

Belfast

Promoting equality
and good relations.

Equality and Good Relations Strategy

A shared, peaceful,
welcoming and open city.



What's it all about?

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

Our commitment

We've carried out a number of public surveys and good relations has been consistently identified as being a key issue for local residents. We are committed to making Belfast a place that is safe and welcoming to everyone. We need to continue to work hard to transform a city known for division, into one that is shared by all.

Diversity and changing community dynamics

In Northern Ireland, the traditional divisions between Catholics and Protestants persist. Many of our citizens continue to live parallel lives, with some communities still separated by physical barriers. It is no coincidence that the poorest neighbourhoods in Belfast continue to be those located in and around interfaces and flashpoint areas. Building relationships across communities is central to the good relations agenda, with work continuing to create a better future for people within these neighbourhoods.

Over the last number of years, the population of Belfast has changed substantially. We have welcomed new people from other countries who have come to make Belfast their home. This diversity has enriched our culture and contributed to our prosperity and economic prospects.

Our aims

Our work falls under the following headings:

- Securing shared city space
- Transforming contested space
- Developing shared cultural space
- Building shared organisational space

This will be delivered under our six strategic themes:

- Better leadership – strong, fair, together
- Better opportunities for success across the city
- Better care for Belfast's environment – clean, green city now and for the future
- Better support for people and communities
- Better services – listening and delivering
- Better value for money – a can-do, accountable, efficient council

How does this happen?

Our Good Relations Unit is responsible for the delivery of a number of council programmes.

- **Equality and diversity**
Continued, ongoing engagement with all Section 75 communities within Belfast and equality proofing of all our policies to ensure that everyone has equal access to council services.
- **Good relations grant aid**
Designed to support local groups and organisations with funding for events, programmes and activities that promote and address good relations issues within their locality. The maximum grant available is £10,000. Smaller grants are also available annually for St Patrick's Day.
- **Peace III**
We currently manage and deliver a number of Good Relations programmes through the Peace III Programme Measure 1.1: "Building Positive Relations at the local level". These projects are made possible through the allocation of £6.3m of European Union funding to the Council for targeted actions across the city.
- **Bonfire management programme**
Working in partnership with a number of communities across the city in the positive celebration of cultural heritage around bonfire periods. This is delivered in partnership with statutory bodies and government agencies and funded through Peace III.
- **Promoting the inclusion and integration of migrant and minority ethnic communities**
We lead a multi-agency migrant forum (Peace III funded) to ensure that everyone in Belfast has equal and appropriate access to the services in the city. We also deliver training on migration awareness and ending hate in our communities.
- **Growing a shared city**
This Peace III project seeks to coordinate greater service delivery and engagement within Belfast specifically in terms of creating a shared city.
- **Interfaces**
Working with communities and other partners across the city to support interventions around interface areas.





Who do we work with?

Many organisations and individuals across the city are involved in promoting equality and good relations work. Our role is to lead this work, in partnership with community and voluntary organisations, public and private sector bodies, businesses and trade unions and most of all, the people of Belfast. We aim to support this work by assisting in providing the resources and tools to ensure that everyone with a stake in the city can contribute to our programmes.

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