

Dr Katy Radford, MBE herewith represents the experiences and views of the Belfast Jewish Community a NI registered charity. The Jewish Community is Northern Ireland's oldest non-indigenous ethnic minority community dating back to 1652. It provides religious, social and welfare services to Jews in and visiting Northern Ireland from within the parameters of an Orthodox community observant of Halacha. Furthermore, from our synagogue and community centre and through external organisations, members also provide broader assistance and educational cultural and civic outreach to non-Jews with organised tours, talks, exhibitions, arts events and facilitated visits locally and overseas on matters related to Jewish culture and heritage.

Dr Radford represents the community as a member and the first peer elected chair of the Executive Office-convened sectoral Race Equality sub-group working with officials to develop the Race Equality Strategy, she was the sole woman appointed to the Commission on Flags, Identity, Culture and Tradition and brings oversight of the sectoral challenges and deficits across a range of statutory and community service provisions.

Hate Crime Legislation

We are a community that has had to adapt to imposed change, anti-Semitism, prejudice and inequality. Consequently many of the challenges currently facing minority ethnic and migrant people in Northern Ireland are matters that we have historically faced. We have been proactive in raising awareness of these issues and supporting the local Executive to address them including our response to Judge Marrinan's Review of Hate Crime Legislation. We refer to his Report at points 4.40-4-53 – where he discusses antisemitism in Northern Ireland, and specifically his advice at 4.50 (when discussing the sale of Nazi memorabilia), that that while *“such trading may not fall squarely within the scope of a review of hate crime law per se and, as such, I do not feel that it lies within the remit of this review to make a formal recommendation for the abolition of such a practice in any revised hate crime legislation. However, I respectfully suggest that it is a matter which should be properly discussed and debated in society and at the Assembly, to discover whether people here are content to allow this trade to continue or follow the example of Germany and other European countries.”*¹ This is a matter which we urge NIAC to take forward and to take up with colleagues in the Assembly encouraging them to become the first devolved administration in the UK to Northern Ireland Assembly to address this issue.

¹ Marrinan, D. (2020) Hate Crime Legislation In Northern Ireland Review, Vol 1 pp. 107-110 Department of Justice

Refugees, Asylum Seekers, Health and Well Being

As a voluntary organisation with limited resources, our response does not address applicants' experiences of the EU settlement scheme and economic migration – there are many others working professionally in this sector for whom this is core work. Rather, our experience of applications to live in diaspora has more in common with those for whom asylum and family reunification are components of seeking refuge and refugee status or resettlement as a result of being victims and survivors of trauma. There are particular ramifications for those who have been traumatised elsewhere which in turn will impact the development and delivery of the Regional Trauma Network, other aspects of the NI Health sector and *de facto* wider society in Northern Ireland. These are a cohort of people which we urge NIAC to give as much consideration to as they do to those impacted by Brexit.

Brexit and access to goods and services

And, in terms of Brexit and the Northern Ireland protocol, it is noteworthy that the Community have been unable to access a range of kosher goods and services from GB as a result, which are required to keep an Orthodox community vibrant. Like others in Northern Ireland, (and as a result of temporary and *ad hoc* arrangements put in place during the Passover holiday by the Department for Communities), we looked south to access kosher foodstuffs previously sourced from GB. This indicates a clear direct and negative economic implication for lost east-west trade. It is worth noting that the Kosher food we now acquire north/south from the Republic originates in Europe and furthermore that its cost is prohibitive to be a proportionate and sustainable source for our small Northern community.

Anti-Semitism and Memorialisation

There is much still to be reflected on by the NIAC and the Assembly and any forthcoming Office of Culture and Identity as outlined in the New Decade, New Approach deal in terms of how commemorative and memorial practices are addressed in Northern Ireland. Across Europe targeted attacks and vandalism along with the desecration of Jewish artefacts are commonplace with rising records of anti-Semitic acts and increased reporting of Jewish related hate incidents and crimes in Belfast. We also refer to the targeted destruction of Jewish graves in 2016 and more recently in 2021² reported in the British and Irish Press. It is also worth recognizing that the removal or destruction of memorials related to Belfast's connection to the state of Israel, including commemorative Ulster Historical Society

² <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/aug/28/jewish-graves-desecrated-belfast-cemetery> sourced 6.2.21 and <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/crime-and-law/north-s-jewish-community-dismayed-at-desecration-of-graves-1.4540842> sourced 4.5.21

plaque to the Herzog family and the Northumberland Street mural to Lt Col John Henry Patterson. This clearly extends to how those in minority communities are able to respectfully mourn their deceased.

Cultural Cohesion and Victims and Survivors

Finally, the architecturally significant synagogue at Somerton Road is a key site of interest for some tourists to the city. And our experiences and the legacy of loss in our community means we are well placed to support and educate Northern Ireland's victims and survivors with lessons in resilience building and reconciliation across the sectarian and interfaith divide. To that end we encourage further consideration of the role the community plays in its outreach work to approximately 7,000 people per year with programmes both in Northern Ireland and beyond that draw on social inclusion, diversity, cultural exchange and learning.

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