

Written evidence submitted by Inclusion London (CVD0036)

Inclusion London Briefing: Disability Hate Crime

Inclusion London is a Deaf and Disabled people's organization that works to promote equality and inclusion of Deaf and Disabled people. We support over 70 DDPOs in London and through those organisations our reach extends to 70,000 Disabled people.

Inclusion London is the lead organization for the London DDPO Hate Crime Partnership, working with 20 DDPOs across London to influence key policy makers on the issue, as well as working together to provide training, specialist casework support for Hate Crime advocacy, secondments to develop Hate Crime support within DDPOs, peer support for people with Learning Difficulties and to develop resources including a DDPO Hate Crime Toolkit. During the Coronavirus period, Inclusion London has been running a weekly survey, sent out to DDPOs which have a hate crime advocacy service, to collect information and data on the incidence and types of hate crime disabled people have experienced during lockdown, and now, during the easing of lockdown.

Key Trends

- A rise in hate crime committed by neighbours of Disabled people, including a rise in hate crime against Disabled children whilst they are at home, by neighbours
- A rise in verbal abuse against Disabled people and instances of being spat at whilst out of the house due to the inaccurate perception that Disabled people are “virus spreaders.”
- An increase in online hate crimes – Disabled people have been told that their lives are inferior and are taking up resources from non-Disabled people.
- Disabled people have reported being targeted whilst out shopping if they have PAs/carers with them or require prioritisation in queues for shops.
- DDPOs have major concerns about the Care Act easements and the general shortages in social care during the lockdown period, and how this could lead to increased hate crime against Disabled people as Disabled people are forced to rely on strangers to do tasks previously undertaken by carers/PAs.
- People with learning disabilities and neuro-diverse conditions may not be fully aware of restrictions put in place under lockdown due to a lack of accessible information – often they will not immediately appear “Disabled” so their behaviour may not be understood by police and the general public.
- Disabled people have felt like they have not been treated fairly when reporting instances of disability hate crime; that they feel they will not be believed due to previous negative experiences.
- DDPOs offering support to people with learning disabilities are completely overloaded on a daily basis keeping in touch with their members, many of whom will experience digital exclusion.

Survey Results

Week 5 of our weekly survey is the latest information that we have collected which is available and has been analysed.

- 62% of DDPOs report that there has been an increase in disability hate crime referrals to them, 25% report a decrease and 13% report no change on the previous week.
- When responding as to why there may have been an increase/decrease in hate crime referrals, DDPOs provided answers such as, “People in close proximity; in close quarters for longer periods of time; perpetrators idle, more time on their hands for "othering" targeting disabled/black/LGBTQIA+, perpetrators realizing that people are cut off from their support networks”, “A lot of the cases I have involve neighbour issues. Raising quarantine restrictions mean some service users are able to get away from their neighbours”, “People not know where or how to get help, when their usual way of seeking help has now changed due to call the contact restrictions.”
- When asked what DDPOs wanted from the London Mayor’s Office for Police and Crime to improve on or support them with, the majority of DDPOs answered with greater funding for their organisations and hate crime advocates, so that victims of disability hate crime could be better supported. Furthermore, more awareness amongst the police and general public that disability hate crime is a crime, and that a zero tolerance approach should be put in place.

Recommendations

- There is a clear need and demand from DDPOs for additional funding to be put in place for disability hate crime advocates, to better support victims of hate crime and to better reach out to people who may have experienced disability hate crime but are not aware of where they can access support.
- Disabled people are often not able to access on an equitable basis essential emergency services such as the police in order to report instances of disability hate crime and abuse, there must be further training and resources put in place so that police officers know how to correctly record incidents, follow up on investigations and direct the victim to support services.
- Disability hate crime during the coronavirus pandemic has not come from nowhere – the image of Disabled people as virus spreaders and taking resources from non-Disabled people must be tackled.
- The core belief that Disabled people’s lives are of less value than non-Disabled people must be continually challenged through working closely with DDPOs.
- Disabled people must be provided with information about the lockdown measures and where to access support in the case of experiencing a hate crime in accessible ways (e.g. Easy Read, BSL).

July 2020

