

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Public Protection
DATE	10 October 2018
REPORT TITLE	Aberdeen City Hate Crime
REPORT NUMBER	GOV/18/175
CHIEF OFFICER	Fraser Bell
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TERMS OF REFERENCE	5.7

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report seeks to inform the Committee about Hate Crime in Aberdeen City.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That the Committee note the report.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1.1 Hate Crime is a crime against the person and Police Scotland record Hate Crime and Hate Incidents according to the following Scottish Government definitions.

3.1.2 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.

3.1.3 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.

- 3.1.4 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.
- 3.1.5 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.

3.2 National Context

- 3.2.1 The Police Scotland Annual report for the year ending 31 March 2017 showed that nationally the volume of Hate Crimes had decreased by **4.7%** with over **12,000** Hate Crimes in that period.
- 3.2.2 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.
- 3.2.3 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.
- 3.2.4 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 Aberdeen City.

3.3 Local Context

- 3.3.1 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.
- 3.3.2 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.
- 3.3.3 During 2018, the Diversity Liaison Officer has attended a number of events and delivered inputs across Aberdeen City including Action on Disability, International Students, the SACRO Fearless Project, the Ethnic Minority Forum, the NESS Disability Project, City of Sanctuary, Aberdeen Multi-cultural Centre, Aberdeen Holi Mela (Hindu celebration), LGBT+ group, Grampian Pride, The Anne Frank Awards, Eid in the Garden, and a regular slot on SHMU FM focusing on both diversity and wider crime reduction matters.
- 3.3.4 In addition, he is in discussions with representatives from Four Pillars (providing peer education & information to support the LGBTI community), Aberdeen University Students Union, Aberdeen City Council, Moray Council, Moray College and volunteers at Nelson Street Mosque to have staff trained or re-trained in the development and further provision 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.
- 3.3.5 Events have also been attended by Police Scotland's Positive Action Team which provides support to people across Scotland from under-represented

groups who are considering a career in Policing. The team work in particular with people from ethnic minority communities.

- 3.3.6 Police Scotland runs an annual national Hate Crime campaign '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. Positive feedback was received from elected members, members of the LGBTI community, Aberdeen Multicultural Centre, and SHMU FM.
- 3.3.7 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.

3.4 Aberdeen City Context

- 3.4.1 During 2017/2018, **256** Hate Crimes were reported to the Police within Aberdeen City (a decrease of **3** crimes on 2016/2017), of which **175 (68.3%)** were detected. Once again, a significant number of these crimes relate to the victims being Emergency Service workers.
- 3.4.2 Much of the Hate Crime which occurs within Aberdeen City Centre takes place during the Night Time Economy or in areas of regeneration within the city, with alcohol often a factor for one or more party.
- 3.4.3 Within Aberdeen City Centre the Community Policing Team is very active in reinforcing the need to report Hate Crimes to the Police within that Night Time and the Retail Economies. This issue is referenced at various trade meetings such as the City Centre Partnership, Retail Forum, Licensing Board, Unight meetings and at Street Pastor Induction Training, with the Police working alongside Unight to raise awareness of such issues and to deliver increased training around the awareness of staff on vulnerability through intoxication or otherwise and the detection/prevention of disorder within licensed premises, including Hate Crime.
- 3.4.4 In support of this a 'Licensing Matters' event was held in March 2018 which saw an audience of partners and the trade examine issues like this and how a new policy or joint approach could prevent or reduce disorder including Hate Crime within premises and create a safe and enjoyable environment for all. It is recognised such a policy requires an onus for meaningful staff

training and awareness delivered by the licensing sector themselves, with the Police and other partners adopting a supportive role.

3.4.5 The partnership nature of Weekend Policing ensures that Officers hear more readily about such incidents and are well placed to deal with them, as night time workers and door stewards in particular enjoy the added ease of reporting incidents through the 'Pub Safe' radio system, meaning that the Police are made aware of incidents that, had they occurred out with the City Centre, the victim might not have considered reporting to the Police, as many of the Hate Crimes reported from Weekend Policing are comments directed at security/door staff having taken issue with some aspect around how they are being dealt with or managed.

3.4.6 There is no evidence to suggest a standalone issue or problem that may relate to any particular group or premises within Aberdeen City.

3.5 Conclusion

3.5.1 Hate Incidents and Hate Crimes continue to occur across the North East and Aberdeen City is no exception given its status as the focal point for this part of the country, with its thriving Retail and Night Time Economies.

3.5.2 Although within the national and local 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.

3.5.3 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.

3.5.4 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.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

N/A

7. OUTCOMES

N/A

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment	N/A
Privacy Impact Assessment	N/A
Duty of Due Regard / Fairer Scotland Duty	N/A

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A

10. APPENDICES

N/A

11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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