



Commissioner for Older People
for Northern Ireland

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By email: zRace&EthnicityActionPlan@psni.police.uk

24/10/24

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Race and Ethnicity Action Plan 2025 – 2027 Consultation

I am writing on behalf of the Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland (COPNI) regarding your Race and Ethnicity Action Plan 2025-2027. Mr Eddie Lynch, who is currently in a caretaker role in the office of COPNI, and his office welcomes the opportunity to engage with this consultation and is supportive of the Action Plan's implementation.

Outlined in legislation¹, the primary aim of COPNI is to safeguard and promote the interests of all older people in Northern Ireland. Older people are a diverse group and embody multiple identities related to characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and age. It is important that policing addresses issues relating to the entirety of their identity and their needs. Thus, COPNI was pleased to see a commitment in the Action Plan to creating a police force that is representative of the community in which they serve, and deliver policing based on diversity, inclusivity and equality.

Minority ethnic communities can often experience racial discrimination and racism in Northern Ireland.² Racism can also interact with ageism³ to increase older ethnic minorities' vulnerabilities and reduce their access to services, such as policing. Older people are less likely to be victims of crime⁴, but are more likely to have higher levels

¹ *Commissioner for Older People Act (Northern Ireland) 2011*. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2011/1/contents>

² Research by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland found that minority ethnic and migrant groups said racism was a "normal part of day-to-day life in Northern Ireland". Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (2022) *Impact of Brexit on Minority Ethnic and Migrant People in Northern Ireland*, p 8. Available at: <https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Delivering%20Equality/DMU/ImpactOfBrexit-MinorityEthnicMigrantPeople.pdf>

³ A study by Steward et al found that participants described how ageism adds "an insidious layer of oppression in later life on top of existing experiences of racism". Steward, De Fries, Dunbar, Trujillo, Zhu, Nicotera, and Hasche (2023) *A Phenomenological Understanding of the Intersectionality of Ageism and Racism among Older Adults: Individual-Level Experiences*, p 887. Available at: <https://academic.oup.com/psychsocgerontology/article/78/5/880/7049937#405052870>

⁴ For instance, in 2022/23, there were 7,773 recorded victims of crime aged between 20 and 24, 9,295 aged between 30 and 34, 7,206 aged between 40 and 44, and 4,567 aged 65 and above. Data taken from the Police Service of Northern Ireland (2023) *Annual trends in police recorded crime 1998/99 to 2022/23, Pivot table 3*. Available at:

of fear of crime.⁵ Fear of crime among older people from ethnic minority backgrounds may be exacerbated by experiences of racism, coupled with ageism. COPNI was pleased with the commitment in the Action Plan to ensure people from a minority ethnic background feel safe, valued and engaged in policing. This is particularly important for many older people as they navigate experiences of racism and ageism and engage with the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI).

COPNI's *A Different Crime* report found that a victim's "pre-offence status" can be a factor in determining the extent to which a crime impacts them.⁶ A recent study found that minority ethnic groups can experience inequalities in relation to housing, employment, education, health and wellbeing, community safety, as well as civic and political participation.⁷ Such inequalities may influence the extent to which a person from an ethnic minority copes with the impact of a crime. In a similar way, many older people face several health, social and financial issues⁸ that can mean older victims experience a greater impact from crimes. Thus, older people from ethnic minority groups may need additional, tailored support to address the impacts of their experiences of crime. COPNI commends the Action Plan's commitment to reducing the harm caused by crime against ethnic minorities and reviewing the services in place for victims to ensure individual needs are met.

Finally, COPNI is supportive of the PSNI's Race and Ethnicity Action Plan and hopes it will serve to support people from ethnic minority backgrounds in Northern Ireland, particularly older people many of whom experience additional, distinct vulnerabilities.

https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.psni.police.uk%2Fsystem%2Ffiles%2F2023-11%2F517487509%2FPolice_Recorded_Crime_in_Northern_Ireland_1998-99_to_2022-23.xlsx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK

⁵ The 2020/21 Northern Ireland Safe Community Telephone Survey found that 11% of those aged 75 plus had high levels of worry about crime. Respondents aged 65 and above were, also, more likely to describe the effect of fear of crime on their quality of life as 'moderate' or 'great'. NISRA (2022) *Findings from the 2020/21 Northern Ireland Safe Community Telephone Survey*. Available at: <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/findings-202021-northern-ireland-safe-community-telephone-survey>

⁶ Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland (2023) *A Different Crime*, p 9. Available at:

<https://copni.org/assets/general/resources/a-different-crime-2023-crime-report.pdf>

⁷ Belfast City Council (2022) *Inequalities Experienced by Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Traveller people residing in Belfast*. Available at: <https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/inequalities>

⁸ Older people are more likely to live alone, live with a disability or health condition, have poor health, be widowed, experience social isolation and loneliness, and experience poverty. Data available at:

<https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/execoffice/wellbeing-in-northern-ireland-report-2022-23.pdf>
<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/system/files/statistics/census-2021-main-statistics-for-northern-ireland-phase-2-statistical-bulletin-health-disability-and-unpaid-care.pdf>

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<https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.nisra.gov.uk%2Fsystem%2Ffiles%2Fstatistics%2Fce-nisra-2021-ms-a33.xlsx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK>

https://datavis.nisra.gov.uk/communities/PII_report_2223.htm#



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I would welcome the opportunity to discuss further the Race and Ethnicity Action Plan 2025-2027 or this response, should it be necessary or helpful.

Best wishes,

Anna Doran

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Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland

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