

Equality & Diversity Forum
1st March 2016

Report of the Executive Head of Community Safety and Youth Engagement

Hate Incidents Update

Ward location: not applicable

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Area Served: Borough-wide

Lead Councillor: Ruth Dombey

Summary

This report describes the oversight that is in place for tracking, and responding to hate incidents in Sutton.

1. Background

1.1 We classify hate incidents under the following categories:

- Race
- Disability
- Religious faith or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity

1.2 These may be a crime and will be pursued by the Police as hate crime.

1.3 The Safer Sutton partnership took on responsibility for monitoring and oversight of hate incidents on behalf of the Council in 2009. We collect information from across the Council (including safeguarding) and through third party reporting centres. In 2009 we commissioned an expanded community safety survey to specifically understand community safety concerns of Muslim communities in the Borough. This showed an under-reporting of low level religious and race hate incidents. Colleagues from adult safeguarding also produced evidence showing under-reporting of hate incidents against people with learning or physical disabilities.

1.4 In 2010 the Safer Sutton Partnership commissioned Stop Hate UK (SHUK) to provide a 24/7 reporting system for Sutton.

2. Issues

2.1 Our latest community safety survey continues to show a number of low level but potentially high impact hate crime signals across the borough. These are increasingly of a religious as well as racial nature.

Stop Hate UK third party reporting

- 2.2 Since the previous Equality & Diversity Forum in November, the Safer Sutton Partnership has continued promoting the Stop Hate UK line across the borough.
- Continued liaison and embedding of the Stop Hate line within local police referral processes.
 - Citizens Advice Bureau promoting reporting through licenced premises across Sutton.

3rd Party Reporting:

- 2.3 The nature of referrals from Stop Hate UK is similar to previous years, based upon malicious neighbour disputes where disablism and homophobia are aggravating factors.
- 2.4 Financial year-to-date 2015-16 there were 37 contacts to the Stop Hate Helpline which is below the previous quarter however above the average over the previous 12 months. It should be noted 31 contacts related to the same repeat caller. The majority of contacts were by phone with two by email and two by SMS text facility.

Police Reports

- 2.5 In financial year 2014/15 there was 363 reported hate incidents.
- 2.6 In 2014/15 the majority of incidents (95%) were of a racial nature, followed by 5% based on prejudice about sexual orientation.
- 2.7 All hate crime suffers from large scale underreporting so the apparent low numbers are unlikely to be genuine reflections of actual offence levels within the borough.
- 2.8 In 2014/15 the top 3 wards for hate incident calls to the police are Sutton Central, St. Helier, and Wandle Valley. This follows similar patterns to previous trends.
- 2.9 The current sanction detection rate in FY 2015/16 for homophobic, racist & religious hatred offences is 31.0%. This is above the current MPS average of 24.4%

3. Financial implications

- 3.1 None.

4. Contribution to core values and corporate goals

- 4.1 Hate incidents and hate crime can leave individuals and communities isolated. Aside from the legal duties on public authorities tackling hate incidents is critical to Sutton as a Borough where all can take part and all can take pride. Oversight of the process through the Safer Sutton Partnership means that solutions to issues can be designed involving all the appropriate agencies.

5. Equality and Diversity impact assessment

- 5.1 Provision of effective monitoring and oversight of hate incidents ensures issues experienced by specific groups can be tackled and resolved.

6. Background papers

None

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