Belfast City Council

The Implications of Providing Services in a Divided City

Final Report

7 January 2008
3.7 Arising Issues.................................................................................................................. 19

4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY ......................................................................................... 20
4.1 Introduction.................................................................................................................. 20
4.2 Methodology ............................................................................................................. 20

5 SOCIAL HOUSING........................................................................................................ 23
5.1 Introduction.................................................................................................................. 23
5.2 Background ................................................................................................................. 23
5.3 Location of Northern Ireland Housing Executive Social Housing Provision............... 24
5.4 Analysis of Northern Ireland Housing Executive Waiting List .................................... 25
5.5 Analysis of Northern Ireland Housing Executive SPED and POPPI Statistics ............... 27
5.6 Arising Issues............................................................................................................. 27

6 HEALTH CENTRE FACILITIES .................................................................................. 29
6.1 Introduction.................................................................................................................. 29
6.2 Background ................................................................................................................. 29
6.3 Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT) Facilities .............................................. 29
6.4 Location of Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Health Centres................................. 30
6.5 Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Health Centre Users .......................................... 31
6.6 Evidence of Segregated Spaces ................................................................................... 32
6.7 Evidence of Shared Spaces .......................................................................................... 34
6.8 Arising Issues............................................................................................................. 34

7 FURTHER & HIGHER EDUCATION FACILITIES .................................................. 36
7.1 Introduction.................................................................................................................. 36
7.2 Background ................................................................................................................. 36
7.3 Belfast Metropolitan College Facilities ......................................................................... 37
7.4 College Location in Relation to Community Background ........................................... 38
7.5 Students Attending the Main College Sites ................................................................. 38
Appendices

Appendix 1 - Community Focus Group Correspondence, Participants and Discussion Guides

Appendix 2 - Service Provider Correspondence, Participants and Discussion Guides

Appendix 3 - Maps

Figure 2.1 Geographical Segregation

Figure 6.1 Geographical Segregation and Location of Belfast HSCT Health Centres

Figure 7.1 Geographical Segregation and Location of BMC F&HE Facilities

Figure 8.1 Geographical Segregation and Location of BELB Youth Centre Facilities

Figure 9.1 Geographical Segregation and Location of BCC Community Centre Facilities

Figure 10.1 Geographical Segregation and Location of BCC Leisure Centre Facilities

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### Glossary of Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACORN</td>
<td>Geo-demographic Tool classifying areas in terms of social &amp; economic factors</td>
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<td>BCC</td>
<td>Belfast City Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>BELB</td>
<td>Belfast Education and Library Board</td>
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<td>BMC</td>
<td>Belfast Metropolitan College</td>
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<td>BSF</td>
<td>Building Schools for the Future</td>
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<td>CRC</td>
<td>Community Relations Council</td>
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<td>CRU</td>
<td>Community Relations Unit</td>
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<td>DCAL</td>
<td>Department of Culture and Leisure</td>
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<td>DCU</td>
<td>District Command Unit</td>
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<td>DEL</td>
<td>Department for Employment and Learning</td>
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<td>DHSSPS</td>
<td>Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety</td>
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<td>ELB</td>
<td>Education and Library Boards</td>
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<td>EQIA</td>
<td>Equality Impact Assessment</td>
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<td>ESA</td>
<td>Education and Skills Authority</td>
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<td>F&amp;HE</td>
<td>Further and Higher Education</td>
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<td>GCI</td>
<td>Great Cities Institute</td>
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<td>HMO</td>
<td>House in Multiple Occupation</td>
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<td>HSCT</td>
<td>Health and Social Care Trust</td>
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<td>HSSA</td>
<td>Health and Social Services Authority</td>
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<td>HSSB</td>
<td>Health and Social Services Board</td>
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<td>NICHS</td>
<td>Northern Ireland Children’s Holiday Scheme</td>
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<td>NIHE</td>
<td>Northern Ireland Housing Executive</td>
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<td>NIO</td>
<td>Northern Ireland Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>OFMDFM</td>
<td>Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister</td>
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<tr>
<td>PC</td>
<td>Parliamentary Constituency</td>
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<tr>
<td>POPPI</td>
<td>Protection Of Private Property at Interfaces</td>
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<td>PSNI</td>
<td>Police Service of Northern Ireland</td>
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<tr>
<td>RPA</td>
<td>Review of Public Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPED</td>
<td>Special Purchase of Evacuated Dwellings</td>
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<tr>
<td>UFF</td>
<td>Ulster Freedom Fighters</td>
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<tr>
<td>UIC</td>
<td>University of Illinois Chicago</td>
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<td>UVF</td>
<td>Ulster Volunteer Force</td>
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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

i. Introduction

Deloitte MCS Limited (Deloitte) has been commissioned by The Good Relations Unit of Belfast City Council (BCC) on behalf of the Conflict Transformation Project Reference Group to undertake research into the implications of providing services in a divided society.

ii. Background

BCC has commenced a Conflict Transformation Project as part of its ongoing good relations work and civic leadership efforts. The project aims to build cross-agency dialogue on the principles of conflict transformation and develop a common agenda for the implementation of a Good Relations Plan in Belfast. A Project Reference Group bringing together a range of partner and stakeholder organisations has been established to meet this aim. The project has three strands: “Addressing Divisions”, “Conflict Transformation Learning Consortium” and “Towards a Shared City”. This research analyses service usage and access patterns in relation to specific service use and examines the implications of delivering services in a divided society.

iii. Methodology

The following methodology was used for the research:

Service Line Data Collection and Mapping: The research requirements specify consideration of usage and access relating to a range of services to include housing, policing, further education, health, youth and leisure and community. The following service lines were agreed within each service area:

- **Housing:** We obtained statistical information from NIHE on the geographical location of current social housing stock in Belfast and recent NIHE house sales by geographical location. We were also provided with information regarding the current waiting lists in NIHE District Offices broken down by religion;

- **Policing:** We were provided with data relating to PSNI reported hate crime within each Belfast District Command Unit (DCU). This was analysed in order to determine whether or not certain parts of the city are “hotspots” for hate motivated crime;

- **Further Education:** We examined the location of BMC main sites in relation to the home address of those enrolled on further education courses in order to ascertain inter- and cross-community usage;

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1 Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB), Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT), Belfast Metropolitan College (BMC), Belfast Local Strategy Partnership (BLS), Community Relations Council (CRC), Department of Social Development (DSD), Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM), Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI).
- **Health:** The Health and Social Care Trusts in Belfast provided us with the home address of people registered with Health Centres in order to determine the extent to which this service line is used by all sections of the community;

- **Youth:** We were provided with the geographical location of full-time and large part-time units in the statutory and voluntary sectors which receive funding from the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB) youth service. However, there was no centrally collated user information currently available within the time-scale for this project. There are plans to collate this information for large full-time units in the near future, however due to the fact that there are over 2000 small voluntary units which receive funding this exercise may take longer to progress; and

- **Leisure and Community:** We examined the location of BCC funded leisure and community centres in relation to members’ home address in order to ascertain inter- and cross-community usage.

Following data collation and analysis we undertook a geographical mapping exercise for each service line. The aim of which was to highlight key distortions in service usage and access across the city.

A variety of maps were created using Geographical Information System (GIS) software. A baseline map was devised to pictorially illustrate the community background of residents living within the BCC area using the 2001 Northern Ireland Census Data. Community background information was broken down to determine areas which consist of either a predominately Protestant or Catholic population (more than 60 per cent level respectively) or a mixed community background (with between 40 per cent and 59 per cent Protestant and Catholic residents). This data was presented at output level.

The geographical location of the agreed service provision was plotted against the ward level community background information and a “catchment area” for the facility was devised according to the home postcode of registered users.

These maps provided the basis for analysis and identified where service use is single or mixed identity and where access patterns are distorted by community boundaries (e.g. people travelling further than necessary to access a service or where a service is perceived to be underused considering the population it is close to).

**Community Focus Groups:** Six community focus groups were undertaken across Belfast. Five community opinion focus groups with community representatives were undertaken within each of the five Partnership Board areas (North, East, South, West and Greater Shankill). In addition a Belfast wide focus group was also undertaken with representatives of people from minority ethnic communities.
Comparative Case Study Research: Comparative case study research was undertaken in order to examine the experiences of various cities within the United Kingdom and across Europe who have faced challenges with regard to delivering services within the context of societal divisions.

Service Provider Consultation: A service provider workshop was undertaken in order to bring together key personnel from each respective service line. These consultations helped communicate initial findings to service providers, whilst helping firm up our conclusions and recommendations.

iv. Overarching Findings

The evidence from this research project suggests that service usage is highly dependent upon perceptions of the community “ownership” of the location in which the facility is situated. This pattern demonstrates a fundamental challenge for public authorities who have an obligation to ensure equality of access within and across communities. All public authorities have a statutory duty under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group in carrying out their functions. The Shared Future policy sets out challenging aims for building a shared society, with a key priority being to reclaim shared space. The Draft Programme for Government 2007 further commits to inclusion and tolerance of all cultures in Northern Ireland society.

Following analysis of the primary and secondary data we have drawn the following overarching conclusions:

- **Segregated Communities:** There is widespread spatial segregation between Protestant and Catholic communities in Northern Ireland;

- **Parallel Segregation:** There is a growing potential for further segregation between Protestant, Catholic and minority ethnic communities;

- **Community Division and Political Developments:** The Good Friday Agreement and the current relatively stable political situation has not had a significant impact upon ground level community perceptions and behaviour;

- **Perceived “Ownership”:** There is a perception amongst the people of Belfast that certain geographical areas belong to either the Protestant or the Catholic community. People from minority ethnic backgrounds are also aware of the propensity towards Protestant and Catholic areas, although not to the same extent;

- **Relationship between “Ownership” and Housing:** Perceptions of geographical ownership appear to be directly linked to levels of residential housing concentration;

- **Community Competition:** Due to the fact that community segregation exists, Protestant and Catholic communities in close proximity often perceive that they are in direct competition for services and resources;
Territorial Reinforcement: The perception of competition for services means that areas are often physically demarcated in order to reinforce their ownership;

Lack of Mobility: This concept of “ownership” means that there is a lack of mobility within and across areas of Belfast as people are reluctant to enter other groups’ territory. This evidence has been supported by the current research findings, both in terms of the service data and the community focus groups;

“Ownership” of Services: The research indicates that not only are geographical areas perceived as being “owned” by one community or the other, additionally the facilities located within areas are therefore also perceived as belonging to that community. These facilities could be physical buildings or open spaces such as parks;

Bypassing: Due to people’s perceptions that areas are territorialised according to community background there is a wide-scale tendency to avoid areas that do not match one’s own community affiliation. As a result many services within those areas are also bypassed;

Community Contact: There appears to be little opportunity for many Protestant and Catholic communities to routinely come together on a daily basis;

Some Changing Attitudes: It appears that more people are open to the concept of shared space and as a result may be willing to share essential services with members of the other group. There is a recognition that duplication of services is an inefficient and unsustainable method of delivery;

Trends in Reported Sectarian Crime: This apparent “mellowing” of attitudes appears to be supported by the decrease in reported sectarian motivated hate incidents and crimes reported to PSNI in many areas of Belfast;

Some Reluctance to Change: There are sections of the community who will be reluctant to share facilities with the other group; and

Trends in Reported Racist Crime: The PSNI reported racially motivated hate crime figures indicate an increase in crimes against people from minority ethnic communities, especially within South Belfast. This trend negatively impacts upon feelings of safety and isolation within this section of the community.
v. Potential Barriers to Sharing Services

The following were identified by community representatives as being the main barriers to sharing amongst communities:

- **Physical Location of Services:** The location of services within an area densely populated by members of the “other” group is the most frequent reason given for failing to access a service; and

- **Perceptions of Personal Safety:** Whether or not people feel safe accessing a service is directly related to whether or not they use the facility.

Peoples’ perception of personal safety is affected by:

- **Perceptions of the Area:** Geographical areas can attract a reputation of being unsafe due to actual or perceived community attitudes and/or unrest. Places which are perceived negatively are unlikely to attract “outsiders”, thus perpetuating segregation. Segregation in these instances may exist across communities and within communities. There were examples whereby Catholics living outside of the area would not go to other Catholic areas as they were felt to be unsafe. Similarly Protestant communities are also aware of internal feuds which mean that they feel under threat in affected areas;

- **Territorial Marking:** Physical manifestations of geographical ownership such as sectarian murals, graffiti, flags and kerb painting was perceived as being a tangible sign that an area “belonged” to one section of the community. The result was that people felt intimidated and unsafe in these areas and either refused to enter them or felt uncomfortable when in them;

- **Hate Crime:** Individuals have a spatial awareness of areas in which they are more likely to come under verbal or physical attack. This awareness may be a result of actual experience or hearsay. Attacks do not need to be recent, nor due to personal experience and they link in with an area’s historical reputation; and

- **Habit:** Participants stated that individuals are brought up not to go into certain areas. Therefore large sections of Belfast are relatively unknown to them. This lack of familiarity likely reinforces peoples’ feelings of unease. These feelings are reinforced if they happen to encounter sectarian murals or graffiti and/or actual verbal or physical abuse.

The following socio-economic barriers were also identified as impeding access to services and therefore contributed to low levels of service sharing in some areas:

- **Relationship between Mobility and Deprivation:** There is a distinct relationship between deprived communities and a lack of mobility. There is a heavy reliance on public transport or local taxi services within these communities and therefore there are restrictions on the areas to which they can freely travel; and
- **Relationship between Contact and Deprivation**: There is also a high correlation between segregation and deprivation. It is widely recognised that people living within less affluent areas experience deprivation with regards to the areas of social, economic, employment and education opportunities. Many people within the most segregated areas work, shop and socialise within close proximity to where they live. They often do not have the qualifications which would enable them to attend more integrated higher education and training facilities or to avail of professional employment outside of their community of origin.

Minority ethnic communities also experience specific barriers to accessing public services which are targeted at communities. These were identified as:

- **Low Levels of Cultural Awareness**: The problems of accessing services, that result from differences in cultural norms and forms of behaviour, are often among the most difficult to examine and address, since they often involve the complex areas of sensitivity and perception. It was clear that people from particular groups within the society believe that they were on occasions affected by discrimination, prejudice, insensitivity or culturally inappropriate provision;

- **Lack of Information on Service Entitlement**: There appears to be a lack of understanding of people’s entitlement to services and a general lack of understanding about how to register for or access services such as housing, health and further and higher education. Many people are dependent on members of their own community or specialised voluntary sector support agencies to assist them. Where there are language difficulties the barriers are enhanced;

- **Majority Community Perceptions**: Some people believed that minority ethnic communities are treated differently when seeking to access services, and that it was consequently more difficult for them to access the services suited to their particular needs. This was related to the way in which they believed that the majority population perceived them (e.g. taking local jobs and housing); and

- **Lack of Opportunities to Integrate**: People found it difficult to integrate with local people either as a result of cultural or language differences, a general lack of acceptance or the fact that there are few opportunities to integrate with the majority population on a social level.

**vi. Characteristics of Segregated Services**

The postcode analyses indicate specific access patterns according to where people live in relation to the facilities which they use. With the exception of social housing provision, there is no clear way of stating which services are more segregated than others as evidence of both integrated and segregated service use was found within service lines.
However, findings suggest that segregated service up-take is more likely to occur when there is evidence of:

- **High residential segregation in the vicinity**: Facilities are more likely to provide services to either the Protestant or Catholic community when they are situated within an area which is densely populated by either Protestants or Catholics. It is not surprising that people who live nearest the facility will attend, however, given the segregated nature of housing in Belfast this has implications upon the demographics of service users;

- **Perceived or actual threat to personal safety**: If an area has a reputation as being unsafe for one section of the community people are less unlikely to cross community boundaries to attend;

- **Localised Service Provision**: Segregated service use is more likely to occur when there are outward signs of territorial ownership in the surrounding vicinity or the area has a reputation of instability and violence. This is most likely to occur in youth and community services. These are usually localised facilities which are positioned in the centre of the community in an attempt to meet levels of deprivation;

- **Transport Issues**: Facilities are more likely to be used by one section of the community if there are problems in physically accessing the area. Many people who use public services are dependant upon public transport in order to access facilities. Segregated facilities usually do not have good commuter links and would require prolonged access through areas which may be perceived as being unsafe;

- **Routine Service Provision**: The services provided by segregated facilities are more likely to be general services with no unique selling points or added value; and

- **Similar Service Nearby**: If the same service is provided within close proximity and is based in an area that is perceived to be more favourable, people will attend that facility instead.

### vii. Implications for Service Providers

The following highlights the main difficulties which public sector authorities encounter when attempting to deliver services to communities across Belfast in a manner which is consistent with Government objectives for equality and tolerance for all:

- **Competition for Resources**: The historical reluctance to share territory or services has meant that communities in close proximity are competing for a limited amount of resources (e.g. housing);

- **Duplication of Services**: There has been a tendency for public service providers to duplicate services in order to meet the needs of both communities (e.g. leisure, community, youth services);
Inefficient Service Delivery: The competition for resources, duplication of services and separate delivery mechanisms leads to economically inefficient service provision which is delivered at a cost to the public purse;

Pressure on Services: Some services may come under pressure due to a result of changing needs within communities. These may be a result of population shifts due to an increasing Catholic or minority ethnic community where there was no previous historical residency. Social housing is one service area which is particularly affected;

Promoting Good Relations: Due to statutory obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act service providers are obligated to promote good relations. This places a considerable responsibility upon service providers against a background where there has been a historical reluctance to share space;

Balancing Targeted Services with Shared Services: However, some services are necessarily community based and, as long as housing remains segregated, it is likely that people living in close proximity will attend a particular facility. This will cause an imbalance in community membership; and

Integration or Interaction: There needs to be consideration of whether or not organisations are creating spaces where people come to interact rather than just somewhere that people from different backgrounds avail of a service.

Next Steps

There has been acknowledgement that many people are more open to cross-community contact than was previously the case. However, it must be realised that certain people are reluctant to cross perceptual or physical boundaries.

Therefore the ultimate impact of A Shared Future policy and respective activities aimed at promoting Good Relations is likely to be gradual rather than immediate. It is recognised that the overall impact of Good Relations will be hard to measure, due to the fact that we cannot determine what would have happened had service providers activities not been introduced.

Ultimately, “distance travelled” will depend upon the definition of shared space which the service provider adopts. A current Deloitte study (on behalf of Ilex) is testing and developing a six-point definition of “shared space”. This definition suggests that shared space can be considered along a continuum rather than merely discrete (i.e. from basic co-existence to a more rounded relational and experiential definition). This stepped definition is considered necessary in order to recognise the starting point for many communities and the gradual process of change that will be required to realise Shared Future objectives.
We suggest that the next steps are to:

- give consideration to the recommendations resulting from the current research;
- review the current data collection processes within individual organisations; and
- give consideration of the definition of “shared space” which the organisation wishes to achieve, from buildings and services which are accessible to all irrespective of community background, to services that actively encourage a shared experience and reflection on issues of good relations. The aim should be to create a shared city where every citizen can participate in the life of the city.
1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Deloitte MCS Limited (Deloitte) has been commissioned by The Good Relations Unit of Belfast City Council (BCC) on behalf of the Conflict Transformation Project Reference Group to undertake research into the implications of providing services in a divided society. The project took place over a six month period and this document outlines the findings.

1.2 Background

BCC has commenced a Conflict Transformation Project as part of its ongoing good relations work and civic leadership efforts. The project aims to build cross-agency dialogue on the principles of conflict transformation and develop a common agenda for the implementation of a Good Relations Plan in Belfast. A Project Reference Group 2 bringing together a range of partner and stakeholder organisations has been established to meet this aim. The project has three strands: “Addressing Divisions”, “Conflict Transformation Learning Consortium” and “Towards a Shared City”. This research analyses service usage and access patterns in relation to specific service use and examines the implications of delivering services in a divided society.

1.3 Terms of Reference

The overall aim of the current research is to “better understand the dynamics of managing a divided city and designing interventions which proactively address segregation”.

The terms of reference for the project are to:

- undertake research to examine usage and access patterns, utilising post-code analysis in a range of service provision areas including: housing, leisure, youth, training, health;
- conduct a focus group to elicit key service provider opinion on the implications of service provision in a divided city and the consequent barriers to sharing;
- conduct a focus group to elicit community opinion on factors which influence usage patterns in a divided city and the consequent barriers to sharing;

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2 Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB), Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT), Belfast Metropolitan College (BMC), Belfast Local Strategy Partnership (BLSP), Community Relations Council (CRC), Department of Social Development (DSD), Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM), Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI).
undertake comparative case study research examining service provision and patterns elsewhere;

utilise PSNI statistics to map the location of hate crime incidents against location and use of services3;

carry out informal and formal consultations, discussions, interviews as required to gather relevant information, both quantitative and qualitative;

report regularly on the progress of the research study to the Project Manager and, if required, to the Project Reference Group and Good Relations Steering Panel;

provide a final report in an agreed format, including an Executive Summary; and

assist, if required, in the presentation of the results of the research study to the Project Reference Group, Good Relations Steering Panel and / or the relevant Committee/s of the Council.

1.4 Overview of Approach and Methodology

In response to the terms of reference, we developed an approach which comprised three separate elements. These were:

- **Data Collection and Mapping**: including facilitation of an information gathering workshop with key service providers, agreement of the scope of the project, circulation of data requests, data collation and analysis and the production of maps detailing service usage;

- **Qualitative Fieldwork**: including the facilitation of six community opinion focus groups and a workshop with service providers in order to identify barriers to cross community integration and opportunities for increasing service accessibility; and

- **Conclusions and Recommendations**: including analysis of primary and secondary data and validation of findings with senior personnel from key service providers.

Core elements of our approach are detailed in Section 4 of this report.

1.5 Completeness and Availability of Information

For the purposes of this report, we have had to assume that the statistical information provided to us in terms of service provision is reliable and complete. The scope of the exercise did not extend to an audit of the data provided.

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3 We were unable to undertake this exercise in its entirety due to data protection issues within PSNI
1.6 Report Structure

This report details the findings of the current research study. It is set out in 13 further sections as follows:

- Section 2 Societal Division in Northern Ireland;
- Section 3 Policy Context;
- Section 4 Research Methodology;
- Section 5 Social Housing;
- Section 6 Health Centre Facilities;
- Section 7 Youth Centre Provision;
- Section 8 Further Education Facilities;
- Section 9 Community Facilities;
- Section 10 Leisure Facilities;
- Section 11 Community Focus Groups;
- Section 12 Service Provider Workshop;
- Section 13 Comparator Case Studies; and
- Section 14 Implications for Service Provision and Recommendations.
2 Societal Division in Northern Ireland

2.1 Introduction

This section sets out a short overview of community division in NI and attempts to highlight the impact of segregation and conflict upon various aspects of everyday life. An analysis of recent PSNI hate crime statistics is undertaken and research findings on the implications of community tension upon community integration and attitudes are presented.

2.2 Divided Communities

The history of conflict in Northern Ireland has ensured that many communities are characterised by high levels of social and physical segregation according to their community background. Research has shown that during each episode of violence communities have tended to separate further and, while they tend to come together again after violence has ended, the extent of integrated living is reduced.

Since the early 1970s Belfast has witnessed large movements of people. Most of which took place in and between working class areas and, between public housing estates. This pattern continued at varying rates during the conflict and as a result housing within Belfast is largely segregated according to community background.

Figure 2.1 in Appendix 3 highlights the segregated nature of housing within the Belfast District Council area. This map was compiled using information on residents’ community background from the 2001 Census at output area level. Geographical areas which have a higher concentration of Protestants are shaded orange and areas which have a higher concentration of Catholics are shaded green. Areas which are relatively mixed in terms of religion are shaded purple.

Residential delineation is particularly apparent when we look at census statistics concerning community background in the Parliamentary Constituency of East Belfast (85 per cent Protestant) and West Belfast (83 per cent Catholic). South Belfast (41 per cent Catholic and 52 per cent Protestant), on the other hand, has the highest incidence of “shared space”.

On the surface, North Belfast also appears to be mixed in terms of religion (45 per cent Catholic and 52 per cent Protestant). However, territorial boundaries are clearly demarcated.

North Belfast has been described as:

“a large number of distinct communities most of which...are regarded either as exclusively Protestant/Unionist or Catholic/Nationalist territory...The boundaries, or interfaces, between these oppositional communities are the fracture zones where hostility and antipathy are maintained and renewed through violence and disorder.”

4 North Belfast Community Action Unit, Report of the Project Team (2002)
Furthermore, despite political advances it appears that instead of moving away from religious division we may be moving towards it. For example, at the time of the 1991 census, 63 per cent of Belfast’s population lived in areas that were more than 90 per cent Protestant or Catholic. By the 2001 census, this proportion had risen to 66 per cent.

2.3 **Community Interfaces**

The most visible signs of division are ‘peace walls’. These are usually constructed in areas with high levels of inter-community violence and are used to divide neighbouring communities with different backgrounds. The Belfast Interface Project has listed 41 NIO authorised interfaces in Belfast.\(^5\)

Although this is based on NIO data, it is not regarded as being a definitive figure for the number of security structures in Belfast. There are also other physical barriers across Belfast which also separate communities but which are not formally recognised as security barriers. The Belfast Interface Project identifies four barriers in South West Belfast, twelve barriers in West Belfast, five barriers in East Belfast and twenty barriers in North Belfast. These are also illustrated in Figure 2.1 in Appendix 3.

Ironically, the protective walls and barriers between communities have become the focal point for low level and localized violence. Shirlow and Murtagh\(^6\) mapped the relationship between conflict-related deaths and interfaces/segregation in Belfast from 1969-2004. They found that:

- a third of the victims of politically motivated violence were murdered within 250 meters of an interface;
- around 70 per cent of deaths occurred within 500 meters of all segregated boundaries;
- over 80 per cent of deaths occurred within places that were at least 90 per cent Catholic or Protestant; and
- middle class areas endured the lowest levels of politically motivated violence.

Although conflict-related deaths have reduced significantly since the cease-fires, ongoing problems of interface violence remain. This has been highlighted by headline grabbing events in recent years, including the Holy Cross dispute that started in summer 2001 and the rioting in the wake of the disputed Whiterock Orange parade in September 2005.

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2.4 Hate Incidents and Crimes

PSNI define hate incidents as “any incident, which may or may not constitute a criminal offence, which is perceived by the victim or any other person, as being motivated by prejudice or hate.” Hate crimes involve offences committed against people and property on the grounds of ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, political opinion or disability.

In 2006/07 there were a total of 1,047 hate incidents (12 per cent increase on 2005/06 figures) and 861 hate crimes (15 per cent increase on 2005/06 figures) recorded by PSNI. In PSNI Urban Region a total of 634 hate incidents (an increase of 36.6 per cent on 2005/06 figures) and 482 hate crimes (an increase of 45.6 per cent on 2005/06 figures) were recorded in 2006/07.

Sectarian motivations make up the majority of hate incidents and crimes in Northern Ireland and accounted for (65 per cent and 64.5 per cent respectively) of all hate incidents and crimes reported in Belfast during 2006/07. Table 2.1 illustrates the breakdown of sectarian motivated incidents by DCU. North Belfast has a significantly higher number of reported sectarian motivated incidents (66 per cent of all sectarian incidents) in comparison to other areas of Belfast. West Belfast had the lowest levels of reported incidents (seven per cent of all sectarian incidents), although this may be a result of under-reporting due to the general reluctance to involve the police in what are sometimes perceived as being community issues. North Belfast was the only area to experience an increase in sectarian motivated incidents during 2006/07 (+54 per cent).

Table 2.1
Belfast DCU Reported Sectarian Motivated Incidents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DCU</th>
<th>Total number of incidents 2005/06</th>
<th>Total number of incidents 2006/07</th>
<th>% change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Belfast</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>-40.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Belfast</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>-9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Belfast</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>-20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Belfast</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>+54.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>644</td>
<td>740</td>
<td>+15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: PSNI Hate Incidents and Crimes 2006/07

Table 2.2 illustrates the breakdown of sectarian motivated crimes by DCU. North Belfast also has the highest number of sectarian motivated crimes in comparison to other areas of Belfast (66 per cent). West Belfast had the lowest number of reported crime. South Belfast was the only area to experience an increase in sectarian motivated crime during 2006/07 (+nine per cent).
Table 2.2
**Belfast DCU Reported Sectarian Motivated Crimes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DCU</th>
<th>Total number of crimes 2005/06</th>
<th>Total number of crimes 2006/07</th>
<th>% change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Belfast</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-74.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Belfast</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>+8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Belfast</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>-66.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Belfast</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>-28.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>523</strong></td>
<td><strong>332</strong></td>
<td><strong>-36.5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: PSNI Hate Incidents and Crimes 2006/07

2.5 **Minority Ethnic Communities**

The 2001 Census provides details of the current size and make up of the minority ethnic communities in Northern Ireland. The Census also reveals the diversity of the minority ethnic population, which is estimated at 0.8 per cent of the overall population. As well as the Chinese, Indian, Pakistani and Irish Traveller communities, there are people from the following ethnic backgrounds: Vietnamese, Bangladeshi, Latin-American, Jewish, African, Portuguese, Filipino and South Korean. There are also a significant number of refugees and asylum-seekers from many countries living in Northern Ireland.

Table 2.3 illustrates the percentage of people from a non-white background living within the Belfast Parliamentary Constituency areas.

Table 2.3
**Number of People from a Non-White Ethnic Background Living in Belfast**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>P.C.</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Non-White</td>
<td>% of Non-White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland</td>
<td>1,685,267</td>
<td>14,279</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belfast</td>
<td>277,391</td>
<td>3,796</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Belfast</td>
<td>87,610</td>
<td>639</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Belfast</td>
<td>79,261</td>
<td>787</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Belfast</td>
<td>94,944</td>
<td>2,513</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Belfast</td>
<td>86,066</td>
<td>643</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NISRA, 2001 Census

South Belfast has the highest numbers of people from a non-white ethnic background (2.6 per cent), whereas West Belfast has the lowest (0.7 per cent).

There is a significant diversity of needs both across and within minority ethnic communities in Northern Ireland. However, there has been a growing amount of research undertaken in recent years about common issues and problems faced by
the main minority ethnic communities. This has led to a growing recognition of issues concerning social exclusion, disadvantage and the rising levels of racism experienced.

Racially motivated incidents and crime accounted for 41 per cent and 27 per cent respectively of all hate incidents and crimes reported in Belfast during 2006/07. Table 2.4 illustrates the breakdown of racially motivated incidents by DCU. South Belfast has a significantly higher number of racially motivated hate incidents (41 per cent) in comparison to other areas of Belfast. This area also has the highest concentration of population from a minority ethnic background. West Belfast had the lowest levels of reported incidents (six per cent). All areas experienced an increase in racially motivated incidents during 2006/07 (+20 per cent overall).

### Table 2.4
**Belfast DCUs: Reported Racially Motivated Incidents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DCU</th>
<th>Total number of incidents 2005/06</th>
<th>Total number of incidents 2006/07</th>
<th>% change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Belfast</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>+38.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Belfast</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>+18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Belfast</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>+6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Belfast</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>+32.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>255</strong></td>
<td><strong>305</strong></td>
<td><strong>+19.6</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: PSNI Hate Incidents and Crimes 2006/07*

Table 2.5 illustrates the breakdown of racially motivated crimes by DCU. South Belfast also has a higher number of racially motivated hate crimes (42 per cent) in comparison to other areas of Belfast. West Belfast had the lowest levels of reported crimes (six per cent). All areas experienced an increase in racially motivated incidents during 2006/07 (+30 per cent overall).

### Table 2.5
**Belfast DCUs: Reported Racially Motivated Crimes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DCU</th>
<th>Total number of crimes 2005/06</th>
<th>Total number of crimes 2006/07</th>
<th>% change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Belfast</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>+50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Belfast</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>+19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Belfast</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>+8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Belfast</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>+83.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>160</strong></td>
<td><strong>208</strong></td>
<td><strong>+30</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: PSNI Hate Incidents and Crimes 2006/07*
PSNI have been encouraging those affected by racially motivated hate crime to report each incident and crime. However, not all incidents are reported and there are many reasons why some members of minority ethnic groups do not register crimes committed against them, including:

- they may not wish to be seen to be complaining about their neighbours;
- they may feel that there is no point in reporting the crime to the police;
- there may be language difficulties;
- there may be a lack of knowledge of what the laws are regarding racial crime;
- many members of minority ethnic groups may be reluctant to register such crimes because they have experienced police brutality in their country of origin; and
- others may be too afraid to speak out.

This increase in racist incidents and crimes across Belfast has implications for public authorities with responsibility for promoting good relations between communities.

### 2.6 Implications of Division

Sectarian violence has led to the construction of both physical and psychological boundaries between ‘own’ and ‘other’ community. Murals, flags and bunting can be used to overtly, or covertly, mark out community territory. These symbols can prompt responses of fear and avoidance within outsiders and can lead to a desire to remain within their ‘own’ or ‘neutral’ territory.

Evidence suggests that fear has more general effects, such as the avoidance of risk and new situations. Studies of mobility in segregated areas have been consistent in their finding that residents feel safe in their own community and have reservations about entering areas dominated by the ‘other community’. Based on two surveys of geographical segregation and the reproduction of fears in Belfast (comprising responses from 9,000 individuals in six segregated communities), Shirlow and Murtagh made the following observations:

- only one in eight people worked in areas dominated by the other community;
- seventy-eight per cent of respondents could provide examples of at least three publicly funded facilities that they did not use because they were located on the ‘wrong side’ of an interface;
- in some of the six segregated communities included in the survey, 75 per cent of respondents refused to use their closest health centre if it was located in a place dominated by the ‘other’ community;

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over half of all respondents travel twice as far as they need to, at least twice a week, in order to locate two or more private sector services that they need;

eighty-two per cent of respondents whose nearest benefits office was located in an area dominated by the other community, travelled to a benefits office in an area dominated by their own community, even where this meant undertaking a longer journey;

one in eight respondents were prepared to forgo healthcare for younger members of their family, rather than use the nearest facilities, if these were located in an area dominated by the other community;

only 18 per cent of respondents undertook, on a weekly basis, consumption related activities (e.g. shopping and socialising) in areas dominated by the other community; and

survey respondents indicated both fear of attack by the other community and fear of being ostracised by their own community as contributory factors in their decisions to avoid areas predominated by the other community.

Although middle-class areas have been less affected by tension and violence, it is suggested that interface conflict may be a visible example of underlying tensions that underlie relations in other areas. Jarman identified interface issues as being present in the intersection between middle-class and working-class residential areas, some suburban areas, parks and other local spaces, town centres and shopping areas.

Issues of division also affect people from minority ethnic communities living in Northern Ireland, although in different ways. Whilst many minority ethnic communities are from cultures similar to that in Northern Ireland, others are from areas with contrasting economic, social and cultural systems. Some are members of communities which have been established in Northern Ireland for many years. In these cases, there may be families into their second or third generation in Northern Ireland whose members are proud of their distinct cultural heritage but have also integrated into Northern Irish society. Others are more recent arrivals to Northern Ireland.

There are many people who have come alone, or with their families to work in Northern Ireland, either permanently or temporarily, those who are studying at school, college or university and, increasingly, groups of refugees and asylum seekers. Therefore, the issues which members of minority groups may experience are varied and complex and may include limited employment opportunities, difficulties with access to suitable housing and health care, difficulties with social and cultural adjustment and experiences of discrimination or harassment.

9 Connolly, Paul and Keenan, Michaela (2000), Racial Attitudes and Prejudice in Northern Ireland. NISRA.
In many situations, however, problems are more distressing and more difficult to resolve when compounded by language difficulties. Previous research has shown that the resolution of issues linked to language is a major priority for minority ethnic groups in Northern Ireland and many emphasise the need to acquire fluency in English in order to try to integrate with the resident population.

Indeed, many people from minority ethnic backgrounds experience feelings of isolation in relation to their inability to communicate with local people, difficulties in being accepted within the community or where they stand out as being visibly different.

2.7 Community Contact

Research has shown that sustained cross-community contact holds a number of observed benefits for community relations. Where there are opportunities for sustained contact between ethnic groups in divided societies, this has been associated with lower levels of prejudice and more generalised positive attitudes to the entire other communities.

A recent qualitative study on residentially mixed and segregated areas of Belfast found that inter-group interaction within mixed communities had an ameliorating effect on the fear and anxiety associated with the ‘other’ community. This research also found that residents of the mixed community tended to demonstrate more knowledge and greater understanding of ethnic ‘others’, and were more receptive to inter-group contact than those in the segregated areas. Linked to this, they were more likely to be able to identify both positive and negative aspects within Protestant and Catholic communities rather than assimilate characteristics.

Community affiliation within segregated communities was also stronger and more publicly asserted than in the mixed communities. The research observed that mixed community residents did not share the view prevailing in segregated areas that segregation represents safety and security. Some residents of the mixed communities, who had previous experience of living in a segregated community, were resentful of the community constraints which they felt were imposed on them by segregation. Some people indicated that as they had become more upwardly mobile, they had opted to move from segregated communities to ‘get away from painted curbs, flag flying and tribal mentality’.

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10 Connolly, Paul and Keenan, Michaela (2000), Opportunities for All. Minority people’s experiences of education, training and employment in Northern Ireland. NISRA
2.8 Community Attitudes

The NI Life and Times Survey\textsuperscript{13} can be used to monitor trends in people’s attitudes towards community integration in NI. This survey has consistently found that the majority of Protestants and Catholics would prefer to live, work and educate their children in mixed environments. In 2000, the figure for those expressing a preference for mixed religion areas was 70 per cent (compared with 79 per cent in 2005 and 78 per cent in 2006). In relation to workplace mixing, the trend has also been positive, with percentages of 81 per cent and 82 per cent of respondents in the years 2000 and 2006 respectively. Responses to mixed religion education also show that the majority of people prefer mixed schools to segregated schools. However this has decreased slightly in comparison to the 2000 figures (67 per cent and 70 per cent respectively).

When responses from Protestant and Catholic communities are compared, it is interesting to note that Catholics are slightly more in favour of mixed housing and workplaces than Protestants, whereas Protestants are slightly more in favour of mixed schools than are Catholic respondents.

The education system is also extensively segregated at primary and secondary levels, with the majority of pupils attending either largely Protestant Controlled or Catholic Maintained schools. Although little research exists to sustain an argument that segregated schools perpetuate division, there is some suggestion that integrated or mixed education can deliver more positive social attitudes through increased inter-group interaction. An examination of past pupil attitudes, found that 93 per cent felt integrated education had a positive impact on their lives (making them more tolerant and less prejudiced)\textsuperscript{14}. Research has also found that integrated education had a long-lasting impact upon promoting a less sectarian stance in relation to political opinions\textsuperscript{15}.

Seventy-five per cent of people surveyed stated that they would willingly accept people from minority ethnic groups as a resident of Northern Ireland living and working here. However, only 46 per cent felt that they would willingly accept a member of a minority ethnic background living within their area, 40 per cent said that they would be willing to accept them as a work colleague.

Despite this 54 per cent of those surveyed stated that they always feel comfortable when speaking to people from a minority ethnic background. Sixty-nine per cent of people thought that organisations and public leaders, such as politicians, community groups and churches, should encourage members of minority ethnic communities to participate in public life.

However, when asked whether any of their friends that they mix with socially came from a list of specified minority ethnic groups there were indications that social integration between indigenous population and minority ethnic population is low. The Chinese community and the Polish community appeared to be slightly more integrated than the South Asian, Black and Irish Traveller communities.

\textsuperscript{13} ARK. Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey, 2006


\textsuperscript{15} Hayes, B., McAllister, I. & Dowds, L. (2006). In search of middle ground: Integrated education and Northern Ireland politics. Research Update, 42: Queens University, Belfast, ARK.
Only 25 per cent of people said that they would be willing to accept people from minority ethnic groups as a relative by way of marrying a close member of their family.

### 2.9 Arising Issues

The violence of the last thirty years has greatly increased the levels of division between the two main communities in NI. Research shows that communities are characterized by a high level of segregated living. Segregation in housing and reluctance to mix because of cultural differences or a fear of violence has been a critical factor in determining the level of public services needed to support communities.

Within segregated urban communities, the literature shows a relationship between conflict-related violence/deaths, sectarian incidents and the physical interfaces built to protect from the ‘other’ community. More widely, spatial segregation is in evidence across NI between public housing estates, between middle-class and working class residential areas. Territories are often demarcated with environmental symbols such as sectarian graffiti, murals or flags. This division and segregation is associated with a sense of fear and anxiety about entering areas and using public services deemed to belong to the ‘other’ community.

In contrast, research indicates that living in more mixed areas provides a number of benefits for community relations including reduced fear of the ‘other’ community, greater freedom of movement, more cross-community participation in a range of activities and reduced exposure to sectarian incidents. Some of the research examining mixed education environments also indicates that integrated education can result in more positive social attitudes through increased inter-community interaction.

Surveys monitoring the attitudes of people in NI towards inter-group mixing suggest an increasing preference over time for living, working and educating in mixed environments. However, the reality is that people are less likely to have strong social relationships with people who have a different religious or ethnic background. The recent rise in the number of racially motivated hate crimes reported to the police is a worrying trend, particularly if one looks at these in terms of incidents per head of population. Such incidents must be expected to have a negative impact upon the attitudes, fears and perceptions of members of those communities.

Residential segregation and a reluctance to mix because of cultural differences or fear of violence are critical factors in determining the level of public services needed to support communities. This has been particularly apparent in Belfast, whereby public facilities are often enclosed within the territory of one community or the other. It is widely recognised that the societal divide has led to the duplication of services in order to provide for communities that live side by side but do not integrate or share easily. However, government has clearly stated that continued duplication is no longer a viable option within the current policy context.
3 Policy Context

3.1 Introduction

In this section we provide an overview of Government’s current policy framework to address societal divisions within Northern Ireland.

Key developments of relevance to the current research include Section 75 of the NI Act, the good relations policy “A Shared Future”, Belfast City Council’s Good Relations Strategy and the Racial Equality Strategy. The impact of the Review of Public Administration (RPA) upon public authority’s future role in addressing societal divisions is also highlighted.

3.2 Section 75

Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 came into force on the 01 January 2000 and placed a statutory obligation on public authorities in carrying out their various functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- between men and women generally;
- between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- between persons with dependants and persons without.

In addition, without prejudice to this obligation, Public Authorities are also required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, and racial group.

The statutory obligations are implemented through Equality Schemes, approved by the Equality Commission, and by screening and carrying out Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) on policies.
3.3 A Shared Future

During suspension of devolution, OFMDFM published *A Shared Future: Policy and Strategic Framework for Good Relations in Northern Ireland* in March 2005. This established the Government’s vision for Northern Ireland as a peaceful, inclusive, prosperous, stable and fair society which is founded on the achievement of reconciliation, tolerance, and mutual trust and the protection and vindication of human rights for all. A shared and more prosperous future for all in Northern Ireland is a key Governmental policy priority. Its over-arching commitment is that all public expenditure should promote sharing over separation, except where the costs of doing so outweigh the benefits. This vision involves moving beyond working with division to begin to actively challenge those divisions. It states that in the future single identity work:

- must be of a high quality in terms of outcome and it must contain the ability to promote the building of good intercommunity relationships;
- must not reinforce entrenched attitudes and stereotypes;
- should not be used as an excuse or that it delays shift from work ‘within’ a community to inter-community work;
- can only be partial in any community where others share a public or neutral space; and
- must be set within a context that recognises and addresses segregation as a problem.

It is apparent that while government wishes to develop confidence within communities, it will no longer endorse approaches that reinforce segregation although it is recognised that “the causes of division are complex”.

A Shared Future outlines a commitment to a more coherent, coordinated and long-term approach, that places responsibility for improving relations at all levels of public sector delivery.

The following are highlighted as being priority areas for action:

- tackling the visible manifestations of sectarianism and racism;
- reclaiming shared space;
- reducing tensions at interface areas;
- shared education;
- shared communities;
- supporting good relations through diversity and cultural diversity;
- developing shared workplaces;
- good relations, community development and tackling disadvantage;
- ensuring that a voice is given to victims; and
people from minority ethnic communities and the majority community share equality of life chances in all aspects of their lives.

A Shared Future has begun to produce some positive local improvements, particularly in the area of Re-Imaging Communities which aims to tackle visible manifestations of sectarianism and racism through removing displays of flags, murals and other territorial marking. In April 2005 the cross-departmental joint Flags Protocol was launched. It set out an agreed partnership approach to deal with flags issues. The main aim of this protocol has been to work proactively, with communities, to address the removal of flags and emblems from arterial routes and town centres and to remove all paramilitary flags and displays. Despite a small number of difficulties, over 1,000 flags were removed in 2005. The protocol is currently being reviewed.

The Arts Council, the Department of Culture and Leisure (DCAL) and NIHE have developed a Shared Communities’ Consortium to support the Re-imaging Communities Programme. The aim of the work is to deliver environmental improvement through a viable and sustainable partnership with key statutory bodies to provide a regional model to address flags, bonfires, emblems and sectional symbols. This model aims to complement existing, ad hoc initiatives.

The return to devolution has seen the introduction of a new Draft Programme for Government (2007) which includes Promoting Tolerance, Inclusion and Health and Wellbeing as one of its key priorities. While the programme recognises that progress has been made, it reports that sectarianism, racism and intolerance are still too evident and that these mar Northern Ireland’s reputation, blight its economic prospects and have a corrosive effect on its society. Therefore the Draft Programme for Government commits the devolved administration to continuing efforts to address divisions within Northern Ireland society on the basis of equality and tolerance for all cultures in the region.

3.4 Review of Public Administration

The Review of Public Administration (RPA) is a significant contextual issue. A Shared Future’s community relations policy and strategic framework has been developed in the context of the RPA. Its focus on economy, efficiency and effectiveness across the Northern Ireland public sector (including local government, health and education), complements the economic focus on tackling the costs of division to include those related to public service provision.

In 2006 the Secretary of State announced that:

- local government would be reduced to seven local authorities;
- a new Education and Skills Authority (ESA) would replace the Education and Library Boards (ELBs) and administrative bodies;
- eighteen Health Trusts were to be reduced to five;
- a single Health and Social Services Authority (HSSA) would replace the four Health and Social Services Boards (HSSBs); and
- the remaining 81 public bodies were to be reduced to 54.
Under RPA the new public authorities will have clear responsibilities for the promotion of good relations in their respective areas. The functions that will transfer to Local Government will considerably strengthen the powers of local authorities. Local Government will have a critical role in the development of a shared, tolerant and inclusive society which embraces diversity.

3.5 Belfast City Council’s Good Relations Strategy

BCC has a vision for Belfast to be a:

“modern and welcoming city with a quality of life to rival the best in the world - a city that is never content to stand still but improves over the years.” (Corporate Plan Year 4 Review and Update 2006-2007).

Four priority objectives underpinning this vision are:

- providing civic leadership;
- improving quality of life now, and for future generations;
- promoting good relations; and
- delivering best services.

In January 2001, BCC adopted a corporate objective of ‘Promoting Good Relations’ to complement its existing objectives. In February 2003, BCC published the Good Relations Strategy ‘Building Our Future Together’.

The Strategy sets out the vision for:

‘a stable, tolerant, fair and pluralist society, where individuality is respected and diversity is celebrated, in an inclusive manner’.

The purpose of the Strategy is to promote a fairer, more equal society where people from all communities are treated with tolerance and where diversity is respected and celebrated.

The Strategy has four separate themes, three relating to BCC services and influence in the wider community and the fourth relating to the BCC’s own workforce. The themes are:

- celebrating cultural diversity;
- promoting community relations;
- promoting equality through service delivery; and
- promoting equality through a representative workforce.

In order to progress the Good Relations Strategy and meet A Shared Future objectives the District Council Community Relations Programme has been replaced with a Good Relations Challenge Programme and councils will develop three-year local good relations action plans, which link to both internal community development and support plans and community safety plans, as well as the Government’s triennial action plan. The good relations plans are to be approved by the OFMDFM and reviewed annually to ensure satisfactory progress.
against agreed targets. The Community Relations Council will provide training and development, support, advice, and guidance.

The BCC Good Relations Plan incorporates relevant council activities with those planned by the other major statutory agencies in the city of Belfast. The plan includes council actions along with those planned for Belfast from:

- the relevant health board, health trusts and hospitals;
- Belfast Education and Library Board;
- Belfast Institute for Further and Higher Education;
- Department for Social Development;
- NI Housing Executive;
- Police Service for Northern Ireland; and
- Belfast Local Strategy Partnership.

3.6 Racial Equality Strategy

Government also aims to tackle racial inequalities and to promote good race relations through its Racial Equality Strategy. Government states:

“this growing diversity offers Northern Ireland a unique and exciting opportunity. It has a genuinely leavening effect on a society that has long been frozen in a “two traditions” divide. It has the potential to act as a powerful lever on the old attitudes to difference that maintained that divide.”

The aims of the Racial Equality Strategy complement those of A Shared Future. They are as follows:

- **Elimination of Racial Inequality:** To eliminate racism, racial inequality and unlawful racial discrimination and promote equality of opportunity in all aspects of life, including public life, for people of different ethnic backgrounds in Northern Ireland;

- **Equal Protection:** To combat racism and provide effective protection and redress against racism and racist crime;

- **Equality of Service Provision:** To ensure equality of opportunity for minority ethnic people in accessing and benefiting from all public services;

- **Participation:** To increase participation and a sense of “belonging” of people from minority ethnic backgrounds in public, political, economic, social and cultural life;

- **Dialogue:** To promote dialogue between, and mutual understanding of, different faiths and cultural backgrounds, both long-standing within Northern Ireland and recent arrivals to these shores, guided by overarching human rights norms; and
3.7 Arising Issues

The Shared Future policy provides a key framework for this research and outlines a commitment to a more coherent, coordinated and long-term approach, that places responsibility for improving relations at all levels of public sector delivery. Policy implementation through a ‘joined-up’ inter-agency strategic approach to the achievement of peace and reconciliation objectives across all public service areas is complex, and in many sectors will require a significant change in existing service delivery models and service planning.

Many of the commitments outlined by Government in ‘A Shared Future’ represent a real opportunity for change. Firstly, it represents a move away from adaptive policy making towards a more transformative approach. Secondly, Shared Future reflects the moral and economic unsustainability of a ‘separate but equal’ approach and offers a vision of a transformed ‘shared’ society based on the principles of peace and reconciliation. Thirdly, a key theme in the shared future document is the importance of a ‘joined-up’, interagency, strategic approach to the achievement of peace and reconciliation objectives. Finally, ‘Shared Future’ indicates a shift away from the bipolar, static analysis of the NI conflict and accepts the uniqueness of individual identity, dynamic identity processes and the folly of blunt classifications attached to whole communities.

The need to better understand the service usage and access patterns within the Belfast area will inform progress with regard to conflict transformation and A Shared Future principles.
4 Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

In this section of the report we present the analytical framework for undertaking the research. This methodology was agreed by the Project Steering Group. The data challenges faced during the research are summarised and the structure of the current report is outlined.

4.2 Methodology

In order to meet the specified objectives the following stages were undertaken:

4.2.1 Project Initiation

A project initiation meeting was held with the Project Steering Group (consisting of BCC representatives) to confirm the scope of the study, discuss project methodology and agree project management arrangements.

4.2.2 Agreement of Scope and Data Collation

The research requirements specify consideration of usage and access relating to a range of services to include housing, policing, further education, health, youth and leisure and community. We undertook an information gathering workshop with appropriate service providers in order to identify the most relevant service lines from which data could be analysed and to gain contact details for the respective data holders. The following service lines were agreed within each service area:

**Housing:** We obtained statistical information from NIHE on the geographical location of current social housing stock in Belfast and recent NIHE house sales by geographical location. We were also provided with information regarding the current waiting lists in NIHE District Offices broken down by religion;

**Policing:** We were provided with data relating to PSNI reported hate crime within each Belfast District Command Unit (DCU). This was analysed in order to determine whether or not certain parts of the city are “hotspots” for hate motivated crime;

**Further Education:** We examined the location of BMC main sites in relation to the home address of those enrolled on further education courses in order to ascertain inter- and cross-community usage;

**Health:** The Health and Social Care Trusts in Belfast provided us with the home address of people registered with Health Centres in order to determine the extent to which this service line is used by all sections of the community;

**Youth:** We were provided with the geographical location of full-time and large part-time units in the statutory and voluntary sectors which receive
funding from the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB) youth service. However, there was no centrally collated user information currently available within the time-scale for this project. There are plans to collate this information for large full-time units in the near future, however due to the fact that there are over 2000 small voluntary units which receive funding this exercise may take longer to progress; and

Leisure and Community: We examined the location of BCC funded leisure and community centres in relation to members’ home address in order to ascertain inter- and cross-community usage.

4.2.3 Mapping Service Usage

Following data collation and analysis we undertook a geographical mapping exercise for each service line. The aim of which was to highlight key distortions in service usage and access across the city.

A variety of maps were created using Geographical Information System (GIS) software. A baseline map was devised to pictorially illustrate the community background of residents living within the BCC area using the 2001 Northern Ireland Census Data. Community background information was broken down to determine areas which consist of either a predominately Protestant or Catholic population (more than 60 per cent level respectively) or a mixed community background (with between 40 per cent and 59 per cent Protestant and Catholic residents). This data was presented at output level.

The geographical location of the agreed service provision was plotted against the ward level community background information and a “catchment area” for the facility was devised according to the home postcode of registered users.

These maps provided the basis for analysis and identified where service use is single or mixed identity and where access patterns are distorted by community boundaries (e.g. people travelling further than necessary to access a service or where a service is perceived to be underused considering the population it is close to).

The postcode data for each service line was also analysed according to ACORN socio-economic categories. ACORN is a geo-demographic tool used to identify and understand a range of groups within the population can provide a deeper insight and understanding of populations and their demand for products and services.

4.2.4 Community Focus Groups

Six community focus groups were undertaken across Belfast. Five community opinion focus groups with community representatives were undertaken within each of the five Partnership Board areas (North, East, South, West and Greater Shankill). In addition a Belfast wide focus group was also undertaken with representatives of people from minority ethnic communities.
The BCC Good Relations Fund database was used to identify potential participants and this was supplemented where necessary by the respective Partnership Board community group database. Participants were recognised community representatives who are active through local partnerships and other structures. The initial data analysis from the service mapping informed the framework for discussion. Letters of invite, participant organisations and the discussion guide are contained in Appendix 1.

4.2.5 Comparative Case Study Research

Comparative case study research was undertaken in order to examine the experiences of various cities within the United Kingdom and across Europe who have faced challenges with regard to delivering services within the context of societal divisions. The section is structured around the comparator cities and provides an understanding of the different experiences and outcomes in order to identify key lessons for consideration in Belfast.

4.2.6 Service Provider Consultation

A service provider workshop was undertaken in order to bring together key personnel from each respective service line. This was held subsequent to the community opinion groups in order to bring forward the issues raised. The workshop lasted for 2 hours and was interspersed with service line data analysis and discussion. These consultations helped communicate initial findings to service providers, whilst helping firm up our conclusions and recommendations. This information was supplemented with telephone follow-up, in instances in which service line specific discussions were required.

Letters of invite, participant organisations and the discussion guide is provided in Appendix 2.

4.2.7 Analysis and Recommendations

The post-code data was analysed in relation to the findings from the community focus groups and the service provider workshops in order to understand what this means for public service provision in Belfast. It also sets out recommendations for improvement and describes potential next steps.


5 Social Housing

5.1 Introduction

This section outlines the numbers and geographical location of NIHE social housing provision within Belfast according to the community background of the area’s residents. It also provides an analysis of the waiting list by NIHE District Office according to the community background of the lead applicant. Arising issues are discussed.

5.2 Background

As previously noted, public sector housing in Belfast indicates predominately segregated Catholic and Protestant communities. Inter-communal tensions have forced substantial numbers of people to move from mixed areas into areas inhabited exclusively by one denomination, thus leading to an increase in polarisation and segregation. The extent of self-segregation grew very rapidly with the outbreak of the NI Conflict. In 1969, 69 per cent of Protestants and 56 per cent of Catholics lived in streets where they were the majority community. This was the result of large-scale flight from mixed areas between 1969 and 1971 following outbreaks of violence, the respective proportions had by 1972 increased to 99 per cent of Protestants and 75 per cent of Catholics.16 In Belfast, the 1970s were characterised by rising residential segregation.

Social housing providers oversaw the construction of estates across towns and cities in the 1970s and 1980s in an effort to re-house deprived families. However most of these housing developments were also planned and built on the back of security concerns that meant keeping the two sides of the community apart. The enduring legacy is entire districts fortified from the outside world, both physically and culturally.

A strong tendency towards segregation existed long before the creation of large public housing estates. However, the policy of letting people choose for themselves is hard to implement in practice, because the applicants’ demands and expectations tend to become a part of the allocation system itself. After a prolonged period of civil disturbance and population movement, it is very difficult for housing managers to think or behave as though all housing is in principle openly available to all applicants.

Singleton has commented that:

‘segregation of Protestants and Catholics has led to an implicit recognition of the inevitability of allocating dwellings on the basis of “two” waiting lists, one Catholic and the other Protestant... The NIHE has in many instances had no option but to sort its waiting list into Roman Catholics

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and Protestants and provide separate housing sites in different parts of towns for the two groups.’\textsuperscript{18}

A consequence of residential segregation is that many new housing schemes will have been identified by housing managers as dwellings for Protestants or for Catholics even at the planning stage. This is an important background to analysis of access to housing by the two groups.

It was estimated in 2004 that 92.5 per cent of public housing in Northern Ireland was divided along religious lines, with the figure rising to 98 per cent in Belfast.\textsuperscript{19} Self-segregation is a continuing process, despite the Northern Ireland peace process. It was estimated in 2005 that more than 1,400 people a year were being forced to move as a consequence of intimidation.\textsuperscript{20}

There is a degree of residential integration further up the social scale in Northern Ireland, but there has been little or no integration between people living in more deprived areas. The reality is that it is not usual to have regular social contact with Protestants if you live in a working-class Catholic area, and vice versa.

Minority ethnic communities are less likely to rent from the NIHE or a registered social landlord than the rest of the population, rather they are more likely to rent privately. Significant numbers of migrant workers from other European countries are living in Northern Ireland and a small number of migrant families have been housed by the NIHE. There are reports of significant housing issues experienced by Eastern European communities, including overcrowding, poor housing condition and homelessness.

The employment agencies responsible for bringing migrant workers into the country also appear to arrange accommodation. For this reason most migrant workers are housed in the Private Rented Sector, in properties that would mostly be defined as Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs).

There is also a demand for improved advice on housing options and a growing need for housing support for older people from minority ethnic communities.

5.3 Location of Northern Ireland Housing Executive Social Housing Provision

The following data analysis is based upon statistics obtained from NIHE.

NIHE has 22,565 properties across Belfast. The majority of properties are located in North Belfast (28 per cent) and West Belfast (23 per cent). The fewest properties are based in South Belfast (18 per cent), East Belfast (15.5 per cent), and Shankill (15.5 per cent).

The following analysis is derived from plotting the post-codes of NIHE properties within Belfast, according to the concentration of people from a Catholic or Protestant community.

\textsuperscript{20} Neil Jarman, (2005) Institute for Conflict Research, March 2005
Table 5.1 illustrates the location of NIHE properties according to the community background of the people who live within the area (more than 80 per cent Catholic, 60-80 per cent Catholic, mixed (40-59 per cent), 60-80 per cent Protestant and more than 80 per cent Protestant).

### Table 5.1

**A Breakdown of NIHE Stock by District Office and Community Background of the area**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>C80+</th>
<th>C60-80</th>
<th>Mixed</th>
<th>P60-80</th>
<th>P80+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shankill</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2007, NIHE

Please note that in some cases figures do not amount to 100% due to rounding.

Overall the majority of Belfast housing stock is located within predominately Protestant areas (56 per cent) rather than Catholic areas (37 per cent). The exception to this is in North Belfast where provision is comparably distributed between the two communities. Analysis at ward level indicates that housing within “mixed” areas are mostly areas whereby both communities exist side by side (e.g. Highfield, Ladybrook).

Lower numbers of NIHE social housing within Catholic areas may be due to the Right to Buy option. Between 2002/03 and 2006/07, 4,194 NIHE properties were sold to tenants. Fifty-four per cent of which are located within predominately Catholic areas and 38.5 per cent were located within Protestant areas (C80 per cent+ or P80 per cent+).

### 5.4 Analysis of Northern Ireland Housing Executive Waiting List

Overall, there are 9,053 Priority 1 applicants on the NIHE waiting list across Belfast. Table 5.2 illustrates Priority 1 applicants on the NIHE waiting list by preferred District and community background.
Table 5.2
A Breakdown of NIHE Priority 1 Applicants on the Waiting List for Social Housing by District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Catholic</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Protestant</th>
<th>Unknown /Undisclosed</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>2,034</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>1,455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shankill</td>
<td>&lt;5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>608</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,126</strong></td>
<td><strong>46</strong></td>
<td><strong>480</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,846</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NIHE, 31st March, 2007

There are slightly more Catholic (46 per cent) Priority 1 applicants on the waiting list for NIHE housing than Protestants (42 per cent). Seven per cent of applicants did not disclose their community background and five per cent were categorised as “other”.

When the data is broken down by District Office there are clear differences with regards to Protestants’ and Catholics’ geographical choices for housing. Ninety-three per cent of applicants for housing in West Belfast are Catholic, 84 per cent of East Belfast applicants are Protestant, as are 91 per cent of those on the Shankill waiting list are Protestant.

However, in North Belfast the waiting list has a predominately Catholic (58 per cent), rather than Protestant (28 per cent) composition. However, in South Belfast 49 per cent of the waiting list is Protestant and 31 per cent is Catholic. In South Belfast 13 per cent of the waiting list are categorised as “other”. This is reflective of the higher proportion of members of minority ethnic communities wishing to settle in the area.

Analysis of housing stress indicates that 5,385 people (59 per cent) who are on the waiting list have more than 30 points. When this is broken down by religion it is apparent that Catholics are more likely to experience a degree of housing stress, than Protestants (making up 52 per cent and 37 per cent of those with more than 30 points respectively). Minority ethnic communities make up five per cent of applicants with in excess of 30 points.

Further analysis of the point system by District Office indicates that Catholics in West, East and South Belfast experience the most housing stress (72 per cent, 65 per cent and 64 per cent of the waiting list respectively). This is in comparison to 43 per cent of Protestants in East and 54 per cent of Protestants in South Belfast.
Forty-four per cent of Protestants on the Shankill waiting list have more than 30 points. Sixty-four per cent of Catholics on the North Belfast waiting list have more than 30 points compared to 49 per cent of Protestants.

5.5 Analysis of Northern Ireland Housing Executive SPED and POPPI Statistics

Over a number of years figures show that approximately 10 per cent of those who were homeless have cited intimidation as the reason. In 2003 the SPED (Special Purchase of Evacuated Dwellings) scheme which is managed by the Housing Executive spent £44.6m. The scheme allows for the purchase of an Owner/Occupied property where that owner has been intimidated or threatened. NIHE only purchases a property under SPED where the Chief Constable (PSNI) has issued a Certificate confirming that the applicant is in acute physical danger. There has been a decrease in SPED cases over the last few years. In 2002/03 there were a total of 82 cases in Belfast, the majority of which were in North (65 per cent) or East Belfast (28 per cent). Although there were only 5 cases in 2006/07, 4 of these were based in West Belfast.

NIHE also provide security features for private housing. The Protection of Private Property at Interfaces (POPPI) scheme is designed to ensure that private sector properties at interface areas have the same level of safety as that provided to the social housing sector. The need for the protection of private property at interfaces (POPPI) has decreased significantly over the last few years. In 2002 there were 238 cases whereby protection was required at a cost of £228,617 in comparison to 31 in 2006 at a cost of £32,443. North consistently had the highest frequency of POPPI cases, however in 2006 West had the most incidents.

5.6 Arising Issues

There are many impacts of physical segregation. One result of segregation is that areas become marked as belonging to the Protestant community or Catholic community. Therefore it becomes acceptable for only one tradition to live in this area, regardless of demand within that locality by the residing population or of demand in surrounding areas. When an area becomes “owned” by one side or the other this inevitably leads to interfaces where another area starts. In some areas there are multiple interfaces, for example in North Belfast. Tension and civil unrest at these interface areas has also created difficulties for the location of new social housing.

The result is that there are a number of areas that have been blighted by community tension and as a result no one wants to live in the properties located there. NIHE have recorded the number of properties that have been left empty due to this blighting and the lost revenue resulting from lack of occupation. The end result may be that void properties are demolished. This causes capital value to be lost. In addition it is striking that while houses are being knocked down NIHE is faced with a significant waiting list for houses in other areas. This highlights how the segregated nature of the housing market creates significant inefficiencies within public housing in NI.
OFMDFM commissioned research, estimates that Government expenditure on social housing is inflated by £24 million due to societal divide. A large proportion of this is due to the development of new social housing whilst other housing lies vacant due to reasons associated with the divide.21 The cost in 2004/05 due to rental value lost and demolition of 18 houses exceeded £1 million.

There is a real demand for social housing in Northern Ireland and it is particularly concerning that 59 per cent of applicants are in housing stress. The rising Catholic population in certain areas puts further strain on the existing housing stock. NIHE believes that residential segregation gets in the way of meeting housing need and it prevents the best use being made of existing housing and land. However, it would be unrealistic to think that NIHE as one single agency could engineer integrated housing.

6 Health Centre Facilities

6.1 Introduction

This section illustrates Health Centre access patterns across Belfast, in order to identify whether or not there is evidence of single identity service usage within this service line. Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT) facilities are described and the geographical areas in which their clients live are examined. Arising issues from the analyses are discussed.

6.2 Background

One would imagine that health facilities across Northern Ireland would attract service users from both sides of the community. Health is one service over which people have little choice. Clients would presumably register at the clinic in closest proximity to where they live. This not only has practical implications in terms of ease of access for the user but also is a necessity for availing of the “out of hours” locum service, whereby a doctor may need to travel to the client’s home.

Therefore, one would not expect to see instances in which people were by-passing their nearest health centre in order to attend one which is in a more preferable area.

However, as mentioned previously, Shirlow and Murtagh found research evidence to the contrary. In some of the segregated communities which they surveyed the majority of people would not use their closest health centre if it was in the “other” group’s territory and a minority of people stated that they would forgo healthcare services for their children in this instance.

People from ethnic minority groups have a high probability of experiencing particularly acute forms of disadvantage which exacerbate health inequalities. In the last few years an increasing amount of research has been undertaken to examine the needs and experiences of people from minority ethnic groups in Northern Ireland. This research highlights how these needs often differ from those of the indigenous population.

Several literature reviews have been undertaken on the subject\(^2\) and \(^3\). Key messages include difficulties accessing existing services by those who speak little or no English and a general lack of awareness amongst minority ethnic groups as to what services are available.

6.3 Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT) Facilities

Health and Personal Social Care in Northern Ireland is provided as an integrated service. The four health and social services boards (Eastern, Northern, Southern and Western) are agents of the DHSSPS in planning and commissioning and purchasing services for the residents in their areas. From the 1 April 2007, the 19

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\(^2\) Connolly, P (2002); Race and Racism in Northern Ireland: A Review of the Research Evidence; Belfast: OFMDFM
\(^3\) Bunting, V (2001); Equality of Opportunity in Relation to the DHSSPS Draft Equality Scheme; Belfast: DHSSPS
HSS Trusts merged to become six Health and Social Care Trusts. They manage staff and services on the ground and they control their own budgets.

There is a planned £2.9 billion programme of health care investment to be delivered across Northern Ireland over the next 10 years. The Minister for Health, Michael McGimpsey has recently committed £28 million in funding for two new Health and Care Centres in West Belfast. They will be located in Andersonstown and Shankill and a wide range of health and social care services will be available such as family planning, orthodontics, nutrition and dietetics and physiotherapy.

Primary care services for the people in West Belfast are currently provided from a number of separate facilities with local people having to travel to a range of locations for their community health and social care services. These projects will rationalise the existing office and clinical base and will provide four Health and Care Centres in the North and West Trust area. The Carlisle Centre in North Belfast has recently been completed and the new Grove Health and Wellbeing Centre will be based on the Shore Road.

The South and East HSCT deliver services to the 205,000 people living within the South and East Belfast and Castlereagh areas. Two Community Care and Treatment Centres were opened in South and East Belfast. These are based in Holywood Arches located in East Belfast and the Bradbury Centre, located in South Belfast.

The Arches Centre offers a full range of community health and social care services. These include speech and language therapy, physiotherapy, podiatry and stroke rehabilitation. It is also home to seven GP practices.

The £9.3 million Bradbury Centre is located on the Lisburn Road. It will also provide opportunities for the development of new out patient clinics for which patients would previously have had to travel to hospital. It includes children’s services such as speech and language therapy, a children’s disability team, a community dental service and services for adults and those with disabilities including occupational therapy, podiatry and a sight support team.

It is hoped that the development of health and care centres will contribute to a more accessible health and care system. The centres will provide a wide range of services in the community, close to where people live and work. Health service managers intend that this new method of service provision will help alleviate outpatients’ waiting lists.

6.4 Location of Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Health Centres

Figure 6.1 (see Appendix 3) maps the location of Belfast HSCT health centres in relation to the community background of the geographical region using 2001 census data.

Seven of the 15 health centres are based in areas which have a predominately Protestant background (Braniel, Crumlin Road, The Arches, Cherryvalley, Dundonald, Skegoniel, Shankill), four centres are situated in areas in which people from a mainly Catholic background live (Maureen Sheehan, Cupar Street, Whiterock, Ballyowen).
Finaghy, Dunluce and Bradbury in South Belfast are located within mixed areas.

6.5 Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Health Centre Users

The following analyses are based upon data provided by Belfast HSCT. The home postcodes of Belfast HSCT health centre users were mapped in relation to their chosen facility. In order to explore access patterns within and across communities, religiously defined catchment areas were generated for each health centre, based upon 2001 Census data, where numbers permit.

Table 6.1 indicates the percentage of members who are from mainly Protestant (60 per cent+), mainly Catholic (60 per cent+) or mixed (60-40 per cent) areas for each facility.

### Table 6.1
Percentage of Users Living in a Mainly Protestant or a Mainly Catholic Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Centre</th>
<th>C80+</th>
<th>C60-80</th>
<th>Mixed</th>
<th>P60-80</th>
<th>P80+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bradbury</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>39.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunluce</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finaghy</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>33.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Arches Centre</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Braniel Clinic</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherryvalley *</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunonald</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlisle Centre</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skegoneill *</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crumlin Road</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballyowen</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cupar Street</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maureen Sheehan Centre</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shankill</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whiterock</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* denotes small numbers

Source: 2007, Belfast HSCT

Please note that in some cases figures do not amount to 100% due to rounding

The majority of health centres in South Belfast appear to attract users from both sides of the community. The four East Belfast Health centres serve people from the surrounding predominately Protestant areas and the five West Belfast attract users from predominately Catholic areas, with the exception of Shankill Health Centre.

People from both affluent and impoverished areas used the health centres, with the Bradbury health centre in South Belfast having the highest concentration of people who are from wealthy areas. This generally reflects the fact that the facility is located in an affluent area of Belfast.
6.6 Evidence of Segregated Spaces

The location of a health centre determines the geographical catchment area from which registered users will come. The majority of centres are situated in either an area which houses people from a Catholic or a Protestant background. East Belfast is a predominately Protestant area and therefore the health centres in East Belfast mostly serve the local Protestant community. Cherryvalley and Dundonald’s user base are almost exclusively from the Protestant community (99.5 per cent and 96 per cent respectively). The Arches Health and Wellbeing Centre in East Belfast also attracts clients from the surrounding Protestant communities (96 per cent).

There are five facilities in West Belfast and they are also highly reflective of the community background of the people living in the surrounding areas. The majority of clients who attend Ballyowen (93 per cent), Cupar Street (82 per cent), Maureen Sheehan (83 per cent) and Whiterock (92 per cent) health centres live in mainly Catholic areas. Cupar Street and Maureen Sheehan also have a small percentage of users from mostly Protestant areas (15 per cent and 16 per cent respectively) and this may be due to the specialist services which both clinics offer.

Shankill in West Belfast also attracts people who live in the surrounding predominately Protestant area (see Figure 6.2)

Finaghy and Dunluce health centres in South Belfast attract slightly more users from Protestant areas, although around 16 per cent of clients are from predominately Catholic areas.

Skegoneill in North Belfast gains the majority of its client base from Protestant areas (69 per cent), however it also attracts nearly one third of its registered users from Catholic areas. The majority of people who attend this centre are from Duncairn, Castleview and Fortwilliam. This centre will close when the Grove Health and Wellbeing Centre opens.
Figure 6.2

[Map showing catchment area for Shankill Health Centre with color coding and key:
- C 80% PLUS
- MC 60 - 80%
- MIX 40 - 60%
- MP 60 - 80%
- P 80% PLUS

Key:
- Subject Health Centre
- Census Output Areas where Users number 6+ or 3%+ of Adult Residents

Map Produced by
H.McLearnon - theDATAman -
Constructed using NSRA Census Geography
and Roads by Navteq
solutions@theDATAman.co.uk]
6.7 Evidence of Shared Spaces

The data indicates that there are three health centres which have clients from both Protestant and Catholic areas. They are the new Bradbury Health and Social Care Centre in South Belfast and the Carlisle Health and Wellbeing Centre and Crumlin Road Health Centre in North Belfast.

The Bradbury centre attracts 53.5 per cent of its clients from mainly Protestant areas, 24 per cent from mixed areas and 22.5 per cent from mainly Catholic areas. The Bradbury centre is situated on the Lisburn Road which is an affluent, religiously mixed location. People largely come from Ballynafeigh, Blackstaff, Finaghy, Musgrave, Malone, Botanic, Shaftesbury, Rosetta, Stranmillis and Windsor.

The new Health and Wellbeing Centres within North Belfast have succeeded in gaining an integrated client base. The Carlisle Centre on the Antrim Road has registered users from both Catholic (54 per cent) and Protestant (41 per cent) areas. Figure 6.3 illustrates the Carlisle Centre catchment area which includes Ardoyne, Ballysillan, New Lodge and Water Works.

Crumlin Road health centre also services people living within both Protestant (54.5 per cent) and Catholic (43.5 per cent) areas, to include Cliftonville, Crumlin and Legoniel.

6.8 Arising Issues

It is apparent that the area of health provision has the potential to attract both sections of the community due to the fact that it is accessed on a more “needs” rather than “choice” driven service line. The Health and Wellbeing Centre which is located in North Belfast, an area which is sometimes the scene for inter-community conflict and tension, is able to serve people from both Protestant and Catholic residential areas.

However, The Arches Centre in East Belfast is used by people from Protestant areas. This is due to the fact that it is located in an area which is almost exclusively Protestant with the Short Strand area having the only Catholic residential housing.

Within this service line there is an opportunity to deliver services in a way that delivers A Shared Future ethos. The Health and Wellbeing Centres which house a variety of community services could provide a stepping stone for the delivery of other more traditionally segregated services. However, integrated service development also needs to take ease of access into consideration, as facilities need to be carefully located in order to maximise their potential to attract users.
Figure 6.3

Catchment for Carlisle Health Centre

- C 80% PLUS
- MC 60 - 80%
- MIX 40 - 60%
- MP 60 - 80%
- P 80% PLUS

KEY

- Subject Health Centre
- Other Facilities
- Census Output Areas where Users number 6 or 3%+ of Adult Residents

Map Produced by H.McLearnon - theDATAman -
Constructed using NISRA Census Geography and Roads by Navteq

solutions@theDATaman.co.uk
7 Further & Higher Education Facilities

7.1 Introduction

This section illustrates access patterns to Further and Higher Education (F&HE) at Belfast Metropolitan College’s (BMC) main sites, in order to identify whether or not there is evidence of single identity service usage. BMC facilities are described and the geographical areas in which their clients live are examined. Arising issues from the analyses are presented.

7.2 Background

In 2005 Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) provided funding for a research project to identify the chill factors within the two main communities in Northern Ireland that may make a college less attractive to actual or potential students/trainees. The research indicated that prospective and existing students are likely to be influenced by their friends’ and siblings’ opinions when choosing where to study. Factors which influence which college/university to attend include the availability of the course, location and transport, job prospects, quality of teaching and overall environment.

The main barriers which discourage students from applying to certain F&HE colleges are geographical location, transport (its availability and cost) and, to a lesser extent religion.

College lecturers thought that lack of transport, qualifications and the presence of flag/emblems/sectarian issues were the main barriers to access. As a result colleges often introduce policies banning students wearing religiously affiliated sportswear (e.g. Celtic/Rangers tops).

Young people from minority ethnic communities also face barriers in accessing further education. Research by Connolly and Keenan has found that the high levels of illiteracy and lack of formal qualifications gained by Travellers do not reflect a general lack of concern for education among this group. Many express regret at either not having the opportunities to learn, or not making the most of the opportunities that exist and also stress a desire to further their education. As a result many young adults had joined various literacy and other educational programmes. One of the key motivating factors underlying this desire to learn appeared to be recognition of the importance of a basic level of education and of qualifications in order to find work.

Minority ethnic young people whose first language is not English experience further difficulties. The range and variety of minority ethnic communities’ needs often makes effective F&HE provision difficult. There are great variations in the first language, length of residence in Northern Ireland, knowledge of English,

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reasons for coming to Northern Ireland, reasons for wishing to study etc. of students, making it difficult to plan support programmes.

Research\textsuperscript{26} has identified the following issues with regards to providing effective F&HE services which will meet minority ethnic communities’ needs:

- there is limited data on numbers of potential students and their needs;
- students require different levels of support;
- there are irregular attendance patterns linked to transport difficulties, the need to work, family/childcare responsibilities;
- variations in levels of student motivation and commitment;
- difficulties in recruiting and retaining suitably qualified teaching staff; and
- difficulties in publicising the availability of classes in ways which potential students can access.

Recent research\textsuperscript{27} found that many full-time ethnic minority students are subjected to racial harassment with 45 per cent having experienced some form of harassment at college whilst 1 in 5 experience it on a weekly basis. In addition some 35.9 per cent of full-time ethnic minority students have felt the need to hide elements of their ethnic background to fit-in.

In general, however, the research concluded that ethnic minority students are relatively positive in their assessment of the college environment, although in line with their greater experience of harassment full-time and non-white ethnic minority students tend to be more negative in their assessment of the college environment.

7.3 Belfast Metropolitan College Facilities

BMC has over 53,000 students enrolled on full-time and part-time courses, making it one of the largest colleges of F&HE in the UK. Students have the opportunity to select from a comprehensive programme of full-time F&HE courses in a wide range of disciplines. The college also provides a full range of adult education courses in its buildings across the city, including around 140 out-centres.

The vast majority of courses lead to nationally validated qualifications, and BMC has well-established links with local and national universities as well as with employers, ranging from a wide variety of small to medium enterprises to large multi-national organisations.

The college has 5 main sites, in addition to community based out-centres. A variety of full-time F&HE courses at the BMC are delivered in the Brunswick

\textsuperscript{27} Peer Consulting (2007) Study on Racism in the Northern Ireland Further Education Sector
Street, College Square, Gerald Moag, Tower Street and Whiterock Campus buildings.

7.4 College Location in Relation to Community Background

The following analyses are based upon data received from BMC. Figure 7.1 (see Appendix 3) maps the location of BMC main college sites in relation to the community background of the geographical region using 2001 census data.

Three of the main sites are based in a city centre location. These are situated in Brunswick Street, College Square and The Gerald Moag. Tower Street is located in East Belfast, a predominately Protestant area, whereas Whiterock is based in West Belfast which is a mainly Catholic area.

Figure 7.1 indicates that although the city centre college locations are not “mixed” they appear to be situated within a close proximity to both Protestant and Catholic communities.

7.5 Students Attending the Main College Sites

Table 7.1 indicates the percentage of attendees who are from mainly Protestant (60 per cent+), mainly Catholic (60 per cent+) or mixed (60-40 per cent) areas for each facility.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>C80+</th>
<th>C60-80</th>
<th>MIXED</th>
<th>P60-80</th>
<th>P80+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brunswick</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Square</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerald Moag</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tower Street</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whiterock</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2007, BMC
Please note that in some cases figures do not amount to 100% due to rounding

Table 7.1 illustrates that four out of the five sites attract people from both Protestant and Catholic communities. Whiterock, which is based in West Belfast is attended by people who live in a predominately Catholic area (84 per cent of users).
7.6 Evidence of Segregated Space

As previously mentioned Whiterock is the only further education college which has a majority of one community attending. It is likely that its position within Catholic West Belfast means that it is not perceived to be easily accessible to members of the Protestant community. However, when Whiterock’s composition is examined we find that students from mainly Protestant areas make up 11 per cent of enrolments. However, students who attend Whiterock College mostly live in less affluent Catholic areas.

Figure 7.2 illustrates the areas from which Whiterock attracts students. The main areas which Whiterock serves are Falls, Falls Park, Glen Road, Glen Colin, Whiterock, Clonard, Beechmount and Upper Springfield.

7.7 Evidence of Shared Space

Four out of the five BMC main sites indicate that they attract a mix of enrolments from people living within both Protestant and Catholic areas.

Tower Street is located in East Belfast which is predominately a Protestant area. However, although 58 per cent of students do come from mainly Protestant areas, there is almost one third of students travelling to the college from a Catholic area. Tower Street attracts students from a wide area including Ballyhackamore, Falls, Malone and Shaftesbury.

Three colleges are based in the city centre. These are Brunswick, College Square and The Gerald Moag. Each of these colleges has a slight Protestant majority however Brunswick had the greatest percentage gap with only nine per cent more Protestants than Catholics attending.

A large percentage of students attending Brunswick live in the Ballynafeigh, Blackstaff and Botanic areas. Figure 7.3 presents the catchment area for Brunswick.

Figure 7.4 indicates that Gerald Moag attracts students living in Andersonstown, Ardoyne, Botanic, Chichester Park, Glen Colin, Ballynafeigh, Stranmillis and Waterworks.

College Square students mostly live in Andersonstown, Ardoyne, Ballynafeigh, Chichester Park and Botanic (see Figure 7.5).

These facilities also foster integration on a socio-economic level. Tower Street attracts a large proportion of its students from wealthy Protestant areas as well as from economically deprived Protestant and Catholic areas.

The majority of students who attend College Square campus are from affluent Protestant or poorer Catholic areas. The Gerald Moag and Brunswick also provide services to people living in wealthy Protestant areas and less well off Catholic areas.
Figure 7.2

Catchment for Whiterock FE / HE College

KEY

- Subject FE/HE College

Census Output Areas where Users number 6+ or 3%+ of Adult Residents

Map Produced by
H.McLermond
- theDATAmart -
Constructed using NISRA Census Geography and Roads by Navteq

solutions@theDATAmart.co.uk
Figure 7.3
Figure 7.4

[Map showing catchment areas for Gerald Moag FE/HE Campus]

**KEY**
- Subject FE/HE College
- Census Output Areas where Users number 6+ or 3%+ of Adult Residents

Map Produced by
H. McLearnon
theDATaman
Constructed using NISRA
Census Geography
and Roads by Navteq

solutions@theDATaman.co.uk
Figure 7.5

C Catchment for College Sq East
FE / HE College

KEY

Subject FE/HE College

Map Produced by
H.McLearnon
- theDATAman -
Constructed using NISRA
Census Geography
and Roads by Navteq
solutions@theDATAman.co.uk

Census Output Areas
where Users number 6 +
or 3½+ of Adult Residents
7.8 Arising Issues

Further Education provision, within the main BMC facilities is mainly integrated. This particular service line indicates that providing a specialist service within a relatively neutral area will lead to community integration. Caution must be noted with regards to the likelihood that many students may live away from the family home whilst at college. There are large numbers of students living in the traditionally “student” areas of Botanic and Shaftesbury. This will have an affect upon the output of the current research as these instances may mask “true” community background.

The facility within Whiterock is largely unable to attract individuals from nearby Protestant areas, presumably because of people’s reluctance to enter into a “Catholic area”. This college does however succeed in attracting individuals from the surrounding educationally disadvantaged areas.

Many colleges undertake a wide range of steps to encourage participation from both sides of the community. Steps include working with local schools (on either side of the community), advertising in local community and voluntary sector facilities, and offering outreach courses in locations where residents are predominantly one religion or another and have not previously accessed further education and training. Other approaches include cooperation with local political representatives/councils and the introduction of cultural diversity programmes.

BMC have around 140 outreach centres based in community centres and training centres throughout Belfast. These provide a more localised service and due to their nature are likely to be predominately segregated.
8 Youth Centre Provision

8.1 Introduction

This section illustrates the geographical location of BELB funded full-time and part-time youth centres against the community background of the area. In this instance access patterns may only be inferred due to the lack of available user data.

8.2 Background

Research indicates that children can recognise diversity and hold sectarian prejudices from the age of three. By the age of five or six, a considerable number of children display an awareness of sectarian and paramilitary violence and by the age of ten or eleven many have developed deeply entrenched sectarian opinions. Family background, school, media, politics, social lives and personal experiences have been identified by young people as contributing to sectarian attitudes.

School uniform is an identifying marker of religion for young people attending segregated schools. Indeed, school uniform has often been highlighted by young people as exposing them to sectarian attacks when travelling to and from school. These divisions are further perpetuated where schools are located within segregated communities, with some schools surrounded by symbols of a political and sectarian nature.

Young people have also reported how sectarianism affects their social interactions, with this leading to ‘restricted social spaces’ (e.g. in their choice of venues for meeting friends and undertaking social activities). Many report that, due to community and educational segregation they have had limited opportunities to develop cross-community friendships.

A recent study found that levels of segregation experienced by Catholic and Protestant children extend beyond living in different residential areas and attending different schools. More specifically the differences in the experiences of these children tend to be found across a range of social, cultural and political activities as well. The study found a lack of any notable association between a child’s socio-economic background and their attitudes (for example holidays spent in Donegal or Portrush). A child from an economically deprived area was no more likely to develop in-group preferences or out-group prejudices than a child from a more affluent, middle class area.

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There is less research on the area of minority ethnic children and young people’s integration into the wider Northern Ireland community. However, there is evidence that racist bullying and harassment in schools may be a common experience for many of minority ethnic children with the most frequent form being racist name-calling.32

The response of schools to the issue of racist bullying and harassment appears to vary enormously. Some schools appear to deal with specific incidents relatively successfully. For the minority ethnic children and/or parents involved, this usually means taking the issue seriously and taking swift and decisive action. For children, it also includes having teachers who were sensitive to the issue and are willing to listen and understand their experiences.

However, the majority of schools tended to respond inappropriately. This was often characterised by not taking the issue seriously either by minimising it or ignoring it altogether. It also included examples of teachers attempting to address the problem but, unwittingly, tending to make matters worse by the way they approached the issue.

8.3 Belfast Education and Library Board Youth Centre Facilities

The BELB youth service in Belfast seeks to work with young people to facilitate their personal, social and educational development. The organisation will also work to enable young people to gain a voice, influence and place in society in a period of their transition from dependence to interdependence.

Each year a range of training opportunities are provided to adults involved in youth work, in addition to courses for young people on issues such as personal development, communication skills, leadership training, drug education and community relations. For example, BELB provides support to young people in the form of a bursary scheme which provides financial assistance to attend courses and conferences, participate in expeditions/projects, take part in a study tour and acquire further skills.

BELB has approximately sixty full-time staff and two hundred part-time paid and voluntary staff and over three hundred registered groups. They work directly with young people who attend the 22 BELB funded youth centres within the statutory sector. Ten of these facilities are open on a full-time basis and 12 are open part-time. There is a further 26 voluntary run youth centres to which BELB also provide support. BELB also has 7 area projects, which work, in communities across the city. The youth service has an outdoor education residential centre at Drumalla in Killyleagh County Down where it provides a range of outdoor activities for young people (e.g. abseiling, canoeing, kayaking, orienteering and teambuilding exercises).

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Table 8.1 illustrates BELB funded statutory and voluntary youth centres according to location and type of facility.

Table 8.1  
Location of Belfast Education and Library Board Funded Youth Centres

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Statutory Full-time</th>
<th>Statutory Part-time</th>
<th>Voluntary Full-time</th>
<th>Voluntary Part-time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: BELB, 2007

North Belfast has 8 BELB funded youth centres (6 full-time and 2 part-time), East has 10 (4 full-time and 6 part-time), South has 17 (5 full-time and 12 part-time) and West has 13 facilities (7 full-time and 6 part-time).

8.4 Youth Centre Provision in Relation to Community Background

Figure 8.1 (see Appendix 3) maps the location of BELB statutory sector youth centres in relation to the community background of the geographical region in which they are situated using 2001 census data.

Figure 8.1 indicates that the BELB youth centres are positioned in areas which have either a majority Protestant or Catholic population. None are situated within religiously mixed areas.
8.5 Arising Issues

The fact that none of the youth centres are located within religiously mixed areas means that it is unlikely that these centres have a religiously mixed user group. Unfortunately there is no user data available for youth centres, for the purposes of this study but it would be worthwhile to replicate the access data collection within the youth setting in order to find out the extent of integration between young people from different community and minority ethnic backgrounds within the clubs.

The research evidence suggests that the Northern Ireland conflict has affected the extent to which some young people can develop and sustain cross-community friendships. The geographical location of social facilities may mean that the potential opportunities for mixing are limited. On the other hand some young people are able to establish cross-community friendships without any problems through employment and acquaintances as well as specific cross-community events. It is likely that these young people are in the minority. Many young people live, work and are schooled within their local areas and thus opportunities to forge relationships outside of these boundaries are difficult. Therefore, specific cross-community efforts are needed.

Young people from a minority ethnic background also appear to experience an emotional isolation from other young people from the majority communities. Socialising usually takes place around schools based activities and within their own cultural and family connections.
9 Community Centre Provision

9.1 Introduction

This section illustrates access patterns in BCC funded community centre usage, in order to identify whether or not there is evidence of “perceived community ownership” within this service line. Service provision membership is analysed according to the community background of the respective catchment areas and the arising issues for community provision are highlighted.

9.2 Background

Community centres provide a much needed community resource in that they are a forum for local people and groups to meet. As a result the majority of community centres are located within densely populated social housing estates in order that local people may have ease of access to the facilities. As the majority of social housing in Northern Ireland is religiously segregated, the facility location may affect equality of access and lead to single identity service provision.

9.3 Belfast City Council Community Centre Facilities

There are 20 Council led community centres across Belfast. Five community centres are located in North Belfast, six in West Belfast, six in South Belfast and three facilities are located in East Belfast.

Community centres have programmes of activities, which have been developed in response to local needs and they cater for community groups, youth projects and individual needs. Activities on offer within these premises include homework clubs, after schools groups, keep-fit sessions and parent and toddler clubs. There is also a wide range of meeting facilities and IT equipment for public use. Each centre will also have a number of rooms available for public hire. If activities have a community development or cultural focus, rooms can usually be hired free of charge.

Community Centres are open to all members of the community. For example Donegall Pass Community Centre user groups include:

- South Belfast Sure Start;
- Barnardos Learning Together Project;
- Engage with Age;
- Hoi Sum Women's Group; and
- Donegall Pass Forum.

A number of community development resources may also be provided within Community Centres, including access to funding databases. Training may also be offered to local people on a wide range of topics. For example, at Concorde Community Centre in North Belfast these include setting up and developing
community groups and constitutions, child protection training, play development and strategic planning.

Various activities and community projects are organised within the community centres throughout the year. For example:

- Northern Ireland Children’s Holiday Scheme (NICHS): NICHS aims to improve community relations by working with young people. Through the scheme, local young people have examined culture and identity, met up with other communities and enjoyed a wide variety of activities;

- Pathways Project: This Extern children’s project works with 15 and 16-year-olds that have been excluded from formal education. It offers group work, formal qualifications and recreational activities; and

- Digital Communities Project: There are four Digital Community project centres in Belfast. The project provides opportunities for computer training and community development. BCC computer suites are used both as informal drop-in facilities and for computer courses.

9.4 Location of Community Centre Provision in Relation to Community Background

Figure 9.1 (see Appendix 3) maps the location of BCC community centres in relation to the community background of the geographical region using 2001 census data.

Eleven of the 20 community centres are based in areas which have an 80 per cent or more Protestant population (Dee Street, Knocknagoney, Inverary, Concorde, Duncairn, Sandy Row, Donegall Pass, Hammer, Highfield, Suffolk and Olympia), 7 centres are situated in areas which have an 80 per cent or more Catholic background (Ardoyne, Ligoniel, North Queen Street, Markets, Divis, Horne Drive and Whiterock). The Finaghy and Morton community centres, in South Belfast, are located in an area which has a 60-80 per cent Protestant community background.
9.5 Community Centre Membership

The following analysis is based upon locating the home address of BCC community centre users in relation to their chosen facility. In order to explore access patterns within and across communities, we have generated religiously defined catchment areas for each community centre, where numbers permit.

It should be noted that these user groups will not reflect the full extent of those accessing the service. The following statistics and resulting analyses are therefore merely illustrative of the community background of a selection of individuals who use the centres.

Table 9.1 indicates the percentage of members who are from mainly Protestant (60 per cent+), mainly Catholic (60 per cent+) or mixed (60-40 per cent) areas for each facility.

Table 9.1
Percentage of Users Living in a Mainly Protestant or a Mainly Catholic Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Community Centre</th>
<th>C80+</th>
<th>C60-80</th>
<th>Mixed</th>
<th>P60-80</th>
<th>P80+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>Dee Street</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inverary</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>93.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knocknagoney</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>Ardoine</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concorde</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Duncairn</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ligoniel</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>North Queen St</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>Donegall Pass</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finaghy</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Markets</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Morton</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Olympia</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sandy Row</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>Divis</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hammer</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Highfield</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Horn Drive</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whiterock</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suffolk</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2007, Belfast City Council
Please note that in some cases figures do not amount to 100% due to rounding
The majority of community centres obtain membership from either one community or the other. For example, all of Knocknagoney centre users were from a predominately Protestant area, whereas 97 per cent of people using the Markets facilities lived in a predominately Catholic area. Overall, 11 community centre’s had user groups which were from Protestant areas and six centres serviced groups from Catholic areas. Three community centres attracted groups from both sides of the community.

The majority of users are from areas where there is a high concentration of people with the lowest socio-economic backgrounds.

9.6 Evidence of Segregated Spaces

Despite the fact that BCC facilities are open to all members of the community, the community centre user group catchments illustrate that individuals do not tend to use facilities located in geographical areas which are perceived to “belong to the other group”. The following community centres illustrate single identity utilisation which suggests that there are distortions in accessing these facilities with regards to community background. As noted above 17 out of 20 centres had membership from predominately one side of the community.

In East Belfast Knocknagoney, Dee Street and Inverary had a member base comprising of exclusively Protestants. Knocknagoney attracts people from the Belmont area, Dee Street attracts people living in Ballymacarrat, Island and the Mount. This is reflective of the community background of the majority of people living within East Belfast. Inverary’s catchment area is presented in Figure 9.2 overleaf. Inverary’s largest user base is from Sydenham, however it is used by people living in Belmont, Island and Bloomfield.

There are five Council run community centres within North Belfast and they also tended to cater for one side of the community or the other, with the exception of Ardoyne. Concorde and Duncairn have 93 per cent and 94 per cent of their respective membership from Protestant areas. The catchment area for Concorde is presented in Figure 9.3. Concorde has a cluster of members from Ballysillan Park, Cliftonville and Legoniel. Duncairn obtains the majority of its users from within Duncairn and Castleview to a lesser extent.

On the other hand Ligoniel and North Queen Street attract their membership from the surrounding Catholic areas. Ligoniel, however tends to attract a slightly wider user group than North Queen Street, with 12 per cent of members coming from mixed areas and 10 per cent from Protestant areas. Users come from Ardoyne and Legoniel.

South Belfast has six community centres. Donegall Pass (84 per cent), Olympia (89 per cent), Sandy Row (96 per cent) and Finaghy (80 per cent) attract people who live in Protestant areas, whereas Markets (96 per cent) has a membership of people from predominately Catholic areas. Donegall Pass attracts users from Shaftesbury, those living in Blackstaff use the Olympia community centre and Sandy Row also attracts users from Shaftesbury.
Figure 9.2

Catchment for INVERARY Community Centre

KEY

- Subject Community Centre
- Other Community Centres
- Census Output Areas where Users number 6 + or 3%+ of Adult Residents

Map Produced by
H. McLean
- theDATaman
- Constructed using NISRA Census Geography and Roads by Navteq

solutions@theDATaman.co.uk
Finaghy’s membership catchment area is presented in Figure 9.4. Finaghy also attracts 11 per cent of its members from Catholic areas. Users are from the areas of Finaghy, Musgrave and Upper Malone. When we look at the data by socio-economic class, the Catholic users are from the more affluent areas in comparison to the majority Protestant membership. Finaghy community centre’s position close to Finaghy Road South may make it easier for people from nearby Catholic areas to attend as they do not need to navigate densely populated housing estates.

West Belfast has 6 community centres. Hammer and Highfield serve the small predominately Protestant areas of West Belfast. Hammer attracts people who live in Shankill and Crumlin wards and Highfield almost exclusively facilitates groups within the surrounding area.

Divis, Horn Drive and Whiterock gain members from the surrounding Catholic areas such as Falls, Ladybrook, Whiterock and Upper Springfield respectively. The data suggests that there are small numbers of users from Protestant areas which use Divis and Whiterock community centres and this is likely to be a result of cross-community initiatives.

Suffolk’s apparent religious mix may be misleading as Suffolk is situated on an interface with Protestants and Catholics living side by side, rather than “integrated”. It is likely that Suffolk’s user groups are from areas close to the interface. The majority of users are from the Ladybrook area.

9.7 Evidence of Shared Spaces

There are relatively few community centres which can be though of as being integrated or “shared” spaces. Morton community centre in South Belfast obtains half its membership from predominately Protestant areas, 37 per cent from mixed areas and 13 per cent from mainly Catholic areas. Morton attracts people who live in Windsor, Blackstaff, Botanic and Ballynafeigh.

However, the membership data for the Ardoyne community centre in North Belfast suggests that the centre has a balanced uptake. The Ardoyne community centre’s geographical location within a Catholic area and the tensions between members of both communities living in Ardoyne, make this information surprising. We believe that this user data may be a result of a specific cross community initiative within the centre at the time when the data was collected. The catchment area of Ardoyne community centre is illustrated in Figure 9.5. Centre users are coming from Ardoyne, Cliftonville, and Legoniel.
Figure 9.4

Catchment for FINAGHY Community Centre

- C 80% PLUS
- MC 60 - 80%
- MIX 40 - 60%
- MP 60 - 80%
- P 80% PLUS

KEY

- Subject Community Centre

Census Output Areas where Users number 6+ or 3%+ of Adult Residents

Map Produced by H.McLernon - theDATaman -
Constructed using NISRA Census Geography and Roads by Navteq
solutions@theDATaman.co.uk
Figure 9.5

Catchment for ARDOYNE Community Centre

KEY

- Subject Community Centre
- Other Community Centres
- Census Output Areas where Users number 6+ or 3%+ of Adult Residents

Map Produced by
H.McLearnon
-theDATaman-
Constructed using NISRA Census Geography and Roads by Navteq
solutions@theDATaman.co.uk
9.8 **Arising Issues**

It is apparent that community centres are one service area where there is on the whole segregated service provision according to community background. However, this is more a result of the location of the facility, rather than any wish to exclude one section of the community over the other. The majority of centres are based within densely populated housing estates which are themselves single identity and the centres’ membership live in the surrounding area.

The community centres were designed to meet the needs of the local people and therefore were placed in areas which would be easily accessible to those who wish to avail of the services. However, in terms of the A Shared Future policy and Section 75 duty to provide equality of access and the promotion of good relations between members of the community, the issue of the location of many of the facilities would provide a barrier for some people’s ease of access.

There are also likely to be issues relating to service provision duplication with regards to some of these council facilities. For example, the community centre provision in the Markets and Donegall Pass areas are in close proximity but one is based in a predominately Catholic area and the other is within a Protestant community. Similarly there are tensions between the Protestant Donegall Pass and Sandy Row communities, which make facility sharing difficult.

It must also be noted that these centres are targeted at people who have a comparatively low socio-economic status within the community and therefore proximity to facilities and transport accessibility need to be considered in service planning.
10 Leisure Service Provision

10.1 Introduction

This section illustrates access patterns in BCC leisure service usage, in order to identify whether or not there is evidence of community segregation within leisure provision. BCC leisure centre facilities are described, membership catchment areas are examined in terms of community background and arising issues are presented.

10.2 Background

Existing research on service uptake demonstrates that many people living in Belfast feel that they have limited access to certain parts of the city.

A survey carried out among 4,800 households in twelve neighbouring estates separated by peace-lines in Belfast in 2002 showed that 58 per cent travel twice as far as they have to in order to locate what they consider safe facilities to shop, or go to a leisure or health centre.

The research showed that few people were prepared to cross perceived sectarian boundaries to use the City Council-owned leisure centres. Around 87 per cent of those who lived in areas that were at least 90 per cent Protestant or Catholic would not use a leisure facility in an area dominated by 'the other side'.

Seventy-four per cent of those who lived in the most segregated areas had never, since leaving school, used leisure facilities in areas dominated by the other religious grouping. Forty-seven per cent of those who lived in areas which were at least 90 per cent Protestant or Catholic did not use their nearest leisure facility because it was located in an area dominated by 'the other side'.

Based upon previous research findings we might expect to find single identity or mixed identity service use and be able to highlight areas in which service usage is distorted by community boundaries (e.g. people travelling further than necessary to access a service, and where a service is perceived to be underused considering the population it is close to).

10.3 Belfast City Council Leisure Facilities

There are 11 Council led leisure centres across Belfast. Three leisure centres are located in North Belfast, five in West Belfast, two in South Belfast and one facility is located in East Belfast.

These facilities offer a range of activities, including swimming, five-a-side football, squash and aerobics and several have received upgrades to include state of the art equipment and additional services. For example, Grove leisure centre is a popular venue for swimming galas and competitions. Furthermore, this venue

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33 Shirlow, P (2000). Mapping the Spaces of Fear Research. (University of Ulster)
will house a new Health and Wellbeing Centre in 2008 which will include leisure, health and lifestyle services within the same building. The Ozone, which is located at Ormeau Embankment has reopened after upgrade work and offers a wide range of facilities, including tennis, climbing and Laser Zone game.

With such expenditure and effort involved in refurbishing and improving existing services it is crucial that venues are able to attract as large a membership as possible from across Belfast’s population.

10.4 Location of Leisure Centre Provision in Relation to Community Background

Figure 10.1 (Appendix 3) maps the location of BCC leisure centres in relation to the community background of the geographical region using 2001 census data.

Six of the 11 leisure centres are based in areas which have an 80 per cent or more Protestant background (Shankill, Ballysillan, Avoniel, Loughside, Grove and Olympia), four centres are situated in areas which have an 80 per cent or more Catholic background (Andersonstown, Whiterock, Beechmount and Falls). The Ozone, in South Belfast, is located in an area which has a 60-80 per cent Protestant community background.

10.5 Leisure Centre Membership

The following analysis is based upon locating the home address of BCC leisure centre “Boost” members in relation to their chosen facility. In order to explore access patterns within and across communities, we have generated religiously defined catchment areas for each leisure centre, where membership numbers permit.

It should be noted that Boost membership will not reflect the full extent of those accessing the service on a non-member basis. The following statistics and resulting analyses are therefore merely illustrative of the community background of a selection of individuals who use the centres.

Table 10.1 indicates the percentage of members who are from mainly Protestant (60 per cent+), mainly Catholic (60 per cent+) or mixed (60-40 per cent) areas for each facility.
Table 10.1
Percentage of Members Living in Mainly Catholic and Mainly Protestant Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Leisure Centre</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>C 80+</th>
<th>C 60-80</th>
<th>Mixed</th>
<th>P 60-80</th>
<th>P 80+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>Avoniel</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loughside*</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>Ballysillan</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grove</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>Ozone*</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Olympia</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>Shankill</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whiterock</td>
<td>93</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beechmount*</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Falls</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Andersonstown</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* denotes small numbers
Source: 2007, Belfast City Council
Please note that in some cases figures do not amount to 100% due to rounding

It is apparent that the majority of centres obtain membership from either one community or the other. For example, 93 per cent of Falls leisure centre membership comprises of people who live in a predominately Catholic area, whereas 93 per cent of Shankill leisure centre members live in a predominately Protestant area.

In North Belfast there is some evidence of social integration. Ballysillan has 38 per cent of members living in mostly Catholic areas and 56 per cent coming from mostly Protestant areas. Grove leisure centre also indicates some mixed use (32 per cent of its membership from Catholic and 63 per cent from Protestant areas).

Ozone also indicated a degree of inter-community contact, however the membership numbers were small and analysis should be treated with caution. Ozone obtains 47 per cent of its members from mostly Protestant areas and 28 per cent from mostly Catholic areas. Olympia has 57 per cent of its membership from Protestant areas and 18 per cent from mostly Catholic communities.

Ozone, Avoniel, Andersonstown, Grove and Olympia leisure have a high proportion of members (>25 per cent) living outside the Belfast City Council boundaries. This may be due to the specialist nature of some of these facilities or their close proximity to Belfast District Council boundaries (e.g. Andersonstown drawing membership from Outer West Belfast in Lisburn District Council area). Postcode information relating to members who live outside the BCC boundaries was not included in this analysis.

10.6 Evidence of Segregated Spaces

The current leisure centre membership catchments do appear to support Shirlow’s 2002 finding that individuals are not comfortable using sports facilities which are located in the other group’s territory.
Some leisure centres clearly illustrate single identity service utilisation and suggest distortions in accessing services which may be a result of a reluctance to cross perceived community boundaries. These are:

- Whiterock;
- Falls;
- Andersonstown;
- Avoniel; and
- Shankill.

The M1 motorway can often be a physical divider in terms of religious background. Whiterock leisure centre in West Belfast picks up members from predominately Catholic areas near to the Olympia leisure centre, but which are separated by the motorway. Whiterock largely attracts members from the predominately Catholic areas of Turf Lodge, Ballymurphy and Springmartin. It also attracts members from Catholic areas who do not wish to attend their closest facility at Shankill.

Whiterock has attracted membership from within the Protestant area of Highfield. This apparent anomaly may be a result of demographic shifts since the 2001 Census.

Figure 10.2, overleaf illustrates that the Falls leisure centre has a wide-reaching catchment area with people travelling from Ligoniel and Old Park Road to access its facilities. It appears that people living within predominately Catholic areas on the outskirts will “side-step” closer leisure centres in Protestant areas (e.g. Ballysillan, Shankill and Avoniel) to attend the Falls Road leisure centre.

It is interesting to note membership of Falls leisure centre within predominately Protestant streets around Lanark Way. These areas are located next to the Peace Line.

Andersonstown Leisure Centre also gains membership from areas with a predominately Catholic population. Its membership does not include the predominately Protestant and mixed areas around Suffolk, but extends past Belfast District Council boundaries into Lisburn City Council areas.
Figure 10.3, overleaf, illustrates that Shankill Leisure Centre almost exclusively gains membership from predominately Protestant areas in West Belfast and some Protestant communities within North Belfast. There is evidence of service “bypassing” in Protestant areas closer to the Falls leisure centre.

Avoniel leisure centre which is located in East Belfast also obtains members from the surrounding Protestant areas.
Figure 10.3
10.7 Evidence of Shared Spaces

In contrast, there are four BCC leisure centres which appear to attract members from both communities, albeit in smaller numbers.

Ballysillan and Grove leisure centres are both located in North Belfast. It is likely that the M2 and surrounding road networks have an impact upon accessibility of these centres to both communities.

Although Ballysillan leisure centre is located in an area which is over 80 per cent Protestant, some members come from areas which house mostly Catholic residents. On further analysis it would appear that these members are from the more affluent areas and that access to Ballysillan may be made easier due to its proximity to the West Circular Road. It is also worth noting that Ballysillan is situated close to religiously mixed areas which may “dilute” “perceived community ownership”. Figure 10.3, overleaf, illustrates Ballysillan membership catchment areas.

Grove leisure centre also reaches Catholic communities within North Belfast in addition to Protestant communities within the direct vicinity. However, as with Ballysillan it is likely that Catholic membership is coming from the more affluent areas off the Antrim Road. Grove succeeds in attracting a high proportion of Catholics from Cavehill and Bellevue which nearby Ballysillan leisure centre does not.

The Olympia leisure centre is based in Boucher Road, a predominately Protestant area of South Belfast. Its membership largely comes from the surrounding areas of the Village, Lisburn Road and from the religiously mixed area of Finaghy. The Olympia also attracts membership from a Protestant neighbourhood within the Musgrave ward. The data indicates that those members from mixed areas are significantly more affluent than those from the predominately Protestant areas.

Despite the fact that the Olympia is surrounded by religiously mixed areas it does not attract a large number of members from these areas. It would appear that social class issues may also be at work. For example, local authority access and growth of private sector provision which may be more preferable to individuals from the more affluent areas in South Belfast. Figure 10.4 illustrates the catchment area for the Olympia leisure centre.
Figure 10.4
Figure 10.5

Map Produced by H.McLearnon - theDATAman -
Constructed using NISRA Census Geography
and Roads by Navteq
solutions@theDATaman.co.uk

Catchment for the OLYMPIA Leisure Centre

- C 80% PLUS
- MC 60 - 80%
- MIX 40 - 60%
- MP 60 - 80%
- P 80% PLUS

KEY

- Subject Leisure Centre
- Other Facilities

Census Output Areas where Users number 6 +
or 3%+ of Adult Residents

Map Produced by H.McLearnon - theDATAman -
Constructed using NISRA Census Geography
and Roads by Navteq
solutions@theDATaman.co.uk
10.8 Arising Issues

The current research has highlighted the fact that leisure centre membership across Belfast is largely single identity and that there are instances whereby individuals will choose to use a facility further away rather than go into an area which is perceived as being affiliated with the “other” group.

It is apparent that the location of a facility has a significant role to play in who uses it. For example, West Belfast is very clearly defined in terms of religion and such is the extent of everyday segregation, that it is unlikely that members of the Catholic community from West Belfast would feel comfortable attending Shankill leisure centre, even if it had a closer proximity to them than the Falls facility.

There is evidence of some level of shared leisure service provision in North Belfast, despite the fact that it is also highly segregated in terms of religious background. However, the data suggests that more affluent people from areas that are 60-80 per cent Catholic are using the Grove and Ballysillan facilities. This does not necessarily mean that there is inter-community contact, as members could be Protestants living in these neighbourhoods.

There are also instances whereby service provision in an area that has a strong association with a particular community background is utilised by a small minority of the “other” community. In these instances, membership is almost exclusively from the lower socio-economic groups. This is likely to be the result of an accessibility issue. It may be that proximity and cost is a key factor for overcoming any perceived barriers to inter-community contact.
11 Community Opinions

11.1 Introduction

This section details the discussions with participants from the six community focus groups against identified key themes and the arising issues are presented. The composition of each focus group is described.

11.2 Community Discussions

11.2.1 Participants

Five focus groups were undertaken with community representatives from West, South, East and North Belfast and the Greater Shankill area. One Belfast wide focus group was held with members from minority ethnic backgrounds. Table 11.1 indicates the number of participants at each focus group.

Table 11.1 Focus Group Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Belfast</td>
<td>The Mount</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Belfast</td>
<td>West Belfast Partnership Board</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Belfast</td>
<td>South Belfast Partnership Board</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Belfast</td>
<td>Groundwork NI</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shankill</td>
<td>Spectrum Centre</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority Ethnic</td>
<td>Belfast Gems</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Focus groups lasted for approximately 90 minutes.

The output of the community focus groups are presented according to the following themes:

- Awareness of Community Segregation;
- Mobility across the City;
- Impact of Territorial Marking on Mobility;
- Impact of Division upon Service Access;
11.3 Findings

11.3.1 Awareness of Community Segregation

Within all of the focus groups there was an awareness that large areas of Belfast are comprised of high concentrations of either Protestant or Catholic residents. In general terms West Belfast was described as “Catholic”, East Belfast and Shankill as “Protestant” and South and North Belfast as “mixed”.

However, geographical “pockets” which housed members of the other community were also noted. For example, participants mentioned the fact that Suffolk, a mainly Protestant area was also within West Belfast and that Short Strand, a Catholic area was located in East Belfast. The relatively mixed area of South Belfast was identified as also comprising of the Protestant areas of Donegall Pass and The Village, in addition to mostly Catholic areas such as Lower Ormeau Road. North Belfast was discussed as being highly segregated in terms of community background and several interface areas were also mentioned. Cavehill was thought of as being a comparatively mixed area within North Belfast, but this was perceived as being an affluent area.

Although participants recognised that there had been residential segregation before the Northern Ireland conflict, they thought that the intimidation and violence experienced over the last 30 years had heightened this segregation and people began to feel safer within same religion areas.

Participants also spoke about the implications of changing demographics within communities over time. During the Greater Shankill discussions the Springfield Road area was perceived to have become “more Catholic”. Duncairn, Tigers Bay and the Shore Road were also perceived to have changed over the last 30 years with a decrease in the number of Protestant families living there. There was the belief that

“Catholics want in there as their population is growing” [Greater Shankill]

Representatives from the minority ethnic communities in Northern Ireland also had an awareness of how Northern Ireland was divided in terms of community background, although they did not go into as much detail with regards to individual geographical areas as did the community group participants. They mentioned that there were greater concentrations of members of the Chinese community living in South Belfast and a growing number living on the Springfield Road in West Belfast. There was a
greater concentration of members from the Indian community living within North Belfast.

There were discussions around the fact that there were now groupings of minority ethnic communities within areas of Belfast. This was mostly due to the fact that they may know someone who had previously moved to the area and had said that it was safe. There was also a need for familiarity and the fact that many people could not speak English and therefore congregated together to overcome this was also an important factor.

Participants thought that people from a minority ethnic background would be content to live anywhere in Belfast but support organisations often had to advise them on areas which would be safer to live in than others. It was thought that people were often offered social housing in the areas that no-one else wanted to live in due to community tensions and they often had no option but to try and find private rented accommodation.

11.3.2 Mobility across the City

Participants felt that as a result of the residential segregation within Belfast there were areas that would be out of bounds due to the fact that people were afraid to go there. Fear of attack and habit were provided as being the main reasons that people did not enter certain areas.

“People from Shankill wouldn’t go into Catholic areas. There’s a great fear. I know a fella who wouldn’t visit his father in the Royal [Victoria Hospital] ‘cause he wouldn’t set foot in the Falls” [Shankill]

“People from the Village would go to the Park Centre…but it’s a big deal for them even though it’s not actually inside [a Catholic area]. They won’t go to the Royal though” [South Belfast]

“There was a traffic diversion and I had to go into Shankill. All I could see were murals and bunting. I felt as though I had a flashing light above my head although there was no reason for anyone to notice me and I was in the car” [West Belfast]

“If I was going to the Falls from New Lodge it would be quicker to go through the Shankill…but I wouldn’t do it” [North Belfast]

“There’s just places that you’re brought up not to go to” [South Belfast]

“You’re afraid to say your kids names out loud... ‘cause then people would know [you are Catholic]” [North Belfast]

Participants in both South and West Belfast said that before the conflict situation there was still a thought that an area was either Protestant or Catholic but there was a higher level of cross-community mobility than there is currently.
“When I was younger I would take off my school tie to go there, but I wouldn’t have gone at night. Then you had the Troubles and you stayed were you were as you felt safer there” [South Belfast]

People attending the North Belfast focus group spoke about the use of the black taxi service which their community used. However, the taxi drivers would not take people in to certain areas unless the customer was known to them. The same taxi would be needed to take people back to their own areas again as they could not use the taxi service of the other community.

Feelings of fear are not limited to Protestant and Catholics. Members from the minority ethnic focus group also spoke of how the fear of racial attack stops them from entering certain areas of Belfast.

“When someone from the Chinese community gets attacked you feel you will be too. You too are a potential target” [Minority Ethnic Group]

It was recognised that people’s perceptions of an area played a large role in whether or not they would feel safe going there.

“You mention Lower Shankill and people think they play tag with hatchets there. But it’s not that bad if you go there. Some Protestants would have trouble going there too” [Shankill]

“I do cross-community work and me and [Catholic community worker] had to drive through the Shankill. She stalled the car. The hairs on the back of her neck stood up” [Shankill]

“North Belfast stands out because of the rising tensions around the marching season” [North Belfast]

11.3.3 Impact of Territorial Marking on Mobility

Participants recognised how the use of flags, murals and kerb marking could intimidate people and stop them from entering an area and in some cases are done in order to keep people out. Some areas of North Belfast were thought to contain strong paramilitary influences which hindered progress. Many spoke of the positive affect of the Government’s Re-Imaging Communities programme, however there was a resounding belief that the programme would not work if it did not have the backing of local people.

In West Belfast there was discussion around the fact that murals were bringing tourists into their area and there was a reluctance to let a wealth of history disappear due to recent Government policy.

Participants from South Belfast thought that the re-imagining programme had worked well on the whole but thought that Government needed to give consideration to smaller communities which have a strong sense of historical attachment to mural drawings.
“Donegall Pass has only a small number of murals. There are very strong feelings that they’re losing their identity” [South Belfast]

Other murals, however did not have community support.

“There’s a grim reaper UFF one in Broadway and the people want it away as it really scares the children and wee toddlers are frightened to walk past it” [South Belfast]

People from the minority ethnic focus group spoke about their feelings on territorial delineation.

“We get a lot of people coming to us as they are frightened of these paintings. They say that there are pictures of men in masks with guns. They do not understand and are worried that it is directed at them” [Minority Ethnic Group]

This group believed that murals which explained the history of the area and its people were acceptable but that others which were paramilitary based were frightening to people from a minority ethnic background as they had no understanding of what they mean.

“There’s a big flag outside my house. It says UVF. My husband didn’t know what it meant and I didn’t tell him. Then one day he came home very worried as he had heard what it was. I told him that we are probably the safest people here as it is of no business of ours” [Minority Ethnic Group]

Participants from the community groups spoke about their frustrations when isolated events have a negative impact upon the work which goes into building relationships within and across community boundaries.

“We managed to negotiate that there would be no flags or red, white and blue markings on the roundabout at the Circular Road, then in 2005 after the Whiterock parade events it all went back up. Every year it’s like Groundhog Day” [Shankill]

11.3.4 Impact of Division upon Service Access

Participants agreed that people from their areas do use services according to the geographical location that they are in and that places are perceived as belonging to “one side or the other”.

“People from Shankill shop in Shankill or they might go into the city centre. But it would be the centre, they wouldn’t go near Castle Street” [Shankill]

“People from Suffolk would use the Olympia Leisure Centre…They wouldn’t feel comfortable going to Falls” [West Belfast]
There was recognition that territorial perceptions often meant that people missed out on valuable opportunities. Training and employment opportunities were often bypassed if they were not located within an acceptable area.

“This fella I worked with was unemployed and was sent to do training at Springvale. He refused to go, said he didn’t care if his dole got stopped” [Shankill]

“People would rather go to work in East Germany rather than East Belfast” [West Belfast]

“In An Chultúrlann they had a thing on about history over the last 25 years...all about the hunger strikes. A lot of people would have loved to go but they just couldn’t” [Shankill]

There were discussions around the fact that people would bypass their nearest facility in order to access one that was in an area that they felt more comfortable in. For example people from the Shankill would use the Valley Leisure Centre as it was felt to have better swimming facilities than the Shankill. However they would not use the closer Falls Leisure Centre due to the fact that it is in a Catholic area. The majority of people would work, shop and use public services within their own communities and therefore there was reluctance, or no need, to cross over perceived community boundaries.

The “insular mindset” of communities was also discussed and this was thought to be a direct result of the need to feel safe. There was also recognition that there were some areas that were considered “no go” even within same religion communities due to internal disputes.

“People from Highfield wouldn’t go down to the Shankill to drink due to all the internal feuds there are” [Shankill]

People from South Belfast said that any services that there were within the Village area would not be used by differing factions. For example, people who live in Rodent Street would not go to a facility in Donegall Road as that was seen as being another Protestant group’s territory.

“There are five distinct areas in Protestant South Belfast from the Village to Sandy Row. They don’t mix” [Shankill]

It was pointed out however that Protestant communities in Donegall Pass share common facilities with the Chinese community living there.

“They’ll share with everyone... apart from Catholics” [South Belfast]

Participants also raised the issue of community poverty and deprivation as being a significant barrier to the take-up of services.
“There are so many opportunities for people in South Belfast but it’s not just the location or divide that stops them accessing them. We’re surrounded by businesses in this area but the local people don’t have the right skills. There’s the School of Music but that’s seen as exclusive, not for them” [South Belfast]

11.3.5 Service Specific Access Issues

Housing

Housing was a sensitive issue for the group due to the rising waiting lists in many areas of the city. Many Protestant communities felt that they were being pushed out of their areas due to the fact that the rising Catholic population needed to be accommodated. The South Belfast group also mentioned the fact that there was a rise in people from a minority ethnic background coming to live in South Belfast who is also competing for housing. Demographic changes sometimes lead to population shifts with schools and churches being closed due to lack of numbers. It was felt that housing issues were now a political agenda.

Participants thought that NIHE integrated housing projects would only work if they were in a neutral location, despite the fact that there are large numbers of both communities on the waiting list. They felt that some people might be open to integrated housing but that people from areas with a high concentration of either Protestants or Catholics would not want it. There also appears to be a lot of speculation and suspicion with regards to members of the other community.

“I think there were rumours of it at Brown Square at the bottom of the Shankill once. But a residents group got together. They thought that if Catholics got in they wouldn’t be able to get the Orange Order down the Shankill on the Twelfth” [Shankill]

“People in Suffolk don’t want mixed housing. We are already fenced in on four sides. Our communities would disappear. As one community expands the other retreats” [West Belfast]

Housing issues were thought to be related to socio-economic status and there was awareness that there was a tendency for community integration to occur on a wider level amongst more affluent members of the population.

“Class is part of it. If you have a good job and can afford a nice house, you won’t care if it’s beside a Catholic” [Shankill]

Youth Services

Participants indicated that they felt that there was a general lack of facilities for young people within their respective areas.

“We close our shops at tea-time...we don’t want to encourage young people to hang around” [Suffolk]
There was also the belief that many services were located within communities due to the fact that it would not be safe for young people to use facilities in a different area and that they did not have the money needed to travel to expensive venues. It was stated that young people were most likely to be at risk of attack because of their religion. They were thought to be easily identifiable through their sportswear. Individuals believed that young people’s attitudes were significantly affected by their parents’ views of members of the other religion and that parents often translated their own fears and insecurities onto their children. The often negative relationship between young people and the police was also mentioned as an area of concern in North Belfast.

“It’s not always sectarianism...mostly it’s boredom...or a slow news day” [North Belfast]

In West Belfast young people also tended to socialise within their own communities and the city centre nightlife was seen as being used by young people from more affluent areas.

It was felt that young people from minority backgrounds were often very isolated. There was thought to be a lack of cultural identity awareness within schools and that any funding was provided on an ad hoc basis. There is a low uptake of community based youth provision by these groups due to the fact that many youth clubs and church based groups are religiously segregated. Some children from a minority ethnic background had experienced racist remarks at these groups and it was felt that many of the smaller clubs were led by volunteers who had a lack of skills with regards to how to deal with any racist comments made by children.

“They start not wanting to go and then you find out. Kids take it upon themselves and don’t say anything about the bullying” [Minority Ethnic Group]

As a result children from a minority ethnic background would use youth facilities attached to their schools or would attend groups run by members of their own community.

Further Education

It was thought that Further Education Colleges were accessible to both sides of the community as people would be driven by their wish to pursue a certain course or career path. Several buildings were located in the City Centre and these were thought to have neutral venues. New builds like Millfield were thought to be a good idea as they had no prior history of being “owned” by either community.

People from a minority ethnic background had specific access issues with regards to further education. They believed that there was a lack of information and clarity with regards to the variety of subjects and a need for an explanation regarding the academic grading system. People also
encountered difficulties in getting their previous qualifications recognised and were uncertain which would be the most appropriate courses to take.

“I was a teacher in China and all I could do was take a job as a cleaner. I wouldn’t tell my friends back home. My parents would be so disappointed” [Minority Ethnic Group]

“For the first four months I thought why did we come here? I said to my husband you got a work permit but I had a good job and good salary. I dare not speak English. I don’t want people to talk to me. I don’t know how to respond” [Minority Ethnic Group]

There was recognition of the BMC community development course aimed at refugees and asylum seekers who are unable to work on entering the country. This was thought to have been extremely valuable in helping people to learn the language and to occupy them whilst they were out of work. The high cost of basic English courses was thought to be a significant barrier to enabling people to access further education.

### 11.3.6 Willingness to Interact

The participants believed that they had a more open view to inter-community contact than many members of their community. There was quite a bit of discussion around the fact that people often can not just forget about the violence, deaths and atrocities which happened during the height of the conflict. There was a feeling that communities are at different stages in the process and that some do not have the confidence to engage.

“Our objective is to get the Peace Walls down, but at times they need built up as people are not ready. There are walls still in people’s minds” [Shankill]

However, it was thought that people’s attitudes are beginning to slowly change and they are more willing to become involved with members of the other community. However, at certain times of the year, for example around marching season, tensions would emerge and people would be more apprehensive about going into certain areas.

“There’s more passing through areas now. Not always on foot, they’ll maybe drive…but at least it’s a start” [North Belfast]

There were many examples given whereby residents did work alongside members from the other community. However it was thought that there needed to be a benefit to both communities or else people would not perceive a need to interact.

“There was some developer building houses on the Springfield Road but the entrance would have caused an interface. Residents from both sides sat down in the middle of the road in protest and they got it moved. Give them something to work together on. It’s a start” [Shankill]
It was thought that these initiatives did attempt to break down long established community barriers. However there were areas which were thought to be more open to this way of working than others. There was a recognition that some people will never want to mix with members of the other religion no matter how hard Government or anyone else tries to persuade them.

“In Highfield they have a Catholic running some programme or other. People have no problem with her background as they got to know her and she’s working for them. It’s easier for them to accept her background [as interface community] more difficult though for the likes of the Shankill” [Shankill]

“It’s in the paramilitaries’ interests to keep things the way they are. Sometimes it’s difficult to establish what communities really want” [North Belfast on Tiger’s Bay]

Representatives from minority ethnic communities said that people often found it hard to integrate into the community.

“There are areas that we can’t go into, so we stay with what we know and then get accused of not integrating” [Minority Ethnic Group]

“When I first came here I was very low. I felt I was away from my parents and I can’t make any friends” [Minority Ethnic Group]

11.3.7 Recommendations to Encourage Shared Services

Participants realised that there were no easy solutions to attempting to break down barriers and encourage people to access services in areas that they do not usually go into. The historical duplication of public service provision was mentioned in the majority of the focus groups and this was thought to hinder interactions between communities. Duplication was not thought to be economically sustainable and was resulting in a shortfall in areas such as health and education and one group mentioned that communities often knew how to manipulate the system in order to get what they want.

“They have to be given a push to do something as well” [South Belfast]

However, it was felt that service providers needed to be aware that the location and ease of access of a facility was crucial to whether or not people would feel comfortable using it.

“It depends on where it is. No narrow streets, down into housing estates and back streets. Out in the open, people are looking for an easy exit route if they need it” [Shankill]
“They could be as welcoming as anything inside...but if you’ve to go past a big mural and a bonfire to get there...” [North Belfast]

Yorkgate was thought to be accessible to both communities from North Belfast due to the fact that it was not too close to any housing estates and was easily accessible. Abbey Centre and Park Centre were also thought to be accessible. The Carlisle Health and Wellbeing Centre in North Belfast is also thought to be a relatively neutral venue.

Value for money service provision, based in facilities which were located in neutral, open spaces is preferred. They also needed to be accessed along safe public transport routes.

“Transport is a big problem. The Highfield ones would shop at Park Centre if they had cars but I don’t think they would get the bus to go. It might go through too many [Catholic] areas” [Greater Shankill]

One participant in the North Belfast stated that some Protestants had used the Ashton Centre, “which is perceived as being for Catholics” as they had heard that they would get a good service there. However this was thought to be an exceptional example. Participants did note that there was a lot of poverty within communities and therefore a unique and affordable service would be used by both Protestants and Catholics if it was situated in an accessible venue.

“A landmark facility...there’s no reason why people couldn’t be bussed there if they had to be” [South Belfast]

“You have to provide something that people really want. Why should anyone leave their area if there’s already one on their doorstep?” [Shankill]

It was also suggested that services could be advertised within community newsletters in order to encourage people to access areas that they would not usually go into.

It was thought that, as staff are usually people’s first point of organisational contact, they need to indicate respect for people’s beliefs and cultural background.

“It’s about how welcoming people are when you go in. It’s good if you see signs in different languages. Olympia [Leisure Centre] has that and it’s easy to navigate where you are meant to go to without asking anyone” [Minority Ethnic Group]

“They have some really good inclusive policies out there but they aren’t filtering down to practice on the ground” [Minority Ethnic Group]
One participant from the Indian community described how pleased they were when the local leisure centre agreed to close off the swimming area in order that females from the Indian community could use it. However, through a lack of understanding of the culture they had scheduled a male life guard to be on duty.

“It is difficult for facilities to accommodate our beliefs as we believe that males should be separate from females. Also we wanted to book a room at the leisure centre for our festival but it is determined by the lunar year and we couldn’t say which date it would be. That meant we had to book the room for two days or try and find one that understands” [Minority Ethnic Group]

Language barriers remain the most prominent barrier for people from a minority ethnic background’s ability to access public services. However, it was felt that the situation was improving with service providers now realising that it is not acceptable for people to use a family member to communicate on their behalf. However there was recognition that interpreter services are very expensive.

“They have to recognise that no matter how slow they speak we just don’t understand” [Minority Ethnic Group]

It was also thought that a lot of money is wasted in translating documents which will only be relevant for a short duration into different languages. It was felt that service providers should consult with groups to find out the most important information gaps and the most accessible format for presentation. Social housing was one area in which people would value guidance, particularly with regards to NIHE’s point system.

In general participants from each of the groups thought that there should be more collaboration with local people, rather than short-term communication and consultation.

11.4 Arising Issues

The community focus groups indicated that there are many factors which influence whether or not local people will use a service or facility. These included the quality or uniqueness of the service provided, ease of access, habitual use or by recommendation. However in the majority of instances the overriding factor will be whether or not they feel safe when travelling to and from the facility and their treatment when they are there.

People are very much aware of residential segregation and the resulting perceived “territorial ownership” and this affects whether or not they will enter a geographical area. Some people may feel relatively safe driving through in their cars but a smaller number of people will actually go into an area perceived as belonging to the other group by foot. Therefore overall there is a general lack of mobility within and across areas of Belfast.
This community segregation means that services and facilities in these locations are unlikely to be routinely used by the “other group”. Participants spoke about how they would bypass their nearest facilities in order to reach one in which they felt more at ease. There was recognition that many communities had an “insular mindset” and that this meant that opportunities were often passed by because of fear or an unwillingness to travel outside their own locale.

Housing in particular appears to be one area where there is a reluctance to share space and this is likely to contribute to the current housing stress in Belfast and the perpetuation of the segregated nature of many residential areas.

There was an admittance that things were slowly changing with people starting to engage on specific issues that would benefit both communities. However, it was noted that these working relationships would seldom impact on participants’ social relationships.

There was a recognition that communities did need a gentle push to move towards interaction but there was caution exercised that this had to progress at its own pace and should not be enforced by Government’s own agenda.
12 Service Provider Discussions

12.1 Introduction

This section outlines the discussions from the service provider workshop.

12.2 Participants

The two hour service provider workshop was held in the Cecil Ward Building and was attended by eight participants. A copy of the discussion guide and a list of the organisations represented can be found in Appendix 2.

Participants were presented with the findings from the postcode data analysis and the focus groups and were asked to discuss the findings. The output is presented as follows:

- effect of Division on Existing Service Provision; and
- recommendations for Improvement.

12.3 Findings

12.3.1 Effect of Division on Existing Service Provision

Service providers were well aware of the divisions which exist within and across communities. It was felt that these divisions mean that separate services are often provided in locations that are in close proximity and would not usually warrant a second facility. Internal feuding was a further difficulty which organisations had to consider when planning for public services within affected communities.

Housing provision was seen as being a particularly difficult issue to solve due to people’s refusal to move into an area which was perceived to belong to the other community. There was recognition that this led to inefficient use of the existing housing stock and often people were provided with temporary homeless provision. NIHE base their housing allocations on need and there are differential levels of housing need throughout the city, meaning that there are vacant houses that people will not live in. Mixed community relationships were thought to be vulnerable due to the segregated nature of social housing within Belfast.

“The segregated nature of the city means that land for housing doesn’t necessarily exist where you want it. There is a need to find housing for the large number of Catholics on the waiting lists but we can’t use some of the stock” [NIHE]

It was pointed out that residential segregation occurs in the private rental sector and in owner-occupier accommodation, in addition to the social housing sector. It was thought that the abolition of the 11 plus would
impact upon the demographics of Belfast as people moved house to be near what were perceived as being good schools. NIHE are currently in the process of speaking to developers with regards to possibilities for providing shared housing in Belfast. However, this can be difficult as developers are reluctant to provide any social housing as it affects their profits. It was thought that Planning Service should attempt to ensure that there are not large concentrations of single identity housing being built.

Providers recognised that fear of attack was the primary reason why people stayed within their own communities. PSNI stated that there were significant costs attached to policing interface areas and that these communities were particularly affected by societal divisions. It was noted that whilst sectarian motivated attacks were decreasing, there was a significant rise in racially motivated crime. It was thought that Catholic communities were more sophisticated in terms of integrating with people with a minority ethnic background in comparison to Protestant communities.

It was thought that some communities are particularly inward looking and it would be impossible to cost effectively meet their needs. People would often live in overcrowded conditions rather than move slightly out of their comfort zone.

“There are people on the waiting list that won’t take anything that’s not within their three preferred streets” [NIHE]

Further education was thought to be particularly affected by a reluctance to leave one’s own area. However there was a feeling that service providers already do try to find ways to encourage people to take-up services. This reluctance to move out of the local area was thought to affect people’s access to education, training and employment opportunities.

“BMC has 6 main campuses and 140 out-centres. We deliver classes to them because they won’t move out half a mile” [BMC]

“When we closed our East provision and based it in Millfield there were people who refused to go because they thought it was now in a Catholic location” [BMC]

Youth and community services were also thought to be particularly divided, with communities unwilling to share facilities and resources. However there was discussion around the fact that this mindset was not sustainable in the long-term. There was an understanding as to why people were frightened to go into areas which they had never been to before but this was matched with the need to find a more economical way to deliver public services with decreasing budgets.

Participants thought that young people were particularly vulnerable to sectarian verbal abuse and physical attack. In many instances schools would have different opening and closing times in order to reduce the amount of conflict. It was recognised that young people suffer from media
reports of tension and violence around interface areas and that often such incidents are orchestrated by older people.

12.3.2 Recommendations for Improvement

There were discussions around the new Health and Wellbeing Centre in North Belfast and it was agreed that providers should be aiming to fund a small number of good quality larger facilities which people would want to use.

“I think health has started a precedent for how to deliver services. Carlisle is based in a neutral area and should attract all members of the community” [HSCT]

“The new Grove Health and Well Being Centre will have an impact upon the other leisure centres. There will be a big soft play area and I think it will attract a greater number of people” [BCC Leisure Services]

PSNI mentioned that their issue was not about service duplication due to the fact that the crime figures dictate how much policing an area will receive. However, the police are involved in various activities in order that they could access communities in order to provide a service to the local people. A lot of time and effort is put in to try and negotiate with community gatekeepers.

There are also important regeneration initiatives which service providers could link into in order to train people for potential employment opportunities (e.g. the development of the Titanic Quarter). As a result it was thought that attempts should be made to make further education career progression courses more affordable to people on benefits or low incomes. Cost was seen as being a barrier to accessing further education amongst those who could benefit from it the most.

Participants thought that it was important that operational staff should be trained more effectively with regard to the ethos of A Shared Future principles. For example the council leisure centres do not allow young people to wear potentially offensive sports tops on their summer schemes. Community centres are also trying to provide a neutral venue in order to encourage mixed use. They are putting a shared space sign in all their facilities and a “welcome wall” which will greet people in different languages. They plan to have a “comment box” in which people can report any problems they have encountered on their visit.

There was a discussion about whether or not organisations should aim to create a space where people come to interact rather than just somewhere that people go. It was recognised that cross-community initiatives are valuable and that it is important to bring people together but that they rarely have an impact after the project ends.
12.4 **Arising Issues**

The segregated nature of the city means that there are significant challenges for service providers both in terms of actual service delivery and with regards to promoting good relations between communities.

Post Good Friday Agreement, Northern Ireland remains a deeply divided society. Strong sectarian attitudes and deeply ingrained patterns of segregation persist, yet there is a growing demand for integrated goods, facilities and services, and increased evidence of more people breaking away from traditional conceptions of identity. The Government has now adopted the policy goal of creating a shared and integrated society, and have recognized that the costs and consequences of trying to manage two divided communities are unacceptable.

However, this process has the potential to become an invaluable example of post-conflict transformation and to contribute to the wider debate of how to address sectarian or other differences within deeply divided societies.
13 Comparator Case Studies

13.1 Introduction

This section outlines several case studies within the United Kingdom and across Europe regarding cities which have faced challenges with regard to delivering services due to societal divisions. The section is structured around the comparator cities, providing an understanding of the different experiences and outcomes in order to identify key lessons for consideration in Belfast.

13.2 Background

Belfast has historically experienced significant economic under-achievement in comparison with other cities in the UK and across Europe as a whole. Parkinson (2004) argues that a key factor which inhibits Belfast’s performance is fragmented and inefficient governance and decision making. Good governance is considered to be a critical feature of competitiveness. However Belfast’s political challenges have meant that this is a challenge for the city. There remains an intrinsic lack of trust between political interests in the city which makes it difficult to make progress and form partnerships. Additionally, there are clear territorial divides throughout the city, and there is little sense that the city exists as a single, whole community. As a result, there is often a belief that no part of the city can be given facilities or resources unless another part receives similar treatment. It is important to address these challenges in order for Belfast to fulfil its potential in terms of physical, economic and social development.

13.3 Bradford Case Study

Background

The Bradford District in West Yorkshire is one of the best known multi-cultural centres in Britain and represents a unique challenge to race relations. The District was once a place of economic wealth and prosperity, but with the demise of local industries and the decline in manufacturing, the District has seen a decrease in its fortunes. It has struggled to redefine itself as a modern, competitive area and has lost its community spirit.

The Bradford District has witnessed growing divisions amongst its population with regard to race, ethnic, religious and social class issues. This has created mistrust and fear within communities and across communities. In 2001, this escalated further with Bradford and neighbouring Burnley and Oldham witnessing high profile riots between youths and the police. Despite a number of initiatives there remain underlying tensions in the area, in part due to antagonistic behaviour between young males and in some cases between different groups of Asian youths. In many parts of Bradford, this has resulted in a level of segregation between communities. For example, it is recognised by the area’s council that it is rare for White and Asian residents to live in close proximity. Parallels can be drawn between the segregation between Bradford’s ethnic groups and Belfast’s segregation between the two main religious traditions.
Additionally, as with Belfast, competition for resources is said to contribute to the community tensions and the recent arrival of Eastern Europeans and asylum seekers has led to conflict between established and new communities over access to local services.

**Council Initiatives**

Although the Council aimed to work towards building and understanding diversity between communities in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham, there was no overarching strategy to mainstream community cohesion through the provision of services. In the aftermath of the disorder that took place in 2001 a Community Cohesion Review Team was developed to report on the disorder and identify the key issues of concern in areas which had experienced disorder. As a result the team were able to make recommendations for action to improve community cohesion, which cut across a wide range of local and national agencies. The main recommendations from the team included the development of a vision of what it means to be a citizen of a modern multi-racial Britain from which to provide a more coherent approach to education, housing, regeneration, employment and other programmes. Cross-cultural contact between different communities was also promoted in order to foster understanding and respect and develop a programme of ‘myth busting.’

‘Myth-busting’ is a priority for the Bradford Council’s communications team. Actions include:

- explaining to residents the differing needs of Bradford’s communities and neighbourhoods;
- the allocation of resources they receive from the Council; and
- setting out what the Council is doing to improve the district as a whole.

This approach is helping to break down barriers between different areas and communities in Bradford and to develop confidence in the district.

Additionally, all three councils in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham now have clear strategies for community cohesion which involve the mainstreaming of community cohesion practices into service delivery in areas such as education, housing and leisure facilities.

Burnley Council has made a clear attempt to improve integration by encouraging interaction between schools. In addition, it is going to demolish all eight secondary schools in Burnley and three in nearby Pendle and replace them with eight colleges by 2010. These modern and fully equipped facilities would also be available for the whole community as places to learn and interact. The buildings will double as social hubs with cafes and inter-faith centres.

The £200m plan is being financed through the government's Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme with the new schools aiming to achieve a social and racial mix which reflects the local area. Burnley has also developed the Burnley Sports Alliance, made up of many diverse clubs, organisations and individuals who are interested in developing sports provision in Burnley. The Alliance...
identifies areas where there is little provision and addresses this issue in partnership.

**Impact**

The new mechanisms put in place to support better engagement in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham appear to be helping to change attitudes and improve communication amongst residents, right across the Council areas. Residents’ perceptions of the Council are improving as relationships and opportunities to communicate with the Council develop. As a result of improving relationships new opportunities to work together have emerged. For example, Neighbourhood Forums have led to increased opportunities for council services to engage with the public and undertake consultation. They have also enabled residents to obtain information from the Council, express their views, and receive feedback. These opportunities also lead to tangible action. For example, in a local district of Bradford young people attended a forum to express their views about the absence of a community centre in their local area. As a result, a community worker is now working with a group of young people from all sections of the community to raise funding for a new community centre and activities.

**Key issues for consideration:**

- a Community Cohesion Team helped develop and drive an overarching strategy for providing services by opening up communication lines between council and communities affected by the trouble;

- the promotion of cross-cultural contact between different communities to develop a programme of ‘myth busting’ has helped to break down barriers between communities;

- due to a coherent strategy to mainstream integration through service provision integration is embedded through services on a day to day basis; and

- communities need to be at the forefront of decision making. Making communication links developed between council and community vital in taking forward any community cohesion initiative.

**13.4 Berlin Case Study**

**Background**

Between 1961 and 1989, the Berlin Wall was one of the most striking features of Berlin as a structure which divided the city, encasing the French, British and American (or West) sectors of Berlin and separating from the East. The Wall dissected eight train lines, four underground train lines and 193 major and minor roads, in total measuring 97 miles. This included 27 miles through the city centre (of which 23 miles cut through residential areas), 19 miles through woodlands and forests and 15 miles through rivers and lakes. The fall of the Wall in 1989 was the first step toward German reunification, which was formally concluded on October 3, 1990. Even now, some years after reunification, there are still cultural differences between East and West Germans, sometimes described as "Mauer im
Kopf" ("The wall in the head"). Although the divide no longer follows the line of the Berlin Wall there is still social division nourished by preconceptions and prejudices. Additionally, Berlin experiences a level of segregation between immigrant and non-immigrant residents, with little interaction between various segregated areas. Again, parallels can be drawn between this and the entrenched segregation experienced in Belfast.

Local authorities had focused upon providing services to disadvantaged areas, however there was little recognition of the interaction between various areas with regards to service delivery. Additionally, service provision was mainly based on a ‘top down’ model where residents had little input in the process. Conversely, issues surrounding integration and social cohesion where mostly based on a ‘bottom up’ model, where interaction was largely driven from a community level. Again, a coherent integration strategy was not considered to be explicitly part of the wider service provision strategy.

**Council Initiatives**

Local Government identified the need for a more localised perspective on service provision which takes greater account of ethnic diversity and is in the process of developing an integration strategy to encourage inter-community communication. It wishes to achieve more input from the community when developing service provision in order to open dialogue and to foster cooperation between communities. It is hoped that creating networks between local initiatives, organisations and businesses and promoting their involvement in neighbourhood activities will empower residents and integrate marginalised individuals and groups into community organisations. Participation activities will be targeted at those with low levels of interaction with other groups in the community.

There is also recognition of the need for cross-sectional strategies that focus on all groups, rather than solely disadvantaged groups. It is hoped that this will improve cooperation between various sections of the society and will reduce any sense of competition for resources. At a practical level, integration will be facilitated through a number of projects. Specifically, the government aims to introduce innovative initiatives within ethnically segregated schools in order to develop integration amongst young people and the wider community and also to improve language skills amongst immigrants in order to facilitate communication with the indigenous population.

**Impact**

As this strategy is relatively new, the full impacts of the approach are yet to become apparent. However the approach taken in Berlin has had a number of initial positive impacts. The community based approach to integration has fostered an increased level of participation amongst those groups who traditionally have had little, or no involvement in integrative activities. Additionally, community level input into the service provision process has also created increased support for the wider regeneration strategy.
Key Issues for Consideration:

- a similar cross-sectional approach, which involves all community groups in the service provision process could lead to tangible benefits in terms of increased interaction and cooperation across the population;

- a targeted effort to involve those who traditionally have low levels of interaction in the participation process could be beneficial attempting to address those sections of communities who are most entrenched in the segregation; and

- high level strategic support for community cohesion which is targeted at service provision and delivery could drive integration at ground level.

13.5 Leicester Case Study

Background

Leicester is a multi-cultural city with a high proportion of ethnic minorities. In workshops conducted by Leicester City Council, residents highlighted that there was an overall lack of integration between groups. This led to an underlying ‘fear of the other’ and unwillingness to use facilities which were predominately associated with other community groups. Although Leicester was not affected by the race riots which were experienced in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham in 2001, the Council recognised that there was an element of segregation within the city which it needed to address. Specifically, there is recognition that many community groups lead ‘separate lives’ and that use of services are usually centred upon those within local neighbourhoods.

Leicester has had a strong reputation for promoting positive community relations through people in the community coming together to address key problems. However, there was recognition that a clear policy focus on community cohesion was required in order to effectively deliver integrated services. Originally, there was a dissipation of large numbers of small individual initiatives.

Council Initiatives

Leicester has now developed a clear strategy with regard to community cohesion within service provision. With regard to education, it aims to form a number of specialist schools with facilities that can be used by a range of schools with pupils from various backgrounds in order to facilitate interaction. There is also an effort to recruit teachers from minority ethnic backgrounds. In terms of the health sector, Leicester Council hopes to monitor the take up of services by various groups within the community and to promote and facilitate access to those services across existing and emerging communities. Additionally, it has plans to attract more ethnic minority health care workers in order to ensure that minority groups feel comfortable in using health services within the Leicester area. Housing services will also be approached with an increased focus on integration. Housing developments now aim to attract residents from all communities in order to limit segregation within the city. For example, the Monkston and Northfield Estate was an area known in the late 1990s for abandonment and crime. Residents worked closely with the police and the Council to develop a number of practical
and inexpensive interventions to improve the estate. Additionally, there were plans to use the estate to house asylum seekers and refugees and residents became pivotal in welcoming new residents.

**Impact**

As the strategy is relatively new, many of the anticipated affects of the programmes have yet to be realised. However, several of the short term projects have proved to be extremely successful. In the Monkston and Northfield Estate, residents now have a sense of belonging and work together to meet the needs of everyone living in the area, regardless of their community background. Diversity is also regularly celebrated through social events. As a result of a coherent community cohesion strategy, there is therefore a focused drive throughout the Council’s strategies to achieve successful integration.

**Key issues for consideration**

- an explicit strategy seems to be a key element of the success of Leicester in addressing segregation and integration issues in service delivery;

- a focus on community participation is considered to be important in order to foster community support. Involving community groups in issues which will address service provision could deliver practical suggestions for improvement; and

- it is important to monitor the impact of service delivery on integration issues and to foster a continued, high level of community engagement in order to maintain momentum.

**13.6 Other Relevant Examples**

**Chicago**

The Great Cities Institute (GCI) at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) conducts and supports interdisciplinary, high-impact, research and partnerships that address key urban issues on a local and global scale. The GCI’s Neighbourhood Initiative consists of a diverse network of partnerships between the UIC and local organisations within close proximity to University sponsored community based facilities.

The Neighbourhood Initiative places particular emphasis on the engagement of students, faculty and staff in long-term, meaningful relationships with communities. Through a wide range of activities and across multiple disciplines, the Initiative enlivens the mission of the University by nurturing mutually beneficial partnerships in research, education and service. It aims to bring together the expertise, resources and wisdom from the community with that of the university staff in order to improve the quality of life for all beneficiaries. These relationships enhance both community and university leadership and organisational capacity. As neighbours, both entities address matters of mutual interest thereby insuring the effective utilisation of the collective resources of both parties.
These partnerships increase the institutional capacity of UIC to contribute to neighbourhood revitalisation through teaching, research, and service provision which focuses on measurable improvements in educational outcomes, health status, economic conditions, physical environment and safety among other important issues.

**Sunderland**

In England, Local Authorities are currently operating in a context of rapid change and reorientation, defined to a very large degree by Central Government. The agenda for public service reform is gathering pace and has achieved numerous successes, particularly in cases whereby service improvement has been driven by clear targets. The impact on the ground however has been less than successful due to the fact that much of Government policy and initiative remains disconnected from one another. The cultural and constitutional changes that are necessary to ensure that public, private and voluntary sectors work together effectively at the local level have not been fully articulated.

In Sunderland a recent proposal aims to impact upon this disconnect by developing and delivering an ambitious programme of integrated public services. This is focused on addressing inequalities and improving the quality of life of local people, offering them a choice on how, where and when they access services. The programme builds upon a multi-agency approach and examples of good practice throughout local government in looking to develop models which allow contributions from the public, private and voluntary sectors. There are also clear links to achieving "Sustainable Communities" and in helping to redefine service provision in rural communities as well as in urban areas. In addition, there is also the opportunity to extend the model to incorporate new approaches to community engagement, democratic renewal and scrutiny.

The local authority has identified a number of opportunities of integration that could be explored. At the lowest level there are gains to be made from co-location going beyond one stop shops. The next stage is the co-ordination of front and back office personnel and processes followed by the integration of specialist services. Finally, at the highest level, a new breed of services could be developed which would not be attributable to any one existing agency.

Although in its infancy a reference group has been established with other local authorities to explore models which meet these challenges and to assess how best autonomy can be used to support the integration of public services at the local level. Through this project, new models and frameworks need to be explored with Central Government, barriers to progress identified and flexibilities defined for both local authorities and their partners.

As the programme is relatively new, many of the impacts have yet to be realised. However, the local authority has identified a number of anticipated outcomes coming from the public service integration initiative. For example, the service user would receive a greater choice and easier access to services and louder voice for the community over service provision. Additionally, local government would benefit from economies of scale and more effective and well coordinated service planning and delivery.
13.7 Conclusion

Although the situation in Belfast and indeed Northern Ireland is somewhat unique, it is clear that lessons can be learned from other cities who have experienced a degree of societal division and whose councils have developed strategies for social cohesion. Common responses appear to be the promotion and provision of opportunity for cross-communal interaction as well as communication ‘top to bottom’ between council and community in order to gain support at a grassroots level.

The unifying factor in providing services in cities with societal divisions is the role of the local authority. In Northern Ireland, the introduction of RPA will mean that local government will have a more prominent role with regards to public service delivery and promoting good relations within and between communities.

Any municipality wishing to build an intercultural future for their city needs to have a clear commitment from local politicians. There needs to be associated support for cross-communal civic networks and their aims should be translated into practical projects (such as the integration of schools in Burnley or a programme of ‘myth-busting’ between communities in order to breakdown barriers like in Bradford).
14 Conclusions and Recommendations

14.1 Introduction

This section aims to draw together the findings from the data on patterns of service access and the findings from the community focus groups and the service provider workshops in order to understand what this means for public service provision in Belfast. It also sets out recommendations for improvement and describes potential next steps.

14.2 Overarching Findings

The evidence from this research project suggests that service usage is highly dependent upon perceptions of the community “ownership” of the location in which the facility is situated. This pattern demonstrates a fundamental challenge for public authorities who have an obligation to ensure equality of access within and across communities. All public authorities have a statutory duty under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group in carrying out their functions. The Shared Future policy sets out challenging aims for building a shared society, with a key priority being to reclaim shared space. The Draft Programme for Government 2007 further commits to inclusion and tolerance of all cultures in Northern Ireland society.

Following analysis of the primary and secondary data we have drawn the following overarching conclusions:

- **Segregated Communities**: There is widespread spatial segregation between Protestant and Catholic communities in Northern Ireland;

- **Parallel Segregation**: There is a growing potential for further segregation between Protestant, Catholic and minority ethnic communities;

- **Community Division and Political Developments**: The Good Friday Agreement and the current relatively stable political situation has not had a significant impact upon ground level community perceptions and behaviour;

- **Perceived “Ownership”**: There is a perception amongst the people of Belfast that certain geographical areas belong to either the Protestant or the Catholic community. People from minority ethnic backgrounds are also aware of the propensity towards Protestant and Catholic areas, although not to the same extent;

- **Relationship between “Ownership” and Housing**: Perceptions of geographical ownership appear to be directly linked to levels of residential housing concentration;
• **Community Competition:** Due to the fact that community segregation exists, Protestant and Catholic communities in close proximity often perceive that they are in direct competition for services and resources;

• **Territorial Reinforcement:** The perception of competition for services means that areas are often physically demarcated in order to reinforce their ownership;

• **Lack of Mobility:** This concept of “ownership” means that there is a lack of mobility within and across areas of Belfast as people are reluctant to enter other groups’ territory. This evidence has been supported by the current research findings, both in terms of the service data and the community focus groups;

• **“Ownership” of Services:** The research indicates that not only are geographical areas perceived as being “owned” by one community or the other, additionally the facilities located within areas are therefore also perceived as belonging to that community. These facilities could be physical buildings or open spaces such as parks;

• **Bypassing:** Due to people’s perceptions that areas are territorialised according to community background there is a wide-scale tendency to avoid areas that do not match one’s own community affiliation. As a result many services within those areas are also bypassed;

• **Community Contact:** There appears to be little opportunity for many Protestant and Catholic communities to routinely come together on a daily basis;

• **Some Changing Attitudes:** It appears that more people are open to the concept of shared space and as a result may be willing to share essential services with members of the other group. There is a recognition that duplication of services is an inefficient and unsustainable method of delivery;

• **Trends in Reported Sectarian Crime:** This apparent “mellowing” of attitudes appears to be supported by the decrease in reported sectarian motivated hate incidents and crimes reported to PSNI in many areas of Belfast;

• **Some Reluctance to Change:** There are sections of the community who will be reluctant to share facilities with the other group; and

• **Trends in Reported Racist Crime:** The PSNI reported racially motivated hate crime figures indicate an increase in crimes against people from minority ethnic communities, especially within South Belfast. This trend negatively impacts upon feelings of safety and isolation within this section of the community.
14.3 Potential Barriers to Sharing Services

The following were identified by community representatives as being the main barriers to sharing amongst communities:

- **Physical Location of Services**: The location of services within an area densely populated by members of the “other” group is the most frequent reason given for failing to access a service; and

- **Perceptions of Personal Safety**: Whether or not people feel safe accessing a service is directly related to whether or not they use the facility.

Peoples’ perception of personal safety is affected by:

- **Perceptions of the Area**: Geographical areas can attract a reputation of being unsafe due to actual or perceived community attitudes and/or unrest. Places which are perceived negatively are unlikely to attract “outsiders”, thus perpetuating segregation. Segregation in these instances may exist across communities and within communities. There were examples whereby Catholics living outside of the area would not go to other Catholic areas as they were felt to be unsafe. Similarly Protestant communities are also aware of internal feuds which mean that they feel under threat in affected areas;

- **Territorial Marking**: Physical manifestations of geographical ownership such as sectarian murals, graffiti, flags and kerb painting was perceived as being a tangible sign that an area “belonged” to one section of the community. The result was that people felt intimidated and unsafe in these areas and either refused to enter them or felt uncomfortable when in them;

- **Hate Crime**: Individuals have a spatial awareness of areas in which they are more likely to come under verbal or physical attack. This awareness may be a result of actual experience or hearsay. Attacks do not need to be recent, nor due to personal experience and they link in with an area’s historical reputation; and

- **Habit**: Participants stated that individuals are brought up not to go into certain areas. Therefore large sections of Belfast are relatively unknown to them. This lack of familiarity likely reinforces peoples’ feelings of unease. These feelings are reinforced if they happen to encounter sectarian murals or graffiti and/or actual verbal or physical abuse.

The following socio-economic barriers were also identified as impeding access to services and therefore contributed to low levels of service sharing in some areas:

- **Relationship between Mobility and Deprivation**: There is a distinct relationship between deprived communities and a lack of mobility. There is a heavy reliance on public transport or local taxi services within these communities and therefore there are restrictions on the areas to which they can freely travel; and
Relationship between Contact and Deprivation: There is also a high correlation between segregation and deprivation. It is widely recognised that people living within less affluent areas experience deprivation with regards to the areas of social, economic, employment and education opportunities. Many people within the most segregated areas work, shop and socialise within close proximity to where they live. They often do not have the qualifications which would enable them to attend more integrated higher education and training facilities or to avail of professional employment outside of their community of origin.

Minority ethnic communities also experience specific barriers to accessing public services which are targeted at communities. These were identified as:

- Low Levels of Cultural Awareness: The problems of accessing services, that result from differences in cultural norms and forms of behaviour, are often among the most difficult to examine and address, since they often involve the complex areas of sensitivity and perception. It was clear that people from particular groups within the society believe that they were on occasions affected by discrimination, prejudice, insensitivity or culturally inappropriate provision;

- Lack of Information on Service Entitlement: There appears to be a lack of understanding of people’s entitlement to services and a general lack of understanding about how to register for or access services such as housing, health and further and higher education. Many people are dependent on members of their own community or specialised voluntary sector support agencies to assist them. Where there are language difficulties the barriers are enhanced;

- Majority Community Perceptions: Some people believed that minority ethnic communities are treated differently when seeking to access services, and that it was consequently more difficult for them to access the services suited to their particular needs. This was related to the way in which they believed that the majority population perceived them (e.g. taking local jobs and housing); and

- Lack of Opportunities to Integrate: People found it difficult to integrate with local people either as a result of cultural or language differences, a general lack of acceptance or the fact that there are few opportunities to integrate with the majority population on a social level.

14.4 Characteristics of Segregated Services

The postcode analyses indicate specific access patterns according to where people live in relation to the facilities which they use. With the exception of social housing provision, there is no clear way of stating which services are more segregated than others as evidence of both integrated and segregated service use was found within service lines.
However, findings suggest that segregated service up-take is more likely to occur when there is evidence of:

- **high residential segregation in the vicinity**: Facilities are more likely to provide services to either the Protestant or Catholic community when they are situated within an area which is densely populated by either Protestants or Catholics. It is not surprising that people who live nearest the facility will attend, however, given the segregated nature of housing in Belfast this has implications upon the demographics of service users;

- **perceived or actual threat to personal safety**: If an area has a reputation as being unsafe for one section of the community people are less unlikely to cross community boundaries to attend;

- **localised service provision**: Segregated service use is more likely to occur when there are outward signs of territorial ownership in the surrounding vicinity or the area has a reputation of instability and violence. This is most likely to occur in youth and community services. These are usually localised facilities which are positioned in the centre of the community in an attempt to meet levels of deprivation;

- **transport issues**: Facilities are more likely to be used by one section of the community if there are problems in physically accessing the area. Many people who use public services are dependant upon public transport in order to access facilities. Segregated facilities usually do not have good commuter links and would require prolonged access through areas which may be perceived as being unsafe;

- **routine service provision**: The services provided by segregated facilities are more likely to be general services with no unique selling points or added value; and

- **similar service nearby**: If the same service is provided within close proximity and is based in an area that is perceived to be more favourable, people will attend that facility instead.

### 14.5 Implications for Service Providers

The following highlights the main difficulties which public sector authorities encounter when attempting to deliver services to communities across Belfast in a manner which is consistent with Government objectives for equality and tolerance for all:

- **Competition for Resources**: The historical reluctance to share territory or services has meant that communities in close proximity are competing for a limited amount of resources (e.g. housing);

- **Duplication of Services**: There has been a tendency for public service providers to duplicate services in order to meet the needs of both communities (e.g. leisure, community, youth services);
Inefficient Service Delivery: The competition for resources, duplication of services and separate delivery mechanisms leads to economically inefficient service provision which is delivered at a cost to the public purse;

Pressure on Services: Some services may come under pressure due to a result of changing needs within communities. These may be a result of population shifts due to an increasing Catholic or minority ethnic community where there was no previous historical residency. Social housing is one service area which is particularly affected;

Promoting Good Relations: Due to statutory obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act service providers are obligated to promote good relations. This places a considerable responsibility upon service providers against a background where there has been a historical reluctance to share space;

Balancing Targeted Services with Shared Services: However, some services are necessarily community based and, as long as housing remains segregated, it is likely that people living in close proximity will attend a particular facility. This will cause an imbalance in community membership; and

Integration or Interaction: There needs to be consideration of whether or not organisations are creating spaces where people come to interact rather than just somewhere that people from different backgrounds avail of a service.

14.6 Recommendations

Recommendations are placed within the complementary framework of BCC’s Good Relations vision for:

‘a stable, tolerant, fair and pluralist society, where individuality is respected and diversity is celebrated, in an inclusive manner’.

Recommendations are made to address the issues raised under the following headings:

- Government Commitment to A Shared Future/Human Rights Principles;
- Service Planning;
- Service Provision;
- Operational Management;
- Partnership Working; and
- Monitoring and Evaluation.
14.6.1 Government Commitment to Good Relations Principles

The BCC Good Relations Strategy Action Plan provides a vehicle through which public authorities can drive forward good relations. There needs to be an ongoing commitment made by a number of agencies to provide:

- a positive image of Northern Ireland in order to attract visitors, foreign direct investment and economic and social stability which can be enjoyed by all members of society;
- a mechanism which will develop trust and understanding between political interests in the city, in order to progress BCC’s vision for Belfast and its population;
- adequate and sustained funding for activities which promote good relations;
- visibility to local good relations activity and practice in order that it may be perceived as a norm; and
- support to enable communities to overcome perceived and physical barriers in order to foster relationships.

14.6.2 Service Planning

Effective strategic planning will ensure that important decisions occur within a good practice framework. We suggest that organisations should consider the following when planning new public services:

- promoting good relations should be at the forefront of service planning and development;
- when planning public services careful consideration should be given to the location of new buildings in terms of ease of access. This applies to the facility’s connectivity to public transport but also to the building’s proximity to high density segregated housing;
- where possible providers should develop a strategy to address existing and developing segregation by increasing the number of spaces that are accessible to all. For example, this could involve providing services to be used by both communities in neutral spaces. Where there is no option but to locate a new facility within either a Protestant or a Catholic area, neutralisation could mean locating it in a visually open location in order to foster a sense of space and locating it in close proximity to arterial routes;
- services should be based upon identified need rather than to satisfy communities’ competition for “like-for-like” provision;
- there should be early inter-agency co-operation in order to provide a variety of community services under one roof in order to appeal to
different sections of the community and to maximise cost-effectiveness; and

- a framework of good relations indices could support planners to build in good relations considerations at an early stage.

### 14.6.3 Service Provision

Value for money and good quality service provision is a primary motivation for using a facility or service. We suggest that:

- facilities should strive to provide a unique and quality service which will set them apart from other service deliverers in an attempt to attract other people into the facility;

- providers should work towards developing existing services in order to attract a variety of users (e.g. significantly reduced rates for families, the unemployed and young people);

- facilities should actively market their services in order to attract people who would not usually enter the area (e.g. in community newspapers, within complementary facilities); and

- providers should aim to gain a reputation for providing a quality service across community boundaries.

### 14.6.4 Operational Management

Recommendations are provided with regard to public service providers’ internal management processes. We suggest that where there are implementation gaps the following recommendations should be considered:

- the Shared Future Action Plans indicate the ways in which Central Government will mainstream Good Relations within their activities, however, Government/Agency cooperative working arrangements need to be established in order to join up policy and operational service delivery (e.g. NIHE and the Planning Service);

- care should be taken in order to ensure that A Shared Future objectives are filtered down to operational level. Operational staff in particular should be trained according to A Shared Future code of practice, with particular attention to issues of cultural awareness;

- facilities should aim to provide clear signage that meets the needs of minority ethnic users. BCC recommends that fixed signage at and in Council properties is either pictorial, tactile or in English. It also suggests that a ‘Welcome’ sign may be provided, at a reception area or other appropriate place, in a number of languages, including Irish, Ulster-Scots and other languages that reflect the diversity and multi-cultural composition of the local community likely to be using the service. Our focus group with minority ethnic
representatives suggested that pictorial signage is particularly useful and eliminates the need to update signs for additional languages as communities change;

- facilities should have a clear policy with regards to the identification, reporting and dealing with sectarian or racist incidents both by staff or the public; and

- staff at all levels should be trained in the organisational policy with regards to sectarian or racist incidents and understand what steps (including mediation) to take if such activities occur.

### 14.6.5 Partnership Working

Facilities within and across service lines should not work in isolation as there is scope for complementary initiatives and working practices. As such we suggest that efforts are made to reinforce the importance of each component to the overall success of improving equality of access with regards to service provision. This could be achieved by:

- encouraging internal communication within specific service lines, to include sharing good practice, and potential service development. For example Council leisure facilities could support and encourage members to use specialist equipment at other council sports facilities which are in close proximity or could provide free training advice/coaching to schools;

- working together across service lines to promote complementary services;

- encouraging communities to be more aware of the benefits of overcoming community divisions and working towards providing a better quality of life for local people;

- challenging communities to overcome their perceptions about others and providing opportunities to mix;

- fostering relationships with local communities and linking in with initiatives such as Re-Imaging Communities in order to improve the physical image of the surrounding area and promote good relations. There should be an increase towards collaborative working rather than consultation;

- working with minority ethnic communities in order to identify their specific information requirements with regards to service access. Where necessary and in cases where there is an identified information gap, providers should seek to translate relevant information into minority ethnic languages in an agreed format which has the support of communities;
organisations should work closely with PSNI and community safety partnerships in order to combat crime and anti-social behaviour within communities;

- organisations should work with the media (local, regional and national as appropriate) in order to effectively manage perceptions of accessibility of certain geographical areas and the services located there; and

- providing community outreach where possible in areas which have a low take-up in order to raise awareness of specialist facilities and services.

14.6.6 Monitoring and Evaluation

Despite the need under Section 75 for public bodies to monitor and evaluate their service provision, our analysis to date suggests that many public authorities have not yet developed co-ordinated and systematic approaches to collecting this kind of data on the people who use their services. This will ultimately make it more difficult for the public bodies involved to understand and change their service uptake patterns to better reflect a Shared Future ethos.

There should be a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation strategy with regards to service access, in order to evidence anti-discriminatory practice and equality monitoring requirements within organisations. The current data is based upon post-code information and is not explicitly related to community background, merely illustrative. Therefore we recommend that:

- facilities should routinely collect and share information on the people who access specific services and facilities, according to the categories under Section 75. Ideally public service providers should develop a joint evidence base that would facilitate setting and monitoring common objectives for addressing segregation in service provision and uptake;

- current data collection processes should be revised and a database devised which will meet future monitoring and evaluation requirements;

- training should be provided to those who collect and input the data in order to ensure a high level of accuracy;

- information on service up-take should be analysed on a routine basis in order to identify under- and over-representation of specific sections of the community;

- allegations of discriminatory comments or actions should be collected and analysed; and
that future service access analysis should utilise postcode data in conjunction with self reported community background.

14.7 Next Steps

There has been acknowledgement that many people are more open to cross-community contact than was previously the case. However, it must be realised that certain people are reluctant to cross perceptual or physical boundaries.

Therefore the ultimate impact of A Shared Future policy and respective activities aimed at promoting Good Relations is likely to be gradual rather than immediate. It is recognised that the overall impact of Good Relations will be hard to measure, due to the fact that we cannot determine what would have happened had service providers activities not been introduced.

Ultimately, “distance travelled” will depend upon the definition of shared space which the service provider adopts. A current Deloitte study (on behalf of Ilex) is testing and developing a six-point definition of “shared space”. This definition suggests that shared space can be considered along a continuum rather than merely discrete (i.e. from basic co-existence to a more rounded relational and experiential definition). This stepped definition is considered necessary in order to recognise the starting point for many communities and the gradual process of change that will be required to realise Shared Future objectives.

We suggest that the next steps are to:

- give consideration to the recommendations resulting from the current research;
- review the current data collection processes within individual organisations; and
- give consideration of the definition of “shared space” which the organisation wishes to achieve, from buildings and services which are accessible to all irrespective of community background, to services that actively encourage a shared experience and reflection on issues of good relations. The aim should be to create a shared city where every citizen can participate in the life of the city.
xth November 2007

Dear [xxxxx]

RE: Focus Groups on Accessing Services in a Divided City

Belfast City Council (The Council) has developed a Conflict Transformation Project as part of its ongoing good relations work and civic leadership efforts. As part of this project, The Council have asked Deloitte MCS Ltd to carry out discussions to find out what barriers exist for people wishing to access public services (such as leisure and community centres, youth services, housing, further education and health services) and what can be done to increase the sharing of services within and across communities.

The focus group with organisations representing people who live in xxx Belfast will be held on xx at xx, at xx. It is anticipated that the discussions will last for approximately 90 minutes and tea/coffee and sandwiches will be provided during this time.

As spaces are limited, we would like to invite a maximum of two representatives from your organisation to take part.

Deloitte will contact you within the next week to confirm your attendance and discuss any access/dietary requirements. Should you have any queries or comments, in advance of this please contact xxxx.

This is an important opportunity to help influence and develop the way that services are provided in the future. We would really value your contribution and look forward to your participation.

Yours sincerely,

xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
PARTICIPANT ORGANISATIONS

East Belfast
Cregagh Women’s Groups
Oasis Centre
Short Strand Community Forum
Ballymac Residents Association
Ballymacarrett Arts & Cultural Society

North Belfast
The 174 Trust
Vine Centre
Sailortown Regeneration Groups
Fortwilliam Action Committee
Greater New Lodge Community Partnership
The Concorde Group
Star Neighbourhood Centre

West Belfast
Suffolk and Lenadoon Interface Group
Upper Andersonstown Community Forum
Clonard Neighbourhood Development Trust
Ballymurphy Women’s Centre
Blackie Community Groups Association

Greater Shankill
Highfield Residents Association

South Belfast
Greater Village Regeneration Trust
Donegall Pass Community Forum
South Belfast Partnership Board

Minority Ethnic Communities

NICEM
Mandarin Speakers Association
Belfast Islamic Society
Discussion Guide for Community Focus Groups

- Introductions and background
- Map exercise & discussion
- What effect does segregation have upon local communities?
- Does the community access and use services differently because of divisions within the city?
- What are the key reasons behind access and use patterns?
- [BREAK]
- Discuss findings from initial data analysis
- Do you think people want to share space/at the minute?
- What is it that puts people off?
- What can be done by providers to encourage more integrated service take up?
- What would be the first steps for service providers to take?
APPENDIX 2
PARTICIPANT ORGANISATIONS

Community Cohesion Unit, Northern Ireland Housing Executive

Belfast Metropolitan College

Leisure Services, Belfast City Council

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Community Services, Belfast City Council

Youth Services, Belfast Education & Library Board

Operations, PSNI
## Discussion Topics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Service Provision</th>
<th>Future Service Provision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reaction to the research findings - is this what you would expect?</td>
<td>How are service providers responding to the challenges of A Shared Future and promoting Good Relations?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what degree does division influence service planning/provision?</td>
<td>What types of initiatives are there?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What other factors are taken into account and how do these connect to division?</td>
<td>Is good relations being mainstreamed into core service provision decisions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the key barriers to sharing?</td>
<td>What barriers do public service providers face in promoting integrated services?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is this different for different types of services?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Are some services more affected than others? Why?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is this different across the City?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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APPENDIX 3