

# **Review of the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Advisory Group on Tackling Sectarianism in Scotland**

**A report by Dr Duncan Morrow**

**March 2017**

## **Foreword**

Sectarianism has had real consequences in Scotland and remains an issue which needs to be addressed through the continuation and development of positive action. It exists in a variety of complex relationships within and between political, social and economic forces. From political, social and religious roots, it has evolved and adapted, surviving as a factor in communities, in organisations, in attitudes and relationships.

In May 2015, the independent Advisory Group on Tackling Sectarianism in Scotland (the Advisory Group), reported its findings, conclusions and recommendations reflecting the evidence gathered over three years. The Advisory Group had set out to consider two key questions 'How does sectarianism manifest itself in Scotland now?' and 'How can we best deal with its consequences?' and I feel that the conversations, community action and research that took place during the lifespan of the Advisory Group and beyond to the present day, has taken us closer to finding answers to these questions.

The recommendations of the Advisory Group were aimed at a range of organisations and sectors across Scotland and we were clear that a culture of responsibility was vital if we were to move this issue forward in a positive way and promote good relations at individual and community level. This could only be successful if key figures and organisations from across civic Scotland were engaged and willing to provide positive leadership.

I am very grateful that 18 months on from the publication of the Advisory Group's final report, the Minister for Community Safety and Legal Affairs invited me as the former Chair of the Advisory Group to review the progress that has been made across all of the sectors that the recommendations were aimed at.

Evidence remains extremely important and the work taken forward during the lifetime of the Advisory Group, and continued since, by a programme of community based work has developed the most extensive understanding we have had of sectarianism in modern Scotland. Being able to work from an evidence base is crucial to engage and to approach the subject which can create polarised opinion.

The work of the community projects has emphasised the varying degrees of opinion on sectarianism, with some communities opening up and being willing to address the issue, and others not engaging or denying there is a problem. This work has shown that there is no easy answer and no one-size fits all approach that can be taken but that a series of approaches are necessary and even welcomed at times to allow engagement and time for confidence to grow, sometimes in individuals and other times in communities as a whole.

When the Minister tasked me with reviewing the recommendations I made contact with all relevant agencies and organisations previously contacted by the Advisory Group and essentially those who were responsible for taking forward recommendations. Letters were sent to each organisation in October 2016 with contact continuing to be made and responses received up to and including late January 2017. The content of this report is based on the evidence gathered through this process.

In conclusion, I do not believe that sectarianism is the biggest problem facing Scottish society. But I do believe that it remains a deep-rooted and serious problem which continues to manifest itself in areas across Scottish society. Work taken forward over the past few years has demonstrated that this issue can be properly addressed through active leadership and concerted effort, but that requires leaders to stand up and be counted and to use their influence in a positive and constructive way. While there is some evidence that this is happening, there is also evidence that a culture of denial exists in some areas, and that this culture remains an obstacle to progress.

Dr Duncan Morrow  
March 2017

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## **Section 1: Remit**

The remit that I was given for the Review of the implementation of the recommendations of the Advisory Group was:

To review the progress that has been made in the implementation of the recommendations of the independent Advisory Group on Tackling Sectarianism in Scotland, and to provide Scottish Ministers with a report highlighting both progress and good practice and areas where further work is required.

Specifically to:

- Obtain updates from all of the organisations and sectors which were identified in the Advisory Group's report as needing to take action to tackle sectarianism in Scotland.
- Highlight good practice and identify examples of good leadership which have been shown in relation to advancing the recommendations made by the Advisory Group.
- If time allows, look at examples of good practice and good leadership which are outwith the scope of the Advisory Group recommendations.
- Identify areas where progress and leadership are lacking and where sectarianism has been allowed to go unchallenged.
- Highlight what further action is required to tackle sectarianism in Scotland and who is best placed to deliver this.

## **Section 2: Advisory Group Recommendations and Responses**

In this section I will set out the specific recommendations made by the Advisory Group and discuss the responses that I received to my requests for updates on progress towards these. The numbers given for each recommendation are the references to these that appeared in “Tackling Sectarianism and its Consequences in Scotland: Final Report of The Advisory Group on Tackling Sectarianism in Scotland” published in May 2015. The full report can be found here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0047/00477619.pdf>

### **Research**

#### **Recommendations:**

**5.7.1 Focus on the role of gender in both sectarian victimisation and in the 'handing down' of sectarian attitudes through role models and family traditions.**

**5.7.2 Focus on better understanding of sectarian articulation and understanding on social media - potentials for exacerbate or ameliorating.**

**5.7.3 Further understand the relationship between sectarianism and football - top level, youth football - and what can be done to address this.**

**5.7.4 Better understand what we have termed as the polite, educated forms of sectarianism as a means to uncover in professional life in Scotland the roots of what has been described to us as a permissive environment that tacitly sanctions the more overt expressions of sectarianism.**

**5.7.5 Investigate the economic impact to organisations, business and geographical area associated with sectarianism.**

**5.7.6 Ensure the final community project reports, when collated, are used as community practice and practical knowledge alongside the review of evidence.**

### **Responses to the Review**

Community projects have continued to produce important and innovative models of practice which have helped to both gather evidence about sectarianism in Scotland and tested different approaches to tackling the issue which helps to tailor the intervention to the specific problem.

The Action on Sectarianism website has been an invaluable tool, both for connecting emerging community projects working in this field to create partnerships and active learning with other likeminded organisations, and as a publicly available common space for sharing resources and research, debating issues and priorities and developing practical interventions. Primarily focussed on young people and youth work, the website has the capacity to act as a repository of best practice for people engaged in tackling sectarianism in many capacities. It can also be seen as a model for the development of learning resources for other equalities issues.

Among the most interesting innovations has been the development of the educational resource 'Religion, Migration and Society in the making of Modern Scotland' through collaborative partnership between the Scottish Government, Education Scotland, YouthLink Scotland, Stewartry and the Citizens Theatre. The resource is a timeline which clearly illustrates the central impact and influence of religion and migration on Scotland through history and how this continues to shape modern Scottish society, it can be found at:

<https://www.actiononsectarianism.info/adults/about-sectarianism/history>.

The Voluntary Action Fund (VAF), organisations working to tackle sectarianism and the Scottish Government have developed the 'Scotland: No Place for Sectarianism' Evaluation Tool. The aims of the tool are:

- To develop a more accurate and sophisticated understanding of sectarian attitudes and behaviour, highlight the impact on people's lives in Scotland today and identify what works in tackling it.
- To enable the Scottish Government and VAF to assess the overall impact of this funding programme.

Using the guide, every organisation funded under the Scottish Government's Tackling Sectarianism Fund was encouraged to:

- Properly plan their own project evaluation.
- Gather consistent evidence through their project work.
- Share valuable learning across the Programme.

Prior to this Review, the Scottish Government conducted a literature review of all available evidence to establish what this told us and to identify gaps that needed to be filled. The review was published in 2013. A subsequent update was published in 2015 following publication of commissioned work by the Advisory Group and Scottish Government's Justice Analytical Services in February 2015, and can be found at:

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/05/5191>.

Three main pieces of new academic research were commissioned (and included in the updated literature review above):

- Gathering nationally representative public attitudes data on sectarianism via the annual Scottish Social Attitudes (SSA) survey.  
<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/02/5330>
- Qualitative research in communities where sectarianism was perceived to exist, either currently or historically, undertaken by a team of academics led by the University of Stirling.  
<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/02/9920>

- Research into the community impact of public processions undertaken through the University of Stirling.  
<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/02/3769/0>

In addition, a recent independent report on marches, parades and static demonstrations in Scotland was conducted by Dr Michael Rosie and published in October 2016. The report included recommendations to build on existing work in this area and the final report can be found at:  
<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0050/00506722.pdf>.

## Churches

### Recommendations:

**5.7.7 Affirm cooperation where it exists, and encourage it where it has yet to emerge, including the provision of opportunities for people to learn about one another's history, tradition and practice. Too often people have a view of others' faith that is founded on inaccuracy and ancient prejudice.**

**5.7.8 Ensure local action is seen to be the priority, but also affirm this work through symbolic statements and actions at a denominational level to demonstrate the commitment to on-going co-operation and opposition to sectarian behaviour from all of Scotland's churches.**

### Responses to the Review

The Review received responses from Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS), the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, and the Catholic Archbishop of Glasgow.

The recommendations for the Churches were targeted at two way co-operation and a sense of learning from each other. From the responses I received, I was made aware of positive symbolic and practical co-operation developing between the Church of Scotland and the Catholic Church.

The Churches identified a subtle form of sectarianism happening wherever assumptions are made about a particular denominational religious affiliation as linked with a set of political views or cultural identity. Clearly, members of all Christian denominations held a diversity of view on the constitutional question addressed in the recent Scottish Independence Referendum, in line with the population as a whole. At the same time, the perception that this question could take on sectarian avenues remains, although there is no current evidence to support this.

From the responses received, it is clear that Churches are aware of the consequences of sectarianism for wider society and have committed to work over the long term to create a better level of co-operation and understanding from one another and others. The 'In Wi' the Mix' project (partnership between Faith in Community Scotland, Conforti Institute and Place for Hope), funded through the Scottish Government, has had a catalytic effect, bringing together Church leaders at local and national level in a more regular way to hold structured discussions on this



issue. The project is still looking at proposals to bring together trainee priests and ministers to learn from each other. Additionally:

- The Church of Scotland reported that the Very Rev. Dr Sheilagh Kesting, former Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and former Church of Scotland Ecumenical Officer, has been made a Dame of the Order of St Gregory the Great by Pope Francis in recognition of good work between the Church of Scotland and the Catholic Church.
- The Scottish Episcopal Church responded by saying they recognise and deeply regret the sharpness of Protestant-Catholic sectarianism as it is experienced, particularly in the west of Scotland and in the context of football. They also raised an awareness of the more subtle and 'polite' expressions of sectarianism which can be discerned elsewhere.
- The Ecumenical Relations Committee of the Church of Scotland continues to work collaboratively with the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland through the Joint Commission on Doctrine.
- Churches are active partners in the work of 'In Wi' the Mix' and indicated that time has been spent supporting Church leaders at local and national level to build friendships, which then encourages communities to do the same.
- Most clergy feel they are deeply committed to the building of a reconciled and inclusive society but many find that there is no effective process or forum through which they can discuss the presence of parades in their communities.
- The Archbishop of Glasgow welcomed the Advisory Group's definition of sectarianism offered in their final report. He put emphasis on the work of ACTS, as well as co-operation between churches at the local level. The Archbishop provided us with some examples of this work, with a highlight being Ecumenical Chaplaincy work within the Scottish Prison Service, hospices and care homes. Catholic Church leaders work with other Church and faith leaders, especially when important issues confront society, and are currently engaged with the ecumenical 'In Wi' the Mix' project.
- ACTS work in co-operation with partners and helps to facilitate ecumenical understanding, fellowship and mutual trust amongst Scotland's Churches at a national level. ACTS acknowledged that past actions of some churches had contributed to sectarianism but highlighted that now there are good examples of reconciliation and present-day ecumenical work. However, there is more work to do and Churches must play a role in this.
- The response from ACTS also illuminates worries around the possible repeal of the Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Act 2012, affirming concerns that any change made to the legislation could be perceived as "legitimising" sectarianism.

They are of the belief that implications of any repeal or amendment to the Act would require careful and expert investigation.

## Football

### Recommendations:

**5.7.9 We wish to reaffirm the recommendations made in our Interim Report (paragraphs 6.65 to 6.73) all of which remain valid.**

**5.7.10 The football authorities and clubs should proactively work to address the close association in public perception of football in Scotland with sectarianism through direct programmes of intervention, clear anti-sectarian messaging and active and visible leadership in partnership with other agencies such as local government, youth work, schools, police.**

**5.7.11 Respond to our question of 'if not strict liability then what?' It is clear that a strategic and measured response to Scotland's remnants of sectarian attitudes and behaviour cannot succeed without squarely addressing the sectarian problems within and around football.**

### Responses to the Review

A joint response was received from Scottish football authorities - the Scottish Professional Football League (SPFL) and the Scottish Football Association (Scottish FA). The SPFL responded on behalf of their member clubs and I met officials from the SPFL and the Scottish FA:

- The SPFL and Scottish FA explained that they are working closely with Active Scotland, a division within the Scottish Government, to look at responses to unacceptable conduct, including sectarian behaviour, such as extending rules applicable to unacceptable conduct. They indicated that tougher rules applicable to unacceptable conduct were approved in June and July 2016 and revised guidance will be introduced which will 'raise the bar' for clubs to demonstrate they are doing all they can to prevent unacceptable conduct and deal with it appropriately when it does occur.
- There has been positive work with Supporters Direct Scotland (SDS), encouraging wider use of Supporter Liaison Officers (SLO). The Scottish FA has invested £30,000 of funding, matched by the Scottish Government, to extend the SLO programme across Scotland.
- A Scottish FA Diversity and Inclusion Manager has been appointed to work with relevant organisations and to create a co-ordinated programme of education to serve the whole of Scottish football. At the time of writing they were also considering a public awareness video, a match ticket distribution project to minimise risk of unacceptable behaviour, and an education and awareness programme.

- At the meeting I attended with the SPFL and the Scottish FA, they indicated that they believed public perception of the problem of sectarianism at football was not the same as the reality. They were of the view that football is not responsible for what they see as a societal issue. However, in making this claim they also appear to be using the categorisation of the issue as 'societal' as a way of distancing themselves from the need to take anything more than the most tokenistic action to address sectarianism. It needs to be clearly kept in mind that Scottish football is very much part of Scottish society and needs to take full responsibility for tackling the offensive and abusive behaviour that occurs within the commercial spaces (football stadia) that they own, operate and govern.
- The SPFL and the Scottish FA explained that they look at a range of unacceptable behaviours of which sectarianism is just a very small part – pyrotechnics, for example, being seen as a much more prevalent issue from their perspective. There have been a number of rule changes introduced by both the SPFL and Scottish FA. Clubs are expected to take all reasonably practical steps to prevent unacceptable behaviour but now they also look at what happened after the match, for example, whether the club's actions resulted in banning supporters because of their unacceptable behaviour. They believe that the bar for Clubs to meet has been set very high.
- The SPFL and the Scottish FA now both claim they have independent, robust systems in place for dealing with unacceptable behaviour, with guidance to accompany the new rules. The SPFL are now looking to introduce evaluation and monitoring of unacceptable conduct at football for the start of the new 2017-18 football season. These changes need to be approved by the SPFL Board.
- The Scottish FA disciplinary system has been in place for 5 years and there has as yet been no formal evaluation of how effective this is. However, there are annual reviews of efficiency and speed of dealing with cases and success rate of cases prosecuted.
- The SPFL and Scottish FA told me that they believe there have been no incidents of mass sectarian singing in Scottish football in the past year. They believe that Scottish football has come a long way since the 'shame game' five years ago. They also expressed the view that sectarian singing is not a problem at Scottish games and, in fact, it is the perception of it that is the problem, with this perception being very different from the reality. They believe the media has an important role to play in fuelling the perception of sectarianism in Scottish football and they believe the use of language and terms like 'battle' and 'war' before big derby matches intensifies the feelings between sets of supporters.
- Interestingly, when I raised the fact that a recent survey conducted by the international players' union FIFPro showed that 32% of Scottish football players felt they had been threatened by fans on match days and nearly a quarter of players in Scotland reported that they had experienced discrimination by fans on a matchday (23% against the global average of 5%),

the SPFL and Scottish FA stated categorically that they did not recognise the findings. They also expressed shock at the publication of the report. They stated that players have since come out and said they don't recognise the findings. They felt confident that there was no abuse of players in Scotland at matches as no cases have ever been presented to the Scottish FA or SPFL by the player's union. They asserted that football players in Scotland are not exposed to the same levels of abuse at home as players are on the continent – such as coins being thrown and aggressive verbal abuse from supporters. The survey outcomes are available here:  
<https://www.fifpro.org/news/first-global-employment-report-unveiled/en/>

## Marches and Parades

### Recommendations:

**5.7.12 Organisations convey the key messages of their parades through dialogue in and with local communities. Dialogue will also give an opportunity for local communities to present their views.**

**5.7.13 Scottish Government enter a dialogue with local communities and community planning partnerships which affirms and respects the rights of religious and political expression and the rights of communities not to be unreasonably disrupted.**

### Responses to the Review

Responses were received from Police Scotland and the Grand Orange Lodge of Scotland (Orange Order), who referenced their previous response to the Advisory Group's interim recommendations, submitted in October 2014, and provided a new copy of that previous response. They also referenced their input into the independent review of marches, parades and static demonstrations, carried out by Dr Michael Rosie, and meetings with officials from the Scottish Government's Community Safety Unit (CSU) since the publication of that report. There was also acknowledgment from the Grand Black Chapter of Scotland, but no follow up response, responses received:

- Police Scotland indicate that all divisions are engaging with partners and event organisers during the planning and facilitation of statutory marches and parades, utilising partnership working. The deployment of police resources is based on intelligence to the threat and risk posed.
- Several Police divisions reporting decreases in police resources as stewarding levels and skills improve. For example, the Annual Boyne Parade, in Lanarkshire Division on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2016, was resourced with 225 less officers than the year before.
- Local Authorities are effectively sharing application forms, providing time for discussions and assessments to be made in stewarding, conditions and Temporary Traffic Regulations Orders. This has all resulted in Positive working relationships.

- In many cases routes have been the main bone of contention, with a minimal number of parades being refused by the Regulatory Committee. Protest Liaison Officers have been utilised in the planning process of several larger scale or contentious applications, with a positive impact on the outcome.

The Orange Order response raised a number of key recommendations included in Dr Rosie's report on marches, parades and static demonstrations where further engagement and clarification from partners is felt to be required, including on the notification period and response times from local authorities, community engagement and funding to eradicate public perceptions, a single gateway for notification and training with Police Scotland, and Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (TTROs).

The Orange Order stated that they were willing to engage with the projects funded through the Scottish Government's Tackling Sectarianism Fund and would be willing to deliver further work to educate others on the true aims and meaning of 'Orangeism', if funding support was available.

### **Convention Of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)**

#### **Recommendation:**

5.7.14 Should work with local authorities to help empower and enable community planning to take the necessary steps to address sectarianism where and how it is found in local areas.

### **Responses to the Review**

COSLA were invited to participate in the review but did not respond to this invitation.

In the Advisory Group's final report, there was an agreement among group members that local government should be the lead agency in taking action to address issues of sectarianism in the communities they serve across Scotland. I am not aware of any action being taken forward by COSLA to ensure this is the case.

### **Local Authorities**

#### **Recommendations:**

**5.7.15 Develop formal guidance on addressing sectarianism at local level which takes a whole council approach though policies, training and education of staff. Where this is currently being developed the learning should be actively disseminated through local government networks for use by other local authorities.**

**5.7.16 Use the learning from the existing community projects funded by the Scottish Government as a data source with community projects integrating their work into their wider youth work practice and training.**

## Responses to the Review

Substantive responses were received from Aberdeen City Council, Angus Council, Dundee City Council, Argyll & Bute Council, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles Council), Dumfries and Galloway Council, City of Edinburgh Council, East Ayrshire Council, East Dunbartonshire Council, East Lothian Council, East Renfrewshire Council, Falkirk Council, Fife Council, Highland Council, Inverclyde Council, North Ayrshire Council, North Lanarkshire Council, Perth and Kinross Council, Scottish Borders Council, South Ayrshire Council, South Lanarkshire Council, Stirling Council and West Lothian Council. Glasgow City Council sent a holding response but no substantive response was received.

There was a varied response to the request for information from Local Authorities, and a wide variety of approaches adopted when addressing this issue. Given the variety of ways in which sectarianism impacts on local communities, some of this is to be expected. However, it is evident that some Councils have already significantly improved the quality of their engagement with this issue. Among the models of best practice were:

- The City of Edinburgh Council, who have engaged actively both internally and externally, developing Council-wide guidance and including anti-sectarianism in the Council's wellbeing strategy. The Council has also adapted and refined existing policies and procedures, for example, forms to record bullying and prejudice now have a section with categories for faith/sectarianism. In June 2015 Councillor Maureen Child hosted the first national conference on 'Tackling Sectarianism in the Workplace' and The City of Edinburgh Council were the first local authority to enter into a high-profile partnership with Nil by Mouth.
- Other local authorities, including East Ayrshire, East Dunbartonshire, Falkirk, Inverclyde, North Ayrshire, South Ayrshire, Perth and Kinross, and South Lanarkshire have developed working partnerships with groups funded by the Scottish Government. In particular, Nil by Mouth have been pivotal in translating the implications of the Advisory Group's report and recommendations into local practice.
- The majority of local authorities who responded have been involved in partnerships and workshops with at least one of the Scottish Government's funded projects over the years including; Engender, Supporters Direct Scotland, Stewartry CVS, Show Bigotry the Red Card, Central Scotland Regional Equality Council, Inverclyde Community Development Trust, Brora Learning Centre and Creativity in Care, Citizens Theatre, Sense over Sectarianism and 'In Wi' the Mix', among others. Highlights include an East Ayrshire partnership with 'In Wi' the Mix' and the active promotion of the Action on Sectarianism website within schools, youth learning centres and across partners in South Lanarkshire, who have also used the Nil by Mouth employers programme to train modern apprentices.

- Fife Community Planning Partnership have established a hate incidents review group.

Many of the responses from local authorities underlined that equalities training is mandatory for all staff and indicated that this now includes sectarianism. Policies including dignity at work and equal opportunities are being updated accordingly and embedded into the culture at many councils. Many councils also gave examples of working with inter-faith groups and equalities champions, detailing their representation on inter-faith forums that include all major faiths.

Some local authorities, such as Argyll and Bute Council, Aberdeen City Council, Angus Council and Scottish Borders Council replied that they did they not feel that their communities had any significant issues with sectarianism.

## Education Scotland

### Recommendations:

**5.7.17 Ensure sectarianism is integrated into the curriculum in a clear, locally appropriate way to provide a pathway into the wider equalities work when teachers and schools have the opportunity to not only address sectarianism but build their own skills, experience and confidence.**

**5.7.18 Aid development of all schools actively tackling the issue by producing a "Horrible Histories" style timeline of sectarianism in Scotland that can be used within schools and where appropriate the local history can be investigated.**

### Responses to the Review

Embedding equality in education remains a priority for Education Scotland. By running seminars and an internal network group Education Scotland has identified where further progress can be made with professional learning in inclusion, diversity and equality. Following the publication of the final Advisory Group Report, Education Scotland has undertaken a number of steps:

- An annotated timeline 'Religion, Migration and Society in the Making of Modern Scotland' has been developed with Youthlink Scotland and partners and is now available on the Action on Sectarianism Website.
- The creation and sharing of resources that seek to embed equality education across Curriculum for Excellence and the development and publication of learning journeys with a focus on equalities.
- A working group, including Scottish Government, was set up to consider how existing tackling sectarianism resources with a proven track record of delivery can be used effectively rather than creating new, competing resources. The outcome of this work was published on 22 February 2017 and can be found: <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/inc22overview>

- A series of events aimed at tackling inequalities and encouraging schools and authorities to take account of the needs of diverse learners have been organised and delivered. These include events on supporting third sector organisations to embed and sustain work and peer learning events on equality and diversity ambassadors.

## Media

### Recommendation:

**5.7.19 Should make a clear commitment not to sensationalise and stoke flames of sectarianism through headlines, intensifying feeling and anxiety as seen in the lead up to the recent Celtic v Rangers league cup semi-final. This commitment should be acted on with the full knowledge that the repercussions of such sensationalism will always be harmful to society as a whole.**

### Responses to the Review

I received a response from the Scottish Newspaper Society who met with me to discuss the recommendations.

In discussions, the Scottish Newspaper Society made clear their view that the claim made by the Advisory Group that the media at times appeared to be ‘stoking the flames of sectarianism’ needs to be evidenced. Freedom of speech issues were seen as being critical to the press and take priority over perceived social consequences. They were of the opinion that the press follows and does not lead in these matters. There was no wish amongst the press to be regulated externally, but it was stated that social cohesion issues were considered through internal regulation.

### Community Projects

#### Recommendations:

**5.7.20 Work closely with local authority departments such as community planning partnerships and education departments where possible to begin mainstreaming work.**

**5.7.21 Form the basis of further development of programmes of training, learning and institutional development, using the Action on Sectarianism website to open up the work to wider sectors with time being spent collating the work to produce a national toolkit or overarching guide.**

### Response to the Review

A collective response was received by the Voluntary Action Fund (VAF) on behalf of the Scottish Government funded projects.

The feedback that I received from the 20 projects funded by the Scottish Government in 2016-17 was overwhelmingly positive. Included in the projects



funding conditions for 2016-17 was the need to look at the Advisory Group recommendations (without taking full ownership of the recommendation) to contribute to a chosen area and help support the organisation which was ultimately responsible for delivering their set recommendation.

Most projects were quick to praise the Advisory Group report as they felt it gave them a degree of leverage to ask organisations how they are working to achieve the report's recommendations. The projects also expressed gratitude for being able to work with a dedicated Civil Service team, and with VAF as grant managers, who have provided a very supportive environment to work in. Such feedback highlighted that the programme was set up and delivered in a way which 'gave space to breathe' and to try new things and innovate.

Working with VAF, especially the provision of a reporting framework and support, has helped the funded projects to develop skills in relation to reporting and applying for funding, and has sharpened their ability to show the difference their work makes. There has been a recognition from the projects that the Scottish Government has worked towards closing the gap between research, policy and practice and a strong feeling among projects that the Tackling Sectarianism Fund has helped to grow the evidence base. The 'creativity shown by Scottish Government' in the way the programme was developed gave them the 'freedom to learn and try and cross-fertilise the work across borders', both physical and organisational.

Community organisations emphasised the benefit of project networks, co-production and partnership working through the initiative of the Scottish Government programme. This collaboration helped to extend the range of organisations that each body would normally work with, developing new relationships and networks and allowing opportunities to share learning and knowledge. The Tackling Sectarianism programme has helped them to work in depth on the subject matter with a range of groups including faith-based, equalities and community groups.

Some of the highlights from the work includes:

- The Nil by Mouth schools programme, which is now self-sufficient with associated buy-in from councils supporting an on-going legacy. They have also engaged with nine local authorities through their workplace project, six of these intensively, working with staff and building on the framework that was taken forward within the City of Edinburgh Council.
- The work of Sacro, which has shown impact, not just directly with the people who use their services, but also with their families and peer groups due to a ripple effect from learning and knowledge dissemination.
- The I See! Scotland project, which has built on success and buy-in from organisations and participants, with Graeme High School now running the course with new groups of pupils. The work is now being taken forward in partnership with Her Majesties Young Offenders Institute (HMYOI) Polmont.

- Bridging the Gap, who are embedded in the two schools in the Gorbals delivering a four week programme of activity. It is peer-led by secondary school children who have been through the programme at primary and is seen as an integral part of the school year.

There is also evidence of an emerging practical legacy from the community funding programme:

- The Gies' Peace project, which has developed a resource that is available to tell the story of lived experience of difference in Inverclyde. The oral history resource about prejudice, discrimination, hate crime and diversity is available to anyone in Inverclyde through the local museum.
- Sense Over Sectarianism continue to work with primary schools and teachers across Glasgow and have successfully developed resources for secondary schools which also feature as part of the Education Scotland resource. They continue to work with teachers to develop skill base and knowledge and provide long term legacy and capacity within education settings.
- The utilisation of the Action on Sectarianism website, with many of the funded projects developing new resources and making them available on the website. The website remains a hub of activity and a source of knowledge as a way to share the work of the community projects.

Many projects underlined the urgency of mainstreaming their practice and learning. Projects such as 'In Wi' the Mix' are currently looking to the future even if no further Scottish Government funding is available. The 'In Wi' the Mix' partnership are aware that they can embrace wider faiths and are looking at issues such as the lack of representation from the Islamic faith. At a community level they have been successful in having sectarianism adopted as a priority and New Farm Loch is now standing on its own and continuing the work independently.

The Sacro project has increased its footprint within Glasgow based statutory organisations and the Crown Office. Closer working relationships have been developed with Police Scotland and Community Safety Glasgow. On-going work in Lanarkshire is seeing a wider development and uptake of the Sacro Tackling Offending Prejudices (STOP) service and this is increasing awareness and options for prosecutors.

Bridging the Gap's legacy is on the young people who have been through the programme in primary schools, who return to be peer supports when in secondary school and who have become an integral part of the volunteer base. The Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) have aided participating organisations to use a community development approach to influence statutory organisations and community planning partnerships.

Many projects have developed relationships in and with various communities but concerns were raised that should sectarianism be subsumed back into the wider equalities agenda too quickly, some organisations will go back to focus on these

other equalities areas, with their interest in tackling sectarianism diluted. There is a clear need therefore, to ensure that this does not happen going forward.

## Justice

### Recommendations:

**5.7.22 Police Scotland work with relevant partners to share their knowledge and expertise in addressing sectarianism to allow the issues to be actively addressed by youth services, local authorities and Community Planning Partnerships.**

**5.7.23 Scottish Prison Service proactively address the issue and work with prisoners to reduce re-offending. Resources that have been developed with and for the prison service to tackle sectarianism should be utilised and updated where necessary.**

### Responses to the Review

The response from Police Scotland detailed the wide variety of steps required to address different aspects of sectarianism and offensive behaviour. Among the many aspects of this work are:

- Police Scotland's Football Coordination Unit for Scotland (FoCUS) has an on-going review and maintenance of the recommendations made by the Scottish Government Joint Action Group (JAG) in 2011. The JAG was created following a request from the then Chief Constable of Strathclyde Police, Sir Stephen House, for Scottish Ministers to convene a round table discussion involving senior officials from the Police, Celtic and Rangers Football Clubs, and Scottish football's governing bodies.
- FoCUS is responsible for the creation and on-going maintenance of Football Banning Orders and a national strategy for Policing Football in Scotland including offensive behaviour.
- Police Scotland also works closely with anti-sectarian organisations, such as Nil By Mouth, Sense Over Sectarianism and YouthLink Scotland, to focus specifically on work that challenges sectarianism.
- Police Scotland actively participate in events and initiatives delivered by partner agencies such as YouthLink Scotland and Supporters Direct Scotland.
- Police Scotland has been tackling online hate crime (including sectarianism) since 2011 and has developed appropriate policy and procedures including a policy framework for taking necessary and proportionate action without unlawfully infringing individual's rights under Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights (relating to freedom of expression).

- Police Scotland use a range of e-learning packages for officers on dealing with criminality at football, including offensive behaviour.
- Police Scotland participate in the Scottish Government's Football Related Safety and Disorder Group and football liaison prosecutors meeting.
- Police Scotland includes mandatory Equality and Diversity training for all staff, at all levels of the organisation.
- Police Scotland works in partnership with equality and diversity organisations, such as Interfaith Scotland and the Muslim Council of Scotland, who are working in communities across Scotland to build on work to promote positive community relations, and ultimately to improve community cohesion.
- Police Scotland detailed that it has contributed to the development of the Community Engagement Standards for Scotland. Understanding the needs of Scotland's communities remains a top priority for policing in Scotland. The Safer Communities: Race, Faith and Belief portfolio within Police Scotland's wider equality and diversity engagement work has been created to focus on strategic engagement with minority ethnic groups to network and support wider inter-faith and intra-faith relations. There is also a systematic assessment of the community impacts relating to religion or beliefs.
- Police Scotland has worked with Sense Over Sectarianism to develop the 'Pitchin' In' educational programme for S2 and S3 school pupils. They have also worked with Nil by Mouth on the 'Kiss Bigotry Goodbye' football festival which saw Catholic and non-denominational schools from both North and South Lanarkshire taking part in a tournament and receiving awareness-raising inputs between matches.
- The Scottish Prison Service (SPS) has been working in partnership with I SEE! Scotland at HMYOI Polmont to deliver peer training for the young people. SPS has also been working in partnership with Sacro and Show Bigotry the Red Card. There is evidence of prisons using anti-sectarianism resources such as the Scottish Books Trusts' 'Walk the Walk' graphic play and education pack.

## Scottish Government

### Recommendations:

**5.7.24 Continue to build on the current evidence base through new research and annual monitoring of the issue.**

**5.7.25 Use learning from community pilot projects to build on the practical knowledge of what is working and develop evidence based policy to direct any future funding.**

**5.7.26 Consider the role of independent advice in the future development of this agenda. While the Scottish Government has a leading role to play in tackling sectarianism, and indeed all other social issues, it is not a problem that can simply be dumped at their doorstep. As well as working with a broad range of partner organisations the Scottish Government should consider how independent advice can continue to contribute to this agenda particularly in relation to reporting on progress; convening discussions which have no political bias; and advising on the development and interpretation of evidence.**

**5.7.27 Leadership needs to be shown by the Scottish Government which encourages the acknowledgement of sectarianism where it is identified while refusing to turn it into a party-political football. In particular the Scottish government should seek assurance that sectarianism is being actively addressed through local government. This is essential if progress is to be maintained.**

### Responses to the Review

I received a response from Annabelle Ewing MSP, Minister for Community and Legal Affairs. The response from the Scottish Government details that:

- The Scottish Government supported the tackling sectarianism agenda with substantial funding over the last five years (£12.5m), and commissioned a number of research projects to help to provide us with the most robust evidence base on the nature and extent of sectarianism in modern Scotland we have ever had.
- In February 2016 the then Minister for Community Safety and Legal Affairs, Paul Wheelhouse MSP, launched a new educational resource 'Religion, Migration and Society in the making of Modern Scotland'. This resource is a timeline which clearly illustrates the impact and influence of religion and migration on Scotland through history and how this has shaped, and continues to shape, modern Scottish society. It is available for use by practitioners and professionals free of charge through the Action on Sectarianism website in different settings to engage, educate and inform. It has been linked into the educational resource, detailed in the education section and published on the 22 February 2017.

- In previous years, the Scottish Government has used the learning coming from the evaluation of the funded projects to direct funding and build on the evidence and good practice where achievable. It attributed this to robust grant management and the evidence gathered from the 'Scotland: No Place for Sectarianism' evaluation tool:  
[http://www.voluntaryactionfund.org.uk/files/5413/8927/4832/no\\_place\\_for\\_sectarianism.pdf](http://www.voluntaryactionfund.org.uk/files/5413/8927/4832/no_place_for_sectarianism.pdf)
- For the 2016/17 funding year, organisations were asked to set out their contribution to fulfilling recommendations (rather than take on the entire ownership of delivering the recommendations) and show that learning had been taken from their previous projects to develop their new proposed initiatives. All projects had to take an assets-based approach, working with the community to identify their specific problem and develop an appropriate response and tailored solution.
- The Scottish Government is open to independent advice as a way to use expertise and experience and provide a credible and non-politically motivated evidence base and framework. An example of this work would be the work delivered by Dr Michael Rosie, former Advisory Group member and Senior Lecturer in Sociology, who provided Ministers with independent advice on marches, parades and static demonstrations in Scotland, published on 3 October 2016.
- As mentioned in the previous section on education, the Scottish Government has been working closely with Education Scotland to develop a national resource, from the available resources developed through the programme. This is for schools and practitioners to use as part of the curriculum and to build on their own skills, confidence and experience. Many of the projects funded by the Scottish Government such as Sense Over Sectarianism, Nil by Mouth and Citizens Theatre, are actively working with schools and teachers in Scotland.
- The Scottish Government has been working with the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) in HMYOI Polmont along with the Scottish Government-funded I SEE! Scotland project, delivered by Cambridge University.
- Scottish Government Ministers, including the Minister for Community Safety and Legal Affairs, Annabelle Ewing MSP, have been invited by Police Scotland to view the policing operation at football matches, such as the Celtic versus Rangers match that took place on 10 September 2016.
- The then Minister for Community Safety and Legal Affairs, Paul Wheelhouse MSP, attended a National Church Leaders discussion in March 2016 which brought together Church Leaders to discuss sectarianism and the role churches can play in communities. This event aligned with the work of the 'In Wi' the Mix' partnership project who have been working with religious leaders increase commitment to develop and model how to respond to sectarianism. This work continues through

the project and they are hoping to make more progress with a further discussion day scheduled in 2017.

- The Scottish Government Active Scotland policy team has been in close contact with football's governing bodies to bring together key figures in Scottish football to discuss the question of 'if not strict liability, then what?'
- The Scottish Government continue to work proactively with a number of the institutions identified by the Advisory Group, assisting them where possible to work towards the recommendations set for them in the final Advisory Group report.

## **Working Definition**

### **Recommendation:**

**5.7.28 The Scottish Government continue to seek the help of communities across Scotland to craft a definition, which is easily understood, useful for analysing what is happening in local areas, and covers as far as possible the breadth of manifestations of this complex phenomenon.**

## **Responses to the Review**

The Scottish Government continues to seek views from all communities on the working definition of sectarianism, through its work with all 20 funded projects and a wider reach online through YouthLink Scotland. A survey canvassing views is available through the Action on Sectarianism website and responses received will continue to be collated with a view to informing debate on changes to a future definition.

Importantly, the Scottish Government recognises that sectarianism manifests itself in different ways in different parts of the country, so sectarianism in the east end of Glasgow will not be the same as sectarianism in Inverness, and communities were therefore encouraged to define sectarianism as it manifests itself in their community rather than having to apply a single inflexible definition.

## Scottish Parliament

### Recommendation:

**5.7.29 Leadership needs to be shown across all parties in the Scottish Parliament which encourages the acknowledgement of sectarianism where it is identified while refusing to turn it into a party-political football. This is essential if progress is to be maintained.**

**5.7.30 Demonstrates a willingness to act where action or resources are required to embed change in line with the report of the assets-based approach set out by the Christie Commission. Central to this is recognition of the fact that such approaches can only ever be successful if they are taken forward in a consistent long-term way and this can only be achieved if there is a shared political vision for this work.**

### Responses to the Review

A key element of the work of the Advisory Group was the engagement with all of the political parties represented in the Scottish Parliament. I am pleased to be able to confirm that this continued with this review and I was able to have discussions with Scottish Labour Party, Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party, Scottish Liberal Democrats and the Scottish Green Party to keep them fully up to date on progress and to discuss their priorities for tackling sectarianism. I appreciate the time that representatives from each party took to meet with me to discuss the role of leadership within the Scottish Parliament.

The Advisory Group was strongly of the view that sectarianism could only change if it remained a matter for common concern, and it is to the credit of all parties that there is clear agreement that sectarianism continues to be a pernicious issue which is stubbornly lingering in many communities across Scotland. All the representatives were in strong agreement that cross-party leadership needs to be shown between all parties, there was also a broad understanding that:

- A range of approaches were needed if sectarianism was to be tackled effectively. All of the party spokespeople recognised the need for education to be a central feature of any work to tackle social issues like sectarianism, but this was caveated by the need to ensure we do not simply burden our children with the full responsibility of ending sectarianism at some point in the future while allowing acts of sectarianism to go unchallenged in the here and now.
- Community-based approaches are an effective way of tackling these types of social issues. There was also some discussion about the geographical spread of work across Scotland and whether this should be focussed in Glasgow and/or the West of Scotland as these were still most often seen as being the areas with the most visible manifestations of sectarianism. All spokespeople had a reasonable knowledge of the range of projects which have been supported through the Scottish Government's Tackling Sectarianism Fund.



In the future, it will be essential that all of the parties represented continue to make common cause in recognising that sectarianism, in all of its forms, requires a robust and holistic approach to ensure it is deprived of the oxygen that has allowed it to thrive in the past.

### **Section 3: Findings and recommendations**

As the Advisory Group report illustrated, there is no single, simple answer to deep-seated issues of social division such as sectarianism. Real change will rely on a combination of actions, taken consistently, in communities and civil society, in responsible agencies and authorities and in legislation and government action.

This is reflected in the ‘mixed approach’ adopted by the Scottish Government, which includes public leadership, evidence-gathering, investigation and analysis and action at a variety of levels. The final Advisory Group report acknowledged that consistent principle is needed to encompass a variety of interventions to allow for differences in geography, class, age and gender, as well as for the different ways in which sectarianism is evident, for example, among young people, in different local authorities, sports organisations, schools, and in relation to marches and parades.

An approach which acknowledges that significant change depends on shared responsibilities runs the risk that it is misinterpreted as an issue for which nobody takes responsibility. The second, critical, dimension of the Advisory Group report was therefore to identify specific areas for specific action. The Minister’s invitation to revisit these proposals only 18 months after the publication of the final report of the Advisory Group was a real opportunity to mark progress or otherwise and a chance to revisit specific actions to see how far these had influenced behaviour since 2015. Specifically, I was able to:

- Highlight good practice and identify examples of good leadership which have been shown in relation to advancing the recommendations made by the Advisory Group.
- Identify areas where progress and leadership are lacking and where sectarianism has been allowed to go unchallenged.
- Highlight what further action is required to tackle sectarianism in Scotland and who is best placed to deliver this.

### **Blame and Denial**

#### **Findings**

There is evidence that the community funding programme has begun to allow for a more evidence-based and practical approach to sectarianism that has been absent until now. Nonetheless, sectarianism remains an issue which causes discomfort and a degree of uncertainty among people in authority. The evidence for this is complex but clear:

- Some of the responses to this exercise remained somewhat defensive and appeared to anticipate an unhelpful climate of blame or shame. While nobody denied the existence of residual sectarianism in general, sectarianism in any specific organisation or group was energetically refuted.

- Attempts to name sectarianism, for example in flute bands, football, education, journalism or political and cultural life, are more often than not met with energetic denial, and a sense that the remedy will be destructive of associations and passions which are regarded as positive.
- At the same time, responses to this Review by agencies such as Police Scotland and Youth Organisations, as well as the evidence of groups funded by the Scottish Government to tackle sectarianism, suggest that these issues remain significant in parts of Scotland.
- The demand for 'evidence' too often appears to be a mechanism for defensiveness and minimisation rather than a interested inquiry for further information.

## **Recommendations**

I make the following recommendations:

- The Scottish Government should continue to make clear that the priority is to end the behaviours, attitudes and structures that underpin sectarianism rather than 'name and shame' any individual or group. The emphasis should shift from historic 'blame' towards failure to act in the present.
- Where particular issues of sectarianism are identified, it is imperative that those with the ability to take specific actions do so, rather than hide behind general or shared responsibilities as a reason for inaction. The funding programme has created opportunities to highlight progress at community level to a wider audience, and these should continue to be encouraged.
- The maintenance and development of a quantitative and qualitative evidence base will be critical to ensuring action to prevent both denial and unevenced prejudice and to illustrate progress and achievement.

## **Mainstreaming**

### **Findings**

Sectarianism, like any '-ism', is not only a series of unique individual actions but a pattern of embedded attitudes, behaviours and structures which perpetuate exclusion, threat and isolation. A critical element of the Advisory Group Report was the recommendation that public bodies in Scotland should develop policies and capacity to identify and address issues of sectarianism where it emerged. In particular, we emphasised, that:

- Local authorities should develop an explicit capacity-led action to tackle sectarianism where appropriate, possibly through inter-agency working under Community Planning mechanisms.

- Sectarianism should eventually be treated routinely alongside other equalities, good relations and human rights issues within the frameworks of the relevant authorities.

The review process highlighted a number of issues:

- The Advisory Group proposed that local authorities should lead community responses to sectarianism. We found no consistent evidence that policy had been further developed to date.
- There is, however, evidence that particular local authorities have developed models of practice in relation to tackling sectarianism which have impacted on both the internal and external culture of the organisation. These models are highlighted in the report in relation to work by Nil by Mouth.
- There is evidence that the support of the Scottish Government for community-based practice in a variety of areas and locations has been an important element in developing better practice in local communities and better relationships with local authorities.
- I found very little direct evidence that tackling sectarianism is explicitly addressed within Community Planning in most of Scotland.
- The relationship between sectarianism, as it is manifest in inequality, public order, youth, schools, cultural and community life and other equalities and human rights issues remains disjointed rather than seamless.
- The Scottish Government could consider establishing a Forum for Community Cohesion Issues which could advise on tensions emerging at local level and on mechanisms for addressing these in a culture of responsibility rather than blame.

## **Recommendations**

I make the following recommendations:

- With notable exceptions, the response of local authorities, including the absence of any response to this review from COSLA, indicates a disappointing lack of urgency in relation to the findings of the Advisory Group. In the next period, local authorities should ensure that formal policy and practice guidelines are developed to address sectarianism at local level. This should include actions connected to other equalities issues.
- Local authorities should actively consider how best practice in tackling sectarianism can be shared more systematically across Scotland.

- In the event that further funding for community-based practice is made available by the Scottish Government, local authorities should be encouraged to partner with applicants to encourage capacity building and knowledge exchange between the voluntary and community sector and public bodies
- Community Planning frameworks should integrate sectarianism explicitly into equalities strategies and create a tool for greater focus and coherence. The explicit integration of sectarianism within local attitudes surveys and within equalities and hate crime monitoring frameworks might encourage this.
- Work by the Equality and Human Rights Commissions (EHRC) and by the Scottish Human Rights Commission (SHRC) to identify both the difficulties and potential pathways to mainstreaming is important if sectarianism is to be treated within a 'normal' approach to human rights, good relations and equality.
- A review of hate crime legislation should consider how sectarianism and sectarian incidents could be integrated into a more general approach.

## **Football**

### **Findings**

The Advisory Group's final report expressly stated that sectarianism in Scotland is not exclusive to Football. Having said that, the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey published in 2014 confirmed that Scottish people associate sectarian behaviour very closely with behaviour at football matches, with the symbolism of colours and identity, and in the wider youth and social media culture connected with football. The full report can be found here: <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/02/6038/0>

As a consequence, the Advisory Report made clear that action was needed by the football authorities as an important contributor to tackling sectarianism in Scotland, indicating that the absence of any apparent interest or commitment in prioritising this issue among the football authorities left very few options other than the introduction of an approach consistent with the wider UEFA approach to tackling racism, known as strict liability. In the words of the report: "If not strict liability, then what?"

The review process highlighted the following issues:

- The supporting evidence for the association between football and sectarianism remains very strong, for example in the evidence of Police Scotland around the demands on police resources for football, on the evidence of the projects sponsored by the Scottish Government on the impact of football and sectarian behaviour on behaviour at community level, in the evidence of the 2016 World Players Union (FIFpro) report (in which 23% of players surveyed reported that they were the victims of discrimination on a matchday), and in the evidence of social media

being used in an extremely aggressive and sometimes intimidatory manner.

- Discussions with the SPFL and the Scottish FA in relation to tackling sectarianism remain frustratingly circular. There appears to be a belief that football is singled out as a 'scapegoat' for a more general social issue and that football authorities and clubs have little scope to act independently. Issues of sectarianism in Scotland are often minimised or attributed largely to other elements in society. The authorities highlighted the role of wider social pressures and of the media in encouraging the use of terms such as 'battle' and 'war' in relation to football. Of the very wide range of interests and institutions we talked to – including other areas where blame has long been attached, such as education and marches and parades – the place where we encountered the most consistent resistance to taking responsibility for further action was in football.
- The evolution of sectarianism from strictly 'religious' antagonism to political/ethnic/cultural rivalry is presented as evidence that the issue no longer requires attention. Football authority officials also expressed the view that there has been significant change over the last 5 years and a sharp reduction in sectarian singing at matches.
- Since the final Advisory Group report, the football authorities have engaged directly with officials from the Scottish Government, while making clear that they do not support the strict liability approach. In its place, the football authorities have proposed a revised and more robust approach to tackle unacceptable conduct, including, but not restricted to, sectarian behaviour. Indeed, it is the view of the football authorities that the use of so-called 'pyros' or flares at football grounds is currently more of a risk to supporter safety. Once these changes have been approved by the SPFL Board, the evaluation and monitoring of unacceptable conduct should begin by the start of the new 2017-18 football season.
- The Scottish FA have invested £30,000 in the Supporter Liaison Officer programme across Scotland – funding matched by the Scottish Government – and appointed a Diversity and Inclusion Manager to work with relevant organisations and to create a co-ordinated programme of education to serve the whole of Scottish Football.
- In relation to grassroots football, the Scottish FA emphasised the significance of 'Positive Coaching Scotland.' This is focussed on young players and aims to promote positive values, although it does not directly address sectarianism in football.

## Recommendations

I make the following recommendations:

- Change in the approach to displays of sectarianism or the expression of sectarianism in public in Scotland will not occur without change in the culture of football. This is not a question of singling out football for blame or of an exclusive focus on football. On the contrary, the current focus on football has become inevitable because it is the most obvious area of Scottish life where the expression of hatred on sectarian grounds is tolerated, normalised and yet simultaneously denied, with those who point this out dismissed. Every effort should continue to be made to involve the football authorities, clubs, supporters organisations and youth organisations directly in active measures to address sectarian behaviour and attitudes in football.
- In its final report, the Advisory Group was careful to underline that football was only one part of the jigsaw of sectarianism in Scotland. The Group also recognised the risk that external solutions such as strict liability could have unintended consequences which could be avoided through a constructive and collaborative approach to addressing sectarianism with those directly involved in football. The continuing reluctance of the football authorities to demonstrate serious commitment on this issue, means that strict liability must remain a real and present option.
- The football authorities have brought forward proposals to improve their ability to address unacceptable conduct. They have worked closely with the Scottish Government Active Scotland policy team to develop initial proposals in this area. While these are obviously welcome, I am sceptical that they will be sufficient to change the evident sectarian behaviour in Scottish football, and I remain seriously concerned that the primary concern of the authorities remains to avoid responsibility rather than to take action. However, in keeping with the spirit of the Advisory Group's Report that change should be evidence-based and collaborative, the sincerity and effectiveness of these proposals must now be explicitly and fully tested. Mechanisms to monitor and evaluate progress should be identified as soon as possible so as to allow shared evaluation of the outcomes from next season in 2017-18. At minimum, a successful outcome must be evidenced by:
  - A measurable reduction in police presence before, during and after football matches required to prevent violence or disturbance.
  - Measurable evidence that sectarian singing at football matches has reduced and has been replaced by other forms of identification.

- Measurable evidence that Positive Coaching Scotland is effective in addressing issues among young football, including sectarianism.
  - A measurable reduction in the reports of abuse of players by members of the crowd.
  - Measurable evidence of a reduction in aggressive and intimidatory social media associated with football and sectarianism.
  - A commitment, including a financial commitment, by football clubs and authorities to anti-sectarian programmes with young people, including active engagement with projects supported by the Scottish Government.
- A baseline study to enable a monitoring framework should be established by agreement with the Scottish Government, the football authorities, Police Scotland and other relevant stakeholders. The outcomes of robust monitoring and evaluation on this basis should be published annually to allow for a genuine debate about the extent of sectarian behaviour and attitudes in football, its impact on culture and the effectiveness of measures to reduce it, and to help further reviews.
  - Consideration should be given to ensuring that sectarian aggression is fully included within any revised definition of hate crime in Scotland.

## **Education and Young People**

### **Findings**

Education and tackling sectarianism among younger people remains a priority. The Advisory Group was clear that change in this area needed to be effective and consistent. The Review found:

- Following work sponsored by the Scottish Government to tackle sectarianism, the quality of educational resources available to teachers and facilitators to deal with sectarianism has improved. However, it is impossible to tell how often these are used in the classroom and how they are integrated into the curriculum on other equalities.
- Ensuring consistency of approach on equalities issues across all schools in Scotland remains important. While the needs and priorities of schools may vary, this remains an issue of uncertainty.
- Resources and teaching materials depend on confident teachers and support. Opportunities to develop good practice and support teacher training in this area continue to depend on committed individuals and schools.



- The Advisory Group was clear that tackling sectarianism was not dependent on the closure of one sort of school or another. However, they were also clear that progress depended on active local partnerships and relationships developing between schools at local level. It is not clear that this has been a priority to date.
- The importance of peer education and youth work approaches was highlighted by the Advisory Group. The use of web resources was widely praised as a model of how youth work can support intervention not only on sectarian issues but on all equalities issues.

## **Recommendations**

I make the following recommendations:

- It is important that Education Scotland is seen to lead on equalities issues in schools, including sectarianism. Maintaining a visible commitment to this issue in the coming years is vital, especially after the publication of resources on 22 February.
- Mechanisms to monitor the use of resources would help to ensure that change is supported in the classroom and with young people.
- Highlighting the importance of monitoring equalities within inspection in schools should be considered. This would offer an opportunity to recognise models of good practice, as well as identifying practical opportunities for improvement. Sectarian issues should be explicitly part of any equalities inspection framework.
- Local partnerships between schools of different backgrounds should be encouraged, including sharing of resources and topics of interest.
- The inclusion of anti-sectarianism as an element in teacher education remains an area for active development.
- Youth work providers should be encouraged to learn from the experience of the groups funded by the Scottish Government under its tackling sectarianism programme as a model for other equalities issues.

## **Other Issues**

### **Findings**

In the course of this Review a number of other issues were raised which merit direct comment:

- The value of a community-based approach was emphasised by many people including local authorities and VAF. While the Advisory Group was clear that funding should not be permanent or create a separate 'sector', this review was made aware of the value of the capacity which voluntary

and community base organisations can make to addressing sectarianism in real situations.

- Detailed work on marches and parades is the subject of a separate and parallel Review undertaken by Dr Michael Rosie and published by the Scottish Government in October 2016. Dr Rosie makes a number of key recommendations to help fine tune a system that, by and large, works well. All partners, including marching and parading organisations, local authorities, Police Scotland and, where appropriate, the Scottish Government, should be encouraged to give full consideration to these recommendations. Progress has been made in terms of marshalling events and in liaison with the police and local authorities.
- In the course of the Review, the issue of the press and the approach of the press to sectarianism in Scotland emerged. There have been no formal changes to press approaches to this issue since the final Advisory Group report and complaints continue to be regulated on a UK-wide basis. In general, the press are strongly opposed to external regulation as an infringement of freedom of speech and believe that progress depends on specific evidence rather than general allegation.

## **Recommendations**

I make the following recommendations:

- The programme to support community-based projects in tackling sectarianism has increased capacity and engagement with this issue, has developed models of intervention for wide application and has raised the issue of sectarianism as a practical one for intervention in society at large. Further funding for community organisations in tackling sectarianism should be tied to explicit outcomes and learning. The key priorities in the short term appear to be building capacity at local authority level, in schools and among professionals working with young people, among young people in inter-church and inter-faith work and in sport-related activity. There is no obligation to provide public support to any specific identity-group, except where that support can deliver shared outcomes.
- Parading organisations should continue to develop their engagement with communities, police and local authorities. This is the primary vehicle for improving the climate around processions and parades. The recommendations in Dr Rosie's report should also apply to Councils and the police.
- Precisely because sectarianism remains both contested and controversial, the availability of robust data and information in this area remains critical. In particular, the maintenance of information on sectarianism within equalities, data on violent crime and hate crime and social attitudes should be prioritised. In addition, qualitative information should be encouraged and enhanced.



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