

# Integrated Communities Strategy



## The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain

4 June 2018

### 1. Summary

- 1.1. The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain is an historic peace church originating in England. We believe that there is that of the Divine in all human beings.
- 1.2. We wish to highlight two specific points from our comments below: firstly, that integrated communities require investment, support and good guidance; and secondly, that there are many examples of good practice which we can identify.

### 2. About Quakers in Britain

- 2.1. Quakers in Britain are formally known as the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain. We are a church, a charity, and undertake campaigning activities on the basis our beliefs.
- 2.2. Our comments below are informed by our belief that everyone is equal in the eyes of God, and by the experience of Quakers across Britain.

### Specific questions

#### 3. Introduction: Building Integrated Communities

*We define integrated communities as communities where people - whatever their background - live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities. Do you agree with our definition?*

- 3.1. Quakers believe that all people should be treated equally, with equality of opportunity to achieve their potential and equal access to resources such as education, housing and employment opportunities. We feel that the definition of integrated communities reflects that ideal and is a good one.
- 3.2. We welcome the recognition that government policies should be reviewed to support this strategy. We believe that a priority for such a review should be the management of immigration and asylum applications. The threat of deportation facing individuals who have married British citizens or who came to this country as children and were not required at that time to obtain particular paperwork needs urgently to be addressed.
- 3.3. We note our own history of hospitality with Kindertransport, and the enormous benefits refugees have brought to Britain. Quakers are also benefiting from our

own programme, Sanctuary Everywhere, which is helping us as a religious society to welcome refugees and learn from their experiences.

- 3.4. It will be important that the strategy is supported by appropriate resources, particularly at local authority level. Without such support, its laudable objectives are unlikely to be met.

*We believe that the varied nature and scale of integration challenges means that tailored local plans and interventions are needed to tackle the issues specific to particular places. Do you agree?*

- 3.5. Migrants who have come to the UK for work tend to be located in specific parts of the country. Any area where there is a concentration of one ethnicity or nationality limits opportunities and incentives for integration. Local plans and accompanying funding to support integration are important, particularly in relation to housing.
- 3.6. This strategy needs to be seen as part of an overarching national policy approach. The introduction to this Green Paper rightly asserts that integration is a two way street. The UK is now an ethnically diverse country, and policies which recognise the need for integration need to apply to all areas where migrants have settled, whether people are first generation or tenth. We welcome the recognition in the strategy of the importance of measures that affect people of all backgrounds, such as improving outcomes for young people, and regulating rogue landlords.
- 3.7. Fear of and hostility towards immigrants in general is higher in areas with low or no immigration. Local authorities and other public bodies should monitor both the diversity of their work force and take up of services to create an environment where diversity is both expected and welcomed, and where there is equality of opportunity for all, including the indigenous population. This should be the case in areas of mono-culture as well as multi-cultural populations.
- 3.8. While this strategy is particularly concerned with groups which appear isolated from mainstream British society, it is also an opportunity to deal with racism towards second and third generation British citizens of ethnic heritage, and white East European migrants.

*Do you have any examples of successful approaches to encourage integration that you wish to highlight, particularly approaches which have been subject to evaluation?*

- 3.9. Our Sanctuary Everywhere Quaker Meetings are revealing a large number of stories about ways forward in this regard. Whilst we do not run or evaluate specific projects, we have an increasing store of anecdotal evidence which we would be happy to discuss further. We also highlight a number of examples of positive practice in our responses to other questions.

## 4. Chapter 1: Strengthening Leadership

*The Green Paper proposes that we need to build the capacity of our leaders to promote and achieve integration outcomes. Do you agree?*

- 4.1. The strategy needs to clarify who is meant by 'leaders'. Quakers recognise that leadership can emerge in many ways and is often temporary. Leaders can be local authority councillors but can also be teachers, ministers of religion, Police and Crime Commissioners, and other individuals in positions of responsibility. Any proposals to build the capacity of leaders in this broader sense, and to increase knowledge of successful interventions in the public sector and elsewhere, are to be welcomed.
- 4.2. In relation to councillors, it should be recognised that they are volunteers, often carrying out their duties in addition to employment or other activities. Induction and refresher training for councillors in all local authorities in England should include the new requirement for social integration and fairness as an expectation in the provision of services. There should furthermore be clear routes to challenge councillors who are not acting in accordance with these requirements.
- 4.3. This strategy is also an opportunity to raise awareness of practical actions councils can take in support of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Fairness Commissions, pioneered by Islington Council between 2010 and 2013 under the leadership of Quaker Catherine West (now MP for Hornsey and Wood Green) and taken up by at least 10 other authorities across England, are one such example. They work to tackle barriers to employment – highlighted as a desired outcome in this strategy – by paying a living wage to council employees, and reducing pay inequality across the council workforce.
- 4.4. A requirement on local authorities as well as central government to review policies for their impact on integration would be helpful. However, meaningful engagement at grassroots level with community groups is challenging for some local authorities, who may have an unrealistic expectation of what voluntary groups can offer.
- 4.5. Turnover or reductions in local authority staff mean community links can be lost. While there should be commitment to engagement at senior level, sharing responsibility to establish and maintain community links between a number of staff at more junior levels within the organisation would be more effective than one senior officer at the centre.
- 4.6. Voluntary groups may well be able to suggest new ideas to support leaders. As an example, Quakers are developing their own Young Adult Leadership programme (see <https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/learn/yalp/>). However, such initiatives need to be supported and managed as part of an overall plan for the whole community. Reductions to local authority budgets are likely to make this more challenging.

## **5. Chapter 2: Supporting New Migrants and Resident Communities**

*The Green Paper proposes measures to support recent migrants so that they have the information they need to integrate into society and understand British values and their rights and responsibilities. Do you agree with this approach?*

- 5.1. Yes. The proposed package of information would be helpful. However, our experience is that constant use of the phrase 'British Values' in Government communications is unhelpful – not because of what is meant by the term, but because of the implied devaluing of the values of whichever country the migrant has come from. More welcoming terminology introducing information about life in this country, rights and responsibilities would create a more positive atmosphere.

*The Controlling Migration Fund was constructed to deal with the short-term migration pressures and associated costs that local authorities can encounter. Do you think it adequately achieves this objective?*

- 5.2. Much of this strategy rightly stresses the positive aspects of migration. The fund provides useful extra resources for areas experiencing recent high migration. It is therefore misleading and unhelpful to describe this fund as 'Controlling Migration'. Calling it the 'Managing Migration' Fund would give a more accurate as well as positive description of its purpose. Otherwise we have no comment.

## **6. Chapter 3: Education and Young People**

*The Green Paper proposes measures to ensure that all children and young people are prepared for life in modern Britain and have the opportunity for meaningful social mixing with those from different backgrounds. Do you agree with this approach?*

- 6.1. We agree in general with the proposals made in this chapter. The cited examples of promoting integration by widening school catchment areas and through twinning schemes are valuable.
- 6.2. It is however unfortunate that local authority youth services have been cut back due to funding limitations. Restoring and redeveloping them to strengthen voluntary youth provision during teenage years would benefit integration (as well as supporting crime prevention and the mental health of young people).
- 6.3. Whilst the National Citizen Service (NCS) can make a valuable contribution, it is not available across the whole country and engages only a few young people in each area where it operates. Furthermore, although useful, its programme lasts only 4 weeks.
- 6.4. Students need to be prepared for adult life in the UK through good careers advice and work experience. School linking and regular school trips outside the

local area should be a requirement in order to support greater contact across cultures and a wider view of British society.

- 6.5. The inclusion of peace education would also be of benefit. The work of Peacemakers, the West Midlands Quaker Peace Education Project, has shown the benefits of greater understanding and increased ability to resolve difficulties between children of different backgrounds, and makes a positive contribution towards the SMSC curriculum. We would also highlight the work of charity 3FF, whose activities are designed to help young people build religious literacy, empathy, and communication skills.
- 6.6. Another example of good practice is the cross-curricular resource for teachers and student teachers, 'Choices then and now', developed by Bradford Peace Museum for use in Bradford schools and teacher education programmes. This explores issues in the context of the First World War and, more recently, the global "war on terror". The underlying aim is to help young people develop their capacity for critical thinking and personal resilience, so equipping them to resist stereotypical thinking and radicalisation. This resource has subsequently been adapted to form the basis of work the museum does with young people using the Home Office's Prevent funding.
- 6.7. A major gap in this Integration Strategy is the consideration of Religious Education in schools. Improved religious literacy is beneficial for young people of all communities in Britain, and would greatly assist with integrating people of all cultures and faiths into British society. A key way of ensuring all children and young people learn about each other is a requirement for good RE in all state funded schools, whether academies or directly run. As well as teaching the world view of different cultures, good RE helps with religious literacy, which needs to be a bedrock of tolerance and understanding.
- 6.8. RE has unfortunately not been given the recognition it requires to be provided at a consistently high standard across all schools. The Commission on Religious Education has published an Interim Report and will issue a final report on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2018. The recommendations in the Interim Report offer essential pointers which would support the government's integration strategy overall. It can be found here: <http://www.commissiononre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Commission-on-Religious-Education-Interim-Report-2017.pdf>

*The Green Paper sets out proposals to support parents with their choice of out-of-school education settings. Do you agree with this approach?*

- 6.9. We note and support the role suggested for local authorities to provide more guidance for parents in choosing out-of-school education settings, and how to raise concerns. Bringing out-of-school education within the inspection and support service and encouraging best practice could be helpful, as long as clear guidance is provided on what out-of-school education actually means. In our experience, a shared focus on safeguarding is a useful way to approach this issue.

## **7. Chapter 4: Boosting English Language**

*The Green Paper proposes a number of measures to improve the offer for people to learn English. Do you agree with this approach?*

7.1. Better coordination and increased funding for English language teaching is welcome.

*Do you have any other suggestions on how we can improve the offer for people to learn English?*

7.2. No

## **8. Chapter 5: Places and Community**

*The Green Paper proposes measures to ensure that people, particularly those living in residentially segregated communities, have opportunities to come together with people from different backgrounds and play a part in civic life. Do you agree with this approach?*

8.1. Chapter 5 includes suggestions on the approach to both housing and community assets to reduce segregation. We support the statement above but have comments and reservations about some aspects of the strategy.

8.2. We support research into ways of improving the quality of rented accommodation and continued funding for teams to deal with rogue landlords, whatever their ethnicity, who provide poor quality housing. A stronger focus on compliance, including through a requirement and funding for enforcement officers, would show 'British values' in action.

8.3. An unintended consequence of the recent relaxation of planning requirements for small extensions has been the temptation for some rogue landlords to offer (even more) unsuitable properties for rent. Such landlords flourish because of the limited supply of genuinely affordable housing, and housing policy should address this as a priority. Longer tenancies in both the private and social sectors would increase stability.

8.4. Increasing the proportion of social housing required for all housing developments – whether for rent or for sale – would help increase diversity in residential areas. Community land trusts, though mostly small scale, are a good model, and should be promoted. Stronger penalties for leaving properties empty beyond a certain time would increase supply.

8.5. We agree that gating communities is unhelpful and should be discouraged when planning consent is given. Involving local groups in the planning process, whilst sounding laudable, risks only the loudest voices being heard, making provision of suitable accommodation for newer arrivals more difficult. The recommendation of a refresh of the National Planning Policy Framework is a good one. We support the planned Community Organisers Expansion

Programme and recommend that this type of community support be recognised as a long term commitment and funded as such.

- 8.6. We see public assets such as parks, libraries and community centres as core to integration policy and a key means of enabling people from different cultures and ages to come together. We note with dismay the number of libraries being closed due to funding cuts. We note too that this strategy mentions community centres on several occasions as a resource for bringing people together. We consider that it is essential that such assets are funded as a public utility.
- 8.7. Involving individuals and community groups in the management of local assets through either an advisory or management committee can encourage ownership and promote usage. We have, however, grave reservations about expecting voluntary groups to take on the main responsibility for these assets in all areas as a matter of course. There are major financial and legal obligations inherent in taking on such a role, and it may be unrealistic to expect volunteers to shoulder these responsibilities without appropriate support. Where there is a lack of local capacity, assets should be managed by the relevant local authority and funded appropriately as a central resource for integration.
- 8.8. It is also essential to consider appropriate safeguards where a local group is asked to manage a community resource. Any sense that the asset is being “appropriated” by one part of the community may provoke local tensions and limit usage, as well as creating uncertainty over its long term future.
- 8.9. The strategy mentions pubs as a community resource. While pubs may serve as community hubs, particularly in rural areas, changes in social habits and patronage may mean that establishments serving alcohol are no longer financially viable. It is also important to remember that they will not be appropriate places for all members of the community to gather, particularly those who do not consume alcohol because of their faith.
- 8.10. There is no mention in the strategy of the role of museums. These often have good outreach programmes which can reflect the experiences of all parts of the local population and engage wider groups. For example, Bradford Peace Museum ran a project in 2017 which extended the museum's reach into south Asian heritage communities through practical workshops, conversations, creating exhibitions (for instance, on Indian partition), and events. The exhibitions also exposed people of other communities to the rich cultural diversity within Bradford and the – often challenging – circumstances in which different communities settled there.

## **9. Chapter 6: Increasing Economic Opportunity**

*The Green Paper proposes measures to provide tailored support to people, especially those who may not currently be active in the labour market, to build their confidence and skills to take up employment. Do you agree with this approach?*

- 9.1. We applaud the recognition of the barriers to employment for many ethnic minority workers and the need for awareness training and advice for both employers and job applicants. We hope this will be addressed in areas of East European migration as much as anywhere else. The results of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's consideration of the recommendations of the McGregor-Smith review on ethnic progression in the workplace should support this work.
- 9.2. We deplore the unrealistic expectation that applicants for Universal Credit will always have resources to live on until their benefit has been paid. We do not see reliance on food banks as acceptable.
- 9.3. The approach in the trial integration areas is positive, and we note the suggestion that Jobcentre Plus may seek to bring support and advice out into the community by a presence in the local community centre. This underlines the need for reliable provision of such centres, as discussed above.
- 9.4. We agree that the early years of childhood are a formative time and that for some low income families, support is necessary. We are disappointed that the emphasis appears to be on getting very young children into school as a replacement for the support previously available in Children's Centres and through Sure Start schemes, many of which have had their funding withdrawn. We see support of this kind for parenting as highly valuable.

## **10. Chapter 7: Rights and Freedoms**

*The Green Paper proposes measures to encourage integration and resist divisive views or actions. Do you agree with this approach?*

*The Green Paper proposes measures to address practices which can impact on the rights of women. Do you agree with this approach?*

- 10.1. We agree in general with the government's approach in Chapter 7. We make the following comments:
- 10.2. We welcome the recognition that being Muslim is not incompatible with British values. We also support the emphasis on women having equal rights and access to the opportunities of living in modern Britain. We support in general the review of the law to encourage all marriages to have a legal as well as a religious status. However, there needs to be further consultation with Muslim communities on how this could be encouraged to avoid any unintended social consequences. We would encourage wider use of the licensing of marriage



celebrants rather than registering buildings, which could help to prevent confusion and secrecy over “marriages” which have no legal status.

- 10.3. We welcome the actions the government has taken to support the police, Tell MAMA and other groups to record, respond to and reduce hate crime of all kinds.
- 10.4. We further welcome the recognition of the role of Inter Faith Groups in promoting understanding between people of different faiths, and the continued funding for the Inter Faith Network for the UK as the national leader in this field. We see the Near Neighbours programme as a valuable and accessible source of funding and support for local projects which can aid integration. We recommend that its geographic remit be widened to areas with limited diversity, where projects which bring people together would be helpful.

## **11. Chapter 8: Measuring Success**

*The Green Paper proposes core integration measures for national and local government to focus on. Do you agree these are the right measures?*

- 11.1. For any measures, data should be collected over a time frame that is commensurate with policy objectives. In the case of integration, it will be important to ensure that evaluation continues into the medium and long term to fully assess impact. Sufficient data should also be collected to support analysis of the way in which different factors have combined to produce specific outcomes.
- 11.2. A key outcome for this strategy is a change in public attitudes and individual behaviour. Monitoring this will need direct surveys with sufficiently large samples to give meaningful results. Larger surveys conducted every two years may be more effective than smaller ones conducted annually. The former Citizenship Survey provides a good example of how this might be achieved.
- 11.3. Population changes and attitudes are dynamic and this integration strategy should be seen as long term, both in terms of policy changes and in monitoring.

## **12. Contact**

Claire Cooper, Parliamentary Engagement Officer  
Postal address: Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ  
Email: [claireco@quaker.org.uk](mailto:claireco@quaker.org.uk)  
Telephone: 020 7663 1107