

Shared City Partnership

8th September 2025



Dr. Jacqueline Irwin
CEO

Community Relations Council

“Promoting a peaceful and shared society based on reconciliation and mutual trust”.

The Northern Ireland Community Relations Council (CRC) was established in 1990 to lead and support change towards reconciliation, tolerance and mutual trust. CRC is an Arm's Length Body of The Executive Office (TEO), a charity and a company limited by guarantee.



CRC was created to be a catalyst for good inter-community and inter-cultural community relations in the region. CRC is funded by TEO, and we assist in the implementation of the Executive's Good Relations Strategy – *Together: Building a United Community* (T:BUC).

STRATEGY

“Integrating good community relationships into everyday life”

- This is the theme of our current strategic plan. We would like to see good relations embedded in everyday life, in everything we do, a normal part of how we live here.
- We are therefore interested in the intersectionality between good community relations and other aspects of everyday life, for example health and well-being, education, business, the environment, sport, the arts and craft, drama, etc.



OUR VALUES AND BELIEFS

Human dignity is the fundamental basis for good community relations. In that context, the Community Relations Council is guided by the following values and beliefs:

- **Interconnectedness:** CRC recognises the importance of living well together and the interdependence of personal and community experiences of all those living and working in Northern Ireland. We believe in inclusive and open dialogue. The CRC exists to promote good relations based on trust, respect, inclusion and interconnectedness.
- **Diversity:** We believe that our diversity of identities and cultures in Northern Ireland enriches life and is to be celebrated.
- **Equity and Equality:** CRC is committed to fair treatment for all, through open access to resources, structures and decision-making processes at all levels of society, as an essential basis for good community relations.
- **Respect and dignity:** CRC is committed to human rights, inter-cultural respect, freedom of expression and movement (whether expressed through religious, ethnic or political background) and supports the peaceful expression of variety and difference. CRC therefore recognises non-violence as an essential condition for the growth of trust, dialogue and conflict transformation.
- **The common good:** CRC believes that community relationships built on trust and living well together contributes to sustainable development, the general well-being of our society and the common good.
- **Openness, Transparency and Accountability:** To maintain trust and confidence in our work as a provider of public services CRC embraces these values in all its work.



We use two methods to deliver our aims:

1. Funding

We are a regional funder supporting projects in every council area across Northern Ireland, working closely with The Executive Office, the Good Relations staff in Councils and other regional and local bodies.

2. Develop Support and Shared Learning

We are a development agency, supporting funded groups and other agencies to identify and develop effective approaches to peacebuilding, reconciliation and social cohesion in partnership with local people and organisations; as well as with central and local government.



CRC Funding Schemes

- **Core Funding Programme** (multi-annual grant scheme)
- **Community Relations/Cultural Diversity Grants Scheme** (small grants)
- **Good Relations Resources** (Media Grants Scheme/Publications Grants Scheme)
- **Pathfinder** Programme (emergency funding)
- **North Belfast Strategic Good Relations Scheme** (TEO programme)



Core Funding Scheme (Budget: £1 million approx. per year)

Aim

The Core Fund provides support for organisations that work wholly or largely on promoting good community relations. In other words, those with a track record and experience in this work. It is focused on meeting strategic needs in community relations provision across the region.

The scheme is multi-annual (subject to government funding) and it contributes towards salary and organisational running costs.

The Core Funding Scheme has a dedicated Evaluation Officer who assists core funded groups in developing their own analytical, evaluation tools. We also work with TEO on the development of a more joined up approach to good relations project delivery across the region.



Belfast Based Core Funded Groups

Partisan Productions

PeacePlayers International - Northern Ireland

Falls Community Council

Belfast YMCA Limited

Belfast Interface project (BIP)

Belfast Library and Society for Promoting Knowledge

Falls Women's Centre

Boys & Girls Clubs

Trademark Belfast

Springboard Opportunities Limited

R City Youth CIC

Youth Initiatives NI

Community Relations in Schools (CRIS)

Donegall Pass Community Enterprises

Youth Link

TIDES Training

Irish FA Foundation



Community Relations and Cultural Diversity (CR/CD small grant scheme)

- The CR/CD scheme is a **small grant fund** aimed at increasing opportunities for people from differing traditions to develop relationships of trust and understanding; to extend their knowledge and understanding of others' cultures, beliefs, traditions; and increase their acceptance of and respect for diversity.
- Grants of up to £10,000 are available per application to this scheme and approximately 100-120 grants are awarded each financial year. Most grant applications awards would fall between £2- £5k.
- Grants are made across the region. New awards are generally discussed with the Good Relations Officer in that council area to ensure that information is shared.



Good Relations Resources - Publications and Media Grant Schemes

- The aim of these schemes is to encourage the **production and dissemination of education, information or artistic resources** that will contribute to greater understanding and better community relations in the region. This may include hard copy publications, short films or on-line resources.
- These schemes are not open at present due to the funding situation.



Pathfinder Grants Scheme

- The Pathfinder Grant Scheme is an **emergency fund** and is not an openly advertised grant programme to which groups can apply; in an emergency situation there is normally discussion between CRC & TEO which precedes any potential grant proposal made to this scheme.
- The scheme contributes towards the in-year salary and running costs of organisations or projects which are considered of strategic importance in promoting community relations work, but which are dealing with a **community crisis or facing a temporary funding gap**.



North Belfast Strategic Good Relations Programme

- This Programme is an **area-based** intervention set up by Ministers and now administered by CRC on behalf of TEO.
- This programme contributes towards salary, running costs and the delivery of annual plans by 10 organisations operating in that area:
- Ardoyne Youth Enterprise, Ashton Centre, Ballysillan Community Forum, Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum, Greater Whitewell Community Surgery, Intercomm, Ligoniel Improvement Association, Mount Vernon Comm. Dev. Forum, Shankill Women's Centre and The Vine Centre



CRC Develop Support and Shared Learning

- We are a development agency, supporting funded groups and other agencies to identify and develop effective approaches to peacebuilding, reconciliation and social cohesion in partnership with local people and organisations; as well as with central and local government. We run the T:BUC Engagement Forum on behalf of The Executive Office and we facilitate shared learning through conferences, seminars and other events. We also run the annual Good Relations Week and the Good Relations Awards.
- We provide advice on the design and delivery of projects; guidance on other funders/groups/ agencies and networks; and take part in reference/advisory structures with central and local government, other public bodies and NGOs.
- We also provide a community relations information hub through our web-site, social media and a monthly bulletin



CONNECT

People — Planet — Prosperity

Good Relations Week 2025

13th – 19th October

Event listings at: goodrelationsweek.com

#GRW25



Northern Ireland
Executive
www.northernireland.gov.uk

T:buc
Changing for the better, together

**COMMUNITY
RELATIONS
COUNCIL**



Good Relations Week 2025 embraces ‘Connect’ as its theme - recognising that the foundation of a better community is built on People, Planet and Prosperity - connected by the goal of Peace.

Contact: pday@nicrc.org.uk

CRC Projects

As well as funding and providing development support to other organisations, CRC also deliver some projects directly, currently:

NI Peace Monitoring Report



and previously:

Decade of Commemoration Project



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