

Kirklees
Hate Crimes
Strategy 2013-2016

Stopping
Hate Crime
Starts Here

This strategy created in partnership by the Kirklees Hate Crime Strategic Group sets out the principles and objectives underpinning local service provision around hate incidents. It clarifies the links with other local strategies such as Health and Well-being and Economic prosperity as well as the links with local organisations and communities such as schools.

The strategy follows the 'Challenge it, Report it, Stop it – The Government's Plan to Tackle Hate Crime' published in March 2012 by the Coalition Government. The plan contains the following definition of hate crime, which is the one used for the purpose of this strategy:

In 2007 Criminal Justice agencies agreed that personal characteristics or strands which would be used for the purposes of hate crime monitoring would include disability, gender-identity, race, religion/faith and sexual orientation. Primarily, this was to ensure a consistent working definition to allow accurate recording and monitoring.

Note however that by definition **'any incident'** which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on one of the above personal characteristics is a Hate Incident and falls within the remit of this strategy.

Local Context

Local provision of services around Hate Crime is driven forward by a partnership approach, all with a commitment to the local Hate Crime Charter. Our over-arching aim is to increase awareness and to provide efficient third party reporting mechanisms to local victims. There are three main reporting channels available and these are the Police, a series of third party reporting centres and an online reporting facility hosted by the council.

A Hate Incident is recorded for 'any incident' which falls outside of criminal or common law. Despite no criminal element to a hate incident, depending on the wishes of the victim it can be recorded and dealt with positively, usually by speaking to and advising the perpetrator.

Hate Crimes, on the other hand, have a criminal or common law element. Should the necessary evidential threshold be met and the case goes to court, if the defendant is found guilty there would be an appropriate punishment. Crimes with a 'hate' element may secure an increased punishment compared to the stand alone offence and if

there is evidential proof of the hate element, making it an aggravated offence, the punishment would almost certainly be more severe.

There are obvious links between Anti-Social Behaviour and Hate Incidents and Crimes. If the perception of Hate is present it should rightly be recorded as a Hate Incident or indeed a Hate Crime, if a criminal offence has been committed.

Home Office statistics are that 43,748 hate crimes were recorded by the police in England and Wales in 2011/12. 82% of these were race hate crimes, 4% were religion hate crimes, 10% were sexual orientation, 4% disability and 1% transgender. In Kirklees 585 incidents and crimes were recorded in the same period also equating to a similar distribution of 82% race hate, 6% sexual orientation, 12% disability and less than 0.5% transgender.

Recent developments in service provision aim to secure an increase in the reporting of hate incidents. This would be seen as reflecting an improvement in public confidence, rather than a deterioration of community cohesion. Specific work is being planned around homophobia and disability hate crime as under-reporting continues to be a particular concern, albeit levels are in line with those from areas similar to Kirklees.

Objectives

This strategy is based on three core principles:

1. Preventing Hate Crime, by challenging the attitudes that underpin it, and early intervention to prevent it escalating.
2. Increasing reporting and access to support, by building victim confidence and supporting local partnerships
3. Improving the operational response to Hate Crime, by better identifying and managing cases, and dealing effectively with offenders.

The plan allows local areas the freedom to develop hate crimes strategies that reflect local needs.

Challenging the attitudes behind Hate Crime and celebrating diversity will send out a clear message to Kirklees residents that there is zero tolerance to such views and behaviours. An early intervention approach would look at resolving issue and tensions, especially community tensions, before they manifest in to hate crimes.

Under-reporting levels would be dealt with by increasing victims' confidence in the reporting of Hate Crime. Online reporting makes for easier and quicker communication with the appropriate agencies. Support can then be offered to victims as part of a partnership framework based on a culture of referrals and effective advocacy. Communication between providers and victims is paramount. There is a specific role for victim support services and scope for specific provision within Kirklees must be explored.

The response to Hate Crime must be a joint one, where local partners make residents aware of Hate Crime and the support mechanisms available. The Criminal Justice System needs to be better joined up to improve operational responses to these crimes. Effective sentencing will send out the message that Hate Crime is not acceptable. We will work closely with the CPS, becoming a key partner for their established scrutiny mechanism to ensure that working practices are pitched at the right level. Strong links with Probation need to be revisited.

It is acknowledged that Restorative Justice can be an effective tool to deal with Hate related matters and that it can be central to preventing further incidents. At present it is not widely used as a disposal for Hate Incidents and Crimes but with a stringent risk-assessment procedure in place, there may be an opportunity to review this.

These generic objectives will translate into specific projects governed by an overall action plan.

Provision and delivery

The delivery of this strategy and its action plans will be driven by the Hate Crimes Strategic Group and reviewed on an annual basis.

Current projects will continue, aiming for quality as the key for a consistent and robust approach to the Hate Crime. The third party reporting mechanisms in existence will be revisited and reviewed to provide simple channels to respond to various and changing needs.

Specific working groups have been set up for Homophobia and Disability Hate Crime and these will continue to deliver the objectives of this strategy. Multi-agency membership will be continuously revisited and reinforced as required, again responding to local circumstances.

There will remain a scrutiny function of the Police in their investigations of hate incidents and crimes. Local communities remain able to contribute to this function via scrutiny panels and recruitment of new members will continue to reflect the local demographics.

Challenges

Financial constraints and a decreasing availability of resources will impact on the consistency and quality of the implementation of the objectives of this strategy. Partnership working is vital to bring resources together to achieve results.

The financial situation informs changes in priorities for the partnership. It will also impact on stakeholders involved, as funding becomes much harder to guarantee for partner agencies.

Review and monitoring

This strategy is a three year document that links with various other local strategies, projects and initiatives. It is expected to respond to changing local circumstances and reflect the impact of these on communities and subsequent service provision.

A set of indicators to measure success has been agreed and will inform our ongoing progress as well as identifying gaps in provision. We recognise that measuring success can be difficult to quantify particularly for the prevention arm of our work. However, indicators such as reporting levels, detection rates and victim satisfaction can provide quantitative data.

All partners will contribute to the review process and should have systems in place to record, monitor and provide qualitative and quantitative reports for measuring success.

