

Update on the work of the Tees-wide Hate Crime Group

This report is intended to provide an update on the Tees-wide position for hate crime. Since the last report presented on 19th March 2013 to this Partnership, the Business Manager who held responsibility for the co-ordination of this work across the Tees Valley has left post and the position remains vacant, with a view to a replacement starting in September 2013.

A draft action plan showing the working position for each area was taken to the Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Board on 8th May 2013 and is awaiting full endorsement. Since Mick Walker left post the Police and Crime Commissioner held a hate crime event on 27th June 2013 that focussed on the disability strand of hate crime. The event was well attended by agencies involved in dealing with, and responding to disability hate crime. This event has then led to a further Tees-wide meeting co-ordinated by the PCC office held on 23 July 2013. This meeting focussed primarily on the disability element of hate crime, but it is hoped that if we can get it right for the disability strand of hate crime then other elements of hate crime can be easily incorporated. There are three main aims that came from the meeting. They were to focus on third party reporting, support for the victim and an effective communications strategy. The attendees of this group have agreed to now work towards addressing the three aims, working collectively together to find a way forward from a Tees-wide perspective incorporating lessons learned from each areas.

Third Party Reporting Centres in Stockton

Third party reporting centres are the first priority that the group are going to take forward to look where possible and appropriate to standardise across the Tees Valley area. This would include setting up minimum standards to be used by each area. In Stockton there were seven venues identified, shown below as a list. From the 12th-17th June 2013 the police co-ordinated a mystery shopping exercise that measured against the five following questions:-

1. Is it obvious that this is a third party reporting centre, any posters up? If yes please describe.
2. Approach staff and ask them "is this a third party reporting centre for hate crime?" Note reply and probe for additional support.
3. Is there a nominated staff member to assist a victim with making a report of hate crime? Have the staff received training or input?
4. Do all / any of the staff know this is a third party reporting centre and what that means?
5. Please note any observations made eg helpfulness, knowledge of staff etc

Third Party Reporting Venues

Citizens Advice Bureau, Bath Lane Stockton
Municipal Buildings, Stockton Council
Billingham Council Office, 1 Chapel Road, Billingham
Stockton Library
Billingham Library, Bedale Avenue
Thornaby Central Library, Town Centre, Thornaby
Thornaby Library, Westbury Street, Thornaby

The completion of this exercise highlighted that in Stockton that there was only one of the seven centres (Stockton Library) that would direct any reports to either the Police or the Council's Diversity Team. All remaining venues had no idea what a third party reporting

centre was, or even more concerning what hate crime was. This clearly highlights a need to effectively train staff and raise awareness of what hate crime is, and more importantly how to take a report, and where to take the information.

Communications

The Communications element of Disability will be addressed at the next meeting with a view to setting a sub group to take actions forward for the Tees valley. All local authority communications representatives to be included as well as Police Communications team.

Support for Victims

The group still are yet to plan how to start looking at the support available to victims of hate crime from reporting through to prosecution.

Whilst there has been some slippage in the ownership of who will take forward the Tees-wide agenda, in the last couple of months there is a little more clarity around what needs to happen, but it is still not clear who responsibility falls with to take this agenda forward. It must be noted that on an operational level hate crime remains high on each partner agency agenda and continues to be treated with urgency when reports are received.

- This report sets out the current position from the Tees-wide perspective, and highlights the need for a clear lead to take this forward. This is in terms of finalising the 33 page Action Plan (available on request) which is still in draft, and ensuring a consistent approach that is appropriate for each area.
- Further work is needed to identify an effective approach to training and raising awareness, are there lessons to be learned from our other partner authorities?
- It is proposed that after September when the new Business Manager commences post a more robust picture can be provided.
- Further information is to be sought through the invitation of Neil Denton from Newcastle to discuss the effective approaches they have used.
- More consideration to be given on how to increase the flow of information from centres and venues that people with a disability visit to ensure that soft intelligence can be fed back to the Stockton Hate Crime Group.

Members are asked to feed any further comments to Claire.Sills@Stockton.gov.uk