

Safer and Stronger Communities
Overview and Scrutiny Committee

5 November 2019

County Durham and Darlington
Hate Crime Action Group: update



Report of: Jon Carling, Head of Policy and Communications, Office of the Durham Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on the work of the Hate Crime Action Group (HCAG) for County Durham and Darlington.

Executive summary

- 2 The number of reported hate incidents is increasing, and the Hate Crime Action Group is monitoring and addressing this. An increase in reporting is to be welcomed, cautiously.

Recommendations

- 3 Members of the Committee are recommended to note and comment on the contents of the report.

Background

- 4 The Joint Hate Crime Action group was formed as a delivery group in November 2013 following the suggestion of the Police & Crime Commissioner. The purpose of the group was to deliver one coordinated action plan between statutory and voluntary partners.

The group meets every quarter and is chaired from the Office of the Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner. The Group's Terms of Reference are attached at Appendix A.

- 5 In practice the group has two broad functions:

- To hold service-providing organisations to account
- To oversee the delivery of initiatives to address hate crime

Aims

6 Ron Hogg's Police, Crime and Victim's Plan contains several priorities which are relevant to the work of this Group, including:

- Tackle and Reduce Hate Crime
- Ensure that victims are supported at all stages of the criminal justice system
- Safeguard vulnerable people

The Joint Hate Crime Action Group (JHCAG) distilled four objectives which support the priorities in Ron's Plan:

- Understand and reduce the true level of hate crimes and incidents
- Increase reporting of hate incidents
- Provide effective support for victims
- Ensure effective prosecutions

Numbers of hate-incidents and hate-crimes

Hate crimes and hate incidents						
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Incidents	409	436	375	452	514	520
Crimes	369	340	471	456	647	854

7 Recorded hate crimes have nearly doubled in Durham and Darlington since 2016. The reasons behind this are not entirely clear, but are likely to be a combination of increased reporting, an increase in the actual number of incidents, and changes to incident classifications which mean that harassment incidents are now classed as crimes.

Joint Hate Crime Action Plan

The current Hate Crime Action Plan was launched in October 2018, following a Hate Crime Conference in July 2018. The conference was attended by 120 people from a very wide range of organisations in the public and voluntary sectors. One of the key elements of the conference was a series of twenty workshops at which delegates tried to identify some workstreams to help achieve the JHCAG's objectives.

The Plan contains this vision:

County Durham and Darlington are areas where all communities are safe, victims and vulnerable people feel supported, crime and reoffending are low, and people have confidence in policing and the criminal justice system.

...and the following priorities, with a progress update against each:

- I. Develop a multi-agency communications strategy, demonstrating a cross-organisation and cross-sector approach, including a message that there should be zero-tolerance of hate crime. The strategy will:
 - Be developed by an external party, covering:
 - Aim at a variety of audiences:
 - Victims
 - Offenders
 - Partner organisations
 - General public
 - Young people
 - Clarify what is meant by 'hate'
 - Feature good news stories
 - Include a Durham&Darlington brand / logo
 - Cover all protected characteristics

Lead organisation: Office of Police, Crime and Victims Commissioner

Progress update: 'Hate Hurts' campaign launched in March 2019, with significant regional publicity. The brand has been adopted by Durham Constabulary for all hate-crime related publicity, and window stickers and leaflets have been adopted and distributed by many partner organisations. 'Hate Hurts' is now a brand to be used across the partnership.

- II. A review of reporting mechanisms and pathways
 - Identify how hate crime be reported at present – and to who (local and national sources)
 - Identify any gaps, and how they might be filled
 - Identify what staff do when they receive a report of hate crime

Lead organisation: Durham Constabulary

Progress update: Review has been undertaken, revealing reporting mechanisms in a variety of public sector organisations. The key gap seems to be in on-line reporting, which relies on the (national) TrueVision website (www.report-it.org.uk) which is out-of-date and under-publicised.

- III. Review how organisations share intelligence
 - Map the sharing of intelligence between organisations
 - Identify gaps

- Identify good practice
- Make recommendations

Lead organisation: Durham Constabulary

Progress update: protocols are in place between the Constabulary and partner organisations. Review will progress once national guidance on information-sharing protocols is released, later this year.

- IV. Review the use of evidence to ensure prosecutions
- Map the use of evidence at present
 - Consider how it is used at different stages of the victim and perpetrator journeys
 - Identify how and when advocacy other victim support services are used
 - Consider how these contribute to outcomes and make recommendations

Lead organisations: Crown Prosecution Service and Darlington Borough Council

Progress update: Initial report produced, indicated nationally-held concerns about quality of files transferred from police to CPS. Discussions continue about the extent to which this issue applies in Durham.

- V. Map support for victims and identify gaps
- ODPCVC to carry out review and report back to JHCAG, with recommendations

Progress update: Mapping exercise underway. There is clearly a significant level of support across Durham and Darlington, but not comprehensive or consistent across all areas. Some key gaps are emerging.

Future meetings

9 Over the next year, the JHCAG will:

- Monitor progress against the five workstreams in the Action Plan
- Hold the Police to account for putting measures in place to tackle and reduce hate crime
- Hold the two Councils to account for delivery of measures to tackle and reduce hate crime

- Review use and impact of Tension Monitoring Toolkit which Durham County Council has produced, including by other service providers
- Develop performance monitoring framework for the Joint Hate Crime Action Group
- Possible consultee for introduction of hate crime cases into Checkpoint
- Contribute to Law Commission review of hate crime legislation, from January 2020
- Report to the Safe Durham Partnership and the Darlington Community Safety Partnership.

Conclusion

- 10 The number of reported hate incidents is increasing, and the Hate Crime Action Group is monitoring and addressing this. An increase in reporting is to be welcomed, cautiously.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

None

Finance

None

Consultation

N/A

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

The Hate Crime Action Group includes members representing the interests of a variety of diverse groups

Human Rights

N/A

Crime and Disorder

The report highlights an increase in reported hate incidents

Staffing

N/A

Accommodation

N/A

Risk

N/A

Procurement

N/A

Appendix 2: Terms of Reference: County Durham and Darlington Joint Hate Crime Action Group

The Hate Crime Action Group (HCAG) exists to take forward initiatives to address the PCVC's objective, in his Police Crime and Victims' Plan, to:

Tackle and reduce hate crime

- 1 In so doing it will:
 - Monitor trends in statistics related to hate crime, and incidents
 - Aim to identify trends as they emerge
 - Consider evidence from member organisations and a wide range of stakeholders including communities affected by hate crime, about the impact of hate crime and how best to address it
 - Work together, as a group of partner organisations, to develop and implement plans and strategies to deal with those trends, drawing on good practice locally, nationally and internationally
 - Comment on the success of initiatives designed to reduce hate crime, or the impact of hate crime

- 2 Membership of the Group will include representatives from:
 - Durham Constabulary
 - Durham County Council
 - Darlington Borough Council
 - Crown Prosecution Service
 - Victim Care and Advice Service (VCAS)
 - Office of the Durham Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner
 - Local Criminal Justice Board support team

The group will also include a diverse range of members of the community, who can represent the interests of people who are affected by the different strands of hate crime.

- 3 The Group will review and decide who its chair should be once a year, during the Spring. There will be no limit to the number of years that someone can chair the Group.

- 4 The Group will be supported by the Strategic Demand and Reduction Command within Durham Constabulary.

- 5 The Group will meet four times a year, with communication taking place by e-mail between meetings.

- 6 The Group will also set up Project Groups as necessary. These will have a remit, if necessary, to identify funding sources for projects.
- 7 The Group will send reports to the Safe Durham Partnership and the Darlington Community Safety Partnership. It will also receive reports from the Independent Advisory Group, covering: LGBTQ+, BME and Disability