



Racist Incident Referral and Support Service Project

Summary of Racist Incidents reported June –September 2013

Remarks

This is the first Summary Report of Racist Incident taken by the lead agency (Sligo Family Resource Centre) on behalf of the Interagency Group. This report covers period from June 17th, 2013 up to September 25, 2013. Note that the Interagency Group members have committed their positive support to overseeing the establishment of a racist incidents recording and support service in County Sligo and to promoting equality and inclusion. The Group strongly opposes racism and racist abuse in any form.

The Racist Incident Referral and Support Service is driven and supported by the Interagency which also has a two-tier structure: a Working Group which decides on overall policy and strategy and Key personnel contact support casework which will record, support and /or refer victims and witness of racist incidents.

The collaborative nature of the Interagency Group, which includes representatives of most local agencies, provides a powerful form of accountability.

This project is led and coordinated by Sligo Family Resource Centre and has been funded by the PEACE III Programme through the European Union's European Regional Development Fund managed for the Special EU Programme Body by Sligo County Council on behalf of Sligo Peace and Reconciliation Partnership Committee.

Racist Incidents June- September 2013

The incidents hereunder were recorded within the accepted definition of a Racist Incident **“Any incident that is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person”**

(Source: MacPherson Report 1999) as adopted by Gardaí Síochána.

It must be said and repeated that prior to the birth of this project; there have never been any records or statistics about racist incidents specifically in County Sligo. It would be neither fair nor accurate to talk about increase in racist incidents during the last 4 months starting from June without having any reference to previous statistics. Any monthly increase should be attributed to publicity and awareness around the new service. Therefore, this report will highlight increase in racist incident reporting, not merely in racist incident rise.

17 June 2013- 2 Cases reported (just after the project launch) + 1 case directly referred to the Immigrant Council of Ireland

July 2013: 4 Incidents Reported 100% increase

August 2013: 5 Incidents Reported 250% Increase

September 2013: 6 Incidents Reported 300% Increase

Out of the 17 Incidents reported; 1 has been referred to Gardaí, 1 has been referred to Immigrant Council of Ireland, 6 were brought to the attention of service providers concerned, 1 generalised case that concerns a certain group of people is pending, 7 have been recorded with no follow up.

Incidents recorded during this period range from institutional racism (2 cases) and Individual racism (15 cases). They relate to refusal to private rented accommodation, lesser treatment at different service provision counters, abuse by other clients in public and private businesses, racial abuse in public places including streets and car park, prejudices and negative attitudes towards clients from ethnic minority background of Asian and black origins, verbal abuse and alleged assault in housing estates and discrimination in sport and leisure facilities.

Whilst the impact on the individual or community cannot be underestimated, fewer of these incidents appear to relate to spontaneous verbal abuse fuelled by ignorance and/or alcohol or occurring during other anti-social behaviour. While this by no means reduces the impact of these incidents, there is no evidence of apparent consistent violence accompanying reported racist Incidents or coming from a particular grouping of people/individuals. Nevertheless, what stands out is that all of the above incidents were directed to ethnic minority black people and /or Asians or Arabic origins. Refugees and asylum seeking groups suffering the most.

At the exception of one particular service providing agency, the majority of these incidents appear to be random events and no pattern has been identified, but the following are factors which may have contributed to the increase in reported racist incidents in Co. Sligo:

- Publicity around the service and ethnic minority interest into the service. This has widely contributed to encourage the reporting of racist incidents to the service especially in light of the involvement / support from
- Increased confidence in the ethnic minority individuals especially after the setting up of the Sligo Intercultural Forum; increased media coverage of racism issues generally and greater awareness that such incidents can be reported.
- Support from and involvement of Gardaí Siochana in Sligo has warden off fear of repercussion.

Over the same period, it has become apparent that Co. Sligo, like much of the country, is not immune to racism which is anecdotally blamed to economic downturn. Sligo still host a good number of people seeking asylum and attracts black and other minority ethnic individuals coming to study or to work locally.

It will become essential for all partners and the wider community to engage further with these minority groups and their representatives to ensure appropriate inclusion.

In conclusion, Racist Incident Referral and Support Service project together with the Interagency Group continue to be active in promoting racist incident reporting and promoting effective diversity working practices across the community. It can be foreseen that there will be both continued opportunities and continued need for initiatives aimed at the creation of inclusive strategies and policies in all agencies and across all private, voluntary and statutory service provision. This is how we could foster a culture where racism is not tolerated and a more cohesive and inclusive Sligo society.

Let's work together towards this goal

I have every confidence that if this service is sustained, it would not take long before we start reaping rewards.

On behalf of the Interagency Group

Deo Ladislas Ndakengerwa, Coordinator

Members of the Interagency Group:

Sligo Family Resource Centre, Gardaí Siochana Sligo, Sligo Leader Partnership, Sligo County Council, Sligo Borough, Diversity Sligo, AREMOJO, West Sligo Family Resource Centre, Sligo Traveller Support Group, Sligo Education Centre, Rape Crisis Centre Sligo, Domestic Violence Advocacy Service, Health Executive Services, Life Start, Springboards, Bridgestock Ltd., Ballymote Family Resource Centre, Foroige, Sligo-Leitrim Filipino Association, Sligo Volunteering Centre and Sligo Intercultural Forum.



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