Regional Improvement & Efficiency Partnerships (RIEPs)
Community Cohesion and Prevent Pilot

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A cross-campus collaboration between CRISS and SEPD

This builds on the University’s ongoing links with local government partners

Links include research and training around the Community Cohesion, Prevent, Equality and Diversity and citizenship/local democracy policy agendas
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The Policy Context

- **Community Cohesion** emerged following the violent disturbances of 2001 and has become an overarching policy priority around community relations and approaches to ethnic diversity within the wider government Race Equality strategy.

- **Prevent** is a key component of CONTEST, the government’s counter-terrorism strategy. This has encompassed work funded by both DCLG and the Home Office, with the approach currently under review by the new Coalition government.
Methodology

• Field research took place between November 2009 and March 2010
• 20 individual interviews with policy makers, officers and front line staff across the two areas
• Research by community-based researchers – 33 interviews and 7 focus groups. Community researchers were trained and coordinated by University research team, and worked in identified localities
• Local strategy documents analysed (13 strategies in total)
Kirklees: the context

• 7th largest population of Metropolitan Districts nationally
• Population is changing and becoming more ethnically diverse
• Communities are not evenly distributed and the area has significant ethnic segregation
• In 2007, Cantle found BME disadvantage but also very isolated and disadvantaged white working class communities
• NI 1 indicator on getting on well together has decreased since 2006, especially in North Kirklees
• Very significant differences on NI 1 between North and South Kirklees
Bradford: the context

- 4th largest population of Metropolitan Districts nationally
- Also has significant ethnic segregation by national standards
- Has the youngest, fastest growing population outside of London, posing a real challenge to grow the number of jobs available
- Most of Bradford is in the highest category of deprivation nationally
- NI 1 scores are similar to Kirklees and have similar geographical variations – scores are significantly lower in Bradford South and Keighley
Key Overall Themes: Issues of Definition

- Community Cohesion is not widely understood as a term – ‘community relations’ is much more meaningful
- Cohesion should be about more than ‘race’ – geography/territory, social background, and other forms of difference
- Lack of clarity over the relationship between cohesion and Prevent
- Greater clarification needed on how cohesion policies relate to those around equality and diversity, and what this says about the ‘identities’ being worked with
- Professionals want more opportunity to debate and explore these issues – need for more training and ‘space’. This helped the development of equalities strategies previously
Targeting Certain Communities?

- Perception that too often Community Cohesion activity has focussed on ethnic minority communities, and not often enough on white communities, where it needs to be ‘sold’ more
- This fuels feelings of ‘unfairness’ in some white communities
- Similar perceptions of Prevent, with not enough focus on ‘extremism’ in other, non-Muslim communities
- Some community members perceive that the Police Service do not exercise their power against all communities in the same manner
Co-ordination and Resourcing

- Clear and committed political leadership evident locally on these issues but...
- Clear dilemmas over how to co-ordinate and direct Cohesion work – should work be ‘embedded’ across all functions of bodies, or should there be a discrete and specific point of co-ordination? How does this relate to work around equalities?
- Related dilemmas over multi-agency strategy bodies, and how this relates to action within individual organisations
- These co-ordination issues have been addressed around Prevent by the top-down demand for multi-agency structures of a particular type
- Specific single community agencies are a vital part of successful cohesion work – they organise and prepare people to take part in such cross-community activity, so being a source both of ‘safety’ and of co-ordination

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Engagement and Communication

- Community members want more opportunities for cross-community contact
- Engagement strategies by public bodies should work more through face to face and cross-community meetings rather than via paper/internet-based work
- Agencies do not publicise, ‘sell’ and explain enough the successful cohesion/cross-community work, the good news stories, that does take place – this both educates and sets a positive and optimistic tone for future work
Measurement

- There are genuine dilemmas over what constitutes meaningful measures of cohesion and positive community relations.
- Measuring ‘success’ is even more problematic around Prevent.
- Respondents identified significant differences between existing data and events and professional perceptions on the ground, both positive and negative.
- Need to work on developing more complex and nuanced ways of measuring ‘success’ and progress.
- The fact that ‘perceptions’ will always be important here means that national or international events can disrupt local work and plans.
Key Findings: Kirklees

- There was early recognition of the need for cohesion and it is a clear local priority – work is still ongoing and developing
- CC work modelled via 3 levels – intensive interventions, targeted interventions and universal provision
- Obligation to respond to Prevent and clear structures have developed but it is not seen as the priority
- Issues clearly identified in high-level strategy documents and are partially integrated in to middle level plans
- 2008 Community Cohesion Strategy involved comprehensive and helpful public consultation process
Key Findings: Bradford

- Cohesion is an important priority locally and has been since events of the mid-1990s
- Community Cohesion has been mainstreamed across the authority’s structures and functions
- Prevent is a controversial and very sensitive agenda locally
- CC (and Prevent partially) are embedded in high-level strategies, with varying level of profile in mid-level strategy documents
- Clear implementation structures are present around Prevent
Key Findings: Implementation

- To communities, good service provision is part of community relations work, as is a visible police presence.
- The development of (internal) community-specific and (external) cross-community infrastructures is equally important for progress.
- Leadership on these issues is important and in both areas strong and visible leadership on the issues was apparent.
- A range of targeted initiatives have taken place in both areas and many people are aware of them and support them.
- There was strong support within communities for more cohesion activity that goes further and faster in bringing people together – many believed that cohesion activity should be more ambitious and more courageous.

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The Future

- Report will be available as PDF and as hard copy
- The University of Huddersfield, in conjunction with LGYH and several local authorities nationally has applied to the ESRC for funding to support a larger-scale second stage of national significance
- Hoping to report on these conclusion to regional LGYH Community Cohesion network meeting
- Keen to work further with local agencies on the issues raised by this research