

# Coventry Police and Crime Board

## Coventry's Hate Crime Strategy and Action Plan (2019-2021)

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## Foreword

Tackling hate crime matters. I am proud to present Coventry City Council's Hate Crime Strategy 2019-2021, on behalf of our partners across the city. Hate crime has a devastating and often lasting effect on victims and their families. It can and does divide our communities. It can prevent people from living and enjoying their everyday lives and make people fearful to leave their homes, let their children play outside or be who they are.

Our country is more diverse today than ever before and many Coventrians embrace this rich mix of different identities, beliefs and cultures. Our household survey in 2018 found that 88% of people from different backgrounds get on well with each other. Coventry is a City of Peace and Reconciliation, a tradition that has continued into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Since 1999 Coventry has been a dispersal city for asylum seekers and more recently a City of Sanctuary and has welcomed a large number of Syrian refugees.

Victims of hate motivated offences have greater legal protection, with the courts able to apply sentencing uplifts to reflect the seriousness of these crimes. But we know there is more to do and more partnerships need to be created with local communities for all of us to reduce and prevent hate crime. This is even more important given the reduction in public services and resources since 2010.

Hate crime reporting has increased in recent years; there is still the challenge of under-reporting; and reporting authorities responding to complaints in a timely and sensitive manner; training local services to support victims; and having the tools to prevent hate crime in our communities.

This 2 year strategy sets out our approach and provides a framework and action plan through which we can support victims and communities; increase awareness and reporting; and reduce and prevent hate incidents.

Councillor.....

Cabinet Member

## 1. Developing the Strategy

Coventry is a vibrant, integrated, multi-cultural city. It has two world class universities, a mobility of people from all over the world and recently awarded City of Culture 2021. Coventry has networks and organisations that reach out, bring together, inform and work with different communities. These include a Multi-Faith Forum, Social Inclusion Network, the comprehensive work undertaken to support refugees and asylum seekers, and the range of partnerships between the City and the Police, local businesses, and the two Universities.

Coventry's City of Culture bid identified challenges the city faces including responding to inequalities and raising the profile of the city's diverse communities. These issues have been reflected on in conversations we have had with local residents to inform this strategy. Cov2017, where over 125 local people gathered recognised Coventry as a diverse city that has a feel of 'a village'. Issues identified including strengthening connections, integration and trust between different communities included responding to hate crime.

The 2018 Coventry Household Survey found that people in the city are more likely to have friends from different ethnic and faith groups; feel they belong to the city; and people from the city get on well with each other. These are positive findings. We want all our residents to feel safe and know that if a hate crime occurs we can and will respond to it.

Coventry City Council and its partners recognise, even within a context of diminishing public finances and services, there is work to be done including building integrated communities,<sup>1</sup> trust and resilience. Responding to hate crime whenever and wherever it occurs is crucial to making Coventry a place everyone can enjoy.

A robust hate crime strategy and action plan aims to:

- Build confidence in local communities that hate crime is taken seriously;
- Create partnerships between different services to respond to hate crime;
- Offer a tool that makes each partner accountable for their actions;
- Identify responsibilities and priorities for action to challenge hate crime;

Coventry's Police and Crime Board aims to respond to hate crime at three levels:

- Support those who experience and report hate crime;
- Respond to under-reporting through improved and innovative reporting mechanisms;
- Reduce the incidence and numbers of hate crime through working in local communities across Coventry.

The Strategy has been informed by *what we know* from national and local data on hate crime (section 2 and 3); *what we found out* from talking with local residents, service

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<sup>1</sup> HM Government, Integrated Communities Strategies Green Paper, March 2018.

providers, partners and potential partners; (section 4) and *what we want to do* in partnership with all who want an inclusive Coventry (section 5).

**Good Practice 1: Crown Prosecution Service**

**Prioritisation of hate crime cases has led to an improvement in the conviction rates**

CPS West Midlands has developed a Hate Crime Service Level Agreement which has been signed by all the Area police forces. Hate Crime conviction rates have improved in all categories, including sentence uplifts. The CPS has created community engagement managers and hate crime champions in each legal team, introduced a hate crime checklist, internal training and guest speakers delivering key messages have all raised awareness and demonstrated the priority given to hate crime. Good news stories from 'lower level' cases are shared with the community to improve confidence and encourage reporting of such cases as well as identifying lessons that can be learnt where no further action has been taken. (Source: HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate, 2017)

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## 2. Understanding hate crime

### ***Definition of hate crime and the law<sup>2</sup>***

We have adopted a definition of hate crime agreed by the Home Office and other partners:

*‘Any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice towards someone based on a personal characteristic’.*

The current hate crime monitored strands are:

- Disability
- Race or ethnicity
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Transgender identity

Other personal characteristics can be added locally for reporting and recording purposes, for example, elder abuse, misogyny or targeted attacks on alternative subcultures and this Strategy will include new monitored strands. Currently each police service area is required annually to provide data on numbers of recorded hate crime by the above monitored strand. This information is publically available and published in October of each year.

There is no specific offence in UK law called hate crime. A range of offences exist which have seen additional classifications wherein the offence is motivated in whole or in part by an individual’s hostility or prejudice towards another based upon a recognised monitored strand. A court can apply a sentence uplift on perpetrators if found guilty.

### **Causes of hate crime**

Hate crime can be caused by individual (social psychological) and wider societal (structural)<sup>3</sup> factors. Individual explanations link prejudicial attitudes and perceptions of threat with hate crime. Such links influence how individuals interact and have attitudes towards others that are held for a range of reasons including:

- Seeking power and social dominance and categorising groups;
- Stereotyping and holding attitudes learnt through socialisation, for example, in the family, social networks and media;
- Competition over resources, for example housing and job opportunities that may cause inter-group threats;

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<sup>2</sup> See <https://www.cps.gov.uk/hate-crime>

<sup>3</sup> Walters, M., Brown, R., and Wiedlitzkam S. (2016) Causes and Motivations of Hate Crime, Equality and Human Rights Commission Research Report 102.

- A dominant community feels its established norms and values are threatened, for example, the increase in reported hate crime during and after the EU Referendum, known as Brexit.

Wider society can influence and create the conditions for discrimination and institutional decision-making through:

- Identifying those that do not fit in the overall norm of society as different and outside of mainstream society. For example, the political and media perception that Muslim women who cover their faces are a threat to national security and not integrating may result in them being the target of hate incidents.
- Institutional decision making that may result in disproportionate targeting of certain groups for surveillance, for example after a terrorist attack. Or other groups receiving or being entitled to fewer services, for example, asylum seekers.

### **Impacts of hate crime**

There is growing evidence that hate crime has a significant impact on its victims than victims of non-hate motivated offences. Direct impacts can range from physical injury to emotional and/or psychological harm. The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) found that hate crime victims were more likely than victims overall to say they were<sup>4</sup>:

- Emotionally affected by the incident (89% and 77% respectively) and to say they were “very much” affected by the incident compared to non-hate crime victims (36% and 13% respectively).
- Hate crime victims are twice as likely to suffer a loss of confidence or increased feelings of vulnerability after the incident compared with non-hate crime victims (40 per cent and 18 per cent respectively).
- Hate crime victims over twice as likely to experience fear, difficulty sleeping, anxiety, panic attacks or depression compared with victims of overall crime.
- Hate crime victims are more likely to experience repeat victimisation than non-hate crime victims<sup>5</sup>.

### **The harms of hate**

Hate crime also has the capacity to generate fears and impacts in local communities who have not been directly targeted:

- A survey with over 3,000 LGBT and Muslim people found that simply knowing other people who have been a hate crime victim increases individuals’ perceptions of threat, which in turn was linked to them experiencing increased feelings of vulnerability, anxiety and anger<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Home Office (2018) Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2017/18

<sup>5</sup> Repeat victimisation is defined as being a victim of the same type of hate crime more than once in the year.

<sup>6</sup> Patterson, J., Walters, M., Brown, R., and Fearn, H. (2018) The Sussex Hate Crime Project: Final Report.

The harmful effects of hate crime are highlighted in the Government's action plan<sup>7</sup>:

- Hate crime targets actual or perceived identities;
- Hate crime victims are more likely than victims of other forms of crime to suffer repeat victimisation and more likely to suffer serious psychological impacts;
- Hate crime victims are less likely to be satisfied with the response they receive from criminal justice agencies;
- Hate crime is widely under-reported and often people do not report because they believe that no action will be taken;
- Hate crime gives a message that can be threatening, harmful and impact on community cohesion.

### **Reporting and Under-Reporting**

Reporting an incident is often predicated on the type of hate crime the victim experiences<sup>8</sup>. Verbal abuse is not likely to be reported to the police or any other support service. Paradoxically, verbal abuse is often the most prevalent hate experience. Reasons why people do not report include:

- Did not think it would be taken seriously
- Dealt with it myself/with help of others
- Did not know who to speak to
- Fear of retaliation/make matters worse
- It takes too long to report<sup>9</sup>

The Government's hate crime plan has identified under-reporting as a particular cause for concern in at least the following groups:

- Disabled people;
- Muslim women;
- Transgender;
- Gypsy, Traveller and Roma
- New refugees

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<sup>7</sup> Home Office, 2016, Action Against Hate: The UK Government's plan for tackling hate crime.

<sup>8</sup> Chahal, K (2016) Supporting Victims of Hate Crime: A Practitioner Guide, Policy Press, Bristol)

<sup>9</sup> A Postcode Lottery? Mapping Support Services for Hate Crime Victims in the West Midlands, May 2017

## **Good Practice 2: West Midlands Police and Warwick University**

### **Co-ordinated response in the Canley area with Warwick University students.**

Reports from Warwick University students being targeted as they travelled to and from the University campus led to actions including:

- Meetings and giving reassurance to student victims by council officers and police
- Extra resources were put in place from West Midlands Police
- A safer routes initiative was designed by police and council to promote personal safety and direct students to use busy, well-lit routes. There was also an undertaking for partners to patrol these routes as much as possible and keep vegetation such as trees/bushes extra cut back. The safer routes material was produced on credit card size format so students could keep in wallet/purse and paid for by the University. The material also included contact information for further help/advice
- Warwick Student Union became a Third Party Reporting Centre
- Communication links were improved between council, police and the University, with representatives from the University sitting on the City's hate crime forum

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### 3. Hate Crime in Coventry

#### **Recorded Hate Crime in Coventry**

Data held on the numbers and types of hate crime recorded by the police nationally and across West Midlands has been analysed to provide an evidence base to build the current hate crime strategy for Coventry. Table 1 indicates the numbers of recorded hate crime across police services in England and Wales, West Midlands and within Coventry in 2017/18.

During 2017/18 hate crime recording in England and Wales increased by 17% on the previous year. Across the West Midlands hate crime recording increased by 10% on the previous year. For Coventry there was about a 3% increase across all the hate crime monitored strands.

Table 1 shows that about 9% of all recorded hate crime in the West Midlands occurs in Coventry. Compared to England and Wales, both the across the West Midlands and Coventry there is a higher rate of race hate crime and much lower rates of recording for all other monitored strands. The low rates of religious hate crime across the West Midlands and Coventry are in sharp contrast to the national recorded figures.

**Table 1: Hate Crime recorded by the police by monitored strand: national, regional and Coventry (2017/18)**

Hate Crime 2017/18	England & Wales		West Midlands		Coventry	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Disability	7226	8	104	2	3	1
Race	71251	76	3894	84	342	85
Religion	8336	9	164	4	19	5
Sexual Orientation	11638	12	440	9	35	9
Transgender	1651	2	34	1	4	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>94098</b>		<b>4644</b>		<b>404</b>	

Table 2 provides numbers of hate crime recorded across the West Midlands over a three year period. There has been a 22% increase in recorded hate crime over this period compared to 34% across England and Wales. Hate crime recording across the five strands has remained fairly consistent across the West Midlands in this period.

**Table 2: Hate Crime recorded by the police by monitored strand over a three year period for the West Midlands area**

Hate Crime	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Disability	92	3	97	2	104	2
Race	2995	83	3450	85	3894	84
Religion	136	4	125	3	164	4
Sexual Orientation	343	10	315	8	440	9
Transgender	31	1	38	1	34	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>3597</b>		<b>4025</b>		<b>4636</b>	

**Table 3: Hate Crime recorded in Coventry, April 2015 to March 2018**

Hate Crime	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Disability	15	4	10	2	3	1
Race	313	82	353	87	342	85
Religion	18	5	8	2	19	5
Sexual Orientation	30	8	28	7	35	9
Transgender	1	0	3	1	4	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>377</b>		<b>402</b>		<b>404</b>	

Table 3 highlights that there was a near 7% increase in recorded hate crime over a three year period for Coventry (compared to a 22% increase across the West Midlands). Disability hate crime recording has significantly decreased and religious hate crime does not reflect the 47% rise across England and Wales over the previous three years.

### ***Profile of hate crime victims***

In 2016/17, men were more likely to be the victim of hate crime compared to women, 57% and 43% respectively. 38% of all recorded hate crime occurred in and around the home. The West Midlands police hate crime data shows that whilst complainants were willing to offer their sex (gender) identity in nearly 100% of all recorded cases, this fell to 82% when volunteering their ethnic/racial identity.

### ***EU Referendum Spike***

There has been much written about the impact of the EU Referendum campaign which began in April 2016 and the spike in hate crime up to and after the announcement of the result in late June 2016.

Data for England and Wales shows that hate crime reporting began to increase and hit a peak into July 2016. Across Coventry, during May- July 2016 there was a 15% increase in recorded hate crime compared to the same period during 2015. However, the sharpest increase was 73 recorded hate crime in July 2016 with 92% of these race hate. This compared to 48 hate crimes recorded in July 2015 representing a 51% increase in hate crime during July 2016.

### ***Building an evidence base***

The numbers of 'recorded' hate crime collected by the police provides an incomplete picture. The extent of hate crime is difficult to quantify because of under-reporting. In achieving a better picture of hate crime in Coventry there will be a need to work with all communities to increase reporting, understanding the reasons why groups do not report and having access to the available up to date data on hate crime.

#### **Good Practice 3: Coventry University Hate Crime Advisor Reporting religious hate crime on campus and beyond**

Coventry University Student Union has created a post of Religious Hate Crime Advisor to respond to reports of religion-based hate incidents through the university's new case management system. The advisor will provide professional, confidential and impartial advice, support, representation and information to all students of Coventry University and relevant partnership institutions; maintain and analyse casework records to support the management of the advice service, with particular reference to religion and raise awareness among students at Coventry University of religion-based hate incidents and hate crime, advising them on how to report incidents and seek support.

#### **4. Gathering views and consultation**

Conversations on hate crime were held with over 135 residents, representatives of service providers and community organisations. A conference in October, 2018 where we asked participants to reflect on our identified strategic priorities. Core themes that emerged from these events are detailed below (see also Diagram 1) and inform the strategic priorities.

- ***Leading and partnership working on hate crime***

In an era of austerity, within which Coventry City Council has seen services and budgets reduced it was still recognised as the agency that should take a strategic and practical lead on hate crime. This was as much to do with community organisations not having the capacity to deliver a direct service. Partnership working was also seen as key and included the two universities, hospitals and police taking the lead.

- ***Shared values and integration***

Coventry is seen as a diverse city with room to build further an integrated City and a sense of shared values and respect through different communities, faith leaders, civic leaders working and organising community events that bring people together to break down barriers.

- ***Reporting processes***

Reporting of hate crime could increase through simpler complaint processes that are advertised wisely. Responding to communication and language barriers could lead to confidence to report hate crime.

- ***Preventing hate crime***

Challenge negative media and narratives that promotes fear and hostility. Identify the work that can be done with perpetrators and communities, for example, restorative justice.

- ***Information and Awareness***

There is a need to explain what hate crime is, where to go to report and for help, raising awareness in schools and with young people and ensuring that new communities have relevant information to understand and report hate crime. Having knowledge/directory of services and a central point, possibly a website that offers information and services for signposting on hate crime and promoting messages on hate crime in community and public organisations. Building awareness of online hate crime.

- ***On-going training***

Training service providers, third party reporting centres, community organisations, young people, schools, social care, health and other relevant services on what a hate crime is, how it impacts, what the mechanisms are for reporting and supporting victims.

- ***Third Party Reporting Centres***

There should be on-going support and development for third party reporting centres including training; community groups should be involved to support victims. There is a general need to identify the range of reporting options, both online and offline, available to victims and service providers.

- ***Direct victim support***

It was recognised that not all forms of victimisation will be reported to the police. Victims should be actively listened to and supported. The police are viewed as the primary service to report hate crime but there are services and organisations able to offer direct support and advocacy. These need to be coordinated and practitioners, victims and communities know about.

A recent survey<sup>10</sup> across the West Midlands found that:

- Of 37% who had experienced at least one hate crime, only 9% accessed support from a relevant organisation.
- Reasons for not accessing support services included that they did not know any support services existed or the organisation would not take it seriously.
- The availability and accessibility of hate crime support services varies across the West Midlands.

- ***Building capacity and expertise***

There was an identified need to know what every organisation is doing – more networking events and sharing information. Increasing community engagement and communication between organisations and within communities. Coordinating the work on hate crime in the City to reduce overlap. Use volunteers from community organisations to build a service response to hate crime.

- ***Good practice and research***

Learning from how other areas are responding to hate crime and having access to messages from current research and data analysis to inform local messages, awareness and practice.

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<sup>10</sup> A Postcode Lottery? Mapping Support Services for Hate Crime Victims in the West Midlands, May 2017

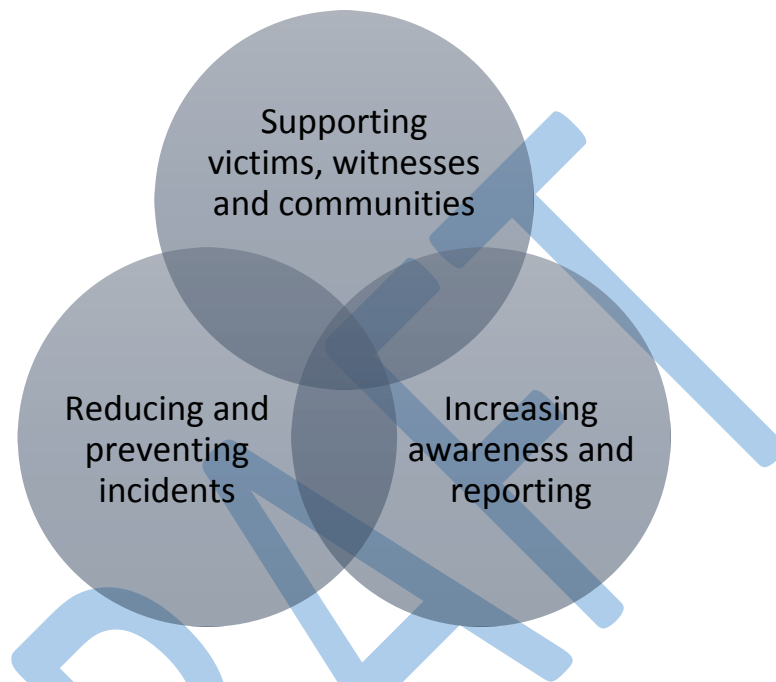
**Diagram 1: Hate crime consultation core themes**



## 5. Strategic Priorities

The three strategic priority areas aim to offer an approach to challenging hate crime that builds from the findings of local consultations, research evidence and current government policy. Diagram 2 illustrates the strategic priorities and how they are inter-related themes.

**Diagram 2: Hate Crime Priorities**



### ***Supporting Victims, Witnesses and Communities***

We recognise that victims, witnesses and potential victims in local communities should receive a professional and appropriate service that aims to meet their immediate needs at the point of reporting and through the process of the complaint.

### ***Increasing Awareness and Reporting***

We recognise that hate crime is under-reported, often misunderstood and individuals and service providers may not know the range of services, reporting methods and support available.

We recognise that there is a need for raising awareness of hate crime as an issue and how people can access help. We also recognise that we have to build an evidence base and research messages on hate crime.

### ***Reducing and Preventing Incidents***

We recognise that there has to be methods and interactions to support the reduction and prevention of hate incidents by challenging the beliefs and attitudes that can hold hostile and prejudiced views.

Training, disseminating tools and information to partners, information events, conversations on difficult issues as well as expanding our responses to new forms of hate, for example,

cyber-hate and to new strands of hate that may be identified, for example, misogyny, through coordinating activities in partnership with local communities and providers. We also need to recognise the work we are doing, and further work that needs to be done, with potential and actual perpetrators.

### **Strategic Challenges**

The challenges that the Harm and Abuse Reduction Partnership (HARP), the Police and Crime Board and community based organisations will consider include:

- Develop an action plan with our partners that aims to respond to hate crime, increase the confidence of communities to report, and challenge the actions of both potential and actual perpetrators set against a context of diminishing resources.
- Update Coventry City Council online information on hate crime, including providing contact details of services that can help provide support for both online and offline hate crime.
- Work with partners and local communities to strengthen third party reporting through a core number of service providers, raise awareness of the location and purpose of the centres and web-based reporting mechanisms.
- Provide guidance materials to community-based organisations that want to provide support to victims, challenge hate crime in their neighbourhoods, increase awareness and reporting and work with core third party reporting centres.
- Support the recognition of hate crime champions in partner agencies and community and faith-based services who can be points of contact for victims and their families.
- Support training to increase understanding of hate crime, supporting victims, and understanding complaint processes, procedures and the rights of victims.
- Raise awareness of hate crime through national and local events, including Hate Crime Awareness Week, Holocaust Memorial Day, and Black History Month.
- Build a knowledge base on hate crime research and good practice that is disseminated to inform our practice, responses and new challenges, for example understanding and responding to hate crime, building restorative justice methods, responding to cyber-hate, working to prevent hate crime.
- Showcase good practice examples in responding to hate crime.
- Show how the hate crime strategy connects and fits in with broader strategies and partnership working.

**Good Practice 4: Positive Images Festival**  
**Supporting cohesion, integration and diversity**

With 24 years' experience of working with different communities and organisations, Positive Images is aware of the following barriers to integration:

Language barriers; lack of awareness about service provision; racism/prejudice; anti-Refugee feeling; economic disadvantage; lack of information about opportunities to learn about the cultural heritage of different communities, LGBT issues and physical and mental disabilities; preconceived negative notions about faith diversity.



Positive Images Festival arranges events that help to lessen the impact of these barriers. Most events are **free**. A variety of events are organised including:

- Community Information Fair in the city centre to create greater awareness about services/entitlements
- An annual Multicultural Big Lunch held at the War Memorial Park
- *Refugee Week* is an integral part of Positive Images Festival
- The Coventry Language Café arranges sessions where visitors can learn a few words/phrases from some of the 100+ languages spoken in the city.

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