

HATE CRIME

WHAT IS IT?

Hate crime is defined as;
“any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a person’s race or perceived race; religion or perceived religion; sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation; disability or perceived disability and any crime motivated by a hostility or prejudice against a person who is transgender or perceived to be transgender.”



DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HATE INCIDENT AND HATE CRIME

Hate incidents can take many forms. It is defined as an incident that may not necessarily constitute a criminal offence but has been motivated by prejudice or hate.

Examples of hate incidents:

- verbal abuse like name-calling and offensive jokes
- harassment
- bullying or intimidation by children, adults, neighbours or strangers
- threats of violence
- hoax calls, abusive phone or text messages, hate mail
- online abuse for example on Facebook or Twitter
- displaying or circulating discriminatory literature or posters
- harm or damage to things such as your home, pet, vehicle
- graffiti
- arson
- throwing rubbish into a garden
- malicious complaints for example over parking, smells or noise.

When hate incidents become criminal offences they are known as hate crimes. A criminal offence is something which breaks the law of the land.

Examples of hate crimes:

- assaults
- criminal damage
- harassment
- sexual assault
- theft
- fraud
- burglary
- hate mail (Malicious Communications Act 1988)
- causing harassment, alarm or distress (Public Order Act 1986).

You should report both hate incidents and hate crimes to police, even if it wasn't directed at you.

It's also important to keep in mind that some hate crimes start as smaller incidents which may escalate into more serious and frequent attacks - so it's always best to act early.

Reporting them also enables authorities to better understand trends and issues.

WHERE CAN I REPORT IT

There are many reasons victims may not report a hate crime. For instance, they may be concerned about repercussions or fear they won't be taken seriously. However, authorities in Hertfordshire (and the UK) take hate crime very seriously. You will always be listened to and treated sensitively if you choose to report to the police.

Also, if reported as a hate crime, courts can impose a tougher sentence on someone, if the crime they committed was motivated by hate (25%).

▪ LOCAL POLICE

Call 101 to report a crime, if you are in immediate danger call 999.

You can also report in on the Hertfordshire Police Website:

<https://www.herts.police.uk/Report/Report-Shared/Report-a-crime>

Hertfordshire have a dedicated team hate crime officers, who can offer victims help, support and advice. They can meet victims in a place they feel comfortable and safe and will explain options available to them.

They can also be there for a victim if a statement needs to be taken and if the case goes to court. If necessary, steps can be taken to help victims follow what's going on during court hearings. Victims can be confident that they will be treated with respect and in confidence.

• TRUE VISION

<https://www.report-it.org.uk/>

True Vision has been developed so that you can report hate crimes online - you do not have to visit a police station to report.

You do not have to give your personal details for this method, however, please note the police's ability to investigate will be limited if you choose to do this.

- THIRD PARTY REPORTING CENTRES

If you don't want to go directly to the police, you can report hate crimes to local hate crime reporting centres.

Please use this link to find a list of centres in Hertfordshire:

<https://www.herts.police.uk/Information-and-services/Advice/Hate-crime/Hate-crime-reporting-centres>

- BEACON SUPPORT

We at Hertfordshire Beacon Victim Care are dedicated to supporting any victim or witness of crime, including hate crime. We are a low-level intervention service, independent from the police aiming to help you cope and recover from your ordeal. We support victims of both reported or unreported crime, so if you are yet to report it to the police you still have access to the right support, and we can support you every step of the way.

Specially trained Case Managers will develop a package of support tailored to your needs and if you wish, act as your advocate. Your Victim Care officer will keep in touch to ensure you are happy with the support you receive and discuss the options open to you.

If you would like to speak to someone, please call us on 0300 0115 555 option 3.

Alternatively, you can drop us an email at info@hertfordshirebeacon.org.

REFERENCES

https://www.report-it.org.uk/your_police_force

<https://www.herts.police.uk/Information-and-services/Advice/Hate-crime/Hate-crime>

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/law-and-courts/discrimination/hate-crime/what-are-hate-incidents-and-hate-crime/>

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/Hate-Crime-what-it-is-and-how-to-support-victims-and-witnesses.pdf>