

the feud
and the fury...

the response of the community sector
to the Shankill feud, August 2000



SPRINGFIELD INTERCOMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

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to the Shankill feud, August 2000

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The Feud and the Fury

why?

This report is undoubtedly written from the perspective and draws on the experience of the community sector as well as the victims, who lived through the events of the 'Shankill Feud'.

On the 19th of August 2000 events unfolded that were to have a severe impact on almost everyone who lived in the Greater Shankill and Lower Oldpark areas of Belfast. The repercussions continue to this day and will have severe implications far into the future. In our recording of events that occurred during the Shankill Feud it was never our intention to apportion blame.

Our experience as an organisation in the field of conflict resolution has been that hindsight is indeed a useful tool. We must use it wisely in order to extract the inevitable learning in even the direst of situations. It is only if we reflect and learn from conflictual situations, which by their very nature carry a heavy human cost that we can in any way contribute to change. In order that events are not repeated and we can move forward, we need to reflect on our practice and responses. So it is with a view to learning that we present this report.

When it came to writing our analysis we carefully considered the interviews we carried out with families, organisations and agencies and the vast amount of information collected. It became very apparent to us that we had three very different perspectives to consider. Firstly, we had the heartbreaking stories of individuals and families who were caught up in a violent dispute between two paramilitary organisations. Secondly, we had the resultant impact on and responses of statutory agencies tasked with helping all affected deal with the consequences. Finally, we had the Shankill community itself and the overall context within which all these events occurred.

At the outset of the feud the verocity and speed at which events deteriorated took everyone by surprise, although in hindsight many would say that they had seen it coming for a long time. That Saturday started like any other Saturday. There had been some discussion about the cultural parade, which was to take place on the Shankill Road. There was excited anticipation in some communities and unease in others. Nobody could imagine what was to come. The result was that when events played out as they did the community was thrown into a convulsive state. There was much misinformation and a plethora of accusations and counter allegations as to the cause of the initial displacements. In the midst of all of this the local community was in shock. Community organisations and groups appeared to be unable or unwilling to act, however, in most cases they were simply at a loss as to what to do.

In the absence of an immediate response by either the community, voluntary or statutory sectors some political parties, ex-prisoner groups and our own organisation filled the vacuum. Almost by default we became the main support and channel of information for families, individuals and community groups. Progressively our role changed and we became advocates on behalf of very traumatised individuals and families. SICDP realised early on that it would be impossible to publish a report that would cover all the issues raised in relation to the various parties involved. These issues were complex and inter-related, but we decided, in agreement with the families and community activists to deal with them by publishing a report in two parts. We now present part one, which draws on the experiences of activists and agencies that responded to the challenges as they arose on a daily basis. Part two of this report will detail the experiences of the families and will be published in the autumn.

This report has taken almost a year to produce but the effort, time, commitment and dedication of the community activists who worked with the displaced families is immeasurable and still ongoing. It needs to be recognised that from 3pm on the 19th of August 2000 activists were engaged in an ever-changing and volatile scenario, not knowing what the next hour would bring. We hope this report promotes debate on the issues raised and is an acknowledgement of the work of activists caught up in events, which were not of their own making.

Róisín McGlone
SICDP

The Feud and the Fury

section one

Introduction

This report is an endeavour to record the response of the community sector and its work in supporting displaced families during the Shankill feud. We also aim to document the response of the statutory agencies, specifically the North and West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and the Social Security Agency during this period. In the autumn of this year a second report, which details the stories of the displaced families will be published. This report also chronicles how the community sector continues to develop and learn new approaches to working in partnerships with other sectors. In the course of the report it will become evident that meaningful partnerships between community organisations and the statutory sector still need to develop. Now is the time to reflect on what we have learned and what can be done in the future to provide better public services. Hopefully, with the publication of the two reports and the proposed recommendations, clear guidelines will be put in place that will help families and communities in times of crisis.

It is beyond the scope of this report to outline either the full background to the so-called 'Shankill feud' or to report on all of the key events. As with many aspects of political history in Northern Ireland the roots of the feud can be traced back over a number of years before the recent difficulties. Suffice to say that the geographical area affected encompassed the Greater Shankill area, including Lower Oldpark. Beyond Greater Belfast tensions were high in Newtownabbey, Carrickfergus, Larne, Antrim and the North West. Within the current context the key date

was August 19th 2000 - the date of the Cultural Parade and Festival in the Shankill and the commencement date of the first displacements. The effects of the feud on the community are devastating, long-term and multifaceted-tragedy is evident on many levels.

The greatest tragedy is, of course, the loss of life and the resultant suffering for families. During this period, there were two additional deaths in North Belfast though they were deemed to be unrelated to the Shankill feud. Those who lost their lives in relation to the feud were as follows:-

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| • August 21st 2000: | Jackie Coulter
Bobby Mahood |
| • August 23rd 2000: | Sam Rocket |
| • October 28th 2000: | David Greer |
| • October 31st 2000: | Bertie Rice
Tommy English |
| • November 1st 2000: | Markie Quail |

In addition to the loss of life, which was the most obvious aspect of the feud, came the tragedy at community level, which was focused on by the media. From August 19th families and individuals were forced under threat (or perceived threat) to leave their homes throughout the Greater Shankill area, including the Lower Oldpark area. The feud has divided the community and local people now perceive Agnes Street as the 'peaceline' that divides the Upper and Lower Shankill. The scale of the social dislocation in the area is illustrated by the fact that at December 2000 the Northern Ireland Housing Executive's figures indicated that 239 cases (families and individuals) had been granted 'A1 Intimidation' status, which refers to people who had been forced to leave their home as a

¹For the purposes of brevity the term 'displaced' will be used as shorthand for 'displaced, dispersed and distressed' in this report. This is done with the full recognition that these groups need to be considered in their own right rather than as a homogenous group.

result of intimidation. (see Appendices 1 & 2) These figures, though stark, do not accurately reflect the scale of the problem. A new phrase coined by those caught up in the feud indicated more accurately the full range of the dislocation - 'the displaced, dispersed and distressed'¹. The Housing Executive's figures only define the extent of the problem in relation to the 'displaced'. It is much more difficult to quantify the 'dispersed' i.e. people who stayed with friends or family because they were under threat at their place of residence. The extent to which people were 'distressed' by the events in the Shankill is impossible to quantify at this stage and will form the focus of much of the work to be undertaken by both the statutory and community sectors over a number of years.

The report is limited in its aims in that it does not attempt to cover the full range of events and experiences generated by the feud. The report therefore covers the experience of a sample of the displaced and their representatives. For the purpose of the report we interviewed community representatives that are associated with different constituencies in the Shankill and Lower Oldpark area. Whilst these categories are imperfect, we hope there is a broad understanding of the classification system we have employed. Firstly, there was a group that was drawn to and organised around the Ex-Prisoners Interpretative Centre (Woodvale Road), the Greater Shankill Alternatives Project and the Progressive Unionist Party. The second group was organised around the Ulster Democratic Party and Community House (Lower Shankill) and a third group of local residents and community activists in Lower Oldpark. With regard to the statutory sector again a limited number of key players is covered namely the North and West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust, the Social Security Agency and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. These statutory organisations are key players in the Interagency Working Group on

Displaced Families which was initiated to co-ordinate the operational arrangements for families and individuals intimidated out of their homes in 1996.

That is not to imply in any way that those representatives, organisations, groups, events and experiences not included are in some way secondary or of less importance.

Aims

This report has a number of aims:

- To highlight the role of the community sector and offer a community response
- To put in context the issue of displacement and the consequential suffering of families
- To explore the response of the statutory sector and the operation of the Interagency Working Group on Displaced Families
- To explore the interaction between the community representatives and the statutory sector
- To make recommendations which reflect the key learnings

Methodology

The recording of events along the interface and the surrounding communities is an integral part of the work undertaken by Springfield Inter-Community Development Project (SICDP). In doing so, it enables the organisation to evaluate their performance and consider areas of further development. Springfield Inter-Community Development Project felt it was necessary to document the ongoing events during the Shankill feud and requested support from Counteract. Counteract was formed in 1990 with the sponsorship and support of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions in Northern Ireland.² Counteract's Community Unit has a particular remit to investigate and highlight the nature and extent of intimidation. Counteract supplied a

²The aims of Counteract is to: empower groups/ organisations in the voluntary/community, public and private sectors to address sectarianism, equity and diversity issues at individual, organisational and group levels. It also encourages organisations to initiate, implement, manage and sustain fundamental changes within their structures, policies and organisational culture.

researcher, who accompanied the Director of SICDP to various meetings and arranged interviews with key people in both the Lower and Upper Shankill Road as well as with statutory organisations. This report aimed to draw evidence from the widest range of sources bearing in mind the limited resources available. To facilitate the generation of information two main approaches were employed. The first approach was non-participant observation. Considerable time was spent in and around the Shankill Road establishing relationships initially with the 'displaced, dispersed and distressed' and their representatives and observing the daily roles and routines adopted.

The second approach is based on the generation of a number of case studies, which will form the second report. Following discussions with community representatives, during which the nature and extent of the information to be generated was discussed in full, it was agreed that a number of case studies would be produced to highlight the experience of individuals and families. Individuals were selected following discussion with community representatives who then made the initial approach to the potential interviewees. When permission was granted a time and venue was agreed for interview - the interviews were all conducted in a suitably safe environment for interviewees with their representatives in close attendance.

A semi structured interview approach was employed to provide some direction although the success of this approach varied between interviews. Experience on the Shankill Road had suggested that women were much keener to relate their experiences and this proved to be the case in the formal interview environment. As a result, a very informal approach was later adopted when interviewing men. Each interviewee was given a full explanation of the research aims and objectives and the nature of the interview to be undertaken. Assurances of confidentiality and anonymity were given to interviewees although a number of interviewees waived the right of anonymity, content that their

stories were already 'public'.

A sample of statutory bodies were also included in this stage of the research. The case studies of statutory bodies was conducted using an interview approach in conjunction with analysis of relevant reports, including minutes from meetings of the Interagency Working Group on Displaced Families. This approach was undertaken to demonstrate the operation of the statutory sector. These interviews were generated through direct request to the statutory bodies in question.

The report is presented in a number of sections:

Section 1 offers background information relating to communal disturbances during the summer of 1996 and the statutory and community responses.

Section 2 details the response of the community sector during the Shankill feud and describes the involvement of Springfield Inter-Community Development Project, EPIC, Community House and Lower Oldpark activists.

Section 3 examines the effectiveness of the statutory sector and the Interagency Working Group on Displaced Families though a number of interviews with key statutory providers, namely:

- The North and West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust
- The Northern Ireland Housing Executive
- The Social Security Agency

Section 4 presents a number of conclusions and recommendations.

Displaced Families: The 1996 experience

Due to the increased tensions during the summer period there is a history of displacements and civil disturbances throughout Northern Ireland. For the purposes of this report an analysis of those which took place in 1996 might prove useful to this report, in light of procedures and community response activated in the aftermath of those displacements.

During the summer of 1996 Northern Ireland faced a difficult and violent reaction to the events surrounding the Drumcree issue. During the week of the 12th of July we faced massive community disruption, which eventually led to violence on the streets and damage to property right across Northern Ireland. This situation had the most impact on interface communities in Belfast. Over the first few weeks of July, North Belfast, which has the greatest concentration of interface communities, sustained high incidents of inter-communal violence. As a consequence, eighty-seven families left their homes as a result of direct or perceived intimidation.

The statutory, voluntary and community sectors were completely unprepared for these events which were sudden and concentrated both in terms of time and geographical location. This was complicated by the fact that there were no procedures or structures for dealing with massive movements of population and the associated severe implications in terms of personal and community trauma. The very logistical issues of securing property and belongings, moving families, providing temporary and subsequently permanent accommodation and dealing with the hardship and heartache that resulted from the events that occurred was stressful and traumatic for all involved. Moreover, these practical issues occurred against a backdrop of exceptional community and political upheaval. What also contributed most to the difficulties was that the needs arising from displaced families could not be dealt with by one agency. Not only were families forced to leave their homes but also they suffered enormous difficulties due to the structure of the public administration system.

Families had to deal with a wide range of agencies and departments all with different sets of procedures and administrative structures.

Community response to the events of 1996

Community activists in North Belfast, where most of the families were 'displaced' (a term that came into common usage at that time), attempted to organise in order to deal with the range of issues that surfaced, in terms of information gathering and dissemination, the needs of the families and the needs of the local community. Much of this work was co-ordinated by the Community Development Centre (CDC) located on the Cliftonville Road in North Belfast. The CDC found itself at the centre of a community response to the events that had unfolded over the July period. The role of liaison, lobbying and negotiation with the statutory agencies and government departments was critical and CDC found itself in that role fairly quickly. Faced with a lack of statutory co-ordinating bodies or existing community structures to deal with these issues CDC was best placed to bring together a group of community activists working with the local communities affected and those who were working with displaced families. This group became known as the "Families in Crisis Group" (FICG). At this time Roisin McGlone and Deirdre McBride were working on an interface project in CDC and were key activists in the co-ordinating, servicing and supporting of the FICG. Roisin recalls, "It wasn't easy. None of our work or community experience had prepared any of us for the complexity and range of problems we were encountering as each day passed, bringing with them new sets of challenges". However, the community activists quickly identified a number of key issues.

- There was no structure to co-ordinate information from or about the many different agencies involved in assessing the needs of the families. This resulted in frustration and anger on the part of those displaced since they were sent from agency to agency in different parts of Belfast having to retell their story time and time again. Furthermore, this approach led to confusion regarding the sequence in which families

needed to visit the agencies in order to obtain particular services and financial help. It became clear that families needed to have particular information (e.g. documentation regarding property damage/loss from the RUC) before other agencies could process their cases.

- The Social Security system was ill-equipped to deal with the influx of claims. Families had to make claims in many different offices depending on where they had been placed in temporary accommodation and there was little consistency in how their claims were processed. In particular, it emerged that the Social Fund legislation was seriously inadequate for dealing with the needs of displaced families. There was a discrepancy between what Westminster legislation believed was necessary for the Social Fund and the financial needs of people facing sectarian intimidation and displacement in Northern Ireland.
- Due to the civil unrest and the reluctance of furniture removal firms to enter areas in North Belfast it was difficult to secure the houses and remove the belongings of many of the families who had left their homes. This was compounded by the fact that one of the two firms contracted by the Housing executive for 'normal' removals were unable to fulfil their duties because of a contractual commitment elsewhere.
- Families were temporarily moved to hotels as the Northern Ireland Housing Executive's list for hostel accommodation was filled within the first week. A consequence of this was that families experienced serious financial strain, many of whom were on state benefit. Since cooking facilities were not available in the hotels families had difficulty meeting the extra cost eating out. Additionally, the extra cost of laundry, transportation and other hidden costs accumulated since they had to leave even the most basic necessities in storage.
- The availability of the housing stock in North Belfast to re-house families was already limited and quickly

became stretched to the limit. It was clear that families would have to stay in temporary accommodation for a very long time before housing became available.

- Families felt vulnerable, isolated and alienated in hostels and hotel rooms. They found it difficult to occupy their children and felt out of place or 'labelled' when they were outside the room. Displaced families felt an acute need to have support and advice from their families and community representatives during this difficult time. However, many of the hostels and hotels were on a different side of town from their communities and extended families. Even more problematic was the difficulty regarding transportation since most of the hotels were not on bus routes and families could not afford to travel back and forth in taxis.
- The trauma suffered by families and particularly children was severe. Since it was the summer holidays it was difficult for parents to provide any sort of routine stability or sense of normality for families. Young mothers, particularly single parents, felt that the stress was unrelenting. This was exacerbated by the fact that they were dealing with the many bureaucratic procedures, which only provided the most basic needs for their families. In the absence of community based counselling services families also had to deal with their children's trauma and their own concerns, especially regarding long term effects of the upheaval.

Community workers in CDC were aware that many of these issues were longer-term issues but decided to address as many of them as quickly as possible. This work took on two distinct foci; a community response and statutory intervention. First, community representatives gathered information and disseminated it to as many of the families as possible. This was done by organising meetings in hotels and hostels for families and eventually held regular meeting for the families in CDC where advice workers were provided. The other focus was on the statutory

agencies themselves. Where there was room for agencies to be flexible community activists encouraged them to remain adaptable and supplied current information on the status of the displaced. However, where there was a little room to manoeuvre, community workers attempted to change procedures. There was some success as some of the agencies changed procedures and practice but there were others who either could not or were not willing to do so. It would be counter productive at this stage to give a blow by blow account of how the community sector addressed these issues on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. Suffice it to say that in the short term many concerns were addressed in an informal way. In the long term changes were adapted as formal procedures, at least on paper.

Community solutions-short and long term

In the short term CDC lobbied the political parties, who then lobbied the Government (through the NIO) to set up a fund through which families could access money in emergency situations to meet some of their most basic and immediate needs over and above what the Social Fund could provide. This was very successful and money was allocated for this from the Making Belfast Work (now Belfast Regeneration Office) budget. The next problem concerned the administration of the fund. Social services had an implementation method through which they could give families financial assistance if children were considered 'at risk'. It was decided that this mechanism would be the quickest to implement and the Social Services office on the Antrim Road became the contact and distribution point. Positive feedback from the families confirmed that this was a welcomed initiative. They reported that even though the amounts were not large, a bit of money each week helped enormously and eased the financial strain. Families also felt that it was a recognition of the terrible pain that they suffered and an acknowledgement of the turmoil their lives were in. With the support of advice workers in CDC, Association of Independent Advice Centres (AIAC)

and the Belfast Interface Project, CDC continued to support families appealing decisions and helped represent families at reviews of the Social Fund. CDC dealt with many of the other issues that arose in an ad hoc manner but the overall learning for the CDC was that many issues the displaced families faced had to be dealt with in a long term, strategic manner. Whilst it was hoped that such a situation would never happen again, the reality was that forward planning had to take place, just in case displacements occurred in the future.

Upon reflection it became clear that the community sector also had to address long-term issues around the way it responded to the summer events and consider ways in which the community could develop models of practice that contributed to the minimising or transformation of community conflict. Meetings began with community activists in September 1997 through CDC's interface networks. Much of the discussion was focused around the community's confusion regarding what actually happened and how misconceptions and perceptions of events had contributed to fuelling an already volatile situation. From these discussions the idea of a community enquiry was formulated to examine the course of the events in North Belfast. The four aims of the enquiry were to:

1. Provide people with an opportunity to give their version of events so that these could be shared with others.
2. To consider the appropriateness of the response to the crisis amongst statutory bodies and other key players.
3. To identify from the submissions issues which the community sector could address to improve communication and dialogue within the area.
4. To consider the response required from the statutory and other key sectors in order to minimise hardship during periods of civil unrest.

The enquiry was undertaken by CDC throughout the winter of 1996 and the spring of 1997. The report that was published in June 1997 was entitled 'On the Edge' and was most successful in achieving aims 1

¹ Jarman, Neil (ed), 1997, 'On the Edge', Belfast: Community Development Centre, North Belfast

and 3. The statutory sector was reluctant to engage with the enquiry and it was decided to compile a second report that would address the issues of the statutory response. For many reasons this did not happen, primarily because there were other developments within that sector which eventually the community sector could feed into, namely, the Interagency Working Group for Displaced Families. The identification of common areas of concern in On the Edge indicated that there were many lessons to be learned for both the community and statutory sector. As the co-ordinator of the community enquiry, Roisin McGlone reflects, "I was both saddened and subsequently heartened by the process. It was stressful and painful to listen to and read many harrowing stories from traumatised families and communities. In saying that, much good has come from the analysis of what actually happened in North Belfast in the summer of 1996."

The findings of the report encouraged dialogue among community workers, who worked with CDC to create practical solutions to lessen communal tensions and rumours during the summer months. In particular there were three key developments that helped people working on the ground. First there was the creation of summer schemes and residentials for young people and secondly was the formation of the mobile phone network. Finally, the establishment of the Interagency Working Group for Displaced Families was developed as a vehicle to bring together statutory agencies and eventually community workers in an effort to develop preventative solutions for the summer violence.

Summer Schemes

A key community development was the establishment of summer schemes and diversionary projects for young people in an effort to prevent 'recreational rioting'. Funding support for these projects came from the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB), Community Relations Council (CRC) and Belfast European Partnership Board (BEPB) and was successfully extended to other areas of Belfast.

where was this in summer?

Not only did the scheme support the young people's project during the summer months but it operated year round. During the summer there were particular strategies, which took young people physically away from the area and provided a range of alternative activities such as residentials, outdoor pursuits (i.e. canoeing, hiking, bouldering) as well as team building and personal development courses.

Mobile Phone Network

The second initiative was the establishment of a mobile phone network. The mobile phone network was first piloted in North Belfast in the summer of 1997 in an effort to promote dialogue and dispel rumours within the interface area. After the summer CDC evaluated their progress and the network was refined and put into action again in the summer of 1998 and has been used in North Belfast and beyond ever since. The report ²'Drawing Back from the Edge', published by CDC describes the planning of the mobile phone network and the issues that arose. The mobile phone network was a co-operative programme between interface groups in North Belfast. Community groups were issued mobile phones with the agreement that there was 24 hour coverage for each phone. The network was co-ordinated through CDC, who kept track of the phone users and provided phone numbers of relevant statutory agencies (such as NIHE, Councillors, and Social Services). In doing so lines of communication were kept open between the Community Bridges staff at CDC, statutory agencies and local community groups. Moreover, the phone numbers of the network were passed on to the members of the Interagency Group and senior RUC officers in the Antrim Road, North Queen Street, Tennent Street and Greencastle RUC stations. On the other side of the Belfast, the Springfield Inter-Community Development Project also co-ordinated the mobile phone network in West Belfast.

The main function of the network was to :

- communicate with other areas within one's own community
- communicate along the interface to the other

² Jarman, Neil. 1999. Drawing Back from the Edge. Belfast: Community Development Centre, North Belfast

community

- communicate with local political leaders
- communicate with the police (when the group chose)
- contact statutory agencies (Jarman 1999: 31)

Initially there were difficulties obtaining funding for this project; however, Making Belfast Work and the NIO eventually agreed to fund the scheme. The mobile phone network enabled communication among key activists working along the interface and helped dispel tensions and prevent violence along the interface. Due to the success of the mobile phone network, the network was further developed and extended to other flashpoint areas in Northern Ireland during the summer months.

Most importantly, the mobile phone network in North and West Belfast enabled many people who previously did not have inter-community contact to begin work with the 'other side' and opened doors for inter-community work, some of which then developed into year-long programmes. Due to the success of the mobile phone network many other areas in Northern Ireland have used it as a tool to diffuse tension and provide communication in volatile situations.

It is clear that each of these new developments was instrumental in dispelling rumours, providing routes of communication, and hindering violence, riots and intimidation. Furthermore, the mobile network and the summer schemes helped build community infrastructure, extend inter-community relations and added to ongoing work in conflict resolution. The most important result was that during a time of high tension the level of conflict and violent outbreaks was significantly reduced, which meant that local people were not experiencing disruption, intimidation and living in fear. For many people in North Belfast, their quality of life was improved during the summer months.

By August 1998 the mobile phone network had been extended to other parts of Belfast and was operating in the Springfield Road area in West Belfast where it was

co-ordinated by Springfield Inter-Community Development Project (SICDP). Community workers and members of the SICDP management committee from both sides of the interface were involved with the network. This also proved to be a valuable means of communication among community workers during the first weeks of the Shankill feud. Currently, an evaluation of the mobile phone network is being conducted by the Community Relations Council and Belfast Regeneration Office.

Interagency Working Group for Displaced Families

After the summer of 1996 the Interagency Working Group for Displaced Families was created as a means to lay the groundwork for the development of procedures to deal with families who were displaced. A manual of Emergency Operational Procedures for Displaced Families was created specifically to ensure that there was a co-ordinated approach within the statutory sector to deal with displacements. (see Appendix 3)

The Interagency Group originally comprised of the North and West Health and Social Services Trust, the South and East Health and Social Service Health Trust, Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), Making Belfast Work (MBW) and the RUC. The membership of this group expanded to include the Social Security Agency (SSA), Belfast City Council, Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB), the Northern Ireland Office (NIO), community workers from the Belfast Interface Project, the Community Development Centre (CDC) and the Springfield Inter-Community Development Project (SICDP). Community activists felt it was of particular relevance that they were offered a place on the Interagency Group because they were often the first contact point for displaced families and worked year-round to promote inter-community dialogue, trust and future strategies. Based on the events of the summer of 1996, it is clear that community workers had an important and strategic role to play in an Interagency Group.

Inter
area
result

There were attempts by community representatives to push for further community involvement and consultation. Whilst this was not entirely unsuccessful, community workers believed that the statutory agencies in the Interagency Group resented community involvement and did not see the value in maintaining the Group. After three years of relative calm there was concern from community representatives as to whether or not the Interagency Group would continue. Even though the community sector pushed for annual updates for the Emergency

Procedures for Displaced Families, there was clear resistance to their efforts. During the displacements the Interagency Group should have been the main forum of communication and co-ordination among community and statutory organisations. Despite four years of preparation and annual updates, when it came to a crisis situation the carefully planned Emergency Procedures were not enacted. Unfortunately, the Group did not convene until September 2000, a month after the feud began.

