

## Response from the London Assembly

The London Assembly Police and Crime Committee examines the work of the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC), which oversees the Metropolitan Police. It also investigates key issues about the police service including violent crime, front line policing, and counter-terrorism.

In September 2019 the Police and Crime Committee published a report on Hate Crime in London, following an investigation into the topic. While the Committee's primary function is to make recommendations to the Mayor of London, MOPAC and the Metropolitan Police, the findings of the final report are pertinent to the following questions from the Home Affairs Committee Inquiry into Hate Crime and its violent consequences:

### **1. The barriers that prevent individuals from reporting hate crime, and measures to improve reporting rates**

1.1 Hate crime is still significantly under-reported. Nationally, only around half of Crime Survey for England and Wales reported hate crimes are reported to the police.

1.2 General awareness raising of what hate crime is and how to report it has helped to improve reporting, but this is an area where more progress needs to be made.

1.3 Our inquiry found that people don't report hate crime to the police for a number of reasons:

- The person did not think anything would happen as a result;
- Fear of wasting police time;
- Incidents happen so often that it becomes 'normalised', and a person believes there is no point in reporting;
- A lack of understanding of what hate crime is. In respect of disability hate crime, offences are often not identified until disclosed to organisations who may be helping the individual with other issues;
- There is a lack of trust in authority and a lack of awareness of how to report a crime, particularly among new migrant communities, and;
- The initial police response may not be appropriate, particularly for people with learning difficulties or mental health support needs.

1.4 Knowledge and understanding of hate crime within schools and among young people could be improved.

1.5 Awareness raising is important not only in helping people understand when they may have been the victim of a hate crime and how to report, but in letting them know that hate crime is being dealt with effectively, which may in turn increase confidence. We concluded that awareness of successes needs to reach all Londoners, not just those already in touch with specialist support services.

## **2 The role of the voluntary sector, community representatives, and other frontline organisations in challenging attitudes that underpin hate crime.**

- 2.1 Our investigation found that MOPAC should work with the Metropolitan Police, other police services in London and anti-hate crime organisations to improve the knowledge base around hate crime offenders.
- 2.2 The absence of hate crime specific rehabilitation initiatives is disappointing for those victims who are motivated to report hate crime because they want to prevent their experience happening to someone else.
- 2.3 As with any preventative approach, there is no quick win solution. But there is a need to look at how the prevention of hate crime can be as effective as possible, and work with offenders is one way to achieve this. There is merit in exploring how increased understanding, investment and effort can be put into working directly with offenders.
- 2.4 The Committee heard two suggestions that could be effective in challenging the attitudes that underpin hate crime: better use of restorative justice “where it is risk-assessed and victim-led”; and offender workshops, similar to those that are used for domestic violence offenders and which “can be very useful in terms of helping challenge prejudicial opinions.”

## **3 Statistical trends in hate crime and how the recording, measurement and analysis of hate crime can be improved**

- 3.1 Changes in the awareness and recording of hate crime by the police can have an impact on recorded crime levels. In 2016, the introduction of the Disability Hate Crime Matters programme in the Metropolitan Police resulted in an 800 per cent increase in recorded disability hate crimes that year. This initiative raised awareness among officers of disability hate crime but was discontinued.
- 3.2 Our investigation found that the lack of data clarity involving repeat victimisation is an on-going issue. The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) suggests that between 2015-16 and 2017-18, nearly one in five (18 per cent) victims of personal hate crime were repeat victims, and nearly four in ten (38 per cent) victims of household hate crime were repeat victims. Greater transparency is needed at a local level around the levels of repeat victimisation.
- 3.3 Data available through MOPAC and the Met provides no insight into this. Not only does this make judging progress and success difficult, but it adds to the lack of clarity about the increase in recorded hate crime.

#### **4 The type, extent and effectiveness of the support that is available to victims and their families and how it might be improved**

- 4.1 In London, MOPAC commissions a Hate Crime Victim Advocates Scheme called Community Alliance to Combat Hate (CATCH). The consortium offers specialist and targeted support for high risk victims of hate crime, including “helping the people they work with to cope, helping them to recover from their experiences and helping to empower them, giving them the tools and support to get things that they need.”
- 4.2 The evidence we gathered during our investigation shows that the kind of advocacy work that CATCH is delivering, alongside the ongoing work of anti-hate crime organisations, is having a positive impact in supporting victims of hate crime. In depth advocacy was provided to over 400 victims of hate crime in the last financial year, including those who did not report to the police. However, with the number of recorded hate crime offences growing, only a small proportion of victims are receiving support.
- 4.3 For initiatives such as CATCH to be effective, they need to be backed up with sufficient resource. It is only very recently that MOPAC has agreed an uplift in the amount of funding it gives to the CATCH service, which will provide for around six extra specialist Hate Crime Advocates. Despite this, it is still possible that the demand for support from victims of hate crime outweighs that which can be provided through MOPAC’s commissioned advocacy service.
- 4.4 It is concerning that resource pressures arising from falling government funding means that support services which we know make a positive impact in supporting victims of hate crime cannot meet the demand required for their services.

#### **More Information**

For more information about the London Assembly and our submission to this inquiry please contact Fenella Nance at [Fenella.nance@london.gov.uk](mailto:Fenella.nance@london.gov.uk) or 07923382181.

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