

Day of Reflection

Proposal: Wider support for the 21st June to be annually marked as a Day for Reflection on the impact and effect of the conflict in and about Northern Ireland.

Guiding principles & values

- There is no date in the calendar which is not important or significant to someone affected by the conflict.
- The importance of remembering those who on a daily basis live with profound consequences of the conflict.
- Acknowledgement of the deep hurt and loss caused by the conflict in and about Northern Ireland.
- There is value in identifying a particular date in the calendar where people can collectively reflect on the dire impacts of the conflict on individuals, communities and the wider society.
- Such looking back is required in order that those previously hurt by the conflict, and society in general can look forward.
- Recognition that the 21st of June is already significant for many people who have participated in activities of reflection over several consecutive years.
- The value of reflecting on how our own current attitudes and behaviours have the potential to negatively impact on others and undermine good relations in wider society.

Benefits & Challenges

Benefits

- Can be an opportunity for individuals and groups to reflect.
- Can be an inclusive opportunity for all to reflect on the same day, but not necessarily together.
- Can link remembering to reflecting and looking forward.
- Existing support and engagement with 21st June as a Day of Reflection.
- Materials and resources are already available.

Challenges

- How to find appropriate ways to reflect.
- Sharing a day with people whose views or opinions one does not share.
- How to enabling people to see that we all played a role in the past, and that reflecting on that role can help us move forward constructively.
- To understand that many feel unable to engage with the Day of Reflection until their more immediate needs are met.

Rationale

A Day of Reflection is offered as an inclusive and positive experience that emphasises a commitment to a peaceful new society. It provides a voluntary opportunity for everyone in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, Great Britain and further afield to reflect upon the conflict in and about Northern Ireland, and the future that is before us. Independent research conducted over successive years has indicated that the pilot initiatives by Healing Through Remembering, focusing on the 21st of June as the Day of Reflection, have had a positive impact on those who participated.

What is needed?

- Support for the Day of Reflection from a wide range of participants, stakeholders and government bodies.
- That the Day is not seen to be owned or controlled by the interests of any one group/sector.
- That the Day is seen as offering a space and process of reflection by all.

This is one of a set of HTR proposals on dealing with the past relating to the conflict in and about Northern Ireland. HTR believes these proposals would be best implemented as a comprehensive response to ensure that a range of complex but interrelated needs are met.



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