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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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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**

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Content

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The Policy Context

- **<u>Community Cohesion</u> 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.**

- **<u>Prevent</u> 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.**

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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 co-ordinated by University research team, and worked in identified localities**
- **Local strategy documents analysed (13 strategies in total)**

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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**

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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**

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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 though 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**

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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**

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Key Findings: Bradford

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- **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

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- **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**

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