

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 NORTHERN IRELAND

Furthering our work from last year, we will take interventions to ensure inequalities are not exacerbated by the Covid-19 recovery measures and that the costs of the rebuilding from the pandemic are not borne by key workers and the most economically marginalised. We will also continue to engage with relevant bodies to ensure that the post-pandemic 'transformation' of the health service does not lead to increased privatisation and the centralisation of decision-making power.

Specific interventions will include:

- Pressing for a NI specific inquiry into the pandemic, as well as engaging, as a Coalition, with the UK wide inquiry.
- Collaborating with the Women's Policy Group on interventions arising from their Feminist Recovery Plan (FRP) for NI.
- Continuing to host seminars/webinars on specific Covid-19 impacts.

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

Concurrent with our interventions on the pandemic, we will continue to press for the enactment of unimplemented rights-based commitments of the peace settlement to underpin sustainable power-sharing and governance in NI. It is already apparent that 2022 will provide fresh challenges and a renewed focus for this work in the context of recent political turmoil and the upcoming May 2022 Assembly elections.

Specific actions will include:

- Pressing for rights-based safeguards over power-sharing contained within the Good Friday Agreement (GFA) to be finally implemented as was originally intended. We will work in particular with the UK opposition parties to ensure this agenda is prominent.
- Lobbying for the implementation of outstanding commitments within the New Decade, New Approach (NDNA) agreement and for the publication of a functioning Programme for Government (PfG) if and when a new NI Executive is formed.
- Publishing a report into the work of the Equality Duty Enforcement Project (EDEP) and continuing to push for the effective enforcement of equality laws
- Capacity building and supporting member organisations in how to use the equality duty as a tool to challenge detrimental policy decisions.
- Contributing to an academic case study by the London School of Economics (LSE) analysing the work and impact of the Equality Coalition

3. EU EXIT - PROTECTING WORKERS AND COMMUNITIES

The NI Protocol continues to be a high-profile political issue in Northern Ireland, with concerns across the Coalition that a move to trigger Article 16 of the Protocol (or remove it altogether) will pose a significant risk of a rollback of rights protections. Into 2022, we will

continue to be active on this issue, including raising concerns related to the impact on workers' rights.

Specific actions will include:

- Engaging with the equality and human rights commissions on the deployment of their new enforcement powers (which have been granted to ensure the 'non-diminution' of certain GFA rights following Brexit). This includes the issue of electoral franchise which will be legislated for in 2022.
- Participating in the launch and dissemination of joint research exploring the post-Brexit Migrant experience, which is being led by CAJ's immigration project in cooperation with a range of Coalition members.
- Taking forward interventions to 'roll back' the Home Office 'Hostile Environment' following the publication of a [legal research paper](#) (commissioned by CAJ) on how Stormont mitigate against these harmful policies.
- Countering racial profiling in public service access and the risks of a 'Windrush' scenario for people trapped in migration limbo in the post-Brexit context.

4. COUNTERING HATE EXPRESSION AND INCITEMENT TO HATRED:

In Spring 2022, there will be a final consultation by the Department of Justice (DoJ) on the implementation of the recent [independent review](#) of hate crime legislation in NI. We will extensively engage in this process particularly to ensure protections are safeguarded for LGBT communities and that an effective model is put in place to extend protected grounds to tackle misogynistic incitement to hatred and transphobia.

Specific actions will include:

- Actively challenging, as a Coalition, resistance to the hate crimes provisions to prevent their dilution. This will be particularly important if a new NI Executive is established following the May 22 election.
- Publishing and disseminating a new research report into tackling hate expression (mostly racist, sectarian, and homophobic) in public spaces.
- Making interventions to seek to tackle sectarianism both in the workplace and in its more institutional form in policy making.
- Pressing for the implementation of the goals of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement in NI.

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