

# A life without fear?

**A Call for Collective Action against  
Learning Disability Hate Crime**



Mental Health  
Foundation



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foundation for  
people with  
learning disabilities

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changing  
lives

**“Learning disability hate crime shouldn’t be happening anymore!”**

**Member of the reference group**

**This PDF report complements an online digitalised report, which can be accessed via [learningdisabilityhatecrime.mentalhealth.org.uk](https://learningdisabilityhatecrime.mentalhealth.org.uk)**

**The digitalised report acts as an important platform for the voices of victims of learning disability hate crimes to be heard and will host interactive content such as good practice films, video blogs and audio recordings.**

“ We all deserve to feel safe and to be safe and this must include people with learning disabilities and people with autism. It is down to all of us to put an end to hate crime. It should not be happening anymore and it still happens far too frequently, in numbers that warrant urgent Government attention.

This project has identified examples of good practice and I suggest its now time for this to become common practice. There should be zero tolerance towards Learning disability and Autism hate crime. With the launch of this report, we are asking Her Majesty’s Government to make this a priority and to deliver an action plan that includes the reports recommendations along with a commitment to make change happen. ”



*Sheila Hollins*

Professor Sheila the Baroness Hollins

# Foreword

I am delighted to have been asked to write the foreword for this important report, which highlights the serious underreporting of learning disability hate crime and the issues in protecting victims from this abhorrent abuse.

This Government, like its predecessors, is clear that all forms of hate crime are completely unacceptable. We published a cross-Government Hate Crime Action Plan “Action Against Hate” in 2016 to set out our comprehensive strategy for tackling hate crime. The Action Plan is improving the response and helping to support victims of hate crime, however there is more to do. We will be refreshing our Action Plan later this year, which will ensure that we continue to learn and improve as well as respond to the evolving challenge, not least from social media.

In my role as Minister of State for Counter Extremism and also Minister or Equalities, I am aware of the difficulties faced by people with learning disabilities, and I am always humbled when I speak to victims who bravely share their experiences of hate crime.

This report has brought to the fore the real-world impacts of hate crime on people with learning disabilities, their families and the wider community around them. It is saddening to hear about the level of social exclusion which many people with learning disabilities feel, and the objectionable behaviour of others who manipulate vulnerable individuals for their own ends.

Government is pleased to work with some leading organisations to tackle learning disability hate crime, such as Carlisle Mencap and Foresight (North East Lincolnshire), as well as on broader disability hate crime, including Changing Faces and DeafPlus.

This report tells us that people with learning disabilities are silently victimised every day and are not receiving the level of support that they so clearly need from our service providers. Across agencies, Government, the third sector and beyond, we all need to work together and learn from one another, as well as from this report, to ensure that this vile abuse is stamped out, and victims are effectively protected, so that they can live their lives without fear.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. Williams".

**Baroness Williams of Trafford**  
Minister of State for Countering Extremism

# Message from Patricia Charlesworth, Chair of the Reference Group

People with learning disabilities are being ignored. It is time to stop and listen to us. Respect us. Treat us as human beings. We have feelings. It is time we are supported.

Learning disability hate crime destroys the lives of people with learning disabilities. Why is more not being done?

I am the chair of the 'experts by experience' reference group for this project. As a reference group we have been involved throughout the project, directing where action is needed. We helped design and test the surveys, helped conduct the scheme interviews, and spoke about our own experiences of hate crime.

We have been the voice for people with learning disabilities. Enough is enough. It is time people with learning disabilities are valued as equal to everyone else. It is time society says no to learning disability hate crime.

We hope the recommendations in this report are listened to, and change happens.

## **Patricia Charlesworth**

Consultant Expert by Experience and  
Chair of the Reference Group

## **Heartfelt thanks to all the people with learning disabilities who agreed to be consulted and interviewed for this research, bravely sharing their experiences of learning disability hate crime.**

A particular thanks to our 'experts by experience' reference group members, for sharing their time and experiences: Patricia Charlesworth, Richard Lawrence, Warren Day, Richard West, Michelle McDermott, David Jeffrey, Richard Walker, Katy Bessent, Dominic Steel, Jeanette Gallivan-Young, Tim Sully, Graham Oliver and Sonia Reed.

We appreciate the support of Esmée Fairbairn Foundation for funding this research.

We would also like to thank all the hate crime schemes that responded to the initial survey and to those scheme representatives who then gave their time to be interviewed and filmed, providing examples of good practice.

Many thanks to Mick Conboy from the Crown Prosecution Service, Mark Brookes and Andie Gbedemah from Dimensions, Paulx Giannasi, the Head of the Cross-Government Hate Crime Programme and Loretta Trickett for their involvement and support of this research. Together we have since formed the National Forum for Learning Disability and Autism Hate Crime, to focus efforts in addressing inequalities for people with learning disabilities and autism.

A big thank you to previous members of staff at the Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities, who were involved in the project: Candy Worf, Camille Bou, Jill Davies and Christine Towers.

For more information, please visit the Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities' website [learningdisabilityhatecrime.mentalhealth.org.uk](https://learningdisabilityhatecrime.mentalhealth.org.uk)

# Executive Summary

It is evident there is still much work needed to truly comprehend the current situation of learning disability hate crime. Although there has been keen involvement from a variety of public and third sector organisations in the development of schemes addressing learning disability hate crime, the underreporting of such acts limits the acknowledgement and understanding of the severity of the situation.

Many people with learning disabilities are unaware they are experiencing acts of hate crime daily, placing them in very vulnerable positions. Yet without reasonable adjustments to the justice, support and community systems, such horrific abuse will continue. We all deserve to feel safe to live in our homes and community. It is our duty to ensure this happens.

A fair system would go a long way to ensure that people with learning disabilities are afforded justice and the protection of their rights to lead inclusive safe lives like all other citizens. The volume of hate crime reported leads to a need to further research the way hate crime is defined and create an understanding of the broader definition. We need to review the volume of hate crime experienced compared to reported crime. We have heard many horrific stories where people with learning disabilities did not realise they were victims of hate crime, particularly from people posing as 'friends'.

The low level of learning disability hate crime reporting is not a surprise. Our focus groups indicated that the occurrence is on such regular basis that it has become the norm in their life. Our report highlights many examples of good practice. We now call for collective action against learning disability hate crime, moving from good practice to common practice.

## Priorities for Action

### We are calling for:

#### The Government

- to standardise police reporting systems, to ensure learning disability hate crimes are correctly recorded and reasonable adjustments are made to support the victims when reporting the incident.
- to fund research to review current reporting pathways and strengthen evidence for good practice examples mentioned in this report and previous reports.
- to request disaggregated statistics for hate crime against people with learning disabilities because they are more susceptible to hate crime and less likely to report it. This should be actioned by the ONS in the Crime Survey and by police in the routine recording.

#### The Home Office

- to implement standardised protocols, unify reporting pathways and evaluation methods for TPRCs and provide a forum for services to share learnings.
- to further research safe place schemes. Subject to evaluation, they can fund the Safe Place Organisation to nationally coordinate the schemes across the UK.

### **The Crown Prosecution Service**

- to evaluate their current schools pack and seek the support of the Department for Education in promoting the materials to schools.
- to carry out regular audits to ensure incidents are correctly being flagged across police services.

### **The National Police Chief Council**

- to prioritise and mandate accredited learning disability hate crime training to all staff within the justice system.
- to carry out regular audits to ensure incidents are correctly being flagged across police services.

### **The Department for Education**

- to prioritise the compulsory inclusion of learning disability hate crime training in all schools. Ofsted then needs to ensure each school is meeting this requirement.
- to encourage the use of Books Beyond Words within schools.

### **Local Authorities**

- to develop and improve inclusive mainstream services and publicise local good practice examples of citizen action projects
- to prioritise the implementation of learning disability hate crime action plans, using a holistic and strategic approach.
- commissioners and the CQC to check that housing providers are aware of and implement standardised learning disability hate crime training and feeling safe at home programmes. This to improve reporting procedures for residents.

### **The Police and Crime Commissioners**

- to review current victim support services and work with each local authority to consult with local experts by experience and ensure services are adequately supporting victims of learning disability hate crime.

## **We will:**

- continue to work closely with our newly developed, National Forum for Learning Disabilities and Autism Hate Crime (NFLD&AHC), as well as our experts by experience stakeholders, to develop our understanding of the issues faced by people with disabilities.
- contribute to the refresh of the Home Office Action Plan on Hate Crime, which will be launched later in 2018.
- publish comprehensive research on spatial analysis on disability hate crime in England and Wales.
- publish a review on the effectiveness of interventions to prevent hate crime in the UK.
- develop further work with other minorities affected by hate crime to gain a deeper understanding of what works in communities for prevention of hate crime.



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# Section A

Understanding the Extent of  
Learning Disability Hate Crime

# Learning Disability Hate Crime – a Growing Problem, an Underreported Issue

**Everyone has the right to live in safety, with dignity and respect. [Learning disability hate crime] shouldn't be happening anymore. There should be strong communities so that people don't feel threatened and we all have a part to play. We need to be talking to each other and sharing information about how to best support people.**

Reference group member

## What is Learning Disability Hate Crime?

Learning disability hate crime is any criminal offence that is perceived – by the victim or any other person – to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's learning disability or perceived learning disability. It can take many forms, including verbal abuse, physical abuse, threatening behaviour, bullying/teasing, online/phone abuse, and damage to property/theft.

Through the spread of fear, abuse and violence, persistent acts of hate crime – which can only be described as cruel – can cause people with learning disabilities or other perceived vulnerabilities such as autism to become isolated and segregated from society. For example, the National Autistic Society's (NAS) Careless campaign reported that 44% of adults with autism said they stay at home because they are afraid of being abused or harassed when out in the community.<sup>1</sup>

Learning disability hate crimes are often acts of opportunity and steeped in vulgarity. They can also take on a calculated and cynical nature, exploiting the vulnerability of individuals. The loneliness experienced by some people with learning disabilities puts them at substantial risk of being targeted and subjected to such acts of cruelty.

For example, so called 'mate crime' is a form of learning disability hate crime. It is when a person who is perceived as vulnerable, such as a person with a learning disability or autism, is befriended by someone who then uses the relationship to exploit or abuse them. The NAS Careless campaign reported 49% of adults with autism had been abused, 27% had money or possessions stolen, and 37% had been forced or manipulated to do something they didn't want to do, all by someone they thought of as a friend.<sup>2</sup>

**Perpetrators of mate crime prey on the most vulnerable people in society and do so in the knowledge that these crimes often go unreported. It is morally reprehensible, and they are cowards.**

CEO, Autism Together<sup>3</sup>

1. The National Autistic Society. (2014). Careless. London: The National Autistic Society.

2. ibid

3. Autism Together. (2015). Mate Crime in Merseyside. Accessed via: <http://www.autismtogether.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/WAS-mate-crime-report-June-2015.pdf>

## The Impact of Hate Crime

**BB Hate crime can be totally devastating for disabled people and rob them of their confidence. Some survivors have been left so traumatised they remain trapped in their homes out of fear. DD**

CEO, Leonard Cheshire Disability<sup>4</sup>

The impact of learning disability hate crime on an individual and their family can be devastating, detrimentally impacting their social, psychological and physical wellbeing. Due to the nature of hate crime targeting the personal characteristic of their learning disability, individuals can often feel fearful of further incidents and isolation.

The Leicester Hate Crime Project found respondents who felt they had been targeted because of their learning disabilities, were more likely to say their quality of life had been very significantly affected by their most recent experience of hate crime. It also reported 26% of those targeted because of their learning disabilities were more likely to report feeling suicidal as a result of their victimisation.<sup>5</sup>

## A Growing Problem

According to Mencap's 'Living in Fear' report, as many as 9 out of 10 people with learning disabilities have been a victim of hate crime and/or harassment and are more likely to suffer repeated victimisation, with 32% experiencing such acts on a weekly basis.<sup>6</sup> More recently Dimensions launched a national survey focusing on determining the current level of autism and learning disability hate crime in the UK. It found 73% of respondents had experienced disability hate crime, with over half experiencing such acts within the last year.<sup>7</sup>

However, many find it difficult to identify such manipulative acts as learning disability hate crime, despite the cruel, frightening and psychologically damaging impacts. This is particularly evident around 'lower level' public order offences and intimidation issues such as verbal abuse. Some perpetrators offend with a sense of impunity, as they are aware that many people with learning disabilities feel powerless in such situations. From their survey, Mencap reported that many people with learning disabilities disclosed coping with bullying for so long that they saw it as distressing but an inevitable part of everyday life.<sup>8</sup> Consequently, without people with learning disabilities being supported to recognise acts of hate crime and understand their options to report such incidents, learning disability hate crime will continue to be underreported.

There is a lack of understanding on what constitutes learning disability hate crime amongst front-line staff and supporting organisations. As gatekeepers to the criminal justice system, it is essential police forces are adequately equipped to effectively respond to and support victims of learning disability hate crime.

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4. Leonard Cheshire Disability. (2017). Fear of hostility prevents a third of disabled people from going out. Accessed via: <https://www.leonardcheshire.org/support-and-information/latest-news/press-releases/fear-hostility-prevents-third-disabled-people>
  5. University of Leicester. (2014). The Leicester Hate Crime Project: Findings and Conclusions. Accessed via: <https://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/criminology/hate/documents/fc-full-report>
  6. Mencap. (2000) Living in Fear: the need to combat bullying of people with a learning disability. Cited on: <https://www.mencap.org.uk/blog/four-things-you-probably-didnt-know-about-disability-hate-crime>
  7. Dimensions. (2016). #I'm with Sam. Accessed from: <https://www.dimensions-uk.org/case-study/imwithsam-experiences-hate-crime/>
  8. Mencap. (2000). Living in Fear: the need to combat bullying of people with a learning disability.
  9. Criminal Justice Joint Inspectorates. (2013). Living in a Different World: Joint Review of Disability Hate Crime. Accessed via: <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/media/a-joint-review-of-disability-hate-crime-living-in-a-different-world-20130321.pdf>

Uncertainty as to whether a victim was targeted because of prejudice or hostility directed towards their disability or not, and a reluctance in officers to ask victims, causes errors in the recording of data related to disability hate crime.<sup>9</sup>

In 2011, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) inquiry, 'Hidden in Plain Sight', stated that there had been a systematic failure by public authorities to recognise the extent and impact of harassment and abuse of disabled people, to take preventative action and to intervene effectively when it happened.<sup>10</sup> This is particularly evident in cases involving ongoing 'low-level' hate crime incidents, which, although are difficult to capture, are often missed or incorrectly reported by the police.

The EHRC recommended that a single new terminology needed to be adopted to replace the term 'hate crime' relative to acts against people with learning disabilities, for example 'disability motivated', 'identity-targeted' or 'hostility' crimes and incidents.<sup>11</sup> This is due to victims and service providers failing to recognise the association of hostility and prejudice as potential motivating factors for learning disability hate crime. Therefore, often such acts are assigned other explanatory motives.

## An Underreported Issue

**Often it is the more violent and extreme acts of targeted hostility which attract media, political and academic attention while the experience and cumulative harms of the more 'ordinary' everyday forms of abuse, bullying and harassment go unacknowledged.**

The Leicester Hate Crime Project<sup>12</sup>

Learning disability hate crime is known to be significantly underreported and this continues to be a prevalent limitation to the success of any learning disability hate crime prevention strategy.

In 2016/17, 80,393 hate crimes were recorded by the police in England and Wales, which is an increase of 29% compared with 2015/16.<sup>13</sup> At present, learning disability hate crime is not statistically segregated in reports from criminal justice services, but recorded under the generalised term of disability hate crime. In 2016/17, it was reported that disability hate crime accounted for 7% of all hate crimes recorded by the police – a 53% increase from the previous year.<sup>14</sup> Although there have been indications of improvement in the recording of disability hate crime, it is still heavily underreported. For example, West Yorkshire Police reported a 71% increase in recorded disability hate crimes and incidences from April 2017 to January 2018. However only 9% of all hate crimes and incidences recorded from April 2017 to January 2018 were marked as disability hate crimes.<sup>15</sup>

In 2013, NAS found that 94% of survey respondents had experienced forms of abuse and bullying, with 65% of respondents experiencing disability hate crime on more than 10 occasions. However, the survey also found that 73% of respondents didn't report the incident to the police. Of those that did, 54% said it wasn't recorded as a hate crime and 40% said the police did not act on their report.<sup>16</sup>

10. The Equality and Human Rights Commission. (2011). Hidden in Plain Sight. Accessed via: [https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/ehrc\\_hidden\\_in\\_plain\\_sight\\_3.pdf](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/ehrc_hidden_in_plain_sight_3.pdf)

11. *ibid*

12. University of Leicester. (2014). The Leicester Hate Crime Project: Findings and Conclusions.

13. Home Office. (2017) Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2016/2017: Statistical Bulletin. Accessed via: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2016-to-2017>

14. *ibid*

15. Autism Together. (2018). United Response to tackle disability hate crimes as new figures reveal huge surge. Cited in: <https://www.unitedresponse.org.uk/News/charity-united-response-tackle-disability-hate-crimes-new-figures>

16. The National Autistic Society (2014) Careless. London: The National Autistic Society.

## An Example of Good Practice: Guidance on Supporting Victims to Report Hate Crime

### United Response

United Response is a charity focusing on ensuring that individuals with learning disabilities, mental or physical support needs, can live their lives to the full and have equal access to the same rights and opportunities. The charity is working closely with West Yorkshire Police. Together they have compiled a training resource pack. The resource pack provides guidance to support workers on how to have conversations with people with disabilities explaining what a hate crime is in easy-to-understand language. This helps people to identify whether they have been a victim of hate crime.

**“[Disability hate crime] is often a hidden and underreported crime. Victims can sometimes lack the confidence in coming forward and reporting this to the authorities. Sometimes they don’t realise they have even experienced a hate crime. That’s why this resource pack we’ve helped put together and the training United Response’s staff have undertaken is so crucial.”**

Hate Crime Co-ordinator for West Yorkshire Police

**“We all have a duty to take action and work in partnership to tackle hate crime and support victims. I fully support the work of United Response focusing on disability hate crime which is helping to make a real difference in our communities. It’s a great initiative.”**

West Yorkshire Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC)

For more information and to download the resource pack, with an additional easy read hate crime reporting form, visit [www.unitedresponse.org.uk](http://www.unitedresponse.org.uk)

Previous analysis of the Crime Survey for England and Wales data found that the underreporting of hate crime is due to the following reasons:<sup>17</sup>

- Lack of police action (43%)
- The incident seemed trivial (21%)
- The crime was dealt with privately (12%)
- The crime is a common occurrence (10%)
- Fear/ distrust of the police (8%)
- Fear of reprisal (8%)
- Reported to other authorities (2%)
- Inconvenient to report (1%)

In 2012, the Government published ‘Challenge it, Report it, Stop it’. This publication aimed to raise the profile of hate crime, ascertaining it as a continuous priority for police forces nationally, and for other criminal justice partners such as the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).

The plan focused on three core principles: improvement through prevention, increased reporting and access to support, and improving the response to hate crime.<sup>18</sup> However, in November 2013 a subsequent follow-up report suggested that whilst there had been some improvement, much still remained to be done.<sup>19</sup> The Home Office have subsequently published the ‘Action Against Hate’ plan to address the issues raised.<sup>20</sup>

17. Home Office, Ministry of Justice and Office for National Statistics and Ministry of Justice. (2013) An overview of hate crime in England and Wales. Accessed via: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/an-overview-of-hate-crime-in-england-and-wales>

18. HM Government. (2012). Challenge it, Report it, Stop it: The Government’s Plan to Tackle Hate Crime. Accessed via: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/challenge-it-report-it-stop-it>

19. HM Government. (2014). Challenge it, Report it, Stop it: Progress Report. Accessed via: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hate-crime-action-plan-challenge-it-report-it-stop-it>

20. Home Office. (2016) Action Against Hate. Accessed via: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hate-crime-action-plan-2016>



Additionally, the ‘Living in a different world: Joint review of disability hate crime’ inspection report stated the need to focus on (a) improving awareness of what disability hate crime is; (b) increasing the reporting of disability hate crime; and (c) embedding disability hate crime processes within the routine working practices of the police, CPS and probation staff.<sup>21</sup>

While acknowledging the complexities involved, it was hoped that the opportunity would be taken to adapt and change the criminal justice system to provide an improved service, prioritising seven key recommendations to be taken forward. However, in 2015, the CJI published a review on the initial report and found that the opportunity to provide a new impetus had not been taken, and consequently, insufficient progress had been made in relation to the seven key recommendations.<sup>22</sup>

## Current Context

Following on from several serious, highly publicised and harrowing cases of learning disability hate crime, such as the deaths of Fiona and Frankie Pilkington, the need for research into the prevalence of learning disability hate crime was clearly apparent. Such tragic cases are merely the ‘tip of the iceberg’ of the current situation of learning disability hate crime, and the devastating impacts for individuals. This was stressed in the ‘Getting Away with Murder’ report.<sup>23</sup> The report examined the prevalence of hate crime against deaf and disabled people in the UK and investigated the reasons behind its low profile and prosecution rate. It presented cases of disability hate crime to show that the roots of such incidents lie in contempt rather than fear. However, disability hate crime remains largely invisible. Its existence is frequently denied, incidents are often underreported, and the reports are commonly mismanaged, meaning that the perpetrators of disability hate crime often go unpunished.

**“ People with learning disabilities are being ignored. Stop and listen to us. Support us, respect us. Don’t patronise me. Meet me halfway.”**

Member of the reference group

In 2012, the Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities (FPLD), in partnership with Lemos and Crane, published the ‘Loneliness and Cruelty’ report.<sup>24</sup> The report became a haunting representation of the cruel acts of hate crime continually experienced by individuals with learning disabilities. It found that the majority of those responsible for such incidents were neighbours or people known in their locality, where “cruelty [becomes] contagious in uncivilised communities”. Therefore, the report became an important platform for the voices of people with learning disabilities could be heard.

The ‘Loneliness and Cruelty’ report acknowledged the need for improved access within the criminal justice system, providing a supportive environment for people with learning disabilities to report hate crime. The report also stressed the importance of strengthening the relationships between people with learning disabilities with others in the community and instilling a sense of responsibility and accountability in the wider community.

In addressing the social problems of loneliness and cruelty, the report suggested that community-based approaches needed to be developed. Their role should be on supporting individuals with learning disabilities to establish relationships within their communities and provide a supportive environment to appropriately and sensitively deal with acts of learning disability hate crime. By developing the social capital paradigm, the prospect would be to counter the loneliness experienced by many people with learning disabilities, which contributes

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21. Criminal Justice Joint Inspectorates. (2013). Living in a Different World: Joint Review of Disability Hate Crime.
  22. Criminal Justice Joint Inspectorates. (2015) Joint Review of Disability Hate Crime Follow Up. Accessed via: [https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/cjji/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/05/CJJI\\_DHCFU\\_May15\\_rpt.pdf](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/cjji/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/05/CJJI_DHCFU_May15_rpt.pdf)
  23. Scope. (2008) Getting Away with Murder. Accessed via: <https://www.scope.org.uk/Scope/media/Images/Publication%20Directory/Getting-away-with-murder.pdf?ext=.pdf>
  24. Lemos and Crane. (2012). Loneliness and Cruelty. London Accessed via: [www.mentalhealth.org.uk/learningdisabilities](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/learningdisabilities)

to acts of learning disability hate crime remaining hidden. It provides an opportunity for current cultural ignorance to be challenged, and the development of a supportive, inclusive community founded on a no tolerance towards learning disability hate crime.

Additionally, the 'Loneliness and Cruelty' report recommended the improvement in current mainstream services, to improve access for victims of learning disability hate crimes and strengthen the support services.

Although many resources and approaches have been developed and tested in collaboration with people with learning disabilities, there is a need for wider dissemination of current strategic methods in addressing learning disability hate crime. A wider outreach will enable a strengthened collective effort to prevent and prosecute acts of learning disability hate crime.

## A Focus on Highlighting Good Practice

Our report aims to map and evaluate schemes addressing learning disability hate crime across the UK. It will create an understanding of how current schemes operate, gather evidence of good practice – highlighted throughout our report – and thus develop recommendations to be taken forward to influence change in policy and the strategic approach to addressing learning disability hate crime.

The Home Office report 'Action Against Hate' sets out the UK Government's plan of action to address hate crime until May 2020.<sup>25</sup> The following report highlights areas for reform, based on evidence of good practice, which should be addressed in the update of the 'Action Against Hate' report.

## The Involvement of Experts by Experience

Involving people with learning disabilities within the research itself and its development has been a fundamental principle throughout this project. Central to this was the development of an 'experts by experience' reference group, who guides our research and ensures the voices of people with learning disabilities are heard. Members of the reference group and other local advocates share and voice their own personal stories. Their stories detail not just their personal experiences of learning disability hate crime, but also show their emotional resilience and strength in taking personal action by building networks of support and engagement within society.

It is important to support and empower people with learning disabilities to lead full and inclusive lives in the community, with appropriate support and systems in place to recognise and pertinently deal with learning disability hate crime incidents. We should all be able to feel safe to live and engage in our communities, with the understanding that there is no tolerance for acts of learning disability hate crime.

### An Example of Good Practice: Citizen Action

#### The Friendship Group

A learning disability involvement officer for East Sussex County Council, supports the Involvement Matters Team – a group of self-advocates with learning disabilities representing the views of people with learning disabilities in East Sussex. An active member of the Involvement Matters Team set up a friendship group at a local Wetherspoons pub.

The staff at the pub have supported this group, ensuring there is always a table reserved for the group and a welcoming atmosphere. This group provides people with learning disabilities an opportunity to come together and socialise in a community environment every Tuesday and Saturday.

The group promotes the concept of peer support, but also social inclusion within a community environment. It started out with four members and has since grown to over 30 members.

25. Home Office. (2016) Action Against Hate. Accessed via: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hate-crime-action-plan-2016>



“ If only people with learning disabilities are given the chance and the support to reach their full potential, that is really what is important. ”

“ People with learning disabilities have the right to a voice. Don't be ashamed of who you are. Speak up. Don't let anyone tell you any different. ”

“ We all have something to give... If only they are given the chance and the support to reach their full potential. ”

# Learning Disability Hate Crime Prevalence

## A Scoping Survey of Current Schemes Addressing Learning Disability Hate Crime

### Survey Design

The survey was designed in collaboration with the 'experts by experience' reference group. It focused on identifying schemes and initiatives across the UK that address learning disability hate crime. The survey comprised 82 questions to understand current scheme operations and evaluative practices.

To ensure the survey was clear and easy to understand, standard definitions for learning disabilities, learning disability hate crime and mate crime were included. Although included within the survey, we oppose the term 'mate crime', as it belittles the very serious nature of the crime. We would advocate for a different term to be used across the sectors addressing learning disability hate crime.

The survey was designed and distributed on Survey Monkey®, allowing for ease in the collection and analysis of data. Prior to the survey being launched, both the members of the reference group and the stakeholder group were asked to test the survey, allowing for any errors to be identified and corrected before disseminating it to the wider audience. This stage was important to ensure the survey was accessible and that the questions targeted the necessary information.

To ensure that the survey was widely promoted, we spent time developing a database of organisations who would potentially either be involved in addressing learning disability hate crime or be able to signpost to local organisations that are. The database included local and national learning disability charities and networks, police forces, advocacy groups, academics and other disability networks.

The survey was then launched in April 2016 for four weeks. It was distributed via a press release, social media, the FPLD newsletter, the UK Health and Learning Disability Network and the Choice forum, as well as by direct email to our database contacts.

### Key Findings

Despite the encouraging emergence of schemes addressing and raising awareness of learning disability hate crime across the UK, there are currently few opportunities for learnings to be shared across communities. Consequently, by conducting a scoping survey, our research aimed to identify current schemes and highlight evidence of good practice.

The survey received 159 responses from schemes across the UK, with 123 fully completed. In some cases, there was duplication of the responses due to certain projects being run by various partner organisations, and in other cases schemes failed to answer all the questions. The survey was very in-depth, taking an average of 25 minutes to complete.

The survey found that 92% of the responses referred to schemes operating in England, 4% in Wales and 2% in both Scotland and Northern Ireland. Over 78% of the schemes specifically covered their local authority area, with more than 36% of the schemes currently offer more than one service. The main types of schemes included:

- Campaigns raising awareness of learning disability hate crime (59%)
- Schemes providing support to people with learning disabilities in a community setting (48%)
- Schemes offering advocacy to learning disability hate crime victims and providing an opportunity to report such incidents (40%)

Additionally, 80% of the schemes that responded also detailed forms of training provision – both internally (to staff) and externally (to other organisations or in community settings) – to raise awareness of learning disability hate crime.

## An Example of Good Practice: An Awareness Campaign

### **I'm with Sam Campaign** ([www.dimensions-uk.org/withSam](http://www.dimensions-uk.org/withSam))

**“Hate crime can wreck lives. It creates a huge mental health problem for people with learning disabilities and autism – people who often don’t have the ability to understand or cope with it.”**

Mark Brookes, Hate Crime Ambassador

In October 2016, Dimensions launched the ‘I’m with Sam’ campaign. The campaign was developed as a result of research into reports of learning disability hate crime, which found 73% of people with learning disabilities had been victims of hate crime.

The campaign identified the principal issues underpinning learning disability hate crime and is a statement of support. By standing with Sam you are standing up to learning disability hate crime and supporting people with learning disabilities and autism.

#### **The campaign developed a blueprint for change, comprising eight principal goals:**

- 1** Separate disability hate statistics into learning disability/autism and other disabilities.
- 2** Change the law to make disability hate a crime online.
- 3** The Department for Education to adapt resources to better support all primary and secondary schools with positive messages around difference.
- 4** Manufacturers to incorporate greater learning disability sensitivity into toys, games and other children’s entertainment.
- 5** The Department of Health to develop simple guidance to help families and support workers identify and manage cases of hate crime.
- 6** The CPS to improve investigation protocols within the criminal justice system in situations where there is a learning-disabled victim.
- 7** The Home Office to improve resources and training for police officers and others to help them when receiving a report of hate crime from a person with a learning disability or autism, including funding self-advocates to provide specialist victim support.
- 8** The campaign will evaluate the effectiveness of new legislation on people with learning disabilities or autism, leading to specific change recommendations and/or a green paper recommendation on stronger legislation to protect vulnerable people from learning disability hate crime.

## Summary

From the survey it was reassuring to report that 57% of the schemes that responded currently involve people with learning disabilities, whether this is via paid employment or on a volunteer basis. 'Experts by experience' can be invaluable in the facilitation and structuring of service provision. Although this 57% from the survey is positive, the involvement and utilisation of the skills and experiences of people with learning disabilities, is an aspect of service provision that needs to be continually improved upon and strengthened in all schemes.

The main concern raised by the schemes in our survey responses was the continuation of service provision and funding. Over 36% of respondents had no official funding in place for the 2016–2017 operation year and, of those with funding, 67% reported they will receive less funding than the previous financial year. The financial strain placed on such schemes is causing many to struggle to maintain service provision to a proficient standard and meet set targets and expectations.

## An Example of Good Practice: 'Expert by Experience' Led Police Training

### Surrey Police Training Programme by Dimensions

**"Our aim is to make all aware of the needs of people with learning disabilities. Training for police is crucial and understanding the research and what it tells us to get a real understand of people's behaviour and how they may not understand that something is a disability hate crime but also how to report."** Sailesh Limbachia, Detective Chief Inspector and Hate Crime Lead for Surrey Police

Dimensions have been delivering training workshops to Surrey Police officers, to help create an understanding of how to sensitively support people with learning disabilities and autism who have been victim of hate crimes. The workshops ensure that 'experts by experience' are leading all training and share their stories of hate crime. A broad programme of training is covered, from the history of learning disabilities to how stigma and discrimination can develop, and from listening to personal stories of hate crime to the best ways of supporting an individual with learning disabilities or autism.

An important aspect of the workshops is providing face-to-face contact with the 'experts by experience' trainers and a providing an opportunity to ask questions and develop alternative ways of responding to a victim of learning disability hate crime.

Police officers who have attended the training have positively responded, and support the training being led by 'experts by experience'. The workshops also raise awareness of the low reporting statistics of learning disability hate crime. Many individuals with learning disabilities may not recognise themselves as a victim of hate crime. Also, incident reports may be incorrectly reported. Therefore, what the police might classify as antisocial behaviour has a cumulative effect on people with a learning disability who may live in fear and stop going out. Therefore, it is important to build awareness with the police and the community of what acts of learning disability hate crime might look like.

**"Crimes is underreported and under-recorded. Police need to understand how people tell their story and that they are more likely to not report it. Understand the tragic cases and work through those and unpick so that they can learn from these."** Mark Brookes, Dimensions

With assistance from the ‘experts by experience’ reference group, the schemes and initiatives from the survey were plotted onto a digital map of the UK and colour-coded into the three main themes that emerged:

- Raising awareness and providing training on learning disability hate crime
- Providing support to people with learning disabilities within a community setting
- Providing learning disability hate crime reporting services

The interactive map provided a visualisation of the scoping survey data and highlighted key service provisions and gaps in distribution across the UK, which were further investigated. A link to the interactive map is included in the digitalised report, which can be accessed via the FPLD website: **learningdisabilitieshatecrime.mentalhealth.org.uk**

## Mapping of Disability Hate Crime in England and Wales

In addition to the scoping survey, we explored the distribution of disability hate crime through a spatial mapping of England and Wales. Current available disability hate crime data does not separate out learning disability hate crime from other forms of disability hate crime. Therefore, the following spatial analysis was inclusive of all disability hate crime.

Previous studies of the UK population have revealed that people with disabilities are significantly more likely to be exposed to violence across a 12-month period, compared to those without a disability.<sup>26</sup>

The following spatial analysis collected data from 43 police force areas regarding the number of hate crimes, the total population, the number of police officers, and the results of a population-based police confidence survey. Data regarding hate crime rates, the Crime Survey from England and Wales, and additional geographic information were also collected.<sup>27,28</sup>

Overall, the results demonstrated that disability hate crime is more common, in absolute numbers, in areas with high population density such as London, Manchester and Cardiff. However, even when factoring in population rate, areas with higher density continued to present as areas with higher rates of hate crime. One possible explanation for this is that areas with higher population density also experience higher rates of unemployment, financial hardship and criminality, such as gang involvement, all of which could increase general crime rates as well as crimes against people with disabilities.

Alternatively, it could be argued that the difficulties surrounding criminality in highly built-up areas promote more investment into the area’s police and justice systems. Therefore, crime rates in these areas are perhaps reflective not specifically of higher numbers of crimes, but of better monitoring, reporting and prosecutions following vigilant and efficient policing.

From the spatial analysis, two significant outliers were identified:

- **Lancashire** – considered a hotspot, showing unprecedentedly high rates of disability hate crime compared to surrounding counties.
- **Cambridgeshire** – presented low rates of disability hate crime compared to the surrounding counties.

A detailed report on the spatial analysis will be published later in 2018 on the FPLD website: **www.mentalhealth.org.uk/learning-disabilities**

26. Emerson, E., & Roulstone, A. (2014) Developing an Evidence Base for Violent and Disablist Hate Crime in Britain: Findings From the Life Opportunities Survey. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 29(17), 3086 – 3104.

27. Home Office. (2017) Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2016/2017: Statistical Bulletin. Accessed via: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2016-to-2017>

28. Office for National Statistics. (2017) Crime Survey for England and Wales. Accessed via: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/june2017>



## The Case of Lancashire: Evidence of Good Practice

Although Lancashire presented as an area with a low total hate crime rate compared to surrounding counties, it was specifically identified as a hotspot for disability hate crimes. Therefore, to understand and conceptualise the current disability hate crime strategy within Lancashire, we undertook further consultations with an array of local Lancashire organisations.

Following the consultations, it became evident that Lancashire Police and supportive organisations, have prioritised disability hate crime reporting. It has been a consistent and coordinated approach, particularly over the last seven years. It has relied on a footprint of partner organisations to work in collaboration towards the aim of raising awareness of learning disability hate crime and encouraging victims, and witnesses, to report it.

In 2010, a hate crime project, 'Lancashire United Against Hate', was established by a partnership between Lancashire Constabulary, Lancashire County Council, Lancashire Unison and Preston & Western Lancashire Racial Equality Council. As part of the project, a DVD was filmed to show Lancashire as diverse, welcoming people from every community. The partnership was later commissioned by the government to produce a DVD for a national audience, using the Lancashire DVD as a template. This has since been distributed to over 300 organisations and is freely accessible via the True Vision website.

**“ The Association of the Chief Police Officers and our partners believe that one of the best ways to help local partnerships is by recognising and sharing good practice from local initiatives and we do this through our dedicated hate crime website True Vision. The Lancashire video is one of the best examples we found, and we were keen to share the benefits with other areas. The video not only encourages victims to come forward to report crime but also helps to encourage positive attitudes and to promote integration in communities. ”**

Superintendent Paul Giannasi <sup>29</sup>

Another aspect to Lancashire's hate crime strategy is the recent 'Say No to Hate Crime' campaign, with the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) calling on all residents, councils and organisations to sign an anti-hate crime pledge:

**“ I am clear that Lancashire is no place for hate and I want people to send a clear message by signing up to the pledge, reporting incidents when they happen and seeking support available through Lancashire Victim Services. ”**

Within Lancashire, there is a strong importance placed upon working collaboratively and in partnership with other organisations when coordinating and addressing issues such as learning disability hate crime. For example, Preston Police worked closely with Disability Equality NW over five years, reviewing the third-party reporting centres (TPRCs) within the area. With consultation from the local community, the emphasis on the service provision of TPRCs shifted.

29. True Vision, accessed via: <http://report-it.org.uk/home>

Rather than processing reports of learning disability hate crime, the emphasis is now placed on providing support to victims and signposting them to other services and reporting pathways. Therefore, victims using the TPRCs will be provided with support and a safe place from which to then report acts of hate crime to the police or trained third-sector organisations. This reduces the onus on staff at the centres to complete incident reports, which requires time, resources, training and so on. It also reduces the vulnerability of staff at the centres, as incident reports can be very emotive.

Additionally, in the 2013 'Living in a different world: Joint review of disability hate crime' report, Lancashire was highlighted as providing training of good practice.<sup>30</sup> A training package on hate crime had been developed by the police and delivered to all front-line staff, including police response and neighbourhood team officers, Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and control room staff. The training was part of a centrally co-ordinated awareness campaign and encompassed half a day on disability hate crime.

The training aimed to help staff:

- Recognise and identify the special nature of disability hate crimes and explore the difference between hostility and prejudice.
- Recognise the common factors/ erroneous assumptions associated with disability hate crimes/incidents.
- Specify a range of special measures for vulnerable victims.
- Describe what autism is and recognise some of the behavioural characteristics and coping strategies.
- Describe how people with autism can become victims and offenders.

The strategic approach to addressing learning disability hate crime in Lancashire is community-led, with key involvement in regular awareness campaigns, development of schemes with 'experts by experience' and the continual review of current practices.

The process of improving learning disability hate crime incident reporting has focused on developing and instilling confidence in community members with learning disabilities to report. Continual engagement with the community – raising awareness and expanding work in this area – has been prioritised. Also, importance has been placed on training front-line services, especially police forces, to identify learning disability hate crime and appropriately record it.

By initiating a combination of strategies to address the understanding of learning disability hate crime and how to appropriately deal with such reports, Lancashire's PCC aims to address the underreporting of such crimes and provide clarity on the current situation. Therefore, despite the spatial analysis identifying Lancashire as a hotspot for disability hate crime, the statistics are in fact testament to the concerted efforts from a partnership of organisations within Lancashire to raise the awareness and reporting of such incidents.

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30. Criminal Justice Joint Inspectorates. (2013) Living in a Different World: Joint Review of Disability Hate Crime. Accessed via: <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/media/a-joint-review-of-disability-hate-crime-living-in-a-different-world-20130321.pdf>

# Section B

Addressing Learning Disability  
Hate Crime



# Evaluation of Current Schemes Addressing Learning Disability Hate Crime

## Evaluation Practices

### Design

Following on from the initial scoping survey, 10 of the schemes that responded were further investigated, focusing particularly on their evaluative practices. This was an important aspect to consider, as without effective evaluation practices it would be difficult to establish whether the schemes and initiatives are evidence of good practice.

In collaboration with the 'experts by experience' reference group, criteria concerning location and type of scheme were used to select and contact 30 schemes (from the 123 completed responses) for further information. After conversing with the selected 30 schemes, 10 schemes were chosen for in-depth reviews via site visits and telephone interviews. The focus of the interviews included: details of the scheme, the strengths of the scheme, the barriers faced, the evaluative practices used and the future objectives for the scheme. Each scheme was then asked to self-select their current evaluation status from the following colour-coded options:

**Red**

**The scheme needs to develop an evaluation process to assess how the scheme is being used and if it is addressing learning disability hate crime within the area.**

**Yellow**

**The scheme has a form of evaluation, yet it needs to be further developed to be able to statistically determine if the scheme is effectively addressing learning disability hate crime in the area.**

**Green**

**The scheme has an effective scheme evaluation process, which can determine how and when the scheme is being used and the level of impact it has on learning disability hate crime within the area.**

### Summary

Although each scheme discussed some forms of evaluation, 8 out of the 10 selected schemes described their evaluative practices as being within the yellow criterion, identifying the need for further development in scheme evaluation. Most of the schemes mentioned verbal feedback as their main evaluative measure, which is difficult to quantify into statistical evidence for the scheme's impacts.

Without an understanding of how a scheme is performing against its intended aims and objectives, it is difficult to determine with a degree of certainty if it is successfully addressing learning disability hate crime. This limitation in terms of evidence, which is usually required for funding partners and other stakeholders, can then affect other aspects of scheme development.

A main barrier identified by all the selected schemes was funding. Without secured funding over an extensive period, the schemes face constant restriction in growth and uncertainty in project security. Lack of funding can have an impact on scheme delivery and its effectiveness as a service, therefore reducing a scheme's ability to meet its aims and objectives. For example, this is evident in the Safe Place scheme in Dudley, where essential scheme operations such as establishment checks, are struggling to be completed. With schemes struggling to maintain scheme operations due to poor funding, low levels of staffing and lack of resources, establishing and carrying out evaluative practices becomes very difficult.

Another important theme from the scheme interviews was the development of a collective approach to addressing learning disability hate crime. A platform to share findings and learnings across schemes would allow for the continual development of schemes based on evidence from current successful practices.

With continued strain on resources and individuals facing difficulty in gaining access to services, particularly public health services, it is time to re-think how important issues such as learning disability hate crimes are addressed.

Rather than placing focus on individual ownership of a scheme, importance needs to be placed on how best to support the victims of learning disability hate crime, which will most likely be through a supportive network of services.

**Below is a summary table of the 10 selected schemes.**

Scheme	Summary
<b>YMCA Bournemouth:</b> The Chatterbox Project	Youth action project aimed at raising learning disability awareness within the local community via campaigns, community training and a magazine written by 'experts by experience.'
<b>The Advocacy Project:</b> Support to Report	Training led by 'experts by experience' aimed at increasing awareness and understanding of how to report learning disability hate crime.
<b>Leonard Cheshire Disability:</b> Hate Crime Advocacy Service	An advocacy service set up to raise awareness of learning disability hate crime, provide person-centred support to victims, increase reporting of incidents, and improve access to policing and other relevant services.
<b>Northamptonshire LDPB:</b> Keep Safe Scheme	The establishment of safe locations within the community where registered people with learning disabilities can receive help when in distress.
<b>Gloucestershire County Council:</b> The Drop-In Service	A free and safe support service for vulnerable individuals within the community, encouraging inclusion and independence and providing signposting to other services within the area.
<b>Dudley Voices for Choice:</b> Safe Place Scheme	A safety net provision for vulnerable people if they need support or reassurance when out and about in the community.
<b>Disability Equality NW:</b> Developing from the Negatives	An awareness project including the promotion of incident reporting, training to external organisations and victim support.
<b>Camden People First:</b> Disability Hate and Mate Crime Project	A user-led project aiming to increase the understanding and confidence of adults with learning disabilities, empowering them to report hate crime incidents.
<b>CACH:</b> Awareness Training in Schools	A learning disability hate crime awareness training in schools.
<b>Brandon Trust:</b> Keeping Safe Course	Accessible training workshops, based on drama activities, for people with learning disabilities to identify disability hate crime and how best to report such acts.

# Feeling Safe in the Community

## An Overview of Safe Place Schemes

Safe Place schemes, also described as 'the big society in action', were strongly identified from our survey as schemes that offer people with learning disabilities places of safety in the community. Many of the schemes are now opening the service to other vulnerable groups such as individuals with dementia, and/or mental health needs. Establishments such as coffee shops or libraries register to become a recognised Safe Place. Once approved, they can then advertise themselves as a Safe Place, mainly via a recognised sticker in the window.

If individuals become distressed when in the community, they can enter a nominated safe place, present their membership card and receive the help they need. The intention is for nominated Safe Place establishments to provide trained staff to assist vulnerable individuals, using the individual's membership card to contact a nominated safe person. The scheme aims to encourage individuals with learning disabilities to explore their local community, with the understanding that, in times of distress, there are places to go to for safety and help.

With a high response from Safe Place schemes to the initial scoping survey, it was imperative to further investigate such schemes. In-depth interviews were conducted with four different Safe Place schemes and related organisations:

- The National Safe Place Organisation
- MacIntyre Safe Places Training
- South Wales Keep Safe Cymru
- Avon and Somerset Safe Place Scheme

The interviews aimed to question how the schemes are instilling feelings of safety in people with learning disabilities, addressing challenges such as reduced funding, as well as reviewing their evaluation methods and current scheme development. Summary findings from these interviews are outlined below, and videos of the interviews can be viewed via the digitalised report on the FPLD website: [www.mentalhealth.org.uk/learningdisabilities](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/learningdisabilities)

## The National Safe Place Organisation

The National Safe Place Organisation aims to establish a nationwide service, providing an inclusive single point of reference for all vulnerable individuals in need of a place of safety. The organisation intends to address fundamental flaws within the current operation of the Safe Place schemes across the UK, which include:

- Many of the schemes operating on a stand-alone basis, sometimes under different names and using different logos.
- Limited information is available for individual schemes, increasing the difficulty experienced by vulnerable individuals when locating nominated Safe Place establishments.
- Some areas across the UK are not being serviced by a Safe Place scheme.
- There is a lack of proactive educational material, not only to teach vulnerable people how to find and use Safe Places, but also educate them on learning disability hate crime.

Although many Safe Place schemes are present across the UK, there is a lack of coordination in services due to them being individually operated. Encouraging a coordinated response between the schemes across the UK will improve the service for vulnerable individuals. For example, if Safe Place schemes are registered with the National Safe Place Organisation, then an individual would be

able to access an interactive map to find their nearest registered Safe Place, whether that is within their local area or an unknown area they have travelled to. It is imperative that people with learning disabilities are supported to become independent and feel safe to travel and explore.

The need to encourage schemes to construct efficient and effective evaluation methods is also evident, to ensure the service provision is fit for purpose, and place the safety of their members at the forefront of decision-making. There have been incidences where registered Safe Place establishments within the community no longer have trained staff or current staff are unaware of their Safe Place status.

In some cases, Safe Place establishments have even closed without notifying the scheme operator in the area. This inconsistency in provision and ineffectiveness of monitoring scheme operations is detrimental to achieving the main purpose of the scheme – keeping vulnerable individuals safe within the community.

### MacIntyre Safe Places Training

In Derbyshire, MacIntyre supports 140 people with learning disabilities. Since 2009, the charity has been supporting their 'Reps on Board' to deliver the Keeping People Safe programme. Supported by Derbyshire County Council and Derbyshire Police, the programme aims to support adults with learning disabilities to recognise and address hate crime, enhancing community safety. The Keeping People Safe programme has been operating in partnership with the Hate Crime and Staying Safe Project Steering Group, which comprises key stakeholders such as 'experts by experience', Derbyshire County Council, Derbyshire Police and MacIntyre staff.

With the support of a group of Champions, comprising 'experts by experience', the Keeping Safe programme delivers hints and tips about keeping safe through the delivery of workshops, hosting awareness events and providing leaflets in easy read to all adults with a learning disability across Derbyshire. The Champions also play an active and integral part in the Safe Place scheme across Derbyshire. With support, the Champions provide checks on nominated Safe Places within the community.

The involvement of 'experts by experience' in the development and operation of the Keeping People Safe scheme is integral to its effectiveness. For example, with the Champions leading the checks on Safe Place establishments, they will identify whether the places are meeting the necessary requirements to ensure vulnerable individuals feel safe if visiting. They will also be able to feedback any changes required to each Safe Place and the scheme in general, covering how it may become more accessible to people with learning disabilities (such as advising on the most suitable venue to become a Safe Place establishment).

### Keep Safe Cymru Scheme

In South Wales, the Keep Safe Cymru scheme was launched in December 2014. Prior to the launch, community involvement was essential to ensure the scheme being developed would meet the needs of vulnerable individuals within the South Wales force area. South Wales Police, Learning Disability Wales and Mencap Cymru jointly developed the Keep Safe Cymru scheme. The scheme is open to all vulnerable individuals within the community, whether they have a learning disability, a mental health condition, dementia, or any other vulnerability.

Although the scheme is based on a card system, it operates from a different stance to the usual Safe Place scheme format. When individuals register to the scheme, they still receive a membership card, which is a standard requirement in a Safe Place scheme. Individuals are given the opportunity to provide emergency contact details, but they are also able to provide a statement regarding their health and communication needs, which will be linked to the online police service. Here is an example:

**How can you best support me? Listen, remain calm and let me know you are there to help me, so I feel supported and understood. Don't touch me if I am distressed unless I say it is ok. I panic if I'm trapped. Contact my family.**

Service user



Once registered, the individual will also be given access to the police disability line – a dedicated non-emergency telephone number. The call handler will also have access to any information provided on the registration number, ensuring they are responding appropriately. The scheme decided to focus on establishing awareness of the scheme within the community, consulting with the community to develop and adjust the scheme before it was then rolled out. The focus on establishing a dedicated police telephone line, rather than opening several Safe Place establishments, was to ensure the scheme could be sustained and that it gained the confidence of community members. This approach is person-centred, focusing on adapting the service to be accessible to all vulnerable individuals in the community.

### **Avon and Somerset Safe Place Scheme**

The Avon and Somerset Safe Place scheme was originally set up in 2014. Operated by the Avon and Somerset Police, over 350 locations for the Safe Place scheme were recruited. However, under the pressures of reduced police staffing and funding cuts, the scheme became increasingly difficult to maintain, and began to underperform. Many Safe Place establishments were struggling to stay open to the public or maintain trained staff due to high staff turnover. Therefore, the scheme was no longer sustainable or providing safety for those vulnerable in the community.

Consequently, this led to an extensive review of the scheme in 2016, with changes to the scheme being rolled out in May 2017. Following similar procedures to the Keep Safe Cymru scheme, the key changes to the Avon and Somerset Safe Place scheme included the withdrawal from most Safe Place establishments, the opening of a dedicated telephone line and the widening of the membership criteria to include other vulnerable members of the community.

The decision to withdraw from most of the Safe Place establishments was met with high resistance from the local community. However, this necessary change was imperative in keeping the scheme operating, sustainable and most effective for community members, especially during financially difficult times for the scheme.

Funding seems to be a fundamental hindrance to current scheme operations. The Avon and Somerset scheme mentioned that, although it can appreciate the value in the National Safe Place Organisation, financial budgets and restructuring within the force prevent access to the necessary funding. A clear message is the need to build a collaborative partnership of the Safe Place schemes, to provide the most effective service for members.

## **Summary**

It is evident from our research that national co-ordination and support for Safe Place Schemes is challenging, particularly in the current financial climate. A priority is for further research to be undertaken to assess the effectiveness of the current Safe Place Scheme design.

Without established evaluation practices embedded in the current schemes, it is difficult to ascertain if the schemes are meeting their projected expectations and the level of support they are providing individuals with learning disabilities or other perceived vulnerabilities in the community.

The core recommendation would be to develop a national network of Safe Place Schemes by supporting the registration of schemes to the National Safe Place Organisation. The important debate is whether the current scheme design can be adapted to be more effective, or whether the scheme design needs to be rehailed to provide a more sustainable service such as the Keep Safe Cymru scheme.

# Feeling Safe at Home

**BB** I was at home and there was a knock at the door. It was late so I ignored it... They kept knocking and I looked out the spy hole and it was my neighbour, yeah? I opened the door and he came in and said he'd broken up with his girlfriend. He had to live with me now! I didn't know what to do. He stayed there for so long and he had his mates round every night doing drugs. I didn't say anything, yeah? I just stayed in my room.

It was my annual meeting with my social worker, yeah? So I saw them and I said that I didn't want to go home because there was someone in there, yeah? They sorted it out for me and called the police, but he kept his key! The next day I went to do the shopping with my mate and when I came home, my neighbour had been back, yeah? He trashed my house! My bed was all smashed up and posted out the window. He threw all of my food in the river, yeah? I had nothing left. **DD**

Focus group resident

## Cases of Abuse

In 2007, the public was confronted with the very serious effects of persistent learning disability hate crime, with the news of the deaths of Fiona and Frankie Pilkington. After years of reporting abuse from adolescent neighbours that were targeting Frankie Pilkington due to her learning disability, the mother and daughter resorted to taking their own lives.

In 2010, a further horrific hate crime was reported where David Askew collapsed and died at his home following an altercation with a group of young people. Despite suffering years of harassment and antisocial behaviour and reporting 88 incidents to the police from 2004 to 2010, no action to prevent this unlawful treatment was taken.

These high-profile cases merely scratch the surface of the high prevalence of learning disability hate crime. Such cases raise the question, what is being done to support people with learning disabilities to feel safe within their own home?

A common experience people with learning disabilities encounter is 'Cuckooing' – a form of home takeover, where a vulnerable individual is befriended by a stranger and eventually coerced into inviting the stranger back to their home. Once there, offenders will often operate criminal activity including drug dealing and prostitution. Victims can often find themselves either living in one small part of their home, hiding from their intruders, or even resorting to moving out of the property. Many people report experiencing violence and being threatened. These encounters can last for years at a time.

Considering the impact of such examples, it also became important to draw attention, as part of our research, to the issue of learning disability hate crime being experienced within the home setting and gain an understanding from victims of how best to support them to feel safe at home again.

# Scoping Focus Groups with Residents

## Design

A scoping exercise involving residents of six selected housing providers across the UK was completed. Each of the housing providers offered a different accommodation setting for people with learning disabilities, including sheltered housing and short-stay housing. A questionnaire was developed, in partnership with the 'experts by experience' reference group, to be used as a guide for the focus groups at each housing provider.

In total, 109 residents across the different housing providers were involved within the focus groups, with many volunteering to share their experiences of learning disability hate crime within their home. As it was predicted that the nature of the focus groups would be emotive, the following considerations were sensitively applied in facilitation:

- Prior notification was given to the residents of the visit and what was going to be discussed.
- The focus group was structured around refreshments, allowing for general conversation to develop before focusing on learning disability hate crime.
- The Mental Health Foundation's peer support practice guidance was employed, inviting people within the focus groups to support each other after the group facilitator left.

## Findings

**I was just going back to my house, and somebody said, do you know what the time is? And I said I wasn't sure, and then he spat in my face all of a sudden.**

Focus group member

Many of the residents spoke of being fearful to go out into their neighbourhood due to previous experiences of abuse.

**I wouldn't go out for ages because I was feeling low and stuff. My care worker just came in with a hammer, slammed my door open and went at my Xbox. She just smashed it in front of me.**

Focus group member

The residents preferred to seek refuge within their own home, where they can lock their doors, hide from danger and use the spy hole to detect any possible approaching danger.

**I was lying in bed and I woke up and men were around me, and they ripped my clothes and made me give them my money. They kept shouting at me. They were with someone who I thought was my friend.**

Focus group member

However, even within the safety of their own home, residents spoke of not being able to escape the abuse. Many of the residents spoke of incidents where, people they thought of as a friend, had taken advantage of them and put them in very uncomfortable positions.

**Before then, my friend had been borrowing £20 from me every time I saw him and I never got it back. We found out he'd taken £1000 from me and I won't see it again.**

Focus group member

Living in fear of experiencing torment and abuse, either outside or within the home, can detrimentally impact the wellbeing of people with learning disabilities. Some residents spoke of how they are so worried about people coming into their home, even at night, they struggle to sleep or eat.

**BB I check the door is locked, even at night. DD**

Focus group member

**BB If anything goes wrong, even if anybody comes here to start on me again, I'm completely alone here so I won't be able to do anything. DD**

Focus group resident

The focus group members also raised concerns over the incorrect labelling of the learning disability hate crime incidents. Residents spoke of feeling misunderstood and feared not being believed when raising incidents. For example, when property has been damaged, including humiliating graffiti, it has often been recorded by the police as antisocial behaviour, rather than a learning disability hate crime. This has led to victims within the focus groups feeling demoralised, and powerless, as such crimes are not taken as seriously as they should be and the consequences for them reporting such acts seem far worse than those for the perpetrators.

## An Example of Good Practice: Police and the Community

### Yarrow Housing Gate Group and Hendon Police

The Gate Youth group, supported by Yarrow Housing developed a training programme to raise the awareness of the needs of people with learning disabilities and how best to support them to report acts of hate crime. The training forms a module for the Hendon Police Training Centre programme.

Therefore, police officers in training will be developing the skills and understanding to identify acts of learning disability hate crime and support victims of such acts.

## Summary

The focus group discussions confirmed there is a need to address how to support people with learning disabilities to feel safe within their home and neighbourhood. The focus group members were all residents of housing providers. Therefore, the suggestions raised focused on how to develop a safer community within each housing provider setting.

Residents spoke of wanting housing providers to raise awareness of what learning disability hate crime is and teach them how to be aware and protect themselves from such incidents. They also wanted someone to be a contact within the housing setting to report any incidents. It is important to them that they know the named person and feel supported by them. This exercise raised the need to address the safety of people with learning disabilities within their home, protecting them from acts of learning disability hate crime.



## An Example of Good Practice: A Working Partnership between the Police and a Housing Association

### KeyRing Housing Association

KeyRing Housing Association aims to support people with learning disabilities to live independently in the community. They currently fund the community living volunteering programmes, which focuses on supporting people with learning disabilities to engage with their local community, but also feel safe to do so independently.

The community living volunteers run a support group hub, in partnership with Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). This group provides an opportunity for the PCSOs to build a relationship with community members with learning disabilities, as well as being visible in the community. This is important so people with learning disabilities feel comfortable to share their experiences of hate crime with the PCSOs.

The community living volunteering programme also work with community members to develop awareness materials around being safe in the community and understanding what learning disability hate crime is.

**“It is important to build a partnership with organisations such as KeyRing, as they can build the bridge to a community that we as police find hard to reach. They help us get to know their members and for them to get to know us. The group they run, the hub in Frome, is important as we can offer guidance on prevention, reassurance, signposting or crime reduction advice.”**

PCSO, Frome

# Feeling Safe to Report

## Current Action on Hate Crime Reporting

Learning disability hate crime is known to be significantly underreported and this continues to be a prevalent limitation to the success of any learning disability hate crime prevention strategy.

This was highlighted in the CJI review, and the CPS has since reviewed and amended disability hate crime protocols, including:<sup>31</sup>

- Mandating disability hate crime training for all prosecutors.
- Introducing a quality assurance scheme which sees all disability hate crime cases checked every month.
- Engaging with community stakeholders to help revise the public statement on disability hate crime.
- Utilising a range of feedback to update and expand key documents such as the Disability Hate Crime and other crimes against Disabled people prosecution guidance.

The CPS has also developed prosecution guidance stating factors to be taken into consideration when reviewing cases and prosecuting offences classified as disability hate crime. In the public statement on prosecuting disability hate crime and other crimes against disabled people, the CPS stated priorities were to:<sup>32</sup>

- Not make assumptions about a disabled victim's reliability or credibility, and challenge others who do so.
- Ensure that disabled people are aware of the support that is available to them to give their best evidence.
- Be more likely to prosecute cases where disability is a factor, including disability hate crimes where there is sufficient evidence to do so.
- Be mindful that language is important and only use the term 'vulnerable' in relation to disabled people when it is appropriate in the context of the law and facts of the case.
- Recognise that the stereotype-based belief that a disabled person is 'vulnerable' forms the backdrop of disability hate crime and crimes against disabled people and can even be a motivating factor in crimes committed against them.

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31. Criminal Justice Joint Inspectorates. (2015) Joint Review of Disability Hate Crime Follow Up. Accessed via: [https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/cji/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/05/CJI\\_DHCFU\\_May15\\_rpt.pdf](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/cji/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/05/CJI_DHCFU_May15_rpt.pdf)

32. Crown Prosecution Service. (2017). Public statement on prosecuting disability hate crime and other crimes against disabled people. <https://www.cps.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/disability-hate-crime-public%2520statement-2017.pdf>

## An Example of Good Practice: Breaking Down Communication Barriers

### Books Beyond Words

Books Beyond Words are coloured picture books, designed to act as a communication tool to support people with learning disabilities to understand situations they might find difficult. They enable professionals and others supporting people with learning disabilities, to communicate more clearly.

The use of pictures rather than words as a tool for engagement, can make the appointment much easier and more beneficial for the person with a learning disability. The books not only allow for people with learning disabilities to understand situations they may encounter, but they also enable them to tell their own stories. The books create a two-way conversation.

Books Beyond Words was founded 25 years ago by Baroness Sheila Hollins, a professor of psychiatry at St George's, University of London. Currently there are 58 individual books, each covering a different situation a person may face. There are 3 books which focus on supporting an individual with a learning disability when involved in criminal justice action: Going to Court, Mugged and Supporting Victims.

Visit [www.booksbeyondwords.co.uk](http://www.booksbeyondwords.co.uk) for more information and access to the books.

An important factor in addressing the underreporting of learning disability hate crime, is to reduce the barriers for victims, ensuring reasonable adjustments are available and explained to victims.

An important issue to address surrounding the underreporting of learning disability hate crime incidents, is the compounding problem of incorrectly flagging and reporting of such incidents. It is important to flag a learning disability hate crime as soon as possible, to ensure the correct support is made available to the victim and facilitates a proactive investigation of the evidence.

Many police forces are restructuring current hate crime strategies to address such issues and improve the awareness of and response to such incidents. For example, following consultations during Hate Crime Awareness Week 2015, Gloucestershire Police and associated organisations established the Gloucestershire Hate Crime and Hate Incident Coordinated Response Strategy 2016–2021.<sup>33</sup>

This cross-sector, multi-agency response is led by the Police Hate Crime Coordinator, with the aim of:

- Reducing and preventing hate crime incidents through the delivery of targeted educational materials and awareness campaigns.
- Improving the access to support for victims, working in partnership with Victim Support.
- Improving the accuracy of the recording and the collating hate crime data within the police service.

33. Gloucestershire Hate Crime and Hate Incident coordinated Response Strategy 2016 – 2021. Accessed via: <https://www.gloucestershire.police.uk/media/4212/gloucestershire-hate-crime-strategy-2016-2021.pdf>

## An Example of Good Practice: Identification System to Flag Learning Disability Hate Crime

### Pegasus

Surrey police have introduced the Pegasus computer system, which automatically flags if the caller has a learning disability or autism. Currently there are over 500 people within the community, predominately people with learning disabilities or autism, who are signed up to the Pegasus programme.

Each individual is given a unique pin number, which is then linked to any previous incidents and highlights any reasonable adjustments that need to be made in order for the Police to appropriately support the caller. The Pegasus programme therefore allows for the Police respondent to read a full history on the system and prevents a victim from reliving previous incidents.

Surrey Police have also rolled out Learning Disability Police Liaison Officers throughout the county. They have an important role in building relationships with community members with learning disabilities and autism and remove the barriers to victims to support reporting of hate crime incidents. The officers are offered extra training on learning disabilities hate crime and the current support services available to victims.

The Police Liaison Officers aim to raise awareness of learning disability hate crime, aid the communication between with the police and the community, and front an awareness of how to capture the information accurately and help signpost victims.

Surrey Police have also developed the single combined assessment of risk form (SCARF) to support their safeguarding. SCARF offers the opportunity to identify the risk of an individual to hate crime. It is a lengthy questionnaire and looks at the impact of hate crime on the individual and others who may be impacted by the hate crime incident. This process is an important mechanism that helps to categorise and identify where there is risk. It helps to improve the service from Police, ensuring current identification of such incidents. The process allows for effective signposting to support services for hate crime victims.

## What are Third Party Reporting Centres?

In an effort to improve hate crime reporting statistics, there has been a focus on reducing the barriers and improving access to reporting pathways, including online, telephone application and face-to-face advocacy services. A key reporting endeavour, established by various public-sector and third-sector organisations, has been third-party reporting centres (TPRCs).

TPRCs aim to offer victims of hate crime an alternative safe place to report incidents, especially as many vulnerable individuals do not feel confident in reporting to the police.

After an initial scoping exercise via an internet search, we selected three TPRC schemes to investigate further to understand current restrictions to the effectiveness of TPRCs. The reviews were completed via telephone interviews and referenced previous evaluative documents. The three TPRC schemes approached were:

- Hampshire Police
- Cumbria Constabulary
- Stop Hate UK

## Hampshire Police

**BB Hate crime is unacceptable. It has no place in our society; it doesn't reflect the values of our communities. Everyone has a right to live their life free of discrimination and prejudice, to be proud of their identity and not to live in fear... Having more independent reporting centres across the Hampshire policing area will help those most vulnerable members of our communities feel more confident to come forward and report these crimes. DD**

PCC for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight (2017)

With a 21.7% increase in hate crime incident reports from 2016 to 2017 within the county, the PCC for Hampshire placed hate crime at the forefront of police priorities. By March 2017, there were only three TPRCs within the Hampshire and Isle of Wight counties. Therefore, during National Hate Crime Awareness Week 2017, the PCC announced the new initiative to develop TPRCs in all Citizens Advice offices across the counties, in addition to current independent sites. By the end of March 2018, there were 49 TPRCs across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

To bring uniformity and consistency across the TPRCs in the county, the PCC introduced guidance, information and literature, which can be accessed via the PCC's website. With the establishment of a network of TPRCs across the county, the next phase of the initiative is to develop effective evaluation to monitor and assess their effectiveness by the end of 2018. This stage of scheme development is crucial in ensuring the best service provision is provided for members of the community. With the establishment of a new TPRC scheme, the question to be raised is: where is the concept of a collective voice in addressing hate crime?

TPRCs have been set up nationwide, with varying levels of success, under different management and influence. Yet learnings from the different TPRC schemes are not widely available. Some TPRC schemes have undertaken in-depth reviews, identifying key failings to the scheme structure, and therefore producing recommendations to improve the service provision. Without such reviews being shared and publicised to similar schemes, learning is simply bound to just improving one scheme's service provision.

## Cumbria Constabulary

In response to the UK Government's 'Challenge it, Report it, Stop it' report, Cumbria Constabulary launched an investigation into its established TPRC network of over 80 sites.<sup>34</sup> The purpose of the TPRCs within Cumbria was to provide:

**BB ...a safe neutral location within the community where people can report hate crime or hate incidents without having to contact the police directly. Anybody can use this facility regardless of whether they are a victim, witness, or just someone who is aware of information that needs to be reported. DD**

Cumbria Constabulary, 2013<sup>35</sup>

The investigation involved the use of mystery shoppers to access the service provision in the TPRCs across the county. The following results were gathered:

- 14% of the listed TPRCs on Cumbria Constabulary's website no longer existed.
- 90% of the TPRCs did not offer a friendly and confidential environment in which to report a hate crime.
- Only 17% of front-line staff members within the TPRCs were aware of the status as a TPRC.
- 87% of front-line staff in the designated TPRCs did not exhibit empathy and support when dealing with the request for information on how to report a hate crime.

34. HM Government. (2012). Challenge it, Report it, Stop it: The Government's Plan to Tackle Hate Crime.

35. AWAZ Cumbria. (2013). Reporting Hate Crime in Cumbria: An Impossible Task for Victims? Accessed via: <https://equalitycumbria.org/awaz-cumbria/news/reporting-hate-crime-cumbria-impossible-task-victims>

- 91% of the centres did not display any information to publicise that they are a TPRC.
- 81% of the TPRCs did not have any hate crime information leaflets or reporting forms.
- 100% of the TPRCs did not publish their opening days/times on the Cumbria Constabulary website list.
- 100% of TPRCs did not have information leaflets on additional support services for victims of hate crime.

Following the investigation, Cumbria Constabulary has identified further research and implemented the following standards to ensure hate crime is effectively challenged and that all avenues are accessible for victims, while more work is being done to support third-party reporting schemes.

- Police incident logs are checked routinely and stringently to ensure hate incidents and crimes are recognised and recorded correctly.
- Incidents are reviewed to ensure an appropriate response has been provided.
- A dedicated Hate Crime Manager has been appointed for the area.
- Trends and hotspots from the data collection are identified and reviewed.
- Emphasis is put on working with partners to support victims and reduce hate crime.
- It is a standing agenda item at Daily Management Meetings.
- There are regular reviews of live investigations at senior level.
- There is a final review of all such investigations.
- The Cumbria Police website will make third-party hate crime reporting forms available, which are easy to access and use.

This review of TPRCs is not stand-alone, with other organisations finding similar results. For example, Barnet Safer Communities Partnership Board reviewed TPRCs within the area in 2016. The Board found that most of the centres lacked any promotion of their role as a TPRC, with many of the staff being unaware of their position as there had been no training or updated advice since 2010, when the TPRCs were initially established.

With continual damaging reviews of TPRCs, it is evident that the current TPRC scheme structure is not providing the most effective service provision for vulnerable community members reporting acts of hate crime. The focus needs to be placed on how TPRCs can collaboratively (across the UK) be evolved into an effective reporting pathway.

### Stop Hate UK

Stop Hate UK is one of the leading national organisations working to challenge all forms of hate crime and discrimination based on any aspect of an individual's identity. The organisation provides independent, confidential and accessible reporting and support for victims, witnesses and third parties.

The organisation was formed in 1995 as a service for victims of racial harassment: this was in direct response to the murder of Stephen Lawrence. In 2006, it launched the Stop Hate Line to respond to recommendation 16 of The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, 1999 (Stop Hate UK), which reads:

**“ That all possible steps should be taken by Police Services at local level in consultation with local Government and other agencies and local communities to encourage the reporting of racist incidents and crimes. This should include: – the ability to report at locations other than police stations; and – the ability to report 24 hours a day. ”**



In 2013, Stop Hate UK launched the Stop Learning Disability Hate Crime Line, a service for England and Wales, which was funded by the Ministry of Justice. The Stop Learning Disability Hate Crime Line provides support to people affected by learning disability hate crime within the commissioned areas, whether as a victim, a witness or a third party. Stop Hate UK also has a dedicated LGBT helpline, alongside the general hate crime helpline.

Stop Hate UK works alongside local strategic partnerships to tackle hate crime and discrimination, encourage reporting and support the individuals and communities it affects. The helplines enable people to access independent support and information 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

The service provided by Stop Hate UK provides a critical initial point of contact for victims, witnesses and third parties of hate crime incidents. The aim of the helpline is to listen and ensure victims are properly supported, but also to manage expectations. The focus has been to improve hate crime reporting statistics. However, there needs to be an understanding and level of perspective brought to the situation, as not all incidents will have sufficient evidence to gain justice.

There is an opportunity to collectively provide a unified reporting pathway. There is also a need to understand and accept the individual qualities and expertise of the different collaborative partners, and structure a strategy against hate crime that brings forth the strengths within a partnership.

TPRCs rely on the staff of other organisations to take on the sensitive role of first contact for victims to report an act of hate crime. The demands of this are not only apparent in terms of time and resources, but also in terms of the emotional toll placed on the person taking the report. Stop Hate UK offers a service that can bridge this gap. The use of TPRCs can be to offer a victim of hate crime a safe, private space to speak to a service such as Stop Hate UK. By contacting Stop Hate UK, a hate crime victim will be able to speak to a trained member of staff, offering more than just a form-filling service. The service provides victims with a chance to openly speak about their situation and be heard and listened to, without impositions of other demands.

Hate crime incidents often uncover multifaceted aspects, which can be difficult to capture. A service such as Stop Hate UK can take a victim through the referral process and assess the most effective route for the report. The service is also able to signpost victims to other supportive organisations within the local area, depending on the needs of the victim.

## Summary

TPRCs have been introduced to provide victims of hate crime an alternative reporting pathway. However, there are many issues surrounding the effectiveness of the current TPRC structure. The Home office needs review how current TPRCs are working and whether there needs to be a restricting of the service.

They need to consider implementing standardised protocols and evaluation methods for TPRCs. TPRC reviews such as the reports from Cumbria Constabulary, provide an insight into how ineffective the scheme can be in providing a supportive reporting pathway. There needs to be a platform for learning to be shared.

# Concluding Thoughts and Recommendations

**Our report has focused on highlighting evidence of good practice while providing a voice for the victims of learning disability hate crime. It is unacceptable, that after years of reflection and implementation of strategies targeting learning disability hate crime, we are still witnessing such cruelty. By speaking to victims of learning disability hate crime via our focus groups and reference group, it is evident how such crimes are easily missed.**

People with learning disabilities are often overlooked and pre-judged, becoming victims of the implicit bias that exists in all of us. This allows for the current system to justify its inaction towards the demands of support from people with learning disabilities.

It is evident there is still much work to be done if we are to truly comprehend the current situation of learning disability hate crime. Although there has been involvement from a variety of public-sector and third-sector organisations in the development of schemes and initiatives addressing learning disability hate crime, the underreporting of such acts limits the acknowledgement and understanding of the severity of the situation. Many people with learning disabilities are unaware that they are experiencing repeated acts of hate crime, placing them in a very vulnerable position. However, without reasonable adjustments to the justice, support and community systems, such horrific abuse will continue. We all deserve to feel safe to live in our homes and community, and it is our duty to ensure this is reality.

## Recommendations for Action

In the 2016 Home Office 'Action Against Hate' report, five key areas were outlined to address hate crime. The key recommendations from our report are listed below, under the five key Home Office report aims.<sup>36</sup> Our report highlighted evidence of good practice, which have been the basis from which our recommendations have been developed.

We hope our recommendations will be addressed in the Government's We hope our recommendations will be addressed in the refresh of the Government's Hate Crime action plan, published later in 2018. Our main recommendation is for key partners across the sectors to work collaboratively to enforce and ensure citizens with a learning disability are afforded the same rights and justice as any other 'parity of esteem'.

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36. Home Office. (2016) Action Against Hate. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hate-crime-action-plan-2016>



## Preventing Hate Crime

- Local authorities need to develop and improve inclusive mainstream services and publicise local good practice examples of citizen action projects (eg. The Friendship Group, pg 16)
- **The Department for Education must prioritise the compulsory inclusion of learning disability hate crime training in all schools. Ofsted then needs ensure each school is meeting this requirement.**
- The CPS needs to evaluate their current schools pack and seek the support of the Department for Education in promoting the materials to schools.
- **Local authority commissioners and the CQC need to check that housing providers are aware of and implement standardised learning disability hate crime training and feeling safe at home programmes. This to improve reporting procedures for residents.**
- The Department for Education needs to encourage schools to use Books Beyond Words and run book clubs, to support people with learning disabilities to access information.

## Responding to Hate Crime

- Local authorities need to prioritise the implementation of learning disability hate crime action plans, using a holistic and strategic approach.
- **The National Police Chief Council need to prioritise and mandate accredited learning disability hate crime training to all staff within the justice system (e.g. Dimension Police Training pg 20).**

## Reporting of Hate Crime

- The Government needs to standardise police reporting systems, to ensure learning disability hate crimes are correctly recorded and reasonable adjustments are made to support the victims when reporting the incident (e.g. Surrey Police SCARF and Pegasus systems pg 36).
- **The Police Chief Officer and the CPS then need to carry out regular audits to ensure incidents are correctly being flagged across police services.**
- The Government needs to fund research to review current reporting pathways and strengthen evidence for good practice examples mentioned in this report and previous reports.
- **The Home Office needs to implement standardised protocols, unify reporting pathways and evaluation methods for TPRCs and provide a forum for services to share learnings (e.g. via the True Vision website).**<sup>37,38</sup>

37. [http://www.report-it.org.uk/files/hate\\_crime\\_operational\\_guidance.pdf](http://www.report-it.org.uk/files/hate_crime_operational_guidance.pdf)

38. <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/media/joint-inspection-victims-and-witnesses-20090429.pdf>

## Supporting Victims of Hate Crime

- The Home Office needs to further research safe place schemes. Subject to evaluation, they can fund the Safe Place Organisation to nationally coordinate the schemes across the UK.
- **The Police and Crime Commissioners to work with local authorities to review current victim support services. Each local authority should consult with local experts by experience to ensure services are adequately supporting victims of learning disability hate crime.**

## Collecting Hate Crime Data

- The Government to request disaggregated statistics for hate crime against people with learning disabilities because they are more susceptible to hate crime and less likely to report it. This should be actioned by the ONS in the Crime Survey and by police in the routine recording.

“ People with learning disabilities are being ignored. Stop and listen to us, support us. Meet me halfway and give me what I need. ”

“ I am an individual like you, no different. No more, no less. We are part of society, we always have been and always will be. ”

“ It makes me very angry that the lives of people with learning disabilities are so bad... Everyone is a valid person on this Earth. ”

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**#stoplearningdisabilitieshatecrime**

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please visit:**

**[learningdisabilityhatecrime.mentalhealth.org.uk](http://learningdisabilityhatecrime.mentalhealth.org.uk)**

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