Strength in Diversity

Towards a Community Cohesion
and Race Equality Strategy

Home Office

Introduction

We have a vision of a successful integrated society that recognises and celebrates the strength in its diversity. We believe there is no place for racism and extremism in Britain. Through the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 the Government has demonstrated its commitment to eliminating unlawful racial discrimination, and promoting equality of opportunity and good relations between people of different racial groups. But our ambitions go further. Turning that vision into reality requires a comprehensive strategy that cannot be achieved through legislation and the delivery of public services alone. It must be underpinned by a sense of people belonging to Britain and to each other, underpinned by common human rights and shared values.

This is an ambitious vision and there are challenges and risks that we have to tackle if we are going to make it a reality: the impact of exclusion and racism, the rise in political and religious extremism and segregation that can divide our communities. We want to find practical ways to overcome these challenges, building on the considerable progress that has been made, but recognising that we can and must go much further. Our aim is to develop a Government wide Community Cohesion and Race Equality strategy, which we will launch in the autumn and which will form the basis of a renewed programme of action, across Government and more widely, to build community cohesion and reduce race inequalities.

This pamphlet sets out our analysis of the issues and challenges that we need to address through the strategy. It is not a conventional Government consultation document and deliberately so. This is not an area where the Government can or should have all of the answers, but it is our role to lead an honest and robust debate, in which people freely express their views, and this pamphlet provides a framework for that. We have deliberately not set out

specific proposals at this stage, which could close down options and risk narrowing the debate, but we do want to get past generalities and down to ambitious ideas, specific proposals and actions that will change people's lives.

Of course, this isn't the start of the debate and nor is it likely to be the end. A great many people have dedicated their lives to addressing the issues and challenges that are set out in this pamphlet and it is thanks to their commitment, passion and determination that we are able to elaborate such an ambitious, progressive vision of British society.

Over the coming months, we want to engage with as many people as possible across Government, the wider public service, the private sector and voluntary and community organisations. We also want to engage directly with the public, particularly young people whose views are often not heard. To help achieve this, we will be arranging a series of events and workshops across the country. But I also call on all those in positions of responsibility and leadership to promote and lead the debate across your networks and organisations. Building community cohesion and reducing race inequalities are profoundly important to us all and the Government's strategy must be based on an understanding of the views and concerns of all people in Great Britain.

FIONA MACTAGGART MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary for Race Equality,
Community Policy, and Civil Renewal

1

Why we need a Government wide community cohesion and race equality strategy

1.1 The United Kingdom has a long tradition of successful migration and integration that has brought, and continues to bring real economic and social benefits, which are shared by all. There have been migrants in what are now the four nations of the United Kingdom for more than two thousand years and throughout our history we have relied on migrants to supply essential capital to our economy and plug labour gaps, including in our vital public services.

1.2 Today, Britain is a culturally and ethnically diverse country, reflecting the fact that modern communities have a far more complex mix of backgrounds within them, including different races, faiths and nationalities. Eight percent of the population describe themselves as a member of an ethnic minority and five percent as belonging to a minority faith.[1] Eight percent of the population of the United Kingdom as a whole was born overseas.[2] Although no definitive figures are available, the Gypsy and Traveller population in Britain has been estimated to be up to 300,000 individuals.[3] Across London over 300 languages are spoken.

1.3 While no community is truly homogenous, different parts of the country have varying concentrations of people from ethnic and religious minorities living in them. In some areas of London, including Brent, Newham and Tower Hamlets, over half of the population is Black and minority ethnic and in a further twelve the proportion is over a third.[4] While in two thirds of all schools in England, the proportion of minority ethnic pupils is less than five per cent.[5]

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[1] Census 2001
[2] Census 2001
[3] Morris and Clements (2002), quoted in the Commission for Racial Equality's Gypsy and Traveller strategy (2004)
[4] Census 2001
[5] Department for Education and Skills 2004

1.4 Ethnic and religious diversity in Britain is dynamic. Black and minority ethnic communities have a higher proportion of young people under 25 and are projected to account for over half of the growth in Britain's working age population over the next decade.[6] Over time, settled migrant populations change from generation to generation. Globalisation, new patterns of migration and the expansion of the European Union will all impact on the changing nature of our population, as will the fact that many more people now chose to study, work or live for a time outside their countries of origin.

1.5 Our diversity as a society is a source of great strength and enriches all of our lives. Migrants to this country have brought new talents and skills, different perspectives and new ways of doing things, increasing productivity and flexibility in the economy, and through their descendants, ideas and achievements, their contribution is carried forward for future generations. The economic case for migration is an important part of the picture. But the benefits from the diversity that migration has brought about go much wider, touching every aspect of our social and cultural lives – the food we eat, the music we listen to and the clothes we wear.

1.6 Integration in Britain is not about assimilation into a single homogenous culture, it is a two way process with responsibilities on both new arrivals and established communities. Integration is also about more than how we respond to new arrivals, it means ensuring that ethnic, religious or cultural differences do not define people's life chances and that people with different backgrounds work together to build a shared future.

1.7 People from Black and minority ethnic communities have experienced and continue to experience racism, discrimination and disadvantage and while we can take pride in the considerable progress we have made to reduce prejudice and inequalities, we cannot be complacent about the significant challenges that remain. This is a complex picture and not just one of white advantage and minority ethnic disadvantage, but we know that many people from Black and minority ethnic communities enjoy fewer life chances. Strategies which help minority ethnic groups to obtain greater opportunities might offer solutions for other disadvantaged groups and by doing so, help to build more cohesive communities.

[6] Ethnic minorities and the Labour Market, Strategy Unit (2003)

1.8 In many areas, the diversity within and between communities has been a source of rich cultural interactions, but in other areas segregation has led to fear and conflict, which has been exacerbated by political extremists who capitalise on insecurities to promote their own narrow objectives. Structural inequalities and the legacy of discrimination have resulted in whole groups that are effectively left behind, with young people failing to share in the opportunities that should be available to all, which in turn fuels their disengagement from mainstream society and creates pathways to extremism.

1.9 By developing a Government wide strategy for community cohesion and race equality, we aim to articulate the vision of a successful integrated society, draw together the evidence and provide a coherent framework through which we can drive a programme of action across Government, the public services and more widely. It will be a strategy led by Government, but which will require the engagement of individuals, communities and organisations across society.

1.10 To make sure that the strategy takes us beyond words and into actions that make a real difference to people's lives, it will be underpinned by powerful delivery mechanisms, ensuring accountability and ownership sits with those who can make a difference. We need to ensure that the delivery mechanisms that are put in place reflect the particular challenges and constitutional arrangements that apply in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. This will be a strategy for Great Britain and will apply in Northern Ireland only to those matters that are reserved or excepted under the provisions of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. It acknowledges that racial equality and community relations are matters for the Northern Ireland Administration, which is developing strategies for racial equality and community relations. It also acknowledges that there are separate devolution arrangements for Scotland and Wales, which will need to be taken into account as the strategy is developed in partnership with the devolved administrations.

1.11 Government and political leadership are essential. But this is not an area where Government can have all the answers and it is important that we have an honest and robust debate about how we respond to the challenges that face us as a modern multicultural democracy. This document sets out the framework for that debate.

2

Promoting inclusive notions of citizenship, identity and belonging

2.1 To build a successful integrated society we need to promote an inclusive concept of citizenship, which goes further than the strictly legal definition of nationality and articulates the rights and responsibilities we share. Building this wider notion of active citizenship through participation, volunteering and civic action, underpinned by a sense of shared values, is one of the main ways in which we can strengthen the relationships and connections between communities. We need to ensure that all citizens feel a sense of pride in being British and a sense of belonging to this country and to each other, and to ensure that our national symbols, like the Union Jack and the flags of the four nations, are not the tools of extremists, but visibly demonstrate our unity, as we saw through the Golden Jubilee celebrations.

2.2 The question of what it means to be British was considered in the report of the Life in the United Kingdom Advisory Group, which said:

"To be British seems to us to mean that we respect the laws, the democratic political structures, and give our allegiance to the state (as commonly symbolised in the Crown) in return for its protection. To be British is to respect those over-arching specific institutions, values and beliefs that bind us all, the different nations and cultures together in peace and in a legal order. For we are all subject to the laws of the land including Human Rights and Equality legislation, and so our diversities of practice must adhere to these legal frameworks. To be British does not mean assimilation into a common culture so that original identities are lost. Assimilation to such a degree has not, after all, happened for most people in Wales and Scotland, nor historically for Irish and Jews or even for smaller communities such as the Poles who once fled from persecution. There is no reason why loss of a distinctive identity should occur to immigrants from the new Commonwealth or from elsewhere. This is applicable both to the

relationships of individuals and of communities, who may all in different ways have made positive contributions to our present way of life."

2.3 People in the United Kingdom have always shaped their identities by reference to different beliefs, geography, age, class, and, increasingly, by reference to their cultural preferences, including music and sport. Forthcoming research from the Home Office Citizenship Survey tells us that faith is a key factor in how people from ethnic minority communities identify themselves, with people from Muslim, Hindu and Sikh faiths, ranking their faith second only after family and Jewish people identifying themselves by their faith first. There is also a significant and growing proportion of the population that describe themselves as mixed race, which reflects the growth in inter racial relationships.

2.4 People have always drawn on a variety of sources to define and express their identity. In Britain today, people feel comfortable defining themselves, for example, as Scottish and British, Black and British, Jewish and British, or Muslim, Pakistani and British. Nor are identities fixed, they can change over time, evolving in response to changes in society and to individual circumstances.

2.5 The vast majority of people already recognise that British is a dynamic and inclusive concept, with 86% agreeing with the statement that you don't need to be white to be British.[7] Integration is not about assimilation into a single homogenous culture and there is space within the concept of "British" for people to express their religious and cultural beliefs. We see this in practice in the sensitisation of public services to accommodate different expressions of identity or belief, for example the adaptation of uniforms in schools and key public services, like the police, to include Muslim hijabs and Sikh turbans.

2.6 Respecting and valuing diversity is an essential part of building a successful, integrated society. But respect for diversity must take place within a framework of rights and responsibilities that are recognised by and apply to all – to abide by the law, to reject extremism and intolerance and make a positive contribution to UK society. Different ways of living our lives, different cultures or beliefs all coexist within this shared framework of rights and responsibilities.

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[7] The Voice of Britain, Commission for Racial Equality, 2002

2.7 Like all areas of public policy, we need to balance rights and responsibilities and this places a duty on Government to ensure that excellent and appropriate services are delivered without compromising fundamental principles and values. For example, in designing the provision of Coroner's Services, we must make sure that the administration of those services allows people to fulfil their religious obligations towards family and loved ones, while safeguarding the fundamental role of the Coroner to rule on the cause of a person's death. Some minority faiths require a speedy burial as a matter of belief, a legitimate demand that in certain circumstances needs to be balanced against the need to undertake post mortem investigations to determine the cause of an individual's death. How we approach these issues is a measure of our success as an integrated society.

2.8 Recognising that integration can mean changes for established communities does not mean abandoning the values that we share as citizens: respect for the law and democratic structures, fairness, tolerance and respect for difference. Part of the power of the concept of shared values lies in the debate itself. One of the main lessons from the disturbances in Northern English towns in 2001 was that a lack of shared vision and principles had contributed to the breakdown of cohesion and the Cantle report made recommendations in this area.[8] Through the Community Cohesion Pathfinder programme, the Home Office has been supporting initiatives led by local authorities, in partnership with the voluntary and community sector, to develop approaches to building a shared vision across diverse communities.

How can we ensure that people feel a sense of pride in being British – without feeling they have to leave other traditions behind? How can we ensure that pride in bring British is combined with respect for other people's identities? What role can shared values play in this?

2.9 Promoting active citizenship is already at the heart of the Government's agenda. In education, we have introduced citizenship as a National Curriculum subject in English schools, as part of the curriculum in Wales and in Northern Ireland and as a cross-curricular initiative commended by the Scottish Executive for Scotland's non-statutory curriculum. We have introduced new citizenship ceremonies for people taking up British nationality, with a programme of support to overcome practical barriers to becoming active citizens, including a focus on English language skills.

[8] Community Cohesion: A report of the independent review team chaired by Ted Cantle, Home Office (2001)

2.10 We want to explore ways in which we can go further and promote inclusive notions of active citizenship, particularly working with young people, for example through youth volunteering schemes and the work of the Department for Education and Skills on the curriculum. We also want to identify lessons we can learn from the experience of countries, like Canada and Australia, where they place more emphasis on the symbolic nature of citizenship, for example through ceremonies or national events.

In what ways can we promote British citizenship for all, particularly among young people?

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3

Eradicating racism and extremism

3.1 Racism and extremism have no place in modern Britain. We live in a rapidly changing world and that means new and exciting opportunities, but also new challenges. The rise in international terrorism, new patterns of migration and the effects of globalisation, can all contribute to people's sense of insecurity and fear, which is often most profoundly felt in areas suffering deprivation or where change occurs over a short period of time. We need to acknowledge those concerns as valid, while we work to address the causes and continue to drive out racism and extremism, political and religious, wherever they are found.

3.2 We have come a long way from the days when racism was openly displayed in public and we should celebrate that progress. There are now strong anti-racism messages throughout society, for example in the determination to eliminate racism in football. From the British Social Attitudes Survey, we know that there is widespread support for anti-discrimination legislation and there is attitudinal evidence that suggests society is getting less prejudiced over time. But we also know that people from Black and minority ethnic communities still experience racist abuse, harassment and crime motivated by racism and hatred, and that we are seeing a rise in anti-semitism and Islamophobia. We know that for members of Gypsy and Traveller communities, overt racism is still a fact of day to day life.

? **How can we ensure that all communities see racism, racial and religious harassment and hate crime as unacceptable and are able to act to drive them out?**

3.3 We are also experiencing a rise in political and religious extremism, across Europe and more widely, and there is a risk that tacit support for extremist views in wider society feeds off people's insecurities. The media can also play a role in creating and perpetuating stereotypes and myths. We need to break out of the vicious circle in which ignorance and fear feed resentment and prejudice, which then drives segregation, which in turn makes it harder for people to understand each other and makes further increases in prejudice and problems of community cohesion more likely. We need to do more to engage the public in decisions that affect their neighbourhood, particularly where those decisions are contentious or sensitive. Communications strategies at all levels need to take account of the importance of effective engagement to building cohesion.

3.4 All political and community leaders share responsibility, working with the local and national media, for tackling the myths and misrepresentation of facts that can damage cohesion. Religious extremists who wrongly argue for support for acts of terrorism in the name of Islam present the same threat to British Muslim communities as they do to others, compounded by the fact that they propagate false perceptions about the values and beliefs of Islam. We need to explicitly recognise that political and religious extremists do not speak on behalf of the communities they purport to represent, and to work with those communities to counter the false perceptions that extremists promote.

How can we most effectively respond to the threat from political and other forms of extremism, including understanding and tackling its causes?

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3.5 The Government is committed to eradicating racism, whether explicit or institutional, in all public institutions and organisations. The Macpherson inquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence provided a wake up call for Government, the police and other public services, and has led to a wide ranging programme of action to tackle institutional racism in the police, the wider criminal justice system and across public services. There is still a long way to go, and we have seen evidence of continuing racism and discrimination in public services, including in the BBC's Secret Policeman investigation and from the inquiry into the death of David Bennett in a mental health facility. Where tragedies do happen it is critical that we approach them openly, taking

responsibility for what has gone wrong and working to learn lessons that can be applied in a way that delivers lasting change.

3.6 Through the Race Relations (Amendment) Act, over 43,000 public bodies are now under a positive duty to promote race equality and good race relations. This is a potentially very powerful lever to drive change throughout public services, both in employment and the delivery of public services, but we know that it is not yet being consistently applied. We need to find ways to ensure that the new duty brings about real change and the Commission for Racial Equality is working with public bodies to develop guidance.

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How can we build on the progress that has been made and ensure that the duty on public bodies to promote good race relations makes a real difference in the way that public bodies deliver race equality and community cohesion?

4

Tackling inequality and opening opportunities for all

4.1 Ensuring all people have access to opportunities and similar life chances, and know that public services will treat them fairly irrespective of ethnic or religious differences are essential principles of an integrated, diverse society. But we know that in Britain people's ethnic or religious differences affect their experiences of public services and their life chances more generally. This is a complex picture – not simply a question of white advantage and minority ethnic disadvantage. People of all races and religions share experiences of deprivation and disadvantage, but we know that they affect particular groups more profoundly. For example, 67% of people from Black and minority ethnic communities live in the 88 most deprived districts in England, compared to 37% of the white population.[9]

4.2 Disadvantage affects people throughout deprived neighbourhoods and tackling poverty and deprivation in all communities is a priority across Government. We have seen a huge investment in regeneration programmes in disadvantaged communities in recent years, targeting those most in need. Yet the scale of disadvantage experienced by Black and minority ethnic communities appears to have changed little. We know that past regeneration initiatives have failed to engage effectively with Black and minority ethnic communities and, as a result, the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal[10] makes an explicit commitment to involving and benefiting Black and minority ethnic communities.

4.3 We know that people from Black and minority ethnic communities experience disadvantage in different ways. The Strategy Unit's study into ethnic minorities and the labour market showed that Chinese and Indian people

[9] Neighbourhood Renewal Unit 2004
[10] A new commitment to neighbourhood renewal: National Strategy Action Plan, Social Exclusion Unit (2001)

performed on average better that their white peers, while Black people, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis performed significantly worse.[11] Although "all ethnic minority groups – even those enjoying relative success, such as the Indians and Chinese – are not doing as well as they should be, given their education and other characteristics".

4.4 Sometimes the forces of disadvantages can be multiple, not just race but also social class, faith or gender can all be factors. The Strategy Unit report also reiterated the message that disadvantage experienced by Black and minority ethnic communities is not only a product of racism, institutional or overt, but that other factors, like geography and socio-economic status, also play a role. As a result of that report a programme of action addressing these factors is being implemented across Government.

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How can we more effectively target policies to tackle the specific disadvantages experienced by different sections of the population, within a strategy that delivers equality for all?

4.5 All areas of public service need to be set up to counter race inequalities rather than enforce them. We now have in place some of the most progressive anti-discrimination legislation in the world, including a duty on public bodies to promote race equality[12] and protection against discrimination based on religion or belief in the workplace.[13]

4.6 One of the key challenges is to ensure we use the existing tools and levers, including the legislation, more effectively and place responsibility for tackling inequalities squarely with those that can make a difference. All public bodies are now under a duty to develop a race equality scheme and race impact assessments of their policies and programmes, ensuring that race equality is embedded in all of their activities and that there is leadership from the top. Inspection and audit bodies, ethnic monitoring and performance management arrangements for public bodies play their part in ensuring the practice matches the policy and delivers real outcomes.

4.7 We need to make sure that we have the right enforcement mechanisms and that they are used effectively, supplemented through positive incentives that promote innovation and excellence throughout public services. The White Paper *Fairness for all: the Commission for Equality and Human Rights*, just launched

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[11] Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
[12] Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
[13] Employment Equality (Religion and Belief) Regulations (December 2003)

for consultation, further underlines the Government's commitment to a fair, inclusive society based on cohesive communities and opportunity for all. The White Paper sets out our vision for the new Commission as a body to provide a step change in how we promote, deliver and enforce equality and human rights, building on the work of the existing equalities bodies including the Commission for Racial Equality.

What more should be done to embed race equality in the delivery of public services?

4.8 For Black and minority ethnic people to have confidence and trust in public services, those services must have workforces that reflect the population they serve and this is particularly important for services that are responsible for enforcing the law or exercising some other form of control over individuals. This is obviously true for the immigration service, police and other criminal justice agencies, but also a key factor and local authorities, for example housing departments. Failing to achieve representation, including at the most senior levels of public organisations, puts the legitimacy of those services at risk. Building representative workforces across the public services is also critical in ensuring that we making the most of the talent and skills available.

4.9 Progress has been made, including through setting challenging targets for the recruitment, retention and progression of Black and minority ethnic people in the Home Office and its services, including the police. But, even where progress has been made, Black and minority ethnic staff are too often concentrated in the lower grades, with lower rates of retention and promotion.

What further actions can we take that will ensure public sector workforces are representative of the communities they serve?

4.10 Although not subject to all of the same legal duties as the public sector, some leading organisations in the private sector have recognised the business imperative in tackling race equality issues in their employment policies and more widely. Through initiatives like Race for Opportunity they are actively promoting good practice throughout the sector, but there is still a long way to go. We need to build on the progress that has been made and find ways to promote the strength in diversity as a key business opportunity across the private sector, not just for large businesses, but also small and medium sized enterprises.

How should we work with the private sector to promote race equality?

5

Building cohesive communities

5.1 In many places, the diversity within and between communities has been a source of rich cultural interactions, but in others segregation has led to fear and conflict. The evidence gathered following the disturbances in Northern English towns in 2001 showed that communities in those places had become segregated, in housing, education, employment and how they spent their leisure time, and that this was one of the factors that had contributed to the breakdown of trust and cohesion.[14]

5.2 The Government is committed to promoting greater choice as one of the ways to improve appropriateness and standards in the delivery of public services. There is however a risk that people exercise their choices in a way that leads to them living separate or parallel lives, where they do not interact with people from different backgrounds, beliefs or traditions. We recognise too that for many people their choices are limited because of socio-economic status, discrimination or some other factor and that is why tackling inequalities and opening opportunities for all is at the heart of our work to develop this strategy.

5.3 Addressing the challenges of segregation is not just the business of places that are obviously multi-racial, nor is it as simple as imposing quotas. The fact that people from the same background or culture choose to live or work together is not in itself a sign of a breakdown in cohesion. But it is important that we foster mutual understanding and respect between people from different backgrounds and cultures. Communities are better equipped to organise themselves to tackle their common problems if they are not divided by mutual suspicion and misunderstanding of diverse cultures and faiths. We

[14] Community Cohesion: A report of the independent review team chaired by Ted Cantle, Home Office (2001)

need to understand better why segregation persists in some of our communities – so we can ensure people do not feel forced into it, while respecting their right to retain their culture and traditions.

5.4 One of the challenges for Government, public services and the wider community is how to promote and support ways of bringing together people from different backgrounds in a way that increases understanding and respect. Through the programme of Community Cohesion pathfinders, we have seen many examples where local initiatives are building bridges between communities. For example in Tower Hamlets, where community organisations are working to bring people together through the use of community facilities, like the local Catholic centre, which was used by people from the Bangladeshi community during Ramadan for evening prayer. Private sector organisations also have a key role in helping to build community cohesion, for example the Oldham United project, where local employers are leading work with the media in Oldham to ensure that the positive benefits of diversity are recognised.

5.5 Faith communities can play a key role in providing leadership and bringing together people from different faiths and cultures. For example the Leeds Faith Communities Liaison Forum, which works closely with the local authorities and partnerships in Leeds to tackle issues of exclusion and cohesion. The London Borough of Croydon has been working with the Employment Forum UK and the local faith-based community organisations to develop new social enterprises, jobs and learning opportunities. Alongside which they have found ways to enhance understanding between members of different faith communities about their different beliefs and practices.

5.6 Engaging with young people is key, ensuring that we sow the seeds now of community cohesion in the future, through programmes twinning schools to community led initiatives that bring young people together outside schools, in youth clubs, sports and other activities. We want to go further, ensuring that all young people have positive experiences of different cultures and faiths as part of the normal experience of growing up in modern Britain.

What more can we do to build relationships and understanding between people from different backgrounds?

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5.7 We need to recognise that immigration and asylum present separate challenges, distinct from the issues and challenges set out here and which are complex in their own right. For immigration, these include the need to

balance the economic, social and cultural benefits of migration with the duty to protect the system from abuse and to manage the impact of new arrivals on communities. For asylum, the need to balance giving protection to those fleeing torture and death and ensuring that we process applications quickly and fairly, while tackling abuse of the system where it happens. But, while there are important distinctions that need to be made much more clearly, many of the issues set out here are clearly relevant for new arrivals too. This presents us with a challenge to ensure that in debating these issues we avoid confusion and the negative effects that can have on community relations.

How can we ensure that we have an open debate around how to properly manage migration and prevent abuse of asylum which doesn't fuel prejudice against Black and minority ethnic communities?

5.8 We have emphasised the importance of successfully integrating new arrivals to Britain through a two way process with responsibilities on both the migrant and the community that welcomes them. That means providing practical support to overcome barriers to integration, both for the individuals newly arrived in Britain and for the local community into which they are being welcomed. We have already started to do this, including through the practical support associated with the new citizenship ceremonies for new British nationals. Many migrants, such as refugees are able to access free English language provision to support their integration in the UK. Provision of English language training for people who speak other languages has been increased by over 50% in the last two years.

5.9 The challenges of integration for new arrivals are often most acute in the case of refugees, who will normally be completely new to this country, often lacking family or other support networks here and in many cases do not have even a basic knowledge of English. The Government will be publishing in the summer a new strategy for the integration of refugees into British society, which will emphasise the need for personalised programmes of support during the first crucial weeks after a person is granted refugee status.

What more should we be doing to support integration of new arrivals – and to involve existing citizens in this as a two way process?

5.10 Civil renewal is at the heart of the Government's vision of life in our 21st century communities. It aims to reconnect citizens with the public realm by empowering them to influence the development of solutions to problems affecting them. It is vital that barriers to participation – from lack of

confidence and capacity to express one's views to prejudices which lead to exclusion – are tackled so that the aspiration for wider engagement can be translated into reality.

5.11 Across Government and the public services, civil renewal is taken forward through promoting and supporting active citizenship, investing in capacity building to strengthen communities and involving local people in improving the planning and delivery of public services. In all these areas, we recognise the need to support not just existing communities, but also to bring diverse communities together to develop shared objectives and means of mutual support.

How can we ensure that, in the true spirit of civil renewal, public service reforms consistently build cohesion and foster understanding between people from different cultures

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6

The way forward – from discussion to action

6.1 This pamphlet sets out the Government's analysis of the issues and challenges that we need to address in developing a community cohesion and race equality strategy. Through it we want to promote an honest and open debate, engaging people from all backgrounds, age groups and parts of the country. In doing so, we are calling on those in positions of responsibility and leadership to promote and lead the debate across your networks and organisations, whether in Government, the wider public service, the private sector, voluntary and community organisations or elsewhere. While these issues and challenges should be part of an ongoing debate in any vibrant modern democracy, for the purposes of developing the strategy, we would welcome responses by 17 September 2004.

6.2 Responses to this consultation exercise can be submitted by email ccresconsultation@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk or by post to *Strength in Diversity consultation, Home Office, 50 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AT.* All responses will be acknowledged. A programme of consultation events, workshops, seminars and meetings are planned, supported by the Home Office and third party organisations. An online tool-kit will be available from 25 May on the Home Office web-site (www.homeoffice.gov.uk/comrace) for people organising and facilitating consultation events. In keeping with best practice on Government consultation, we will publish a summary of the responses to this pamphlet.

6.3 The information you send us may need to be passed to colleagues within the Home Office or published in the summary of responses. We will assume that you are content for us to do this and that if you are replying by email, your consent overrides any confidentiality disclaimer that is generated by the organisation's IT system, unless you specifically include a request to the

contrary. Please make sure your response is marked clearly if you wish your response or name to be treated as confidential. Confidential responses will be included in any statistical summary of numbers of comments received and views expressed. Copies of the pamphlet and toolkit will be made available in large format, Braille, Audio tape and simple text on diskette.

6.4 The discussions that are held and the feedback we receive in response to this pamphlet will inform the development of the community cohesion and race equality strategy, which we intend to launch in the autumn 2004. The strategy will provide a framework for action across Government, the public services and more widely and will be underpinned by powerful delivery mechanisms that ensures accountability and ownership sits with those who can make a difference.