**Briefing note**

**Action Against Hate – The UK Government’s plan for tackling Hate Crime (July 2016)**

**Summary**

After the EU Referendum there was a national increase in the number of reported hate crimes associated with race. This increase triggered a House of Commons debate on 29 June 2016, from which the Home Office, in partnership with the Department for Communities and Local Government has produced ‘**Action Against Hate – The UK Government’s plan for tackling hate crime (July 2016)**’.

The four year plan sets out key actions to tackle hate crime in the UK and address the Home Secretary’s statement; ‘it is utterly unacceptable that people should suffer abuse or attacks because of their nationality or ethnic background. We must stand together against hate crime and ensure that it is stamped out’.

In October 2015 Government published its ‘**Counter-Extremism Strategy**’. A key part of this strategy was a focus on all forms of extremism from Islamist to neo-Nazi and the full range of harm that extremism causes. The strategy included the promotion of hatred and division among communities and will therefore contribute to the delivery of the Government’s Hate Crime Action Plan as well as the Prevent agenda which forms part of the Counter-Extremism strategy.

**The focus**

Action against Hate is based upon the following five key areas:

- **Preventing hate crime** – this strand will be achieved through tackling the beliefs and attitudes that lead to hate crime and challenging attitudes within society that can lead to discrimination and divisions within society.
- **Responding to hate crime in our communities** – this strand will focus upon a number of setting that have emerged as high risk environments for hate crime, including public transport, the night-time economy and the internet.
- **Increasing the reporting of hate crime** – this strand will focus upon improving reporting systems, including third party reporting and publishing more information about prosecutions.
- **Improving support for victims of hate crime** – this strand focuses on what can be done to provide victims of hate crime with timely and effective support both at the time of reporting their crime and through the criminal justice system.
- **Building our understanding of hate crime** – this strand focuses on improving the data which Government collects on hate crime and understanding of the drivers of hate crime so they can be addressed.

**Actions**

The following are key actions stated within the plan that may have a direct bearing upon the services which Norfolk County Council and our partners provide (those shown in blue are of particular interest).
Preventing hate crime

The action plan includes a number of projects which focus on young people and forging good relationships between those from different backgrounds.

- Building upon a DCLG pilot project in Bradford the DfE will support a programme to equip teachers to hold debates and conversations with pupils on a range of difficult topical issues. This will include debates about extremism and fundamental shared values. It also states that these sessions will ‘be a chance to discuss issues concerned with equality, prejudice, hate crime and foreign policy.’
- DCLG will support ‘Streetwise’ to work with young people to tackle antisemitism and anti-Muslim hate crime.
- The CPS has produced a resource pack for schools and teachers on hate crime. The CPS will carry out a full refresh of these packs over the next three years.
- The Government will continue to support the Anne Frank Trust to deliver its new programme.
- The Government will fund a new programme in London and the West Midlands to challenge prejudice and discrimination and to inspire young people to become responsible community members who engage in social action.
- The DfE and Government Equalities Office will assess the level of anti-Muslim, anti-Semitic, homophobic and other bullying in schools in order to understand the circumstances and will further support projects and programmes to reduce the level of bullying.
- With the support of the police hate crime reporting portal ‘True Vision’, organisations such as the Sophie Lancaster Foundation and the National Holocaust Centre and Museum, DCLG will promote engagements with young people to reduce hostility, promote human rights and to share best practice across strands of hate crime.
- DCLG will work with the Society of Editors, the Media Trust and the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO) to update the ‘Reporting Diversity’ booklet.
- A new fund has been created to provide in-kind support to help community groups focused on tackling hatred and division to get their voices heard, in their communities and online.
- Government will also provide grants to those working in communities to challenge prejudice and promote the shared values that bind our country together.

Responding to hate crime in communities

- Government will fund three new community demonstration projects to explore innovative ways in which communities can respond to hate crime. We will seek to apply lessons from these projects across work to tackle all strands of hate crime where appropriate.
- Government will work with community-based organisations which provide assistance to people who experience hate crimes based sexual orientation and transgender identity to develop resources that specifically meet the needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans communities. We will share existing good practice across the LGB&T Hate Crime Consortium and criminal
justice agencies, such as the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) hate crime group.

- Government will disseminate to community based partners the quality standards document that has been developed by the National LGB&T Hate Crime Partnership, providing a framework to assist organisations in identifying issues for improvement in tackling hate crime.

- Government will work with the police to create a database of symbols, slogans and flags that may be illegal because the organisations that use them are proscribed or incite hatred. DCLG will lead on the creation of this database and it will be shared with all partners through the NPCC.

- DCLG will continue to support the Antisemitism Working Group, the Anti-Muslim Hatred Working Group and the Gypsy Traveller Liaison Group to ensure that the voices of these communities are heard.

- We will look at current best practice examples in tackling disability hate crime and work with partner organisations and the police to promote safety for disabled people.

- Representatives from religious communities have raised concerns about attacks against mosques, gudwaras, churches and temples. In October 2015 the Prime Minister made a renewed commitment to tackling anti-Muslim hate crime and announced that new funding would be made available for the security of all faith establishments. In 2016 the Home Office will launch a £2.4m scheme for protective security measures at vulnerable faith institutions.

- We will continue our commitment to the security of independent and state aided Jewish faith schools, synagogues and other Jewish community sites with £13.4m of funding in 2016/17.

- The NPCC will host a series of round table events with public transport providers and community groups to ensure that criminal justice agencies understand the problems on public transport and can devise solutions to ensure that public transport is safe for everyone.

- The Home Office and the Department for Transport will further work with local transport providers to ensure that bus drivers across England and Wales are fully equipped to challenge hate. This will include new guidance for drivers to support them when confronted with hate crime.

- We will review guidance on taxi licensing and training to ensure that taxi drivers are given the training they need to identify and report hate crime in the night-time economy.

- Police and Home Office officials will review existing use of body-worn video by Police and investigate new ways to use this technology, both for police and civilian staff in the night-time economy, to provide a deterrent against hate crime.

- The Drinkaware Club Crew project aims to reduce drunken anti-social behaviour among 18-24 year olds and keep them safe through specially trained staff who work in bars and clubs. The Home Office is working directly with Drinkaware to ensure that training for the project includes information about hate crime, how to identify it and how to report it.

- The Government will convene a ministerial seminar on hate on the internet that brings together victims’ groups, stakeholders and industry representatives. This will set out an approach with specific agreed actions to reduce the harm caused by online hate and to tackle online abuse.
• The police will **continue to develop True Vision** – a dedicated hate crime portal which allows victims to report hate crime directly to their local police force. **In particular more support will be provided to young people who are exposed to hate material online and targeted social media advertising will increase awareness of the portal.**

• To give a clear picture of online crime, including online hate crime, the police are now required to flag whether a crime has an online element.

• The Government has established an official government working group through the Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy to tackle online issues. We will ensure this is co-ordinated with our work to tackle online hate crime in all its forms.

• As a result of the Counter-Extremism Strategy, the current Government set up a group that brings industry, government and the public together to agree ways to limit access to terrorist and extremist content online without compromising the principle of an open internet. We will work with the Internet Watch Foundation to examine online hate crime and will use this forum to work with industry to develop effective approaches to hate crime, as well as extremism.

• We will **provide funding to the No Hate Speech movement in the UK, which offers support and training to young people to provide counter-narrative to online hate and to provide support to victims to encourage reporting to hosts and authorities.**

• To further protect young people online, we will work with organisations such as the **UK Safer Internet Centre.** The Centre provides educational and awareness raising resources for children, parents, carers and teachers, a **helpline for professionals working with children** and a hotline for reporting criminal behaviour.

• In order to encourage reporting we need to show that, when a victim reports the incident or crime, action will be taken, the victim will be kept informed of any progress and should the matter go to court they will be informed of the outcome.

### Increasing the reporting of hate crime

• We will **encourage third party reporting through targeted communications and advertising of True Vision**, aimed at the communities with the highest rates of under-reporting. We will also **offer advice to reporting centres and establish a best practice standards for reporting centres**, which will be available online.

• **We will work across government to identify other locations, both in the public sector and outside, where third party reporting can be made available.**

• **Third party reporting centres can be particularly important for disabled people** to report hate crime at locations accessible to them. We will continue to work with community groups to raise awareness of hate crime among disabled people and **increasing the availability of third party reporting centres, in particular at locations and through services that are used by disabled people.**

• The police will lead work with partners and disabled peoples groups to **develop resources targeted to raise awareness of hate crime among carers and families** of disabled people to encourage reporting.

• We will take action to improve awareness and reporting across all strands of hate crime, particularly where there are low levels of awareness about what
constitutes hate crime and what people can do about it. **We will work with community groups representing Muslim and Christian communities to raise awareness of hate crime and how it can be reported. This will include visits to places of worship and community groups as well as targeted social media campaigns.**

- We will work with the Charedi community (Jewish community who have been identified as the least likely to report hate crimes) to increase awareness, educate young people in the community as to what constitutes a hate crime and encourage reporting, including supporting youth groups with an educational programme on what constitutes hate crime and how to report it.

- During our consultation, community groups and local police forces highlighted two further communities which face barriers when reporting hate crimes – the Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities and asylum seekers and refugees. We will work with organisations already present in those communities to ensure that everyone has the opportunity and information needed to report hate crime. This will include helping to establish third party reporting centres where they do not exist and helping to promote them where they do.

- We will work with Kick It (following their successful work on antisemitism in football) to develop a similar guide on anti-Muslim hatred and also on initiatives related to LGB&T hate crime.

- Community Groups have said that they do not report hate crime as they believe there is little chance of a conviction. However CPS statistics show that convictions of hate crime are high when compared to other similar crimes. Guides describing what hate crime is and what to do about it are being prepared. These short guides will help inform individuals and advisers with a view ultimately to increasing reporting.

- The **CPS is committed to developing a hate crime communications strategy** which will improve publicity about successful convictions for all strands of hate crime, offering reassurance to communities that hate crime is taken seriously.

- **From April 2016 police forces in England and Wales have started to disaggregate data on religion-based hate crime.** In advance of the publication of official statistics the National Policing Lead will carry out a retrospective review of religion-based hate crime data from 2015/16 to give a baseline for the figures as they stand before the improved recording.

- Some forces have undertaken proactive recoding pilots where crimes against disabled people are automatically considered to be a hate crime, unless evidence is found to the contrary. The **National Policing Lead will assess these pilots** to see if there is anything to be learned that will increase the recording of disability hate crime.

- The National Policing Lead and College of Policing have started to identify training needs for officers that will lead to better understanding and recording of hate crime. They will then build a training package on completion of this review.

- The National Policing Lead on hate crime will review the location and number of specialist hate crime police officers across England and Wales to ensure that resources are deployed in the most effective way for the public.

- **New IT systems** that are being developed across the criminal justice system will **enable government, the police, the CPS and the court system to share information to track hate crime offenders** so that data is provided from initial charge through the courts to offender management.
Improving support for the victims of hate crime

- The **Home Office will work with Fire and Rescue Services** to understand what **role they can play in identifying victims and perpetrators** of hate crime and what practical actions can be taken to ensure that where identified these issues do not go unaddressed.

- Police and government will work with CATCH (Community Alliance to Combat Hate) to establish a **standardised hate crime advocacy role** and ensure that victims are referred to the correct external statutory and voluntary agencies at the right time.

- The CPS will **produce guidance on community impact statements** for hate crime to **ensure that communities have their say on how hate crime has affected them**.

- The Government continues to carefully consider the recommendations from the Law Commission review into hate crime legislation. The principal recommendation from this review was that a full-scale review be conducted into aggravated sentencing and offences.

- We will **continue to work with local Race Equality Councils** to strengthen the voice of victims and advocates against hate crime, and to ensure that their views are taken into consideration by local and national bodies.

Building our understanding of hate crime

- We will work with a consortium led by Sussex University and the Metropolitan Police Service to analyse data on recorded hate crimes to identify trends. This analysis will be shared across police areas.