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Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (RIEP) Community Cohesion and Prevent Pilot. A report prepared for: Local Government Yorkshire & Humber

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

Inspiring tomorrow’s professionals
The University Research Team

- Dr. Surya Monro, Umar Razaq, Dr. Paul Thomas and Dr. Andrew Mycock
- 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
Content

• Background to the Research
• The Policy Context
• Methodology
• Key Findings: Overall Themes
• Key Findings: Kirklees
• Key Findings: Bradford
• Key Findings: Implementation
• The Future
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

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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
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 into 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.
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