

Crime and Disorder Select Committee

A meeting of Crime and Disorder Select Committee was held on Thursday, 20th September, 2018.

Present: Cllr David Wilburn(Chair), Cllr Paul Rowling(Vice-Chair), Cllr Chris Barlow, Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Ian Dalgarno, Cllr Stephen Richardson, Cllr Julia Whitehill, Cllr Barry Woodhouse

Officers: Judith Trainer (DCE), Satnam Singh, Claire Sills Nigel Hart, Marianne Sleeman (DCO)

Also in attendance: Beth Miller, Liam Twizell, Ruth Benson, Jean Kirby, Ellie Lowther, Paul Christon, Euphrasia Makaure and Alex Metcalfe

Apologies: Cllr Kevin Faulks

CAD 25/18 Audio, Evacuation & Housekeeping Procedures

Evacuation procedures were noted.

CAD 26/18 Declarations of Interest

There were no interests declared.

CAD 27/18 Minutes of the Meeting held on 19th July 2018 - For Approva/Signature

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 19th July 2018.

AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on 19th July 2018 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

CAD 28/18 Scrutiny Review of Hate Crime

The Select Committee took evidence from the following organisations who provided support to victims from groups with protected characteristics:

Beth Miller - Diocese of Durham

Beth commentated that her experience of hate crime within the Diocese tended to be religious name calling which meant that Church members did not feel comfortable when discussing religion outside of the confines of the Church. She felt that this sort of behaviour would not be tolerated for other faiths and was not acceptable. She felt that people had somehow become accustomed to this type of behaviour – i.e. berating Salvation Army members, or parishioners making home visits, and that tackling this issue was therefore difficult. Asylum Seekers who had converted to Christianity had also received similar negative comments.

Liam Twizell - REACH Project

Liam informed members of the difficulty suffered by parents, carers and disabled people and the lack of awareness of Hate Crime. He felt that in his opinion disabled people were not altogether familiar with the Criminal Justice system and how to report hate crimes. Cleveland Police had done a lot of work around the issue although they only operated a 9am to 5pm service for

reporting such incidents. Therefore, it was a concern that this might detract people from attempting to report such crimes. It was noted that the Council also had trained staff who could receive and deal with reports of hate crime, although it was felt there was little awareness of this.

Reference was also made to the availability of Safe Place Schemes which, although not set up to deal with the reporting of crimes, they were described as an enhanced customer services support facility provided Tees wide to make people feel safe. Again, it was felt knowledge of these facilities, particularly amongst young people was minimal.

Ruth Benson – SNAPS

Ruth commented that the families involved with SNAPS experienced a lack of tolerance from some members of the public showing no understanding for parents and carers with children with disabilities or learning difficulties. People criticising families when a disabled person or someone with learning difficulties presented in a supermarket, for example, was unacceptable.

Jean Kirby – Over 50s Forum

Jean advised that in preparing for the Select Committee meeting, she had asked Forum members if they had experienced hate crime and she had not received any responses. She believed that the older generation would be afraid to speak up and would not know where to go for help. She also felt that a lot of older people felt intimidated by groups of young people and their conversations.

Euphrasia Makaure - One Community Link

One Community Link (OCL) was formed in 2016 and is now a registered charity working predominantly with ethnic minority communities from Africa, Asia, Europe, South America and Arab countries to understand their rights. Their main focus is in promoting social integration by raising awareness of hate crime and empowering Ethnic Minorities. OCL act as intermediaries providing support and guidance for ethnic minority families including parents who are going through the asylum seeking process and have concerns about hate crime.

During sessions on hate crime the organization takes advantage of interpreters so that people have a clear understanding of the subject and are able to share their experiences. The biggest barrier for OCL clients in seeking support has been language and as a result the organization is funding basic English lessons. Other barriers include:

- Ignorance

- Fear that they would be reported to the home Office and it would affect their asylum case

- Cultural shock

- Their previous background about police/ negative experience with the police in their home country.

- Lack of understanding of the UK system

- If they complain about hate crime they think the government will deport them to their country.

- Having more complex personal issues to focus rather than hate crime

Paul Christon - Middlesbrough and Stockton Mind

Middlesbrough and Stockton Mind were a leading local charity providing confidential services for people experiencing emotional or mental health problems and their families. Established in 1995, the group provide information and activities for people in the community experiencing mental health difficulties.

Each year they work with over 6000 people to improve their mental health and employ over 100 paid staff members and each year over 100 people support them by volunteering.

Middlesbrough and Stockton Mind were based in Yarm Road and have a Third Party Reporting Centre in Middlesbrough. One hate crime incident had been reported which had been racially motivated. However, it often became evident working with clients, that historical incidents of hate crime were a trigger for poor mental health. Paul felt that there were a need to do more awareness raising with staff to understand what hate crime was and its impact on mental health. The organisation signposted clients to help and support and a lot of emphasis was placed on self-help and prevention.

Ellie Lowther – Transaware

Transaware were the first gender identity specific charity in the North East. They offered a bespoke service, free of charge to faith and community groups, however there is a cost for public sector services and provided training and awareness raising to business, schools and organisations. All staff were volunteers and the charity was fully funded by paid for work. Transaware also had a safe living space for those at risk of homelessness or not accepted in their home environment.

The charity had delivered awareness sessions to over 100 organisations and the National Citizens Service to 300 young people over the last two years. 39 sessions had been delivered over the summer and next year sessions were planned with two national companies and support in prisons.

The organisation had supported three people to report in the last month.

Ellie felt that the culture of organisations prevented people reporting transphobic hate crime and that discrimination was widely experienced (this included shops, housing associations and GP surgeries).

Participants provided the following feedback around key questions during workshop discussion:

The main issues the groups discussed were as follows:

What Should The Council Do More Of?

- Educate and raise awareness of what “hate” is; make sure the message is understood
- Dedicated Police hate crime specialist team

- Recognition of invisible disabilities
- Provide clear and simple information of where to go to? Telephone numbers? What level is acceptable? Stress that reports can be anonymous
- More awareness that it's a crime and that all groups can experience hate crime
- Stockton News is a good platform to raise awareness with older people
- More awareness of groups with protected characteristics
- Ensure that HR policies deal with the issue properly; staff need to know what is acceptable/ appropriate behaviour even outside of work
- More positive information on Social Media
- Partnership organisations need to challenge each other and work together
- Other people to act as advocates
- Awareness raising with support staff, volunteers
- People need to make a stand for what is right
- Consider what a victim might want? For someone to understand what the impact of a perpetrator's words/ actions have had
- Encourage and support many organisations to become third party reporting centres
- Training community champions in every ethnicity
- Creating a platform for Home office workers to discuss problems
- Creating a platform for Police to relate more to the communities
- Surgeries to provide support
- Targeted work should be undertaken in schools

What Has Been The Biggest Barrier For Your Clients in Seeking Support?

- Not recognising it as hate crime; people don't always see themselves as a victim
- Other priorities in their lives at that time; sometimes it is easier to ignore it instead
- Fear of repercussions
- Embarrassment – victims can internalise and feel shame instead
- Some agencies don't take the issue seriously; victims feel it would be just dismissed
- Not wanting to waste police time
- Victims don't know how to report it
- Concept of Hate Crime
- Organisations don't understand or follow the Public Sector Equality Duty
- Public attitudes and lack of respect

What Are The Biggest Challenges in Tackling This Issue?

- Negative Press both nationally and locally.
- Social Media, particularly comments around benefit changes.
- Getting the right message across.
- Difficulties with the term "hate"; residents don't like it through it's a nationally recognised and defined term
- Lack of respect in communities.
- Breaking down false perceptions/ attitudes; we need a wider understanding
- Conflicts within communities.
- Bringing together different religions, we need to build bridges.
- Need to re-educate the older community.

- Educating victims that it's not the norm or acceptable (but still have to accept people's choice not to report).
- That there are consequences of taking action.
- Changing mind sets.
- Awareness of Safe Scheme Centres
- Education of offenders to highlight the impact on the victim; they may not be aware they have committed at hate crime

Any Positive Work / Best Practice That is Happening in Relation to Hate?

- Police Hate Crime Unit
- That it is being talked about more openly
- School in Yarm worked to resolve a problem with perpetrators without judging them
- More Community Cohesion Officers (outreach) "great if we have the right people in these roles"
- Building on positive experiences of policing
- Staff are being trained more in awareness of hate crime
- Hate Crime Awareness week on 13th October 2018
- Review of Hate Crimes at multi-agency meetings held monthly

**CAD
29/18** **Work Programme**

Consideration was given to the Work Programme.

AGREED that the Work Programme be noted.

**CAD
30/18** **Chair's Update**

The Chair had nothing further to report.