

Belfast

Building

Good

Relations



Belfast
City Council

www.belfastcity.gov.uk/goodrelations

Promoting good relations through a shared, peaceful, welcoming and open city

What's it all about?

Good Relations is about promoting better relationships between people from different political, religious and racial backgrounds, tackling sectarianism and racism and promoting cultural diversity and inclusion.

Residents tell us regularly that good relations is a key issue for them. We are committed to making Belfast a place that is safe and welcoming to everyone. We need to continue to work hard to transform a city known for division, into one that is shared by all.

Our work

Our good relations work is aligned with the overarching Northern Ireland Government Strategy "Together Building a United Community" under the following headings.



Our vision

The Belfast Agenda, our community plan for Belfast, recognises the importance of good relations; one of its aims is that Belfast will be a culturally rich and diverse city that is open, safe and welcoming to all.

Promoting good relations is key to improving the quality of life for everyone in the city and making Belfast a better place to live, work, socialise and do business. We want to make sure that fairness, equality and respect are at the heart of everything we do. These values are central to our policy making process and underpin all our activities.

A city that embodies good community relations is one in which:

- people feel they can move around in an environment free from sectarianism and racism
- all areas and services are open and accessible to everyone; and
- different traditions, cultures and identities are seen as a cause for celebration, as opposed to being viewed negatively.



Leadership

As a council we strive to lead the way in improving the lives of everyone within Belfast and this is underpinned by the creation of a truly shared city. We established the Shared City Partnership to lead on this work. The Partnership brings together representatives of the main political parties on the council along with representatives from the faith, community, voluntary, statutory, business, trade unions and minority ethnic sectors.

The Shared City Partnership drives the work of the Good Relations Unit and advises the wider council on approaches to good relations issues.

Working in partnership

Many organisations and individuals across the city are involved in promoting good relations work. Our role is to support this work, in partnership with relevant stakeholders and most importantly, the people of Belfast.



We can help by providing resources and tools to make sure everyone can contribute to our programmes.

We recognise that relationships between communities would not be as positive as they are, without the dedication and hard work of a significant number of individuals and community organisations in all parts of the city. We will continue to support them in their work at a community level as we continue the huge task of creating a truly shared city.

Diversity and changing community relationships

Our city and wider society has made huge strides in fostering good relations over the decades. However, many of our citizens continue to live parallel lives, with some communities still separated by physical barriers. It is no coincidence that the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Belfast continue to be those located in and around interfaces. Building relationships across communities is central to the good relations agenda, with work continuing to create a better future for people within these neighbourhoods.

Over the last number of years, the population of Belfast has changed a lot. We have welcomed new people from other countries who have made Belfast their home, enriching our culture and contributing to our society.



Our work

We are responsible for delivering a number of good relations programmes

Good relations development support and grant aid

- We work with organisations to develop projects that build meaningful, sustained and purposeful cross community relationships. Our grant aid supports local groups and cross cultural organisations with funding for events, programmes and activities that promote and address good relations issues within their locality.

Promoting diversity

- We deliver a range of initiatives including the Diversecity programme that help people to learn more about the people, places and communities that make our city and raise awareness of the diversity that exists in Belfast.

Supporting cultural expression

- We work with communities to support the positive expression of culture, either through training and capacity building or by supporting the delivery of inclusive events that represent the range of cultures that are part of life in Belfast.

Promoting the inclusion and integration of migrant and minority ethnic communities

- We lead a multi-agency migrant forum to ensure that everyone has equal and appropriate access to the services in the city. We also run a number of initiatives to support the integration and inclusion of new communities.

Promoting shared space and working with communities at peace walls

- We support communities and other partners across the city to develop use of shared spaces by addressing issues of physical demarcation such as flags, kerbstone painting and militaristic murals. We also support interventions around interface areas.

Informing policy and practice

- We help other council colleagues ensure their projects and services deliver good relations outcomes. This includes capital projects such as Girdwood Community Hub and the Innovation Factory as well as initiatives in our parks and open spaces that have created new opportunities for residents in such areas to engage with each other.

Sharing perspectives on history

- We lead on the delivery of a Decade of Centenaries project which facilitates conversations on the shared history of Belfast and allows recognition of the different perspectives in our city.

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