

REPORT TO POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 20 DECEMBER 2018

POLICE SCOTLAND NORTH EAST DIVISION - THEMATIC REPORT: HATE CRIME

1. Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1.1 Discuss the information provided in this report in relation to Hate Crime particularly within Aberdeenshire.

2. Background/Discussion

- 2.1 Hate Crime is a crime against the person and Police Scotland record Hate Crime and Hate Incidents according to the following Scottish Government definitions.
- 2.2 The spectrum of Hate Crime is wide ranging and types of incidents reported include physical and emotional harassment, physical and emotional abuse, name calling, bullying, online/social media based actions, damage to property, and sometimes serious acts of violence.
- 2.3 Hate Crimes are those perceived by the victim or any other person to be motivated (wholly or partly) by malice and ill-will towards an individual or social group based on their actual or presumed sexual orientation, transgender identity, disability, race or religion and these groups are specified within the Hate Crime legislation as protected. Hate Incidents are those perceived by the victim or any other person to be motivated (wholly or partly) by malice and ill-will towards an individual or social group within the aforementioned protected characteristics but which although morally offensive do not constitute a criminal offence under the legislation.
- 2.4 So whilst not every Hate Report will amount to a crime, Officers are still required to take preventative and protective measures even when no crime is apparent, in recognition that in individual cases a seemingly insignificant event can have a significant impact or consequences for that victim irrespective of the circumstances, and that repeated insignificant events can also have a cumulative impact.
- 2.5 Those subjected to Hate Crimes or Hate Incidents do not actually have to belong to one of the protected groups in order to be victims. It is sufficient for the perception of the victim or any other person to be that the crime or incident was so motivated.

3. National Context

- 3.1 The Scottish Police Authority Annual Report and Accounts for 2016/2017 reported that the volume of Hate Crimes had decreased nationally by **4.7%** with over **12,000** Hate Crimes in that period.
- 3.2 There was an increase in the number of reported Hate Crimes identified as Transgender Hate Crimes. Working in partnership with the Equality Network, a national Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) equality and human rights charity, Police Scotland delivered bespoke training to **91** Officers. This resulted in the Officers having an enhanced knowledge and skill base, to work proactively with our LGBTI community.
- 3.3 The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of a leading LGBTI rights agency, recently reported an increase in LGBTI confidence in the Police response and subsequently an increase in reports of homophobic and transphobic incidents. The CEO was clear that this increase was linked to greater confidence in the Police.
- 3.4 Within Police Scotland's Specialist Crime Division, the Safer Communities Equality and Diversity Unit are responsible for engaging directly with national equality groups, the Scottish Government and organisations supporting people from all our communities. The Team provide support, advice and assistance to Police Officers and staff throughout Police Scotland in relation to service delivery aspects of equality and diversity, Hate Crime/Incidents, public reassurance and confidence, community impact assessments and routine community engagement, in addition to managing a cadre of Community Advisors (formerly known as Lay Advisors) who are members of the public that have volunteered to provide advice to Police Scotland in relation to their area of specialism on Hate Crime matters. The Equality and Diversity Unit has staff based across Scotland, including North East Division.

4. Local Context

- 4.1 During 2017/2018 **416** Hate Crimes were reported to the Police in North East Division (an increase of **33** crimes on 2016/2017), of which **295** were detected. We have seen an increase in the detection rate when compared to 2016/2017, up **7%** to **70.9%**. It should be noted that a significant number of these crimes relate to the victims being Emergency Service workers.
- 4.2 Within North East Division Partnerships and Events Unit, Senior Officers and the Diversity Liaison Officer provide support and guidance to all staff dealing with Hate Crimes and Hate Incidents. In addition they have developed and maintain relationships with the numerous minority communities, and with statutory and voluntary partners, acting both as conduit for them to the Division and supporting their own activities with advice, information, and attendance at various events and forums such as Integrate Grampian, the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme, and the Grampian Gypsy Traveller Interagency Group. The Diversity Liaison Officers proactive activities to promote positive attitudes is further supported by School Liaison and School Based Officers who provide consistent messaging across Local Authority primary and secondary schools on the Hate Crime topic. This was formerly delivered through the wider ranging Personal Safety input, however

a specific Hate Crime lesson plan has been developed for the 2018/2019 academic year and is now being offered to schools.

- 4.3 Police Scotland runs an annual national Hate Crime campaign, this year titled 'Be Greater than a Hater'. North East Division participates fully in this campaign which last ran during early 2018, delivering key messages to communities across the North East through our long established and wide ranging partnership links.
- 4.4 During March 2018 there was national media coverage of letters received by some individuals including MPs elsewhere in the country entitled 'Punish a Muslim Day' with 4 April 2018 being highlighted as a day of action. It is pleasing to note that North East Division as a whole, experienced no reports of increases in community tension, and recorded no incidents or crimes of a racial or religious nature which were in any way related to this matter, and this is perhaps reflective of the already open and welcoming nature of communities in the North East.

5. Aberdeenshire Context

- 5.1 During 2017/2018, **120** Hate Crimes were reported to the Police within Aberdeenshire (an increase of **37** crimes on 2016/2017), of which **90 (75%)** were detected. Between April and September 2018, **38** Hate Crimes were reported, this being a decrease of **9** crimes on the equivalent period in 2017. Once again, a significant number of these crimes relate to the victims being Emergency Service workers.
- 5.2 Much of the Hate Crime which occurs within Aberdeenshire takes place in town centres and often takes place during the night-time economy where Community Policing Teams are active in reinforcing the need to report Hate Crimes to the Police.
- 5.3 The positive partnership nature of policing the night-time economy ensures that Officers hear more readily about such incidents and are well placed to deal with them at the time. Had such incidents occurred elsewhere, the victim might not have considered reporting to the Police. Many of the Hate Crimes reported from the night-time economy are comments directed at security/door staff having taken issue with some aspect around how they are being dealt with or managed.
- 5.4 There is no evidence to suggest a standalone issue or problem that may relate to any particular group or premises within Aberdeenshire.
- 5.5 During 2018, the Diversity Liaison Officer (DLO) has attended a number of events and delivered inputs across Aberdeenshire, including a Holi Melia event at Ashdale Hall in Westhill, a talk to Aberdeenshire Council Access Panel (Disability Group) about Third Party Reporting, hate crime in general and the role of the DLO, and a talk to ARC (a disability group at Westhill).
- 5.6 In addition, the DLO has met with the Aberdeenshire Council Gypsy Traveller Liaison Officer (GTLO) in order to raise awareness of Third Party Reporting Centres, where Police Scotland are working in partnership with various public sector and third sector organisations to provide safe and private spaces for

people to report Hate Crimes. Although the GTLO role does not lend itself to Third Party Reporting in its truest form, it is thought likely that the GTLO will be able to adopt many of its principles for use during her engagement with the Gypsy Traveller community. This should be assisted by the GTLO now being based within the recently opened seasonal site at Aikey Brae, Mintlaw.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 Hate Incidents and Hate Crimes continue to occur across the North East and Aberdeenshire is no exception.
- 6.2 Although within the national context the number of reports of Hate Crime being received within the North East remains reassuringly low, such reports are continually managed and reviewed by Police Scotland through the process of daily management and monthly tactical meetings.
- 6.3 Police Scotland and partners remain focused on ensuring that the North East is a place where victims of Hate Crime can report these incidents with confidence in the knowledge that they will be comprehensively investigated.
- 6.4 Police Scotland has responded appropriately, in conjunction with partners, with resources being directed towards raising awareness, improving services to victims and thoroughly investigating this type of criminality.

. Scheme of Governance

- 7.1 The Committee is able to consider/comment on this item in terms of Section D.1.1 of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as it relates to matters concerning Police Scotland.

8. Equalities, Staffing, Financial and Risk Implications

- 8.1 An equality impact assessment is not required because this report is principally designed in regard to Cybercrime. There will be no differential impact, as a result of the report, on people with protected characteristics.
- 8.2 There are no specific staffing or financial implications arising from this report.
- 8.3 There are no risks directly identified in respect of this matter in terms of the Corporate and Directorate Risk Registers as the Committee is monitoring the performance of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service as required under the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 however links to the Corporate Risk of Working with Other Organisations.

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