Hate Crime

Briefing for Homelessness Services

Homeless Link

Contents

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Introduction

Hate crime is a growing problem in the UK, with more incidents being reported each year. In the year ending March 2021, there were 124,091 incidents where hate crime was recorded by the police in England and Wales.

This was the biggest percentage increase in hate crime since the year ending March 2017, when there was a 29 percent rise.

Despite many of these incidents being related to threats and harassment towards 'visible minorities' within communities across the UK, hate crime can be motivated by a range of factors. Homelessness services should respond proactively to these issues to ensure that the people they work with, and staff, are supported to tackle this challenge.

Definitions

A **hate crime** is any criminal offence that is motivated by hostility on the grounds of race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or transgender identity. A **hate incident** is a non-crime that occurs but is perceived by the victim to be motivated by any of the personal characteristics.

Individuals who are accessing support from homelessness services can also be at particular risk of **repeat victimisation**. This is where a victim of reported hate crime was also the victim of another reported hate crime within the previous 12 months. Repeat victimisation can occur due to the geographical location of individuals, for instance people sleeping rough being targeted due to their location on the street or repeated accessing of day centres and frontline services.

There are five centrally monitored stands of hate crime:

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

Reporting hate crime

You can report a hate crime if you have been a victim yourself, witnessed an incident or are reporting on behalf of someone else.

1. **In an emergency**
Call police 999 if you are reporting a crime that is in progress or if someone is in danger.

Call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or via their website here

2. **Contact the police**
You can speak to the police confidentially without giving personal details, however, be aware that information you provide could be used in a prosecution so should be as accurate and precise as possible, especially as the police won't be able to contact you back.

If the crime isn't an emergency, call 101 or contact your local police.

Find out what support you can get if you're the victim of crime.

3. **Online reporting**
It is now possible to report online using the link here:

4. **Self-reporting form**
Self-reporting forms can be downloaded from here, and then sent into your local police force.

5. **Third party reporting centres**
It is possible to report hate crime via a third-party organisation including Citizens Advice Bureau, Community Voluntary Services, and local authorities.

Responding to and preventing hate crime in your service

Good practice around preventing hate crime in your service:

Involve clients and ensure that they all understand your organisation's zero tolerance approach to incidents motivated by hate. Ensure that they understand the role that they play in spotting and reporting hate crime. Your organisation should have access to translation services for people where English isn't their first language.

Regularly evaluate and review your internal policies and procedures to ensure they accurately reflect changes in legislation and patterns of behaviour relating to changing contexts e.g., computer usage. All staff should be required to read and confirm they understand the principles and purposes of your organisation's harassment and bullying procedures and code of conduct.

Structured discussions and sessions with clients that promote cultural and diversity awareness, reflecting on attitudes and beliefs, can improve understanding of victim experiences and mitigate against racially motivated offending.

Build partnerships with local organisations who have expertise in particular areas e.g., LGBTQ+ organisations, disability charities and Migrant Refugee Community Organisations.

Effective staff training on hate crime is essential so that your staff members can confidently recognise, and report hate crime incidents that could happen within your service. They will also be able to respond to enquiries from their clients and discuss issues in key working, or one-to-one sessions.

Make it easy for clients to report hate crimes by ensuring that your service is a safe environment where they will be listened to and taken seriously. Your clients may have had negative experiences with the police before which may impact their likelihood of reporting hate crimes. Use visible notices and information boards to display information on reporting. Improved working relationships between your organisation and local police team can help, especially if local officers can begin building relationships

with your clients too. For useful resources, posters and handouts for clients and staff, contact your local police or check online.

Further reading and resources

ChildLine - a free, private and confidential service to help anyone under 19 in the UK. Trained counsellors are available to support day and night, either by phone, email or 1-2-1.

Citizens Advice Bureau - a network of independent charities throughout the UK that give free, confidential information and advice to assist people with legal, money, legal, consumer and other problems.

Crimestoppers - an independent charity helping law enforcement solve crimes. They have an anonymous 24/7 phone number, 0800 555 111, that people can call to pass on information about crime.

Equality Advisory Support Service - advises and assists individuals on issues relating to equality and human rights, across England, Scotland and Wales.

Get Safe Online – a resource base of unbiased, factual and easy-to-understand information on online safety.

Self-Reporting form - The forms have been designed for you to report any form of hate incident or crime that you may have been the victim of, witnessed, or are reporting on behalf of someone else. You can report all types of hate crime, including criminal damage, assault, verbal abuse and harassment.

Stop Hate UK – one of the leading national organisations working to challenge all forms of Hate Crime and discrimination, based on any aspect of an individual's identity.

True Vision – an online resource dedicated to providing up to date information on hate crime, details on how to report it and a range of resources, downloads and materials to use in your service.

Victim Support - an independent charity for people affected by crime and traumatic events. Their specialist teams provide individual, independent, emotional and practical help to enable people to cope and recover from the effects of crime.

What We Do

Homeless Link is the national membership charity for frontline homelessness services. We work to improve services through research, guidance and learning, and campaign for policy change that will ensure everyone has a place to call home and the support they need to keep it.

Homeless Link

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Let's End Homelessness Together

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