**Performance and Resources Scrutiny Programme 2018/2019**

**Report to: the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex**

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| **Title of Report:** | **Hate Crime** |
| **Agenda Number:** | **7** |
| **Chief Officer** | **Assistant Chief Constable Andy Prophet** |
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| **Report from:**  | **Essex Police** |
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| **Author on behalf of Chief Officer:** | **Detective Superintendent Scott Cannon** |
| **Date of Approval:** | **19/01/2019** |

1. **Purpose of Report**

This report provides a summary of the Essex Police performance in terms of hate crime 2016/17 – 2017/18 and focuses primarily on recorded crime and prosecutions.

1. **Recommendations**

No specific recommendations but that the Board notes the key issues and updates highlighted.

1. **Executive Summary**

The current position informed by the available data suggests the following:

* Essex Police has seen little change in the number of non-crime hate incidents being recorded in contrast to an increase in reported hate crime during the reporting period.
* Race related hate crime continues to be the most acutely targeted characteristic in Essex accounting for two thirds of all recorded occurrences. Reported crime in respect of disability, sexual orientation and religion has also increased compared to the same period last year.
* Approximately one in seven investigations have resulted in a positive outcome with the offender(s) receiving some form of sanction.
* The reporting period has seen a slight increase in the number of cases resulting in a formal charge as opposed to alternative out of court disposals for hate crime offences which would indicate officers are being more offender focused in their investigations[[1]](#footnote-1).
* The continued increased reporting of hate crime would tend to indicate that trust and confidence in the police is increasing and as part of the crime data accuracy programme of work, crimes are being more acutely recorded, and in a timely manner.
* Furthermore, the continued investment into the use of third party reporting mechanisms such as Hate Incident Reporting Centres (HIRCS) and Hate Crime Ambassadors (HCAs) has resulted in more victims coming forward to report hate crime, which is clearly a positive indicator.
1. **Introduction/Background**

Essex Police continues to treat hate crime as a priority and is working hard to improve the overall quality of service provided to hate crime victims from the point of contact through to the criminal justice process and beyond.

National academic research suggests that hate crime is still vastly under reported so Essex Police recognises the importance of effective community engagement and identification of those hard to reach groups who are more likely to suffer as victims of hate crime. Local plans continue to be developed, supported by a dedicated Hate Crime Officer in each LPA.

In November 2017 a Detective Superintendent was appointed as the Hate Crime Lead with responsibility for the implementation of various recommendations stemming from both internal and external reviews. A programme of work is ongoing with the aim to improve hate crime performance in a range of areas including –

* The initial response and crime allocation
* Good victim care and support
* Appropriate referrals and signposting to other agencies
* Quality investigations
* Good supervisory direction and footprint
* More offender focused investigations

1. **Current Work and Performance**

**Hate Crime Recording**

In order to meet encourage more hate crime reporting, Essex Police has been instrumental in taking a community led approach by focussing on the development of third party reporting mechanisms i.e. over 50 HIRCs and 500 HCAs across the county. Essex Police also uses the services on an online reporting centre known as National True Vision which has resulted in an additional 371 reports of hate crime during the reporting period.

The role of HIRCS is to support and encourage the reporting of hate crime within the local communities at locations where victims may feel more safe and comfortable. HIRCS will report all incidents to Essex Police including those incidents whereby the victim wishes to remain anonymous. Such incidents are recorded on Athena and investigated in line with force policies and procedures.

The presence of an established network of third party reporting centres has provided many benefits and enabled Essex Police to engage with historically more disconnected or hidden communities. This network was also able to support over 20 events countywide for National Hate Crime Awareness Week (NHCAW)[[2]](#footnote-2).

Overall an upwards trend[[3]](#footnote-3) has been noted in respect of the number of reported hate crimes over the last 12 months. Conversely the number of hate incidents has declined. The reasons behind this are not fully understood but one hypotheses could be the more accurate recording of hate crime as part of the crime data accuracy programme of work.

To support local Community Policing Teams in better understanding hate crime at a local level, hate crime now features as part of the force tasking process. This new process provides a clear platform in which any new emerging threats or trends can be identified with a local response then adopted to tackle any specific issues.

**Hate Crime Data (Crime Recording)**

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Table 1 – Hate Investigations

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|  | **HATE INVESTIGATIONS** |
|  | **NON CRIME** | **CRIME** |
|  | **2016/17** | **2017/18** | **2016/17** |  | **2017/18** |  |
|  |  | 2018 |  |  |  |  |
|  | 2016 | 2017 | 2016 | 2017 | 2017 | 2018 |
|  | Recorded | Recorded | Solved | Recorded | Solved |
| December | 29 | 29 | 131 | 15 | 150 | 27 |
| January | 49 | 30 | 124 | 26 | 152 | 15 |
| February | 27 | 35 | 160 | 24 | 153 | 20 |
| March | 60 | 48 | 195 | 23 | 178 | 30 |
| April | 53 | 44 | 174 | 23 | 204 | 29 |
| May | 47 | 40 | 219 | 30 | 212 | 24 |
| June | 44 | 51 | 245 | 27 | 248 | 27 |
| July | 60 | 52 | 214 | 38 | 294 | 27 |
| August | 39 | 44 | 157 | 30 | 232 | 25 |
| September | 50 | 50 | 158 | 21 | 199 | 47 |
| October | 35 | 47 | 168 | 20 | 234 | 29 |
| November | 37 | 43 | 144 | 22 | 220 | 36 |
| **Total** | **530** | **513** | **2089** | **299** | **2476** | **336** |

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Table 1 – Hate crime investigations indicate the following with regards crime and non-crime:

* Non – crime incidents have declined by a total of 17 reports or 3.2% overall in 2017/18 when compared with 2016/17.
* Total reports for recorded crime have increased by 387 reports or 18.5% overall in 2017/18 when compared with 2016/17.
* As a percentage of overall recorded hate crimes, solved rates in 2017/18 have dropped to 13.5% of the total, compared with a solved rate of 14.3% for the 2016/17 reporting period.
* The decline in the solved rate is attributable to the increase in the number of recorded hate crimes and the solved number of hate crimes has increased.
* Essex Police remains committed to increasing the number of offenders brought to justice, but the uplift in reporting is still broadly considered to be an indicator that trust and confidence in the police is improving.

Table 2 – Non Crime Hate Incidents by Month/Characteristic



Distribution of non-crime hate incidents amongst the protected characteristics for 2016/17 and 2017/18 remains largely unchanged at this time. Racial non – crime incidents account for approximately two thirds of those reported.

Sexual orientation and transgender have seen increases in reports from 47 to 53 reports (or 12.7 %) and 21 to 34 reports (61.9%) respectively between 2016/117 and 2017/18.

 Table 3 – Hate Crime Investigation by Month/Characteristic

 

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Distribution of hate crime investigations amongst the protected characteristics for 2016/17 and 217/2018 indicates that the characteristics of disability and sexual orientation and religion have increased markedly by 112 reports (or 64.3%) 96 reports (or 65.8%) and 54 reports (or 63.5%) respectively. Racial crime investigations still account for approximately two thirds of those reported.

**Hate Crime Investigations**

Following an internal review of hate crime, there were some pockets of good, and in some cases, excellent practice.

However, there were cases identified whether both victim care and investigative quality required improvement.

Essex Police fully recognises the impact of hate crimes on victims, families and communities which is why a D/Superintendent is leading on a programme of work as already articulated within this report.

A supervisory toolkit is also in the process of being formulated which will provide supervisors with a clear and defined checklist to support them in ascertaining whether all aspects of victim care has been provided and whether a proportionate investigation has been undertaken.

**Hate Crime Data ‘Solved Rates’**

Table 4 ‘Solved’ Hate Crime Investigations by Disposal Dec 2016 – Nov 2017

 Table 5 ‘Solved’ hate Crime Investigations by Disposal Dec 2017 – Nov 2018

Distribution of solved outcomes shows that charges for hate crime offences have increased by 24 reports (18.3%) between 2016/17 and 2017/18. 48% of cases were dealt with by means of out of court disposals, namely by caution or community resolution.

**6.0 Implications (Issues)**

See areas for improvement (Section 8.0)

**6.1 Links to Police and Crime Plan Priorities**

The work undertaken by Essex Police to improve the volumes of reported hate crime links to the Police and Crime Plan by supporting Priority 6 – Protecting Children and Vulnerable People from Harm as evidenced by:

* Community engagement events that have led to an increase in volunteers becoming involved with HIRCs. This extra resource has enabled more HIRCS to open[[4]](#footnote-4).
* The HIRCs are now established and connecting with communities previously in marginal contact with Essex police. This supports communities vulnerable to hate crime with all protected characteristics now represented within the HIRC network and this report has noted that early signs are encouraging with volumes of reported hate crime on the increase.

**6.2 Demand**

Local Policing Areas continue to hold the portfolio for hate crime operationally and a decision what taken 12 months ago that all standard and medium risk hate crimes cases would be investigated by the local Community Policing Teams.

This decision was taken in recognition as to the impact that hate crime has not only on victims, but their families and sometimes communities as a whole, making hate crime very much a community issue in need of a partnership and problem solving response.

Whilst volumes of reports are trending upwards hate crime does not make a significant contribution to the key incidents/crimes which place demand on LPAs when compared to their crime incidents types[[5]](#footnote-5).

**6.3 The EU Exit**

Brexit continues to dominate the media with continued and extensive media coverage.

There are concerns amongst forces and within the media that reported hate crime is likely to increase as a result of any decision taking with regards to the EU Exit, but specifically the potential impact in the event of a ‘no deal’ Brexit.

‘Operation Snowbunting’ is the nationally assigned operational code name for then policing response to an EU Exit and Essex Police has formulated a Command Structure with a Gold and Silver Commander and a number of Bronze Commanders with responsibility for various identified strands. The strategic, tactical and operational plans continues to be developed to tackle a number of potential issues which may arise as a result of the EU Exit.

One of the strands is hate crime led by a Detective Superintendent and plans are being developed to ensure there is close daily monitoring of reported hate crime and effective community engagement strategies in place to mitigate any tensions and to respond quickly to any EU exit related hate crime issues.

**6.4 Risks/Mitigation**

**Force Risk Register**

These are significant risks to the force which have been identified and the associated plans to mitigate them are being delivered by D/Superintendent Scott Cannon (Force Lead) and are owned by ACC Andy Prophet.

Hate Crime Investigations (Risk URN 1665): Inconsistent of Hate Crime Investigations identified from an internal review. These are paramount to the forces effectiveness and efficiency. Poor Hate Crime Investigations could lead to missed opportunities to safeguard victims and witnesses. This will result in damage to public confidence and potentially risk to life.

**6.4 Equality and/or Human Rights Implications**

One identified within the content of this report.

**6.5 Health and Safety Implications**

None identified within the content of this report.

**7.0 Consultation/Engagement**

Data has been supplied by the Performance Analysis Team and the respective subject matter expert/s and force leads have been consulted.

**8.0 Actions for Improvement**

In order to improve the quality and consistency of hate investigations (as well as crime investigations more broadly) a Gold Group chaired by ACC Prophet and attended by every LPA Commander and the force inspection team have agreed the following actions:

* Every Sergeant / Detective Sergeant on the LPAs (including acting and temporary sergeants) will be personally spoken to by a member of their command team. Crime investigation standards (and importantly supervision of those standards) will be set out face to face and reinforced with a series of simple process flowcharts and a PDR objective. This will be completed across all 3 LPAs by the end of February.
* From the beginning of March a random, monthly dip sample of hate crime (and other randomly selected crimes) will be carried out by the force inspection team to check adherence to these standards. A monthly performance report will be provided to each LPA Commander in order that local senior officers can deal appropriately with any Sergeants / teams not performing their role to the right standard.
* From the beginning of March every Inspector and Detective Inspector on the LPAs will dip sample 10 investigations on their team every month. Community Policing Team Inspectors will focus their dip sampling on hate crime investigations.

* These ‘inspection results’ will be considered and acted upon by local command teams every month through their command meetings. The results will also be present to and scrutinised at the monthly Local Policing Command Meeting chaired by ACC Prophet and regularly reviewed by the wider Chief Officer team

**9.0 Future Work/Development and Expected Outcome**

Essex Police is a representative of the Strategic Hate Crime Partnership (SHCP) and is working closely with partners to deliver against a partnership hate crime action plan. This plan commits the service to a programme of work up until 2020 to meet the requirements of the government’s Hate Crime Action Plan.

Police specific actions centre on the delivery of quality investigations, victims care, satisfaction and community engagement. The action plan was launched in May 2018.

**10.0 Decisions Required by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner**

None identified within the content of this report.

1. For example cautions or community resolutions. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. National Hate Crime Awareness Week 11th-17th October 2018 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See Table 1 Hate Investigations. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The number of HIRCS wide has grown from 21 to 43 in 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Key incidents for LPAs are DA, Missing and ASB, Burglaries, Road Traffic and Sudden Death. Key crimes are DA, Theft, Public Order, Violent crime, sexual assault modern slavery and fraud. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)