



Home Office

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Rt Hon Dame Karen Bradley MP
Chair, Home Affairs Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

31 March 2026

Dear Dame Karen,

PUBLICATION OF THE COLLEGE OF POLICING AND NATIONAL POLICE CHIEFS' COUNCIL NON-CRIME HATE INCIDENT REVIEW

I am writing to inform the Committee that today the College of Policing and the National Police Chiefs' Council have published their review of Non-Crime Hate Incidents (NCHIs).

The Home Office has carefully considered all the findings and recommendations set out in the review, and I can confirm that I have accepted the recommendations directed at the Home Office.

Non-Crime Hate Incidents

Non-Crime Hate Incidents were introduced following the Stephen Lawrence inquiry to help police identify hostility that, while not criminal, may escalate into more serious harm. This original intent remains as relevant today as it did 30 years ago. However, the environment in which policing operates has changed significantly since that enquiry and Non-Crime Hate Incidents have expanded beyond their original intention.

Concerns around proportionality, consistency and free speech led the former Home Secretary to commission the joint College of Policing and National Police Chiefs' Council review in July 2025. Its interim report, published in October 2025, found that the current regime is not fit for purpose and requires broad reform to refocus policing on genuine harm and risk within communities.

The review published today recommends replacing Non-Crime Hate Incidents with a new framework. Several of the recommendations are directed at the Home Office.

The key changes are:

- **Non-Crime Hate Incidents will no longer be recorded.** The review concludes that the current system is no longer proportionate or effective.
- **A revised definition of an "incident"**, tightening the threshold so incidents are recorded only where relevant to preventing or solving crime, safeguarding

individuals or communities, or fulfilling statutory policing purposes. This is a change from the current approach, under which any event that causes concern to the individual reporting it is recorded by the police as an incident. This new threshold will apply to all incidents reported to policing.

- **Replacing Non-Crime Hate Incident recording with the use of the existing Anti-Social Behaviour framework for relevant non-criminal incidents motivated by hate or hostility.** This will simplify and standardise how incidents that meet the new threshold are recorded.

The table at Appendix A sets out further detail on the changes proposed. The full report can be accessed here [Review of non-crime hate incidents](#)

Where there is a genuine risk of harm and a clear policing purpose, incidents will continue to be recorded. This approach will release significant policing time, allowing officers to focus on preventing crime, protecting vulnerable people and responding to genuine risk, rather than low level disputes.

Implementation will include College of Policing-led public consultation on the new national training and guidance, with the aim of full adoption by the end of the calendar year. The Home Office will lead delivery of the recommendations directed at us, including adopting and owning the revised incident recording standard, and supporting forces and the College of Policing through implementation.

I am confident that these changes, developed by policing experts in close consultation with community representatives, will strike the correct balance between safeguarding vulnerable communities and protecting lawful freedom of expression.

I will arrange for a copy of this letter to be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Very best wishes

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'S. Jones', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sarah Jones MP
Minister of State for Policing and Crime

Appendix A: Proposed changes in detail

Current Code of Practice	New approach following review
What is meant by an 'incident'	
The definition of an "incident" comes from the Home Office National Standard for Incident Recording, last updated in 2011. It defines an incident as anything that "disturbs an individual, group or community's quality of life or causes them concern." The review found it has led police to record reports that go beyond the core purposes of policing.	The Home Office will update and republish a revised National Standard for Incident Recording and Assessment (NSIRA) with a new, tighter definition of what constitutes an incident requiring police involvement. The threshold will be more closely tied to the core purposes of policing: preventing and detecting crime, protecting life and property, and maintaining public order. This means fewer reports will automatically trigger a police record in the first place.
How a report is assessed when it comes in	
When someone calls police to report something they perceive to be motivated by hate, the call taker is responsible for making the initial assessment of whether it requires police involvement. The review found that call takers often lack the training, time, and confidence to do this well, and tend to over-record out of fear of missing something serious.	Police will introduce a triage process, carried out by specially trained staff rather than front-line call takers. This triage will assess whether a report has a genuine policing purpose before any further action is taken. Forces that already use hate crime specialists to carry out this assessment have seen better outcomes, and this model will be rolled out more widely.
How something is recorded on police systems	
Reports perceived to be motivated by hate or hostility can be recorded under any opening category on police systems, with a "hate qualifier" added. Because there is no single designated category, it is difficult for forces to search and analyse the data. Many forces have dealt with this by transferring records to their Records Management Systems (RMS). However, in some forces, the RMS automatically assigns these incidents a crime status, generating a crime reference number and applying terms like "victim" and "suspect" even though no crime has been committed. This has caused significant public concern about whether people are being effectively criminalised for non-criminal behaviour.	All reports perceived to be motivated by hate or hostility that meet the new incident threshold will be recorded as antisocial behaviour (ASB) with a "prejudice qualifier" added. This creates a single, consistent, searchable category. If a record needs to be moved to the RMS for further action, it must be recorded as a non-crime occurrence, not a crime, and criminal terminology must not be used. Forces will need to make technical changes to their systems to ensure this happens correctly.

Whether your personal details are recorded	
There are two types of NCHI record. The first contains no personal details about the person being complained about, just location data or a general description of what happened. The second includes personal data about the person complained about (called "the subject"), but this is only permitted if police can demonstrate there is a "real risk" of significant harm or that a future crime might be committed. The code sets out a detailed decision-making process officers must follow, and personal data must be recorded using the least intrusive method possible.	Under the new approach, the underlying principle that personal data should only be recorded where there is a genuine policing purpose and a real risk of harm remains. However, the review found that in practice, forces have been over-recording personal data because of the fear of missing something. The new framework emphasises that information should only be recorded where there are lawful grounds to do so, in line with data protection law. Forces will be required to ensure their information management processes comply with data protection legislation and the principles of Management of Police Information (MoPI).
Freedom of expression and online speech	
The current Code of Practice includes detailed guidance on freedom of expression. It is clear that debate, humour, satire, and lawfully held personal views are not, by themselves, grounds for recording an NCHI. It also sets out that offending someone is not enough and that the perception of the complainant alone cannot result in a record including personal data being made. The code includes specific case studies to help officers apply these principles.	The new review goes further in acknowledging that in practice, these protections have not always worked as intended, particularly in relation to online speech and social media. The review explicitly recognises that police have at times been drawn into policing lawful expression, and that this has undermined public confidence. The new triage process is specifically designed to stop inappropriate police involvement in lawful online debate. The review also notes that broader concerns about freedom of expression and public order law are being examined separately by Lord McDonald's Independent Review of Public Order and Hate Crime Legislation.
Police attendance at your home or contact with you	
There is no explicit restriction on police making contact with the person complained about. In practice, officers have sometimes visited people at home or made contact about reports that, on reflection, did not warrant it.	The triage process means a report will only result in further police action, including an officer attending your address or making contact with you, if it has been assessed as having a clear policing purpose such as preventing a crime or safeguarding a vulnerable person. If no further action is needed after triage, the report should be closed without police attendance or contact. Closing an incident log does not mean the information is discarded and it can still be linked to future calls if relevant, but it does

	mean no unnecessary police involvement.
DBS checks and your employment	
There is no specific guidance within the code itself about Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. However, under the Police Act 1997, a Chief Constable can choose to disclose non-conviction information, which could in theory include an NCHI record, on an enhanced DBS certificate if they are satisfied it meets the legal threshold for disclosure. There is statutory guidance in place for chief officers to following in making that decision. The current Code of Practice does not change or restrict this power.	The review acknowledges that DBS disclosure has been one of the most significant public concerns about the NCHI system and people have worried that a report made about them for something that is not a crime could affect their ability to work, particularly in roles involving children or vulnerable adults. The legal powers have not changed: a chief officer can still disclose relevant non-conviction information if the legal threshold is met. However, the review has recommended that the Home Office assess whether the current statutory guidance for chief officers on DBS decision-making is still fit for purpose, and whether further support is needed to ensure those decisions are made consistently and fairly across all forces.
Oversight, accountability, and public consultation	
The College of Policing publishes non-statutory Authorised Professional Practice (APP) guidance alongside the statutory code. There is no formal requirement for public consultation on future changes.	The review recommends that the College of Policing conducts public consultation before issuing future guidance on this area. It also recommends that the Home Office considers commissioning His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) to inspect forces on how well they implement the new changes, providing an independent check on whether reform is delivered in practice.