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Advice and Compliance Division
Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
Outline

• Role of the Equality Commission
• Fair Employment legislation in Northern Ireland
• Positive/affirmative action in religion
• Impact on employment composition
• Lessons from Northern Ireland experience
Background to the Fair Employment Legislation

- Inequalities in Employment
- Inequalities in Housing
- Voting rights
- Education
- The Civil unrest
- Political pressure to bring about change
The Fair Employment (NI) Act 1976

- The Fair Employment Agency
- Complaints of discrimination
- Investigations
- Declaration of Principle and Intent
- SACHR Review 1987
1989 Act: Pro Active Practice of Equality on Grounds of Religious Belief and Political Opinion

- Registration
- Statutory monitoring
- Regular reviews of employment policies practices and procedures
- Fair participation
- Affirmative Action
- Goals and timetables
Monitoring

• Annual Return By standard occupational classification, gender and community background (religion)
• No legal obligation on individuals to complete questionnaire
• Very high levels of compliance
Monitoring

Who should be monitored?

- Employees (part-time and full-time)
- Applicants
- Appointees
- Apprentices
- Public Authorities & 250 + employers
  - promotees
  - leavers
Article 55 Reviews

- Review of Monitoring Data
- Review of employment practices
- Assessment of “fair participation”
- Role of Employer/Equality Commission
Positive/Affirmative Action

Mechanism for change. Action designed to secure fair participation in employment by members of the Protestant or Roman Catholic community by means including

- Adopting practices encouraging such participation
- Modifying or abandoning practices that have or may have the effect of restricting discouraging such participation.
Affirmative Action

- Encouraging Applications
- Redundancy
- Targeted Training (Located in specific area but open to both communities)
- Recruitment from those not in employment
- Religion Specific Training
  
  (Section 76 of FETO 1999) Permission needed from Equality Commission).
Employer Support

- Training Programmes
- Employer Networks
- Links to Employer Organisations
- Working with individual employers
- Working with other public sector organisations
- E-zines
- Enquiry line
- Website
- Good practice publications
Chart 1: Composition of the monitored workforce over time (since 2001, with 1990 data for illustrative purposes)
Case Study: Policing

- Historic under-representation of Roman Catholics
- Lack of progress using permitted outreach
- Patten Report
- Culture, ethos, symbols, name
- 50/50 recruitment for 10 years
- Results?
- Challenges for PSNI post 50/50?
Police Service for Northern Ireland

% Roman Catholic Police Officers

- Year: 2001 to 2012
- Percentage: Increasing from 0% to 35%
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>1991</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ulster Carpet Mills Ltd</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Hurst Ltd</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balcas Timber Ltd</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Impact

• High levels of compliance with the duties
• Decrease in segregated workplaces
• More integrated and balanced workforces
• Improvement in employment practices
• Some pockets of under-representation remain
• Roman Catholic share of aggregate workforce close to what might be expected
Lessons from Northern Ireland

• Strong legislation
• Commitment from senior management and building relationships
• Affirmative/positive action to attract applicants
• Monitoring and reporting on progress
• Policies, practices and procedures which promote equality, particularly those related to recruitment and selection (a rising tide lifts all boats!)
• Equality training for managers and supervisors
• Good and harmonious working environment