



About Hate Crime

Delegate Information
3 November 2010

A county-wide commitment to challenge hate crime, hate incidents and support those targeted

“I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

Maya Angelou



Introduction

This document will attempt to establish a common understanding of what hate crime means and the impact it has on the people and communities of Herefordshire. It will also introduce theoretical studies from sociology and psychology in an attempt to open the debate concerning the roots of hate crime.

In 1999 the Macpherson Inquiry into the murder investigation of teenager Stephen Lawrence laid the groundwork for the legal understanding and definition of racist hate crime. Since then laws recognising hate crime on the basis of religion, sexual orientation and disability have become part of equality law. Laterally human rights have been embedded into UK law, which has enhanced UK equality law.

The law empowers us all to challenge hate crime and hate incidents but there is still a long way to go before we are being effective all of the time, on every occasion. As a county we are striving not to let anyone down, failure results in emotional and psychological suffering somewhere for someone. The diversity team has committed to responding to 100% of enquiries, this is the least we can do.

Tackling hate crime is the responsibility of everyone, because it affects everyone. Successfully challenging hate crime is very powerful and empowering for those affected. To be effective and consistent requires reliable and effective partnership working. Successfully challenging hate crime is also empowering for the local organisations. By being effective in our efforts local people will develop increased confidence in us as professionals, which may lead to greater interaction and trust, and in turn increase effectiveness and interaction in other areas of our work.

We hope that producing this document will help to develop a common understanding of the following;

- the definition of hate crime
- latest evidence to inform action
- that hate crime is wider than race
- a person centred approach to challenging hate crime – in other words putting the community at the centre of our work



What is a hate crime?

Hate crime is any criminal offence where anyone believes the victim has been targeted because of their race/ethnicity, religion/belief, gender/gender identity, disability, age, sexual orientation or any other actual or perceived difference.

If the perpetrator perceives or projects a characteristic onto someone, or the person is attacked due to an association (for example the White parent of a mixed race child) then that is also a hate crime/incident.

All hate crime is important. No hate crime is too minor to be reported. Anyone can be the victim of a hate crime. Anyone could be targeted because of some aspect of their identity. Tackling hate crime supports each and every one of us. Herefordshire Council has a long-established ethos of working in partnership to challenge all forms of hate crime, take action against perpetrators and support and protect those targeted.

Hate crime can include verbal abuse (the words used do not have to explicitly refer to the victim's characteristics), threatening behaviour, harassment, offensive graffiti, malicious communications, damage to property and violence.

These incidents are not always directed at a person or family, they can also be directed at whole communities – for example desecration of graveyards, vandalism of places of worship, offensive graffiti in public places, or acts of terrorism.

Hate incidents do not constitute a criminal offence, but nevertheless can cause alarm, harm and distress. An example of this is continual complaining about a person or family in order to harass, isolate or intimidate them. Comprehensive recording of the source of the complaints could help to identify this pattern.

This targeted crime, in most cases, is an extreme manifestation of prejudice and discrimination. It has a devastating effect not only on victims, their family and friends but on whole communities.

We must also recognise that victims and offenders have multiple identities. So, while a person may experience a disability hate crime, the fact that the victim is female and the perpetrator is male must also be considered. This inevitably leads to questions about limits to the current 'equality strand-specific' approach to tackling hate crime and why in an earlier paragraph we talk about social identity.



Why report a hate crime?

We encourage anyone who is targeted for, or witness to, hate crime to report it immediately. This is vital to ensure that perpetrators are held to account.

We have a zero tolerance attitude to hate crime in Herefordshire. An effective zero tolerance attitude to hate crimes/incidents requires that these crimes be reported, to the police, council or other appropriate agencies.

Only if hate crime is reported can we, together, take action to deal with it. No one has the right to harass, threaten or assault anyone because of who they are.

Some reasons for under/not-reporting are:

- The existing relationship between perpetrator and targeted person
- Lack of awareness about human rights
- Not aware that there is support to challenge, or even what “hate crime” is
- Negative previous experiences with the council, police or other agencies
- Lack of accessibility to information
- Embarrassed about seeking support

- Fear of losing control of the process
- Previously told to “just ignore it”
- Difficulty in verbalising experiences
- Issues of recording
- “Low level” incidents tolerated (experience has shown that low level incidents are often a precursor to more serious incidents)
- Experience of telling the story over and over due to intelligence not being shared by different agencies. This is particularly difficult when young people are involved





Either as a witness or a targeted person reporting a hate crime can be a very difficult decision to make.

As a result of experiencing a hate crime those targeted can be extremely distressed, deeply damaged or worse. Sometimes people are persuaded to or want to forget it happened, put it down to “wrong place at the wrong time” or develop a tolerance level they believe they can survive with. Consequently the reluctance to report a hate crime stems from a variety of individual, family and community concerns.

Being targeted for a hate crime carries with it, unlike most crimes, the very real possibility of being re-victimised as a consequence of reporting. Also, because the abuse can be very low level to begin with, those targeted feel they cannot report the incident to anyone. In most cases it is the continuing low level of the abuse that affects a person’s/family’s well being, sense of place and quality of life.

Our strong advice is **report the incident/s as soon as possible**. It is the role of the authorities to ensure that this is stopped, not to make judgements. It is the experience of the diversity team that these kinds of incidents rarely go away on their own.

Who can report hate crime?

Anyone can report hate crime including:

- Residents and private tenants
- Visitors to Herefordshire
- Local businesses
- Community and faith groups
- Employees
- A third party witness

Any kind of evidence can help those involved in the process of investigation. In particular, it can help an investigation if you are able to provide:

- A description of the perpetrator(s)
- Details of any witnesses
- A diary record of any on-going incidents and previous incidents you have experienced
- Original copies of any hate mail that has been sent
- Evidence of damage to property, graffiti etc. It is advisable not to clear these up before reporting the incident if possible

If you don’t have any evidence, we still encourage you to report anything that you perceive as a hate crime. This is important because it helps us build a picture of the challenges facing people in the county, where possible hotspots are and, in turn, where community empowerment initiatives can be prioritised.



How to report a hate crime

1. In an emergency, dial 999. If there is no immediate danger, you can report the incident to the Hate Crime team at the West Mercia Police on 0300 333 3000, or call into any police station.

Callers have the option of reporting an incident anonymously. We encourage people to provide personal details, which will help the police to investigate the incident more thoroughly.

The Police will take your complaint seriously, and thoroughly investigate it.



2. Report it to Herefordshire Council's Corporate Diversity Team who can help in a variety of ways:

- Offer free and independent help and advice
- Provide a local view of equality issues
- Put you in contact with other agencies and act as an intermediary
- Put you in contact with others in the community who have experienced similar problems
- Support any legal action in court or an industrial tribunal
- Advocacy and moral support
- Keep the information entirely confidential if that is what you want

Contact the team on 01432 267307 or equality@herefordshire.gov.uk.

3. The Citizens Advice Bureau can give you advice about what to do. In some cases, they may also be able to give you legal assistance and help you to bring your case before a court or tribunal.
4. Report via a third party reporting centre such as Info Shops and schools.
5. If you are a housing association tenant, speak with your housing officer.



Allport's Scale (1954)

Allport's Scale is a measure of the manifestation of prejudice in a society. It is most commonly referred to as Allport's Scale of Prejudice, but is also known as Allport's Scale of Prejudice and Discrimination. It was devised by psychologist Gordon Allport in *The Nature of Prejudice* (1954). Allport's Scale of Prejudice goes from 1–5:

Scale 1, Antilocution

As a term, antilocution first appeared in Gordon Allport's 1954 book *The Nature of Prejudice*. The word defines verbal remarks against a person, group or community, which are not addressed directly to the target. Generally referred to as "talking behind someone's back," the impact of this is often overlooked. However because antilocution creates an environment where discrimination is acceptable, it frequently progresses to other more damaging forms of prejudiced behaviour.

Scale 2 Avoidance

People in a minority group are actively avoided by members of the majority group. No direct harm may be intended, but harm is done through isolation.

Scale 3 Discrimination

Minority group is discriminated against by denying them

opportunities and services and so putting prejudice into action. Behaviours have the specific goal of harming the minority group by preventing them from achieving goals, getting education or jobs, etc. The majority group is actively trying to harm the minority.

Scale 4 Physical Attack

The majority group, vandalise minority group things, they burn property and carry out violent attacks on individuals or groups. Physical harm is done to members of the minority group. Most of us will be able to think of examples.

Scale 5 Extermination

The majority group seeks extermination of the minority group. They attempt to liquidate the entire group of people (eg. Indian Wars to remove Native Americans, Final Solution of 'Jewish Problem', Ethnic cleansing in Bosnia.)

Reference: Allport, G. (1954) *The Nature of Prejudice*, Addison-Wesley; Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne



The inspiration for the “No Prejudice in Herefordshire” campaign came from two young sisters who experienced on-going racism, bullying and abuse in their school and the community. Through supporting the family through this experience, the Corporate Diversity Team developed the campaign which was launched by the Herefordshire Youth Council at a public event in 2009.

The No Prejudice campaign is not saying prejudice doesn't exist, just the opposite. We know and understand prejudicial language and jokes are part of everyday life for some. It is out there, it is where we socialise and it's where we work. Let us be clear, we are not talking about challenging banter; we are encouraging the safe challenge of offensive and inappropriate language that is bullying at best, criminal at worst and damages the lives of many. Make no mistake it will not go away on its own, it will perpetuate if it goes unchallenged. We are using this campaign to encourage a culture where challenging this kind of thing is the norm rather than the exception.



We are asking that if it is safe to do so, make that challenge!

Many of us have been in a situation where someone, even a close friend or family

member, 'shares' an inappropriate remark or 'joke'. This often makes people uncomfortable. But we tend to shy away from challenging for many reasons; fear of offending someone we like, fear of being ridiculed or simply because challenging is difficult. This campaign is saying think again and if it feels right, challenge it.

Challenging someone doesn't have to be aggressive or negative. Challenging is just about expressing your own feelings. Take a stand against what you feel is the inappropriate use of language. By taking such a stand you are showing that you don't agree with what is being said.

Remember, if you take the decision to challenge, it is safety first. Challenge at the right time, in the right place and in the right tone of voice. Make the challenge out of sadness not in anger.