



Essex Hate Crime Prevention Strategy 2018–2021



***“It’s being believed, that the crime
is something that is important.
It really does get you deep inside”.***

Victim of Hate Crime

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Foreword



Essex is a diverse and dynamic county where people from many different backgrounds and experiences live, work, and thrive. This is reflected in our county motto; ‘Many Minds, One Heart’.

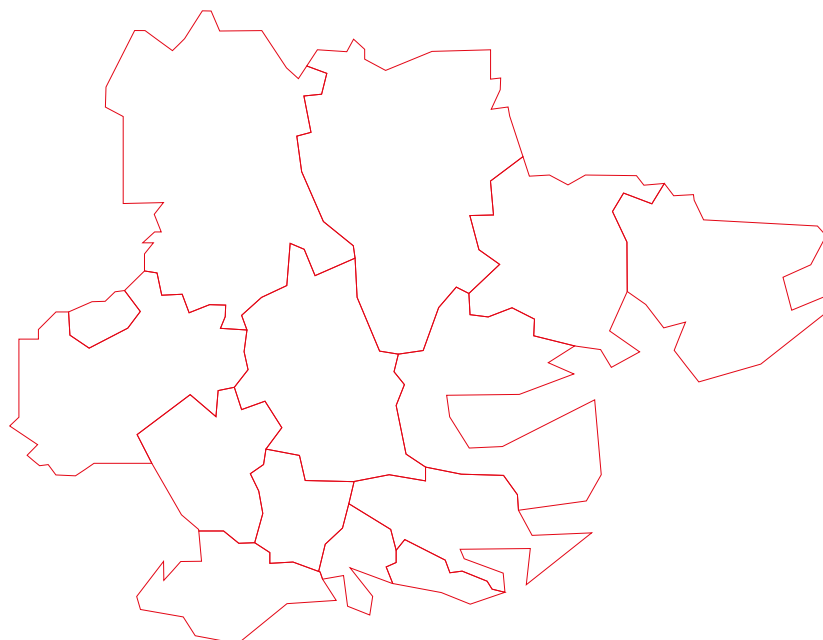
We know that hate crime – those offences and incidents which target victims for their race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, and disability – can cause great distress. This emotional impact has repercussions beyond the individual and can damage whole communities, undermining the sense of security, belonging, and cohesion that should be a basic right for every resident of Essex.

Our message is clear – hate crime will not be tolerated. The people of Essex should be proud of their identities, both personal and communal, and should be free to express those identities without fear of censure or prejudice. We want communities to feel confident to report hate crime wherever and whenever it happens, and to know that the response they will receive from the police and other partners will be prompt, proportionate, and effective.

This strategy and accompanying action plan are an important commitment to working together to tackling these key issues. The Strategic Hate Crime Prevention Partnership, which includes key partners such as Essex Police, the Office of the Police, Fire, and Crime Commissioner, Victim Support, and others, will be responsible for delivering against the aims of the strategy and will report quarterly to Safer Essex on its progress.

As chair of Safer Essex I know the issues faced by our residents and society today can only be addressed by all of the public services joining together – alongside our voluntary organisations – to tackle the key issues. We cannot look at the challenges as ‘That is a police issue’, ‘That is a health issue’, or ‘That is a council issue’; the determinants are affected by all of our actions, or non-action, and can only be addressed by working collectively.

Ian Davidson,
Chair of Safer Essex



Executive Summary

Hate crime is defined as any incident which is perceived as being motivated by prejudice or hostility towards an individual due to their Race, Religion, Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, or Disability. Hate Crime has the potential to impact not just individual victims but also wider communities within Essex.

Hate Crime will not be permitted in Essex and it is the responsibility of all partners to deliver an effective and robust response to incidents and ensure communities are educated about, and invested in, reporting hate crime.

This strategy and accompanying action plan will address how services respond to hate crime within Essex. It will be monitored by the Strategic Hate Crime Prevention Partnership, under of the governance of Safer Essex. The strategy shares the aims of the Future of Essex, the partnership vision of of a county where every single person has the support, the opportunity, and the self-belief to fulfil the promise of their potential, particularly in the ambitions to unite behind a sense of identity and strengthen communities through participation.

This strategy outlines five key themes that the Partnership will address. These are:

- 1. Understanding hate crime**
- 2. Preventing hate crime**
- 3. Increasing the reporting of hate crime**
- 4. Increasing access to support for victims**
- 5. Improving the operational response to hate crimes.**

The Partnership will assume the responsibility to monitor and deliver against the strategy and deliver progress updates to Safer Essex, with Safer Essex endorsing key initiatives.



Introduction

Hate crime is defined as any incident – that may constitute a criminal offence – which is perceived by the victim or any other person as being motivated by prejudice or hostility towards a protected characteristic. These protected characteristics are Race, Religion, Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Disability.

“People find it embarrassing to admit they have been subjected to hate because why would anyone want to admit ‘I’ve been treated like that?’”

Victim of Hate Crime

Individual responses to hate crime vary, but research has shown that hate incidents or crime generally have a greater emotional impact on victims than incidents or crime not motivated by hate. Research by Victim Support found that the impact of hate crime can include fear, particularly of repeat attacks; anger; illness including depression and physical ailments; trauma in children; restrictions in lifestyle; and substantial financial loss.

As hate crimes target certain shared characteristics, the impact of hate crime can be felt across communities, and is not restricted to the individual targeted.

Hate crime has been extensively reported on over the last 18 months, particularly following the rise of reported incidents following the July 2016 referendum and similar spikes in reporting following international and domestic incidents such as the London and Manchester terror attacks. At the same time, online hate crime has received attention both for the perceived lack of response from social media companies and a Crown Prosecution Service commitment to pursue online hate crime with equal vigour as offline hate crime. Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary has also declared its intention to examine police forces on their response to hate crime over the next inspection period.

As such, hate crime remains an issue with a considerable media profile. Hate Crime reporting has varied in Essex over the last few years. The 1,135 hate incidents reported in 2014–2015 fell to 1,079 in 2015–2016, with Essex being just one of six forces showing a reduction in hate incidents over this time, but rose to 1,931 in 2016–2017. This increase of 60% (compared to a 29% increase nationally) is likely a reflection of increased public awareness and the frequency of inciting incidents such as those mentioned above.

The breakdown of motivating factors in Essex show:

Race 73%
Disability 9.5%
Sexual orientation 9.4%
Religion 6.4%
Gender identity 1.7%

“I thought ‘if I report this it’s only going to get worse, it’s not going to get any better’ and I just lived that way. I thought maybe if I keep quiet they will stop. I didn’t want to make the situation worse by reporting it so I let it go on and it went on for years.”

Victim of Hate Crime

Hate crimes fall under the jurisdiction of the Community Policing Teams (CPT) within Essex Police. These teams are supported by the civilian hate crime officers, who risk-assess and support high and medium risk hate crimes, as well as any repeat incidents. Essex Police also host the Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs), panels attended by community members that scrutinise police action, both locally in each borough and county-wide. Matters discussed at these panels include Stop and Search, community tensions, and hate crime.

Despite increases in reporting it can be difficult to calculate the true prevalence of hate crime and its root attitudes, due to the under-reporting of hate crime in general and the particularly low representation for certain groups vulnerable to hate crime, such as the disabled and transgender communities.

In addition, the spikes in reporting that follow international and domestic events must be considered against the fluctuating rate of hate crime reporting during their corresponding weeks from the previous year, as well as the impact of a new police recording system and increased vigilance within the police service in identifying and recording hate crime.

“It’s being believed, that the crime is something that is important. It really does get you deep inside.”

Victim of Hate Crime

Nonetheless, we state in no uncertain terms that Hate Crime is the responsibility of all the residents and agencies of Essex to challenge and eradicate. ‘Hate crime’ also encompasses incidents that are not criminal offences yet are still motivated by prejudice, and the responsibility for responding to these incidents is wider than the law-enforcement and target-hardening offered by police forces. It must be the responsibility of a range of partners to address, and for the community to feel confident to report hate crime so it can be addressed by those partners.

The existence of third party reporting initiatives, rooted in communities and services outside of the traditional criminal justice agencies reflects the need for community involvement.

The third party reporting initiative in Essex operates via several Hate Incident Reporting Centres (HIRCs) and associated Hate Crime Ambassadors (HCAs). A HIRC can act as an alternative pathway for reporting hate crimes/hate incidents rather than victims directly engaging with the police. They also provide advice and signposting to specialist support services. Hate Crime Ambassadors are community members that raise hate crime awareness and promote reporting of hate incidents and crimes. They can be based within organisations that operate as HIRCs or can be independent within their own communities or agencies.



The Strategic Hate Crime Prevention Partnership has produced the following strategy to tackle these key issues and provide direction for stakeholders around the county regarding identifying, understanding, and dealing with hate crime and hate incidents.

Purpose and Scope

Hate Crime will not be permitted in Essex and it is the responsibility of all partners to deliver an effective and robust response to incidents and ensure communities are educated about, and invested in, reporting hate crime.

The purpose of the strategy is to provide clear direction for stakeholders in Essex to achieve this aim. The strategy will establish the activities of the Partnership over the next three years and will define the means by which it will monitor and implement change. The strategy shares the aims of the Future of Essex, the partnership vision of a county where every single person has the support, the opportunity, and the self-belief to fulfil the promise of their potential, particularly in the ambitions to unite behind a sense of identity and strengthen communities through participation.

Vision

The specific actions within the strategy are included in the action plan. These actions fall under five main themes:

- **Understanding hate crime** – We will utilise multiple intelligence sources regarding the prevalence, nature, and locus of hate crime and hate incidents in Essex to determine emerging trends and hot-spot areas. We will ensure the county is able to collect and disseminate the key messages around hate crime and that services have relevant and concise information on key areas of concern.
- **Preventing hate crime** – We will aim to reduce the incidence of hate crime and hate incidents by promoting the early identification of problem areas and co-ordinating intervention activities. We will ensure that hate crime remains a priority in key forums across Essex and promote and support preventative programmes such as the educational work in our schools that is delivered by key partners.
- **Increasing the reporting of hate crime** – We will co-ordinate the work of the Hate Crime Ambassadors and Hate Incident Reporting Centres across Essex and ensure key messaging is consistent across all partners. We will provide best practice around increasing reporting of hate crime and will ensure partners are invested in identifying and reporting hate crime. We will work with partners in both the public and private sector to promote the reporting of hate crime.
- **Increasing access to support for victims** – We will co-ordinate effective partnership working between community and county-wide victim services to ensure support for victims is visible and accessible. We will ensure both strategic and operational partners are able to effectively signpost and refer victims to appropriate providers and agencies.
- **Improving the operational response to hate crimes** – We will work to increase the satisfaction of victims accessing the police, criminal justice system, and support services, as well as making sure a wide range of appropriate outcomes are available for dealing with hate crime. We will provide best practice for operational partners and involve faith centres, community members, and victims to guide the work of key partners.

Our success will be measured against four primary objectives:

1. Improving victim satisfaction with the response to hate crime across Essex
2. Dismantling barriers to reporting hate crime
3. Improving the operational response to hate crime
4. Tackling hate crime by increasing the public awareness of hate crime and promoting positive values.

Monitoring and Implementation

The Partnership will be guided by the objectives of the Police and Crime Plan, with the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner acting as the overall sponsor of the approach.

The Partnership will engage with Safer Essex to endorse its key decisions and help promote its work throughout the county.

The Partnership has responsibility to monitor and deliver against the strategy and deliver quarterly progress reports to Safer Essex. The Partnership will be supported in delivery and implementation of the strategy by the Hate Crime Coordinator, who will provide regular updates to the Partnership.



Appendix i

Interdependencies

This strategy has two key interdependencies with existing plans within Essex; the Police and Crime Plan and the Victim’s Needs Assessment, both produced by the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner.

The Police and Crime Plan contains specific commitments regarding hate crime, namely:

- Respond to the needs of individuals and local communities who are vulnerable to specific crime types such as hate crime, elder abuse, harassment, human trafficking, female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage and honour based abuse (HBA)
- Improve reporting of hate incidents through improved community engagement and greater use of Hate Crime Reporting Centres.

These commitments are reflected in specific actions within the Essex Hate Crime Strategy 2018–2021.

The Victim’s Needs Assessment identifies several actions to improve the operational response to victim’s needs. The most relevant of these to the Essex Hate Crime Strategy 2018–2021 is a commitment to examine the level of hate crime referrals to the Essex Restorative and Mediation Service. This has been adopted as a specific action into the Essex Hate Crime Strategy 2018–2021.



Appendix ii

Supporting documents

There are a number of sources of further information regarding hate crime in Essex and the national response to hate crime. A number of these documents provide valuable context for this strategy, as well as identifying objectives to progress as part of the action plan.

These documents include:

Action Against Hate 2016 – Action Against Hate 2016 is the government’s plan for tackling hate crime. The priorities of the Essex Hate Crime Strategy 2018–2021 align with this document and several of the actions within have been translated into local actions for Essex.

Hate Crime Strategic Profile – A comprehensive analysis of hate crime in Essex was prepared by Essex County Council’s Intelligence and Insight department in December 2018. This provides clear guidance around the local issues and has informed the general approach and several specific actions in the Essex Hate Crime Strategy 2018–2021.

Public Consultation Analysis – The Essex Hate Crime Strategy 2018–2021 was open to public consultation until the 2 February 2018. The results were collated and analysed, and the approach and specific actions within the strategy were carefully considered to respond to the needs of residents of Essex.

Essex Response to the Safer Bristol Multi-Agency Learning Review – In December 2017, Safer Bristol published an independent review of the management of circumstances leading to the murder of Bijan Ebrahimi in 2013. There were several aspects to this management of circumstances which related directly to Bristol’s understanding, recording, and treatment of hate crime victims. The Essex Strategic Hate Crime Partnership produced their response to this review, which contained several actions that have been adopted into the Essex Hate Crime Strategy 2018–2021.

A copy of this document, the action plan, and supporting documents can be found at: www.victimsupport.org.uk/help-and-support/get-help/support-near-you/east-england/essex





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Victim of Hate Crime



Developed by Victim Support in conjunction with the Safer Essex partners and the Office of the Police, Fire, and Crime Commissioner for Essex (July 2018).

If you require this document in another format, please contact: neil.monk@victimsupport.org.uk