

Justice Sub-Committee on Policing

Police Scotland's engagement with black and minority ethnic (BME) communities

Written submission from the Scottish Government

Background

1. On 21 March 2016 the Government published the Race Equality Framework, setting out the Scottish Government's approach to promoting race equality and tackling racism and inequality between 2016 and 2030.
2. The Framework sets out a large number of actions grouped around goals within each vision (one vision is Community Cohesion and Safety) with a view to delivering over the 15 year span of the Framework.
3. Many people from minority ethnic communities in Scotland were born here or have lived here for most of their lives. Scotland is home, too, for recent migrants and the generations within these communities that will be born in future years. However, there is evidence that not everyone accepts minority ethnic people as an equal part of Scotland's society. This has consequences for community cohesion in Scotland.
4. The Vision statement for Community Cohesion and Safety is: **We build good race relations and community cohesion across all communities, and all minority ethnic individuals feel safe, protected and included, and experience less racism.**
5. The Race Equality Framework (REF) is being delivered by the Scottish Government and is coordinated by the Race Equality Team within the Equality Unit, with support and input from policy areas across Scottish Government who own the actions outlined in the Framework itself. As a model of mainstreaming, implementation against the actions includes linking and engaging external delivery partners and policy areas across Scottish Government, with an expectation that there will be a highlight report in 2017 and an actions update report at the end of Year Two. An update on progress against the REF Framework goals for Community Cohesion and Safety is included at **Annex A** to this submission.
6. Over the course of 2017 we organised a series of Themed Roundtables linked to REF themes involving policy officials with key experts from a range of statutory and third sector organisations and academia. Three Roundtables have been held so far, one of which was on Community Cohesion and Safety (27 June 2017) with the next series planned for spring 2018.
7. We will publish a Race Equality Action Plan later this year setting out the key actions we will take over this Parliamentary session to drive positive change for minority ethnic communities. This will include refreshed actions for Community Cohesion and Safety.

Link to the Race Equality Framework is available [here](#).

UPDATE AGAINST RACE EQUALITY FRAMEWORK GOALS FOR COMMUNITY COHESION AND SAFETY

There is greater cohesion between all communities in Scotland

- On 13 June, we published an ambitious programme of work to tackle hate crime and build community cohesion – building on the **Advisory Group on Hate Crime, prejudice and Community Cohesion** chaired by Dr Duncan Morrow. This includes a commitment to raise a public awareness campaign to tackle barriers to reporting which was launched by the Equalities Secretary on 13 October and establishing a multi-agency delivery group comprising CoSLA, Justice agencies and equalities organisations to take this work forward – this will meet for the first time later in the autumn and will be chaired by the Equalities Secretary.
- Lord Bracadale has been appointed to lead an **independent review of hate crime legislation** - he has offered to engage with party leaders across the chamber. Amongst other things, Lord Bracadale is consulting on the groups covered by hate crime legislation.
- We will consider Lord Bracadale's recommendations carefully when they are made in early 2018

Access to justice and safety for minority ethnic individuals is improved and the effectiveness of the justice process in dealing with racism is reviewed

- The Police Scotland review of their **Strategic Police Priorities** involved widespread engagement activity with communities, including minority ethnic communities, to gather views on their priorities for policing in Scotland. As part of this work, a small focus group was facilitated by the Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights on behalf of the Scottish Government, through which participants highlighted a number of key themes of relevance to policing, including:
 - Communication/Education
 - Collaborative Working
 - Trust/Confidence
 - Respect/Openness
 - Community Involvement
 - Fairness
 - Proportionality/appropriateness of response
 - Engagement
 - Performance Management/Measurement
- Feedback from focus groups identified opportunities to further strengthen the Priorities and ultimately led to the inclusion of an additional Priority focusing solely on issues linked to inclusion. The Revised Strategic Police Priorities were laid before Parliament on 5 October 2016. The Strategic Police Priorities were used by Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority to inform their

“Policing 2026” long-term transformational strategy which was laid before parliament on 20 June. The Strategy highlights the importance of Police Scotland responding effectively to diverse needs of Scotland’s communities.

Stop and Search practice on minority ethnic communities

- The Stop and Search Code of Practice, which came into force on 11 May 2017, sets out the circumstances in which a search may be carried out, the procedures to be followed, the record to be kept and the right of someone to receive a copy of that record. The Scottish Government has legislated to ensure that Police Scotland must publish information about how many searches are carried out, how many persons are searched on two or more occasions, the age and gender, and the ethnic and national origins of the person searched.
- Under the Code, Police Scotland must carefully monitor the use of stop and search in relation to specific sections of the community, including different ethnic groups. This will enable any concerning trends or seemingly disproportionate use of powers to be identified, so that action can be taken if necessary. Police Scotland must also publish an annual report, as soon as practicable after the end of each reporting year (ending 31 March), that includes a breakdown of searches by ethnic origin.
- Once the Code of Practice has been in place for 12 months the Scottish Government will fund an independent review that will look at (among other things) any concerns about how stop and search powers are being used on people from ethnic minority groups. We will ask the Stop and Search Advisory Group to examine the review findings and prepare a report for Ministers by the end of July 2018. If the Group recommends that any changes are needed to improve the monitoring or practice of stop and search on people from ethnic minorities, the Scottish Government will work with Police Scotland and stakeholders to make sure these issues are addressed.

Scotland's police workforce is better able to tackle racism and promote equality and community cohesion in the delivery of police services

- Integrity, Fairness and Respect are central to Police Scotland’s Professional Ethics and Values. Police Scotland training has been reviewed to ensure that human rights, organisational values and the Code of Ethics (CoE) must be considered in the design specification of every course. New recruits receive training on the ethics and values, as well as on both the European Convention on Human Rights and the Human Rights Act 1998. In addition, all police officers are required to make the ‘Declaration of Constable’, which includes a commitment to uphold fundamental human rights. These principles have been incorporated into central functions, such as Standard Operating Procedures and Operational Orders, and the personal development review process has been revised to ensure that the values and CoE are central tenets for development and progression. A presentation on the CoE, which includes the protection of human rights, has been delivered to senior management teams for cascading to all police officers and staff, and all staff have been sent a pocket guide on the values, CoE and the National Decision-Making Model.

Police Scotland's workforce better reflects the diversity of its communities

Increase the number of minority ethnic entrants to the police workforce

- We worked with the Scottish Police Authority and Police Scotland to promote positive action in the police workforce. There have been positive changes to the recruitment procedures for Police Officers. Police Scotland's Positive Action Team has implemented the "Introduction to Police Programme" (ITTP), that supports potential minority ethnic candidates through a training and mentoring programme. A total of 108 participants took part in the first two courses, and a high proportion (70%) subsequently applied to join the police. In total over 10% of the recruits who joined Police Scotland in September 2017 were from a minority ethnic background.
- The Positive Action Team has also been instrumental in making changes to the recruitment process to break down perceived barriers to joining the police. This includes the introduction of the standard Hijab for officers; the removal of the requirement that candidates hold a full driving licence; and changes to the police fitness test.

Scottish Government
18 October 2017