

THE EQUALITY COALITION IS SEEKING TO FOCUS ITS WORK ON FOUR STRATEGIC AREAS OVER THE NEXT YEAR:

1. 'NO GOING BACK TO NORMAL' – PANDEMIC AND POWER SHARING

We will develop a body of interventions to ensure inequalities are not exacerbated by the Covid-19 crisis and that the costs of the rebuilding from the pandemic are not borne by key workers and the most economically marginalised.

Specific actions will include:

- Continuing to host events on the impact of Covid-19;
- Seeking a proper ECHR-compliant investigation into failings of the initial pandemic response, particularly in relation to care homes;
- Taking interventions to ensure post-pandemic recovery measures have been equality proofed and that any post-pandemic 'transformation' of the health service does not lead to privatisation.

2. CAMPAIGNING TO ENSURE THE REALISATION OF 'RIGHTS BASED' POWER-SHARING

Concurrent with our interventions on the pandemic, we will press for the enactment of unimplemented rights-based commitments of the peace settlement to underpin sustainable power-sharing and governance in NI. Originally, we intended the bulk of this work to be taken forward during 2020 to coincide with the outworking of the New Decade, New Approach (NDNA) agreement to restore Stormont (which was agreed in January of that year). However, much of this work remains outstanding and will now be actioned during 2021 instead.

Specific actions will include:

- Producing case studies detailing how a Bill of Rights could have potentially constrained actions by ministers that had a detrimental effect on equality and the advancement of progressive policies.
- Actively monitoring the implementation of the rights-based commitments within the NDNA.
- Producing a report that provides a narrative for enforcement reform in relation to NI's statutory equality duty.

3. EU EXIT - PROTECTING WORKERS AND COMMUNITIES

Following the end of the transition period, the UK has now made its official departure from the EU. Public discourse has tended to focus on how Brexit has impacted trade and the 'freedom of movement' of goods, but there are significant impacts on workers and the wider community. The Equality Coalition will campaign on a range of issues that have emerged from Brexit, including the new entitlement boundaries between British, Irish,

EU26, and other groups of citizens here; the impact on migrant workers; and potential risks to worker rights.

Specific actions will include:

- Monitoring the implementation of the UK commitment that there will be ‘no diminution’ of certain GFA rights as a result of Brexit;
- Conducting research on the impact of migrant workers in the post Brexit context and make taking interventions in relation to policy decisions;
- Challenging the hardening of the land border through proposed electronic pre-clearance provisions, which will affect EU and non-EU non-visa nationals and will have serious consequences for communities on the border where tens of thousands of local journeys take place each day.

4. COUNTERING HATE EXPRESSION AND INCITEMENT TO HATRED

A Judge-led Independent Review of Hate Crime (and hate speech) legislation in Northern Ireland [concluded](#) in November 2020. This review recommended a number of key changes that will, if legislated for, extend protected grounds, introduce duties on the public sector to tackle hate expression in public space, and replace NI’s ineffective enhanced sentences provisions with an aggravated offences model. The Equality Coalition will seek to ensure the implementation of the recommendations of the review and will also support other measures aimed at reducing the levels of hate crime and hate speech in NI.

Specific actions will include:

- Actively challenging, as a Coalition, resistance to the introduction of effective hate crime protections in NI, including attempts to dilute the review recommendations;
- Seeking implementation of measures to tackle sectarianism envisaged in our 2020 [Sectarianism: The Key Facts](#) report.
- Finalising a report on tackling hate expression in public space and engaging with organisations, political parties, and public bodies in relation to its key findings.

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