

## SURREY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

### HATE CRIME IN SURREY

1<sup>st</sup> December 2016

#### 1. SUMMARY

This paper provides an update on hate crimes in Surrey and the work done by Surrey Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to address it.

#### 2. BACKGROUND

Hate crimes are any crime that are targeted at a person because of hostility or prejudice towards that person's: disability; race or ethnicity; religion or belief; sexual orientation; or transgender identity. It can be committed against a person or property. As outlined in the Government's paper "Action Against Hate" (July 2016), which focused on better recording mechanisms and information sharing between organisations, hate crime is defined as having: *"a particularly harmful effect on its victims, as it seeks to attack an intrinsic part of who they are or who they are perceived to be"*<sup>1</sup>.

#### 3. BREXIT

Following the Brexit vote, the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) requested weekly returns from police forces in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland to measure hate crime figures. The NPCC ended their weekly collection of hate crime data in September after the numbers declined in August.

Data collated by the Home Office found that faith-based and racially aggravated hate crimes grew incrementally following the result. On the day of the referendum, 31 police forces nationwide had recorded 106 religiously or racially aggravated hate crimes. In under a week, that figure grew to 168. By June 29, faith-based or racially aggravated hate crimes totalled 174. On July 1, it jumped to 207 – a 95 per cent rise on the June 23 figure. Throughout July, the daily hate crime figure for both strands did not drop below the June 23 figure of 106<sup>23</sup>.

National Hate Crime Awareness Week took place in October<sup>4</sup>. Charities StopHate and 17-24-30 coordinated and promoted events and activities across the UK. Surrey Police ran a conference which aimed at raising and improving officers' awareness of what hate crime is, how it should be responded to, how to

<sup>1</sup> "Action Against Hate – The UK Government's plan for tackling hate crime" (/July 2016)

<sup>2</sup> <http://tellmamauk.org/the-brexit-result-had-a-lasting-impact-on-race-and-religious-hate-crimes/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.stophateuk.org/2016/10/13/hate-crime-incidents-soar-wake-brexit-vote/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.stophateuk.org/hate-crime-awareness-week/>

report/record it and to information on the local support services available. The conference included a guest panel with representatives from Faith Matters, GIRES and Tell Mama along with a key note speech from Sophie Cook.

#### 4. SURREY STATISTICS

Surrey Police records hate crime if one or more of the motivations shown above is perceived to exist. The data is collected from a 'flag' being put onto a crime to indicate it is a hate crime or has a hate crime element. Below is a table showing the number of hate crimes recorded in the last eighteen months.

Month	RACIAL	RELIGIOUS	HOMOPHOBIC	DISABILITY	TRANSGENDER	TOTAL HATE
Apr-15	58	9	15	3	4	89
May-15	53	3	12	7	1	76
Jun-15	77	5	13	7	1	103
Jul-15	75	10	10	5	2	102
Aug-15	55	4	8	2	1	70
Sep-15	56	3	13	6		78
Oct-15	75	6	10	4		95
Nov-15	56	8	11	7	4	86
Dec-15	72	11	6	9	2	100
Jan-16	55	7	19	10	4	95
Feb-16	52	5	11	7		75
Mar-16	58	1	8	5		72
Apr-16	61	3	12	5		81
May-16	71	6	14	8	1	100
Jun-16	75	9	20	10	1	115
Jul-16	91	8	14	11	4	128
Aug-16	56	3	17	8	1	85
Sep-16	54	4	9	11	2	80

Instances of hate crime in Surrey rose in the run-up to Brexit and in the immediate aftermath (66.7% increase), although the numbers have since reduced to normal levels.

It is important to bear in mind that whilst reporting has increased, which is good, hate crime continues to be significantly underreported, as highlighted in the Government's "Action Against Hate" paper.<sup>5</sup>

Surrey Police currently has a process to identify and ensure all hate crime is appropriately discussed and allocated, however, unlike all other forces in England Wales it does not have a dedicated hate crime resource to assist with the coordination of all hate crime. Consequently, although each hate crime has a 28 day Inspectors review to ensure progression, there is no easy way of spotting trends across hate crime and areas that need specific focus or working with other officers on this across England and Wales.

Despite this, it is interesting to note that an independent survey to monitor how satisfied those who had been the victims of hate crime were with the service they received from Surrey Police found that victims of hate crime in Surrey are more satisfied with the response they get than other victims. These figures are particularly interesting considering that only 52% of victims are satisfied with the police handling of hate crime nationally, compared to 73% for crime overall<sup>6</sup>.

	2015/16	2016/17 (Apr to Sept)
Total victim satisfaction	81.0%	76.6%
Victim hate crime satisfaction	87.3%	83.2%

## 5. SURREY POLICE PROVISION

As outlined in Surrey Police's draft Hate Crime Policy, Surrey Police "will not tolerate any form of Hate Crime and will speedily respond, investigate, identify and prosecute offenders to the satisfaction of the victim and the community, thereby seeking to reduce repeat victimisation." The draft policy is due to be adopted and published on-line following its ratification at the Hate Crime Working Group and the Equalities, Diversity and Human Rights Board in December.

In order to deal with reported incidents appropriately, Surrey Police has the following specialist roles available to its officers and staff to offer advice: Lesbian and Gay Liaison Officers (LAGLOs); Muslim and Cultural Liaison Officers (MACLOs) and Mental Health Liaison Officers (MHLOs), and is looking to develop the role of Hate Crime Co-ordinator in the coming months as mentioned above. The Government's report stated at point 97 that "victims often feel more confident in the police response when there is a hate crime liaison officer in place", which means this is a key area for the force to improve on. Surrey Police did apply to the Commissioner's Office for funding of this role for twelve months, but it was felt that such an important role should be incorporated properly within the force and not on an interim basis.

<sup>5</sup>

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/543679/Action\\_Against\\_Hate\\_-\\_UK\\_Government\\_s\\_Plan\\_to\\_Tackle\\_Hate\\_Crime\\_2016.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/543679/Action_Against_Hate_-_UK_Government_s_Plan_to_Tackle_Hate_Crime_2016.pdf)

<sup>6</sup>

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/543679/Action\\_Against\\_Hate\\_-\\_UK\\_Government\\_s\\_Plan\\_to\\_Tackle\\_Hate\\_Crime\\_2016.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/543679/Action_Against_Hate_-_UK_Government_s_Plan_to_Tackle_Hate_Crime_2016.pdf)

In the meantime, the force is able to contact its Independent Advisory Group (IAG), a well-established group comprising representatives from many of Surrey's diverse communities, for advice on critical and serious incidents which may have a significant impact on its groups. The IAG also provides advice to the force in terms of the recruitment and retention of BME officers and staff.

Moreover, Surrey Police has recently changed its website regarding hate crime reporting, improving the awareness, documentation, descriptions and referral mechanisms to partner agencies for support. Additionally, there are information sharing agreements with organisations such as the Community Security Trust (a charity that protects British Jews from anti-Semitism and related threats) and Tell MAMA (who support victims of anti-Muslim hate), and easy read leaflets and videos regarding disability.<sup>7</sup> Surrey Police have also initiated Victims Focus Groups, aimed at hearing first-hand the experiences of victims and what the police could have done better.

## **6. WORK DONE BY THE COMMISSIONER**

The Commissioner has attended several IAG meetings and met with Surrey Police's Diversity Directorate to discuss his Police and Crime Plan and hear views on policing in Surrey. As outlined above, hate crime is of increasing focus to Surrey Police and the Commissioner has discussed with the IAG members the challenges faced in getting people to come forward to report it and the role of the IAG in encouraging them to do so. Recently he provided funding to Surrey Police to run a disability survey, which aims to understand the views and experiences of people with a physical, sensory or learning disability when dealing with the police, the criminal justice system and have been a victim of crime and/or anti-social behaviour. The survey will provide data on how the police can improve its response to such incidents and help and support victims with a disability and thus encourage more reports of hate crime or any crime where a person with a disability is the victim.

Additionally, he has met with several Surrey faith groups, including the Surrey Multi Ethnic Forum (SMEF) to which he has provided funding to deliver a new Victim Champions project. This project will train five volunteer champions of diverse ethnicities to identify safeguarding issues relating to domestic abuse, honour based violence, and female genital mutilation and work to support potential victims of crime through engagement, raising awareness, signposting and creating a safe and confidential space for disclosure.

Nationally, the Commissioner has agreed to be a portfolio holder for equality and diversity issues at the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC). Although the details of what this new role will entail are currently being finalised, it is anticipated that the Commissioner and his Office will be a champion for E&D issues as well as providing scrutiny and oversight.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.surrey.police.uk/advice/protect-yourself-and-others/hate-crime/>

## 7. NEXT STEPS

Although instances of hate crime rose in the summer in the run-up and aftermath of Brexit, reported incidents of hate crime in Surrey are low and Surrey remains a very safe place to live. However, it is important that Surrey Police continues to reach out and encourage people to come forward, and properly scrutinises the intelligence it receives, something the establishment of a dedicated full-time Hate Crime Co-ordinator will ensure.

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