in which the needs of the Islamic community can be met, and inter-faith exchanges can take place.

4 - That Derry City Council give priority to the provision of a burial ground for the local Muslim community.

#### **From a parent of an adult with learning difficulties**

5 - That the Health and Social Services Boards and the Education and Library Boards embark on a public awareness-raising strategy in relation to the needs of adults with mild learning disabilities.

6 - That the statutory agencies actively encourage the identification of young adults with mild learning disabilities as a separate minority group with their own distinct needs.

7 - That the Education and Social Services authorities set up a referral scheme to facilitate entry of young adults with a mild learning disability into local groups and agencies.

#### **From Foyle Homeless**

8 - That future housing policy be formulated around the principle of a universal right to a safe and secure home.

9 - Retrograde changes in housing and other benefits which will act to increase the problem of homeless people should be opposed by all public bodies and public representatives.

10 - That the housing authorities stop reducing public housing stock, and build more public housing, since reductions in public housing stock have negative implications for homeless people

11 - That the housing authorities re-evaluate the new type of tenant in the housing market, and make provision for a mixed culture of housing provision, aimed at establishing a variety of tenant types in any future housing development.

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12 - That the Northern Ireland Housing Executive consult at an early stage in planning with representatives of homeless people about the kind and type of new housing provision.

#### **From the North West Visually Impaired Association**

##### **Shopping**

13 - That the local Chamber of Trade and the Retail Associations in the town educate their members about the importance of improved layouts and staff practices in supermarkets and other shops in order to assist the visually impaired shopper e.g. products should be accessibly placed or a member of staff designated to assist visually impaired shoppers.

## Transport

14 - That Ulsterbus, Northern Ireland Railways and other transport providers should consider the needs of visually impaired people when planning and providing transport services.

15 - Public transport vehicles should be more accessible e.g. steps are often too high.

## Public Information

16 - All public information should be available in suitable format. Current initiatives and campaigns should address this immediately for example publicity on the City Partnership's "Vision for the City" and on the fluoridation consultation should be available in braille, large print and audio tape.

## Banking

17 - Cheque books should be in larger print for partially sighted customers.

## Prescriptions

18 - Information on the back of prescriptions cannot be read by visually impaired people. The section for signing should be in large print.

## Traffic Lights

19 - Appropriate signalling should be provided at all traffic light junctions to enable visually impaired and blind people to use junctions safely. It should be remembered that many visually impaired people also have a hearing impairment.

## Public Highway / Footpaths

20 - Public highways and footpaths should be kept free from obstructions. Shop owners should be prohibited from putting signage and A boards on footpaths. Motorists should be prohibited from parking on footpaths and where such laws exist they should be enforced.

## From The Rainbow Trust

21 - HIV and AIDS awareness and education work should be properly resourced in order to enable the continuation and expansion of HIV and AIDS education in homes, schools, social venues and in workplaces.

22 - Research is required into the effects of HIV/AIDS in the North West. Research into safe sexual practices in the wider community is also required.

23 - A forum should be established where family members and carers of people living with HIV/AIDS or those who may have experienced a loss due to an AIDS related illness can come together and share experiences.

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24 - More networking with statutory, voluntary, community and other minority groups who share the same aims and objectives (on prevention, education and research into the HIV virus) should be facilitated by the statutory authorities.

## From a Lesbian/Bisexual perspective

25 - Anti-homophobia training should be established within the police force, civil service, health authorities and education authorities, and amongst the staff who would come into contact with gay people in their professional and working lives

26 - A community police force which is effective in protecting the gay and lesbian

community against homophobic attacks is urgently required. When such attacks do take place, this police force should be capable of thoroughly investigating all complaints of the gay and lesbian community and prosecuting perpetrators.

#### **From the North West Forum for People with Disabilities**

27 - The Department of Environment should improve access to the public buildings and places and provide a public transport system which is accessible to all citizens.

28 - That Derry City Council review their service provision for example sport and leisure amenities.

29 - The Western Education and Library Board provide inclusive education which serves the needs of disabled people.

30 -The Western Health and Social Services Board improve their service to people with disabilities. e.g. shorten the time span on Occupational Therapist waiting list for aids and equipment and provide services locally so people with disabilities do not have to travel to Belfast for consultations.

31 - The Training and Employment Agency should ensure that people with disabilities are not discriminated against in employment. Also the T&EA should provide services to assist people with disabilities to compete equally on the open labour market.

32 - The Department Health and Social Services should provide their information in a manner which is accessible to all i.e. large print, audio cassette, computer disk, braille, video tape for deaf people, appropriate language for people with learning disabilities. They should also promote their services to everyone.

33 - The Northern Ireland Housing Executive should provide more accessible housing for people with disabilities.

#### **From the Fountain Area Partnership**

34 - That the situation of Protestants living in the Fountain be regarded as an issue of minority rights, and that the majority in the city, and their representatives, should strive to respect and protect the rights of people who continue to live in the Fountain.

35 - Statutory authorities should recognise that facilities may be needed within the Fountain to serve small numbers of people who live there, because of the enclave nature of the community.

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36 - Funding applications for projects in the Fountain should be regarded favourably, and funding allocation should not be decided on a per capita basis, because of the decline in population in the area.

#### **From a young Protestant woman**

37 - That the name of the city be recognised as Londonderry as well as Derry.

38 - That night clubs become safe places for all individuals, including Protestants.

39 - That all streets are made safe for everyone, irrespective of religion, and that the right to walk on the street without being called names related to one's religion is affirmed.

40 - That the right of Protestants to live in their homes without fear is affirmed

#### **From Hearing Concern**

41 - That public awareness of the needs of hard of hearing people (as distinct from the needs of deaf people) be increased.

42 - A range of services designed to meet the needs of hard of hearing people should be put in place. These range from proper professional help to graphic advertising and loop systems in public places.

43 - Public bodies should provide appropriate facilities for lip reading in order to serve those members of the public who are hard of hearing.

#### **From a secular perspective**

44 - An integrated state education system should be established. Religion should be seen as a private matter, and the religious education of children should be regarded as the sole responsibility of parents.

45 - Individuals, voluntary and state sectors should accept humanism as a viable and sufficient value base for community life.

46 - That the presumption of "Christianity" be avoided.

47 - That facilities for non-religious ceremonies and celebrations be made available by the civil authorities, for example, a crematorium.

#### **From Foyle Friends**

48 - That public bodies, community and voluntary groups and other organisations should take responsibility for raising their own awareness of lesbian and gay issues by, for example, inviting representatives of the lesbian and gay groups to address their organisations.

49 - The City Council should establish a building which would be designated for the use of local lesbian and gay groups.

#### **From a parent of a child with disability**

50 - Proper local provision for people with disabilities in housing, education, access, transport, finance, health and welfare and facilities for leisure and sport should be established.

51 - A disability officer should be jointly appointed by the public bodies to monitor disabled people's access to existing services and to implement any special recommendations in relation to disability services.



#### **From the Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'i community of Londonderry**

52 - The work and remit of the Community Relations resources of Derry City Council should be widened to encompass the true extent of religious diversity in the city, a move which would be to the benefit of all the people of the district, including those of the two major traditions.

53 - We call on Derry City Council to embark on consultation with local people as part of the United Nations Post-Global Summit Programme with a view to establishing a local "Agenda 21" which will carry the development of Derry into the 21st century. This should be done as a matter of urgency and in a way which will lead to that genuine grassroots empowerment of communities which is a key element of the "Agenda 21" process.

#### **From Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Equality**

54 - That the city and the appropriate bodies therein note the existence of the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Equality the purpose of which is to value and sustain ethnic difference, to ensure that North of Ireland has appropriate anti-racist legislation, to ensure that anti-racist training and education is available to promote the dissemination of advice and information about ethnic and ethnic equality, to seek wider understanding of concern in the field of ethnic equality. Other objectives would be to improve the quality of life among minorities, to engage in, advise or direct research which will have a positive impact on the lives of minorities, to provide and/or facilitate advocacy support for minority and ethnic individuals, to support victims of racial harassment, to develop and implement an effective system to monitor and address incidents of racial harassment.

#### **From a member of the Men's Action Network**

55 - That the dangerous nature of stereotypical roles for men is noted, and how these damage the health of individual men, and the quality of life for everyone.

56 - That the city and the appropriate bodies therein note the existence of the Men's Action Network, which has the following aims and objectives:

1. To stimulate the growth of community self help initiatives among men in the North West area.
2. To facilitate communication between men on issues relating to their health, well-being and changing role in society and to help establish such facilities or services deemed necessary.
3. To seek to create new services to meet the current emotional, physical and mental health needs of men.

4. To seek to create pre-emptive support as well as active response to men experiencing crisis.
5. To provide information on issues relating directly to men's health and well-being.
6. To explore and attempt to understand the nature of disadvantage, damage and pain currently experienced, as well as inflicted, by men in our society.
7. To focus and build upon men's desire for useful change to the current male role.
8. To help promote the holistic well-being of society through the participation of men in self-help scenarios which foster respect for both men and women equally. And finally

9. To work in conjunction with women's organisations and other relevant groups towards mutual understanding, social inclusion and equality.

#### **From the Travellers' Support Group**

57 - That family housing units be provided by the appropriate authorities for Travelling families

58 - That a community or social centre be provided in the city for the use of the Travelling community

59 - That the City Council and the Courts rigorously examine and monitor the conditions under which Public Entertainments and Liquor licenses are issued to retailers in the city who actively discriminate against Travellers

60 - That public representatives and public bodies use their influence to ensure that any future anti-racist legislation which may be introduced in Northern Ireland will include protection for the Travelling community and outlaw discrimination against Travellers.

61 - That the Education and Library Boards re-examine the educational needs of Travelling children and adults and, where necessary, make special provision to meet those needs.

62 - That public bodies, including the City Council take responsibility for raising the level of public education and understanding about the Travelling community, and set in motion strategies to reduce anti-Traveller racism in the city

#### **From Meanscoile Dhoire**

63 - That the Department of Education affirms parents' rights to exercise a real and viable choice over the kind of school their children attend.

64 - That the educational value of education in another language is affirmed and recognised by the education authorities through the provision of resources for such educational provision

65 - That bilingualism as a European trend, in which monolingual children form the minority, is taken into account in the formation future educational policy.

#### **From the Women's Centre**

66 - That the right of women to equal participation in public life is affirmed by all public bodies, political parties and institutions. That the goal of 40% female participation rates, agreed by the British and Irish governments at the Beijing Conference in 1995, is adopted by

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all bodies in the city, and strategies aimed at achieving that goal are immediately designed and implemented.

67 - That statutory responsibility for funding personal development work with women is allocated to a sympathetic government department, and that resources and a strategy for developing this work is put in place.

68 - That free on-site childcare is considered an essential part of any education or training provision used by women, and resources are released to make such provisions on a routine basis.

69 - That women's groups are properly resourced to carry on the important work of women's development, and the contribution of alternative settings for women's education is affirmed.

70 - That educational provision for women with learning difficulties and women with literacy problems be urgently reviewed and improved.

71 - That gender-proofing is implemented on all Partnership Boards and other public and community bodies.

#### **From North West Hard of Hearing Group**

72 - Derry City Council and other statutory bodies in the City area should set up a community education programme focussed on the situation of hard of hearing people in order that their needs are more widely understood and appreciated.

73 - Some simple technical devices, such as loop systems should be installed in all public buildings to assist those who are hard of hearing.

#### **From Gingerbread Northern Ireland**

74 - In order to counteract the inadequacy of the current hostel accommodation available to newly homeless single parents, the housing authorities should ensure the availability of a supply of self-contained flats for single parents and their children.

75 - Childcare facilities in the statutory and voluntary sector should take account of the specific needs of single parents. More childcare provision, using a sliding scale fee system, should be available , and this should include after school and school holiday provision.

76 - That the priority given to increasing the level of childcare provision in the city as a whole is greatly increased by all public and community bodies.

77 - Social Services should improve and extend their registration of childminders in the city.

78 - Lone parents should be encouraged by Social Services to use registered child minders.

#### **From AWARE**

79 - That more resources be devoted by the public, private and voluntary sectors to dealing with depression as a major public health issue.

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80 - That public education initiatives about depression be developed.

81 - That the public note the existence of the local AWARE group who offer support to both carers and to people suffering from depression.

#### **From Derry Wellwoman**

82 - That all medical services in the city strive to extend their understanding of the specific health needs of women.

83 - That all local organisations recognise that empowering women to understand the health needs of their bodies and minds, and those of their partners and children, can only do good for the health of the community.

#### **From Derry Chinese Community**

84 - In recognition of the main problem faced by the Chinese community in the city, the City Council and the Western Health and Social Services Board (or other relevant body) should provide an interpreter service for the Chinese community, so that they can properly access other services such as health, education and welfare services.

#### **From the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints**

85 - That schools include and respect perspectives all religions when teaching religion, either in Religious Education or in General Studies

86 - That the education authorities take up the offer of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and those of similar churches to give talks in schools about their religious perspectives, views and beliefs, in order to promote a religious climate of inclusion and mutual respect for diversity.

87 - That the practice of asking people what primary school they went to as a means of determining their religion be abandoned, and replaced with a simple question: "What religion are you?"

88 - That Derry City Council Cleansing Department provide assistance with clearing up the consequences of the regular vandalism to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

89 - That local voluntary organisations and volunteer-seeking projects stop excluding members of the church from volunteer projects on the basis of their church membership.

90 - That local public bodies should offer the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints the opportunity to participate in consultations with the community in the planning of local amenities.

91 - That minority churches are included in discussions and exchanges of views amongst the main churches.

92 - That church ministers and clerics should be encouraged to be more open-minded and tolerant when their parishioners wish to become members of another church.

93 - That members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints be afforded the same

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access to other church's records as other individuals and groups in the community doing genealogical research.

94 - That the local press be more supportive of church activities and views by providing more coverage of church events and perspectives.

From a Sensory Support Service user.

95 - Attention should be given to the difficulties faced by deaf people using the health services, especially to the danger of mis-diagnosis due to communication difficulties.

96 - The availability of sign language, and teachers who are bilingual should be drastically extended.

97 - Education and Training bodies should ensure that deaf school leavers should have access to a range of courses so that deaf people can lead full lives, and play a full part in the life of their community.

#### Further Recommendations by Templegrove Action Research

98 - This report should be made available to the widest number of people in the city. In particular, formal steps should be taken to ensure that policy makers in the city receive and take note of its findings.

99 - Every opportunity should be taken by policy makers such as the DoE, The City Partnership and Derry City Council to consult with the individuals and groups who made submissions to this hearing when planning services upon which they have made comments here.

100 - The value of including the views of minorities in all planning and public policy should be formally recognised. Proactive steps taken to include minority views should be routinely taken in any future consultation process

101 - The practice of holding 'hearings' should be adopted as a means to increase public and official awareness of the diversity of our city.

102 - Derry City Council, in conjunction with the City Partnership Board, should routinely commission and publish further pieces of action research on the general or specific experiences of minorities in the city, as a means of informing public awareness on these issues.

#### References

(1) Eide, 1995. A Review and Analysis of Constructive Approaches to Group Accommodation and Minority Protection in Divided or Multicultural Societies. Norwegian Institute of Human

Rights.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Vij, Charlotte (1996) "Living in the Waterside", in Fingerpost Women's issue, Derry Londonderry, Yes! Publications.

(4) Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland (1995) Urban Regeneration in Londonderry : Outline Strategy Proposals 1996-1999. Derry Londonderry, DoE.

Ken Rooney	Fountain Area Partnership
Donnie Sweeney	Gobnascale Family Centre
Judith Gilfillan	Education Welfare Service
Pauline Ferris	Education Welfare Service
Geraldine Moran	Education Welfare Service
Carole McKeeman	Cruse Bereavement Care
Sharon Evans	Derry Wellwoman
Phil Lynch	Needs of Adults with Learning Difficulties
Donna Brennan	R.N.I.B.
Martin Muldoon	R.N.I.B.
Marie Moore	P.A.C.
Ken Duffy	Rainbow (Dir)
Alison McDaid	Foyle Friend
Monina O'Prey	N.I.V.T.
Patricia Bray	N.W. Forum of People with Disabilities
Martina Lewis	Foyle Victim Support
Hazel Donaldson	Foyle Victim Support

#### Those in attendance (p.m.)

Jacqueline Toland	Training and Employment Agency
Joe O'Brien	WHSS Council
David Holloway	Project Portadown
Martin McCrystal	Project Portadown
Jim Dorsey	Project Portadown
Maire Ni Lochlainn	21 Ernest Street, Derry
Lorraine Hefferman	MA Peace and Conflict Studies
Maureen Hetherington	Derry City Council
Ina Cantrell	Baha'i Community of Derry
Martha McClelland	Sinn Fein, 15 Cable Street, Derry

NB: others attended who did not sign in.

<b>Presented by:</b>	<b>On behalf of/title (page number)</b>
Dr A.M. Siddiqui.....	The Muslim Community (14)
Sheila Deery.....	The Needs of Young Adults with Learning Difficulties (15)
Gerry Coates and Eileen Best.....	Foyle Homeless (16)
Sally Morrison and William McMorris.....	North West Visually Impaired Association (20)
Malachy Kyle.....	The Rainbow Trust (21)
(read by Dave Duggan).....	A Lesbian/Bisexual Perspective by Helen Quigley (24)
Patricia Bray.....	North West Forum of People with Disabilities (25)
Ken Rooney.....	Fountain Area Partnership (26)
(read by Dave Duggan).....	From a Young Protestant Woman Living in a Majority Catholic City: anonymous (29)
Mrs Elizabeth Ward.....	Hearing Concern (30)
Pauline Collins.....	From a Secular Perspective -with Ellen Weaver, John Nelis and Barney Devine (35)
James Grant.....	Foyle Friends (37)
Brendan McKeever.....	Families with children with disabilities (41)
Ina Cantrell.....	The Baha'i Community (45)
Dr Nooshin Proudman.....	Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Equality (46)
Donnie Sweeney.....	as a member of Men's Action Network (47)
Mary Kay Mullan.....	Travellers' Support Group (48)
Tomas O Doughaile.....	Meanscoile Dhoire (50)
Clionagh Boyle.....	The Women's Centre (52)
Mrs. Winnie McClements.....	North West Hard of Hearing Club (54)

#### **Submissions received after the hearing**

Gingerbread Northern Ireland.....	single parents (60)
AWARE.....	people suffering from depression and manic depression (61)
Derry Wellwoman.....	(63)
Derry Chinese Community.....	Johnny Cheung, Chinese Welfare Association (63)
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Londonderry Branch.....	Joe McGeady, Branch President (64)
Noel McCloskey.....	Sensory Support Service user and member of the Deaf Community (67)



## Budget for the project

	Income	Expenditure
Derry City Council	1000	
Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust	1500	
Inter-Church Reconciliation Fund	1000	
Community Relations Council	1097	
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>4597</u></b>	
 <b>Public Hearing</b>		
Facilitators Fees		1400
Panel's Travelling Expenses		150
Lunch & Dinner		125
Public Address System and Audio Recording		140
Transcription		240
ISL Interpreter		80
Rent of Venue		50
Publicity		126.95
Administration		180
Refreshments		80
Signs		130
Publishing		1600
Sundries		130
 <b>Launch</b>		50
Venue		50
Administration		70
Refreshments		
 <b>Total</b>		<b><u>4601.95</u></b>

*"The public hearing on minorities was fascinating, with many diverse individuals and groups giving eloquent and succinct submissions... While the issues raised were diverse, there were uniting themes, such as the fear from violence of certain minority groups, the experience of discrimination, and the lack of accessible information and Services."*

Christine Bell

*"The minority groups in this town cannot be ignored. If anything is to be learned from our recent history, then it must be at least this."*

Brendan

McKeever

*"...the place that I, as a gay man, would like to live in...is quite simply a place where lesbian and gay people are seen, admired, respected and loved... the problems facing the lesbian and gay community are very much analogous to those facing all other minority groups...We have common cause, it seems...if we*

*are here  
to the changes*

*today for any reason, then it must be to give impetus  
desired."*

James Grant

*"Some will say that the Unionist-led governance of the past exploited Nationalists...therefore if Protestants have been, or are now, being treated adversely, that they either deserve it, or it will do them good to experience the effects of injustice which was doled out to Catholics in the past. I would suggest that such logic is perverse and does nothing to advance the process whereby we can one day live alongside one another in harmony."*

Ken Rooney

*"I think the whole troubles situation, this social strife, has hidden for twenty five, thirty years all the major issues... And I think it's sad that because of the troubles, we are disadvantaged even more..."*

Brendan McKeever

*"I found this kind of forum can make us aware our struggle is not alone...today is only the starting and I still hope more and more other people will voice their problem so that we can support each other."*

Patrick

Yu

*"...participation in public life... is very difficult and a life in politics is very demanding particularly if you've got children and other responsibilities...more steps should be taken to promote the inclusion of women and the accommodation of women within political structures."*

Clionagh Boyle

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