

Strategic Policing and Crime BoardTuesday 21st July 2020**Police and Crime Plan Priority:** Supporting Victims of Crime**Supporting Victims of Crime Title:** Hate Crime Symposium**Presented by:** Harjeet Chakira and Tara Muchemenyi**Purpose of paper**

1. The purpose of this paper is to provide the Strategic Policing and Crime Board an overview of the work currently being undertaken by the Victims Team in respect of Hate Crime against the backdrop of the national and local context.
2. The report will detail the challenges this office has faced in ensuring appropriate service provision is available to victims of hate crime and what we have done to overcome these challenges.
3. The report will also examine how the COVID-19 pandemic and the tragic murder of George Floyd has resulted in heightened community tensions impacting hate related incidents across the region.

Background

4. Hate Crime is a crime that the victim or any other person perceives to be motivated by hostility or prejudice towards any aspect of a person's identity. Police forces in England, Wales and Northern Ireland annually monitor five strands of Hate Crime:
 - Disability
 - Transgender Identity
 - Race, Ethnicity or Nationality
 - Religion, Faith or Belief
 - Sexual Orientation

5. Crimes which are motivated by hate can have a lasting and sometimes devastating effect on victims and communities. They are distressing because they target the very core of who you are or what you believe.
6. As hate crime covers a number of protected characteristics it is important to emphasise that hate crime is an exceptionally broad and complex social problem.
7. Hate crimes are often linked to emerging social and political issues in recent times these have included; Brexit, the COVID-19 pandemic, the death of George Floyd and the ensuing #blacklivesmatter campaign.
8. The response to hate crime requires statutory and voluntary services to work together which must include a focus on anticipating and preventing hate crime, as well as tackling crimes effectively when they have been committed.

Developmental Work

9. Hate Crime remains a priority within the Police and Crime Plan 2016-2020 and so does the commitment to ensure there is adequate support for victims.
10. In order to inform our understanding of hate crime the PCC commissioned a report by the University of Leicester entitled 'A Post Code Lottery'. This report was shared with Community Safety Partnerships so they could use this to inform their community cohesion strategies. A copy of the report is available at Annex 1.
11. Until the 1st October 2018 when Victim Support were awarded funding from the National Lottery to deliver a Hate Crime Project in Wolverhampton and Solihull, no significant numbers of agencies offering face to face support to victims of hate crime as their primary function had been identified in the West Midlands. The funding for this project is due to end on the 30th of September 2021.
12. This has meant it has been difficult for the OPCC to commission any meaningful service in this area.
13. In a Focus Group carried out by Victim Services in 2015 it was found that some community organisations were supporting victims of hate crime by default of working with an individual, for example a disability support service was supporting a victim of a disability related hate crime even though supporting victims of crime was not their primary function. For more information on the work undertaken in 2015 please see Annex 2.
14. The 2019 Victims Fund ring-fenced £50,000 to be spent on services supporting victims of hate crime in the hope that it would identify good practice in this area.

15. Unfortunately this process only identified one service (REMEDI) which we were able to take forward and are now commissioning.
16. From the 1st of May 2020, Remedi have been delivering support to victims of hate crime, the project provides a face to face needs assessment and signposting pathway for victims of hate crime in Birmingham - regardless of whether a crime has been reported to WMP.
17. Like other services commissioned through the Victims Fund, Remedi have adapted their services to meet social distancing guidelines and remote working.
18. Referrals can be made by WMP, partner agencies and self-referrals, the objective of the service is to offer a proactive response for victims of hate crime, providing information to access the support services they need and increase confidence in reporting hate crime.
19. For those that have reported an incident, Remedi will offer support in the first 4 days post-reporting before an officer is assigned to visit the victim or before a victim is notified of the outcome of their case.

National reporting picture and emerging trends

20. According to the CPS Hate Crime Annual Report¹ (2018-19) the CPS show that for hate crime offences, the number of cases sent to the CPS by the police fell by 16.7% from 12,901 in 2017-18 to 10,749 in 2018-19; this year saw the most significant annual fall in hate crime police receipts at 16.7%.
21. The number of these police receipts has continued to fall since 2014-15 highlighting that overall, there has been a fall of 31.4% during the stated period.
22. According to CPS hate crime prosecutions data (2018/2019), West Midlands had 648 convictions which equates to 83.6% successful outcomes and 16.4% (127) unsuccessful totalling 775 cases charged by the CPS.
23. The 2016 Home Office report on '**Action Against Hate**²' reported the increased misuse of social media platforms and wider internet by those who seek to use it as a tool to spread hatred and target individuals and communities because of preconceived notions of who they are or what they believe.

¹ <https://www.cps.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/CPS-Hate-Crime-Annual-Report-2018-2019.PDF>

² https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/543679/Action_Against_Hate_UK_Government_s_Plan_to_Tackle_Hate_Crime_2016.pdf



24. The Home Office report also highlights that of the 801 incidents of anti-Muslim hatred that were recorded by Tell MAMA during 2015, 364 were online (73%).
25. In addition to this, from the same report, the Community Security Trust (CST) recorded 159 anti-Semitic incidents that involved the use of internet-based social media in 2015, which represents 17% of the overall total of 924 anti-Semitic incidents recorded.
26. Similarly, Sandwell Council reported at the symposium that in a survey they recently conducted with young people it was found that more incidents of hate crime or hate bullying were emerging online.
27. In line with government plans to improve safety of those working in the night-time economy, the Hate Crime project delivered in the West Midlands by Victim Support continue to offer training and advice to local businesses that are part of the night-time economy.
28. The aforementioned report adds that over the last decade, in around half of all violent incidents the victim believed the offender(s) to be under the influence of alcohol. It is more likely that incidents increase between strangers, in the evening and at night, at weekends, and in public places leading those working within the night-time economy to experience repeated incidents of hate.
29. Many incidents are towards taxi drivers, restaurant workers and takeaway owners feeling especially vulnerable to racial harassment while carrying out their day-to-day tasks. To further indicate the challenges faced by those working in this space, Police forces, including Bedfordshire Police, have identified that attacks against taxi drivers are under-reported.

Local Picture

30. WMP report that the latest quarters' hate crime performance has been vastly influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic with lockdown measures in particular affecting reporting.
31. Recorded hate crime has increased over the last quarter, both in comparison to the previous quarter and the same period in 2019.
32. Despite the increase, the week commencing 30th March recorded the lowest number of hate crimes in the last year, with 81 offences recorded, this correlated with the introduction of lockdown.
33. Reporting trends to the force indicate that hate crime will increase over the upcoming summer months.



34. Racially motivated hate crime continue to account for the majority in the latest quarter with 1303 recorded (80.7%).
35. Homophobic hate crimes were second highest with 189 offences (11.7%).
36. Religious hate crime has increased since the previous quarter, with the majority attributed to hate directed at perceived Islam.
37. Third party reporting centres are typically third sector organisations who already provide a form of service to the communities they serve and would have received training from WMP to help them identify hate incidents and crimes during their normal interactions with people, and report them to WMP.
38. In Birmingham & Solihull, all registered housing providers are part of the scheme, and in the Black Country, Wolverhampton Homes, Walsall Housing Group, Dudley MBC and Sandwell MBC are also key players.
39. The only exception to this operating model is Coventry, where the city council and Whitefriars Housing have taken the lead for TPRCs, although the NPU Partnerships team is still in close contact with them, it is the council that provides training and the mechanism by which reports are made.
40. Work has been taking place in WMP pre-lockdown to strengthen links with the Chinese community in Birmingham (*this work is undertaken by the Chinese Reference Group*).
41. WMP will be delivering a World Café event this summer to further strengthen relationships with the Chinese community in the city, this will be done online and will give participants an opportunity to address their concerns especially following increasing hate crime incidents during the COVID-19 pandemic.
42. Through chat facilities at the event, participants can share their opinions which will be captured and analysed by WMP in an aim to frame the most appropriate response to matters highlighted.
43. WMP have also consulted with Chinese students in local universities and have adapted their promotional material detailing contact information and support available for hate crime victims taking into account languages spoken by different groups of students.

Hate Crime Symposium

44. The OPCC held the Hate Crime Symposium on the 10th of June 2020 aimed at coordinating a community response to supporting victims of this crime allowing providers to share their expertise on models that could work to support various

groups affected by hate crime. Through this, we aim to shape a model for the region that accurately responds to the needs for victims of hate crime.

45. The symposium took place virtually and invited individuals, organisations, voluntary and community sector providers in the West Midlands working to support victims of hate crime. Individuals and organisations that took part included representatives from:

- Crown Prosecution Service
- Faith groups/ faith leads
- Local Authority Hate Crime Coordinators
- Local Councillor from Birmingham
- Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (West Midlands)
- Representatives from Aston and Birmingham University
- Voluntary sector services offering support to victims of Hate crime in the region
- West Midlands Police

46. The symposium commenced with an exploration of hate crime and hate incidents. Including an assessment of reporting mechanisms and a discussion around the importance of reporting.

47. Voluntary, community sector providers and WMP took part and shared their understanding of hate crime issues affecting communities across the region.

48. As part of the preparatory work conducted by the Victims Team, we consulted with Hate Crime Coordinators through Heads of Community Safety. This enabled the team to gather information from the 7 Local Authorities to gain insight into reporting trends, support available for victims of hate crime and how their objectives differ or match those of support services in the region.

49. Following the symposium, the OPCC will be in a position to commission an additional service that will offer support to victims of hate crime with the objective of having a regional service delivered that will respond appropriately to the needs of victims affected by hate crime.

Findings from the Symposium

50. Some of the findings and discussions from the symposium include;

- Varied responses to the presence, accessibility and understanding of third party reporting centres.

- Exploring the shift in services available to victims as communities learn to adjust to the 'new norm' being COVID-19.
- Ensuring there is tailored support for victims of hate crime due to the complexities of the crime and varying support which may need to be in place once victims are referred to a support service (*support has to be both practical and emotional*).
- Also need to ensure that all our communities can access the same levels of knowledge, support and service delivery, this can be achieved by using networks already in place.
- Working groups will be formed as a result and the Victims Team will put together a document sharing points raised by attendees.

Impact of COVID 19

51. The following points were highlighted by various agencies that took part in the OPCC's Hate Crime symposium in June 2020:

- Increasing reports of the victimisation of Chinese communities in the region where individuals are harassed or assaulted as a result of COVID-19 crisis.
- WMP reported in June 2020 that victims of Asian ethnicity were the most common recorded for hate crime; however those of Chinese/Japanese/South East Asian ethnicity more than doubled since the previous quarter.
- In Walsall, it was reported that there are increased hate crime incidents towards Eastern European communities for supposedly not following lockdown rules and increased hate crime against anyone who looks like they are of Chinese descent.
- Victim Support added that, it is important to note the current climate with George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter movement, a lot of the communities supported by Victim Support have explained that they do not feel as though reporting will improve matters as the abuse they face has been normalised.
- Birmingham University representatives added that they believe a lot of hate incidents go widely unreported. The reasons for students not reporting can include; assuming incidents will not be deemed significant enough to warrant support, feeling it was too common an occurrence to report, not believing anything will be done and the shame and embarrassment associated with being a victim of a hate crime.

- In line with statistics shared by WMP, University of Birmingham representatives highlighted that they have received reports of hate crime from Chinese students in relation to COVID-19 and there was a great deal of unease amongst the Chinese community.

Shaping support services for victims of hate crime

52. The following points were raised at the symposium:

- The importance of establishing safe spaces in the community to report hate crime and need to have increased capacity to support women who are affected by hate crime.
- Increased awareness-raising workshops in the community by national organisations that monitor hate crime and provide a local and national picture of incidents.
- Increase in community cohesion/social mixing sessions across geographical boundaries to assist in reducing hate crime through improved understanding.
- A multi-agency service that supports both victims of ASB and Hate Crime will significantly improve the support and experience of victims of Hate Crime, whilst ASB element of work will help with the de-escalation of incidents before they turn into a hate incident/crime.
- As part of the core service offer, Victim Support are hoping to work with Local Education Authority leads and colleagues in the Victims Commission for the 2020/21 academic year to focus their schools training offer and ensure that these themes are appropriately covered.
- Services need to be easily accessible (including online reporting) and it is vital that there be a culture where students feel empowered to report, safe and supported through this process – services are to address barriers to reporting.
- Services that can provide proactive in contrast to reactive (*practical and emotional*) support immediately after the incident should also be available for victims of hate crime.

Next steps

The victim's team will be working on the following next steps to take this work further;

- Develop a hate crime working group
 - Assess the benefit of 3rd party reporting centres
 - Consider the benefit of hate crime ambassadors
 - Develop our understanding with the Chinese community through the Chinese Reference Group and local universities
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- OPCC and National Lottery commissioning collaboration: the Victims Team met with the National Lottery to discuss funding and potential avenues for collaboration. It was clear from this meeting that we commission many of the same organisations and many are not accessing funding available as they may not have the capacity and resources to apply for funding. It is hoped that by collaborating and potentially holding a joint event aimed at groups supporting those with protected characteristics both the OPCC and the National Lottery are able to work together in terms of commissioning.

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