

<b>COMMUNITY SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY PANEL</b>	<b>DATE</b> 19 September 2019	<b>ITEM NO</b> 7
<b>TITLE</b> Addressing Hate Crime in the Royal Borough of Greenwich	<b>WARD (S)</b> All	
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b> Director Housing and Safer Communities	<b>CABINET MEMBER</b> Children's Services & Community Safety	
<b>DECISION CLASSIFICATION</b> <i>Non Key</i>	<b>Information Item</b>	

## **1. Purpose of Report and Executive Summary**

- 1.1 To provide the Community Safety and Environment Scrutiny Panel with information to allow scrutiny on the work being undertaken to tackle Hate Crime in the Royal Borough of Greenwich.

## **2. Links to the Royal Greenwich high level objectives**

- 2.1 This report relates to the Council's agreed high level objectives as follows:
- A Safer Greenwich
  - A Great Place to Grow Up
  - A Great Place to Be
  - A Strong Vibrant and Well-run Borough

## **3. Introduction and Background**

- 3.1 Tackling Hate Crime is important to the Safer Greenwich Partnership. Royal Greenwich is committed to creating an environment where Hate crime is not tolerated, but challenged, reported and dealt with appropriately. The effects of Hate crime are not only felt by individuals and their families, but also impact on the wider community, creating a perception of fear and damaging community cohesion.
- 3.2 Hate Crime continues to be a priority for the Safer Greenwich Partnership and the Royal Borough of Greenwich (RBG) Hate Crime Strategy is being refreshed for 2020-24. This report provides an overview of activity for the period of April 2018 to date.

- 3.3 In RGB, 649 Hate crime offences were recorded by the police in 2018/19:
- 496 racist and religious Hate offences were recorded in 2018/19, compared with 483 in 2017/18. This is an increase of 13 (+2.7%).
  - 74 homophobic offences were recorded in 2018/19, compared with 53 in 2017/18. This is an increase of 21 (+39.5%).
  - 20 disability Hate offences were recorded in 2018/19, compared with 20 in 2017/18. This is an increase of 0 (0%).
  - 40 faith Hate offences were recorded in 2018/19, compared with 36 in 2017/18. This is an increase of 4 (+11.0%).
  - There were also 26 recorded Islamophobic offences, 3 Anti-Semitic offences and 3 Transgender offences.

- 3.4 In order to ensure commonality between partner agencies, the Safer Greenwich Partnership recognises the following definition of Hate crime, as set by the Home Office:

*“A Hate crime is defined as any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a personal characteristic; specifically actual or perceived race, religion/faith, sexual orientation, disability and transgender identity.”*

*“A Hate crime incident is defined as any non-crime incident which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a personal characteristic; specifically actual or perceived race, religion/faith, sexual orientation, disability and transgender identity.”*

- 3.5 The borough has an active Hate Crime Strategic Partnership Group (HCSPG) that meets quarterly, with representatives from council services, the police, the boroughs third sector Hate crime services and Charlton Athletic Community Trust. The borough also has an established Hate Crime Case Panel to provide a multi-agency response of support and enforcement to individual complex cases. While many other boroughs in London have not maintained a comparable focus on Hate crime for the past several years (for example lacking a case panel and a designated lead officer), work in Greenwich continues and has been strengthened, for example by additional partners joining the HCSPG and activities organised for Hate Crime Awareness Week in October each year.
- 3.6 However, the borough is aware that Hate crime is still significantly under-reported. There are a variety of reasons behind this, including fear of police attention attracting further abuse, the victim believing that their report will not be taken seriously or that no action will be taken against the perpetrator

and the victim not recognising their experience as Hate crime or doubting that it “counts”. There can also be additional difficulties for victims in accessing reporting mechanisms such as language barriers. Therefore, throughout 2018/19, RBG continued to make efforts to encourage all groups within the community to feel confident in both recognising and reporting Hate crime, which could be reflected in the increase in recorded Hate crime offences.

## **4. Addressing Hate Crime**

### **4.1 The Hate Crime Strategic Partnership Group**

4.1.1 The Hate Crime Strategic Partnership Group (HCSPG) exists to provide strategic direction and partnership co-ordination of activity to tackle Hate crime in Royal Greenwich. The HCSPG is accountable to the Safer Greenwich Partnership.

4.1.2 The HCSPG develops, implements and monitors work to address Hate Crime in the Royal Borough of Greenwich. This includes the delivery of the RBG Hate Crime Strategy and implementing actions to achieve the ambitions agreed in the annual community safety plan set by the Safer Greenwich Partnership.

4.1.3 The group ensures the effective use of partnership resources and monitors the performance of any sub-groups or initiatives for which the Hate Crime Strategic Partnership is responsible, which are detailed below.

### **4.2 Hate Crime Strategy**

4.2.1 Work on a new four-year strategy is underway; after completion and approval by the SGP it will steer the partnership’s work from April 2020 to March 2024. At a meeting earlier this year the HCSPG agreed four priority themes:

- to raise awareness of Hate Crime and encourage reporting,
- to ensure staff have the skills, information and confidence to identify and support victims appropriately,
- to celebrate diversity, promote community cohesion and challenge social intolerance
- to ensure a robust and holistic approach is taken in supporting victims and tackling perpetrators.

4.2.2 Each of these themes was the focus of one of four workshops held to consult a range of partners in May this year, which led to the HCSPG meeting in July agreeing a set of more specific objectives that will be included in the strategy. After further work and consultation the draft strategy is planned to go to the SGP's meeting in December for approval.

### **4.3 Community-based Hate Crime Service: Greenwich Inclusion Project (GrIP)**

4.3.1 To support the work of the HCSPG, RBG commissions a voluntary sector agency to provide a Hate Crime Service to assist victims and help to raise awareness amongst local communities, enabling people to recognise, challenge and report Hate crime.

4.3.2 GrIP, working in a sub-commissioning partnership with Metro and Metro-GAD, has been commissioned by Royal Greenwich through the Voluntary Sector Grants Fund, to provide a Hate Crime service for Greenwich residents since 2015. Funding of £90k per annum has been provided for the delivery of a community-based Hate crime casework and support service for all categories of Hate crime, but with a particular emphasis on Hate directed at people because of their Race, Faith, Sexual diversity, Transgender status or Disability.

4.3.3 In 2018/19, the Hate Crime Service supported 51 people who have either been victims or witnesses to Hate Crime incidents. Support varied from the provision of short term/ one-off telephone or face to face advice to longer-term and more intensive casework support where there are on-going complex issues; these typically require multi-agency support through the Hate Crime panel, to which GrIP and partners make referrals.

4.3.4 The Hate Crime Service delivered 14 workshops to young people in primary and secondary schools in 2018/19, reaching 352 young people and 9 training sessions for council staff, partner agencies and community and faith groups, reaching 186 people. The training sessions were evaluated with 100% of attendees stating that they were good to excellent.

4.3.5 The Council ran a fresh bidding process in late 2018-19 for the Voluntary Sector Grants Programme, which included applications for funding to provide the Hate Crime Service. GrIP, in partnership with Metro and Metro-GAD, was the only organisation to bid for the funding and after evaluation was allocated the £90,000 per annum to continue to deliver the service for 2019-2023.

- 4.3.6 After review of the Hate Crime service in the previous funding period, a revised service specification has been put in place to ensure a greater focus on the provision of a casework service for victims rather than on strategic issues. Initial progress in this direction is indicated by the figure of 32 victims supported during Quarter 1 of 2019-20 (including 17 new cases), compared to the total of 51 for the whole of 2018-19.
- 4.3.7 GrIP, with its partners Metro and Metro-GAD, is now funded to deliver on the following outcomes:
- To be part of a coordinated community response in tackling Hate crimes/ incidents in Greenwich.
  - To ensure the delivery of a Hate crime support/ casework service.
  - To ensure the provision of advice, information and signposting, and facilitation of access to support and other relevant services.
  - To ensure the provision of pro-active support to victims and that victims are aware of their rights.
  - To ensure the provision of pathways to victims and witnesses to access advice and support, including information on how to report Hate crime, particularly in relation to race, religion/faith, disability, homophobia and transgender issues.
  - To effectively contribute to the work of the Hate Crime Strategic Partnership group.
  - To provide advice on possible civil remedies or criminal prosecutions.
  - To ensure the promotion of awareness and encouragement of Hate crime reporting.
  - To effectively raise awareness amongst local communities, which enables people to recognise, challenge and report Hate crime and ensures the promotion of the services available to support victims.
  - To ensure that front line professionals have the skills, information and confidence to identify Hate crime and support and refer victims appropriately
  - Ensure a robust and holistic approach is taken in supporting victims and tackling perpetrators of Hate crime.
- 4.3.8 Under the new service level agreement from April this year, the Hate Crime Service is monitored on three key outcome areas:
- Hate crime casework
    - 1) People who experience Hate crime on the grounds of race, faith, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity are able to access quality holistic support through a community-based service.

- 2) Victims of Hate crimes are able to feel confident in the responses from relevant service providers.
  - 3) Victims of Hate crime are able to feel secure and safe in their personal lives.
- Promotion of understanding and awareness of Hate crime matters
    - 1) There is improved understanding of manifestations of Hate crimes in Royal Greenwich.
    - 2) There is improved recognition of the role of different agencies in addressing Hate crime in the Borough.
    - 3) There is improved understanding of routes available to report Hate crime.
    - 4) More voluntary and community sector organisations are available as signposting agencies, improving access to the community-based Hate crime casework service.
  - Strategic Planning Activities
    - 1) The plans, programme of activities and deliberations of the Hate Crime Strategic Partnership are informed by community engagement activities, feedback from victims and clients, academic reports and public inquiries, both local and national.
    - 2) Local Hate crime data is regularly assessed to help direct priority activities and geographic targeting of the work of the community-based Hate crime service

#### **4.4 The Hate Crime Panel**

4.4.1 The Hate Crime panel is a monthly multi-agency meeting that is in place to develop and establish effective responses for Hate crime cases that require a multi-agency response, or are of a serious or complex nature. The meeting shares information to increase the safety and well-being of victims, determines the risk of harm posed by the perpetrator and jointly constructs and implements case action plans that provide support to victims, reduce the risk of harm and support action against the perpetrator whenever possible.

4.4.2 During 2018/19, the Hate Crime Panel reviewed 21 cases, compared with 33 the previous year. Of these, 1 case dealt with Disability-targeted Hate crime, 18 for Race, and 2 for Sexual Orientation. All cases referred to the Panel are monitored at its meetings subsequent to the initial action planning, to ensure that the plan is progressing and to develop it further if the victim experiences more incidents.

- 4.4.3 The panel has been successful in reducing or stopping Hate crime incidents following cases being heard at the panel, through the provision of support for victims and intervention with perpetrators through the multi-agency network.
- 4.4.4 Since the merger of policing to cover three boroughs there has been a change in the police teams that are responsible for follow-up and investigation of Hate crime incidents, depending on whether they are classified as aggravated or motivated offences. All offences flagged as Hate Crime would previously have been dealt with by the police specialist Community Safety Unit. Now those officers deal only with those identified as the more serious “motivated” category and those that are classified as an aggravated Hate crime (e.g. an escalation of a dispute not initially based on a Hate motivation), are dealt with by response or neighbourhood teams.
- 4.4.5 This, and the fact that response officers formerly for Bexley and Lewisham now share in providing the response to calls from Greenwich residents has led to a marked reduction in police referrals to the Hate Crime Panel. The police made 17 referrals to the panel in 2017-18 (52% of all referrals) but only 2 in 2018-19 (9%). Hate offences are now handled by a much larger number of officers and it is likely that many are unaware of the panel or the support it can help them access for their cases and the victims. The Safer Communities Team is working closely with the police Hate Crime liaison officer, who is supporting the panel to improve this situation, ensuring Hate Crime training for police officers and that they are made aware of the panel.

#### 4.5 **Little Fish Theatre Company**

- 4.5.1 In 2017/18 RBG, through MOPAC funding, commissioned the Little Fish Theatre Company to develop a bespoke Hate Crime play and workshop for Greenwich young people for Hate Crime awareness week. This was undertaken with a view that if received positively it could be rolled out annually for the four year MOPAC funded period.
- 4.5.2 The play was developed because although there had been a steady increase in reports of Hate crime, it is still significantly under-reported, particularly by young people, who often do not recognise or understand Hate Crime. Experience of working with young people around crime prevention issues has highlighted that one of the most positive ways of engaging them is through the use of theatre followed by a workshop to give young people an opportunity to discuss the subject matter and highlight their own experiences.
- 4.5.3 The play was piloted in 2017-18 to a professionals group and to young people in three secondary schools. It received excellent feedback from both young people and professionals and a request for its wider delivery across the

borough. Therefore sixteen performances of the play (and workshop) were delivered in Greenwich secondary schools (to children in year 9 and year 11) and two more at youth centres in autumn 2018. Evaluation questionnaires were done at every performance, and were completed by 1,400 of the 1,800 young people who attended. The questionnaires showed excellent feedback with 84% of the young people stating that it improved their understanding of Hate Crime.

4.5.4 A similar programme will be delivered in autumn 2019, again linked to national Hate Crime Awareness Week.

#### **4.6 Stop Hate UK**

4.6.1 RBG funds Stop Hate UK (SHUK) to provide a 24hr helpline to victims of Hate Crime (funded through the borough's allocation under the MOPAC Crime Prevention Fund). SHUK is a long-established national organisation which offers advice and support to victims of Hate crime and enables them to report offences and obtain help from local services (through direct referrals). It works in partnership with the borough's Hate crime service providers, who receive referrals from SHUK whenever a victim wishes to benefit from local support. It is a valuable option not only for its round-the-clock availability but also as a route for people who do not feel confident about reporting their experience to the police. Royal Greenwich is one of only eight London boroughs subscribing to this service.

4.6.2 The contact number for SHUK, 0800 138 1625, has been advertised through the distribution of leaflets in key venues across the borough, such as libraries and Children's Centres, and is also detailed on the RBG council website, through the Hate Crime pages.

4.6.3 In 2018/19 SHUK received 45 calls from Greenwich residents to their helpline. This is an increase of 66% from 27 calls received in 2017/18. The increase is likely due at least in part to the HCSPG taking proactive steps during 2018/19 to raise awareness of the service.

4.6.4 SHUK also works to raise awareness of the support and services offered to Greenwich residents and has assisted the borough through its national and regional work to address on-line abuse through social media platforms.

#### **4.7 Synergy between Hate Crime and Prevent/Counter-Extremism**

4.7.1 The Hate Crime Strategic Partnership recognises there can be links between Hate Crime and the Prevent/counter extremism agenda.

4.7.2 Local, national or global events, such as terrorist incidents, can influence levels of hostility to certain groups, increase community tensions and increase the risk of innocent groups or individuals being targeted due to their perceived association with the communities identified with the perpetrators. This can also lead to increased activity by extreme groups, for example ‘far right groups’.

4.7.3 Both these areas of work sit within Safer Communities and responsible officers’ work closely to ensure that area-based issues are responded to and victims are offered support. For example, arranging the quick removal of Hate graffiti and ensuring that identified victims that come to attention through Prevent/counter-extremism work are offered the support of Hate crime services. This is in addition to ongoing work with individuals potentially at risk of radicalisation or more extremist views.

5. **Cross-Cutting Issues and Implications**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>	<b>Sign-off</b>
<b>Legal</b> including Human Rights Act	This is an information report.	
<b>Finance</b> and other resources including procurement implications	This is an information report.	
<b>Community safety</b>	This is an information report regarding the borough work to address Hate Crime and therefore fulfils the councils obligations under: (b) Section 17, Crime and Disorder Act 1998 “17(1) Without prejudice to any other obligation imposed on it, it shall be the duty of each authority to which this section applies to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area.”	Annette Hines Senior Community Safety Officer. 03/09/19

6. **Report Appendices**

6.1 None

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