

Safer Gateshead

Safer People, Safer Communities

Strategy Against Hate Crime and Harassment 2008/09 - 2011/12



Contents

	Page
Foreword.....	2
Hate Crime policy context.....	3
Hate Crime in Gateshead, the story so far	4
Our aim and purpose.....	6
Process for developing the strategy	8
Priorities and challenges	9
Performance monitoring and review	11
Appendix I Safer Gateshead Structure	12

Forward

I am pleased to be able to introduce the Safer Gateshead Strategy Against Hate Crime and Harrassment 2008/09 – 2011/12.

Our Vision for Gateshead is: *'Local People realising their full potential, enjoying the best quality of life in a healthy, equal, safe, prosperous and sustainable Gateshead'*.

To achieve this vision we need to be able to demonstrate our commitment to develop and implement a strategy to combat hate crime and harassment. We hope to provide a leading example of preventative and responsive action, measured by a reduction in hate crime and harassment, with heightened awareness of its impact. In Gateshead, all agencies and communities work together with the victim at the centre of their work, to tackle hate crime and harassment and to positively promote community cohesion.

This strategy is the very first to tackle hate crime and hate motivated harassment in Gateshead and will be among the first to be developed in the country. It marks a very important step towards tackling hate crime and harassment in our borough. Many people in Gateshead are victims or witnesses of such crime and harassment, which can take place anywhere - at home, in the streets, at work, and in schools and colleges. Nobody should have to live with the fear and anxiety that this causes.

It is a vital issue not only because of the long-term effects it has on the individuals and their families who experience it, but also because of the impact it has on communities and social groups. This strategy acknowledges and builds upon Gateshead's long history of taking action to tackle race hate crime and harassment and its work to promote community cohesion and positive race relations. This strategy demonstrates the commitment of local agencies, communities and individuals in driving this vital work forward. It represents a unique opportunity for Gateshead to really make a difference on this issue.

Gateshead is proud of its diverse communities and acknowledges that there are some groups living in the borough that maybe more vulnerable than others. We will ensure that this Strategy Against Hate Crime and Harassment has an impact upon everyone living in Gateshead to ensure they live in a safe and fear-free community.



Councillor David Napier:
Chair of the Safer Stronger Communities and Culture Partnership



What is Hate Crime?

Hate crime is a crime in which the perpetrator's conduct is motivated, in whole or in part, by hatred, bias, or prejudice, based upon the actual or perceived race, colour, religion, national and ethnic origin, gender, age, disability, or sexual orientation of another individual or group. Hate crime includes anything from verbal abuse, threatening behaviour or malicious communications. This includes all of the following:

Racist: Any incident, which is perceived to be motivated by prejudice towards, or hatred of people of diverse races, cultures or ethnic origins.

Religious: Any incident, which is perceived to be based upon prejudice towards, or hatred of, the religion and belief of persons or places of worship.

Homophobic: Any incident, which is perceived to be based upon prejudice towards, or hatred of, lesbians, gay men or bisexual people.

Transphobic: Any incident, which is perceived to be based upon prejudice towards, or hatred of, transvestites or transsexuals.

Disablist: Any incident, which is perceived to be based upon prejudice towards or hatred of the victim because of their impairment (also people with learning difficulty and/or mental and emotional distress).

The National Perspective

The MacPherson Report on the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry changed the way that racist hate crime and institutionalised racism was understood. From the Inquiry, a definition of a racist incident was developed which has since

been extended to cover other forms of hate crime and is widely used by central and local government. Moreover, the Stephen Lawrence inquiry report was the catalyst for a number of institutional changes within the police and statutory service providers to improve responses to racist incidents and racism. The Home Office has subsequently produced guidelines in relation to racist incidents, religious discriminations and more recently guidelines for tackling hate crime.

Today, the terms gay and lesbian are used to describe women and men who seek same-sex partners. Homophobia can manifest itself in a number of different forms. The Government currently estimates that approximately 5-7% of the population are either: gay, lesbian or bisexual. However, there is very limited data on the number of lesbians, gay men and bisexuals in the UK as no national census has ever asked people to define their sexuality.

A national study of violence against lesbians and gay men in Britain, found that one in three gay men and one in four lesbians had experienced at least one violent attack, and found that the vast majority of homophobic incidents go unreported, with around 18% reporting incidents.

The understanding of disability is enhanced by what is known as the 'Social Model' of disability, which recognises that disability occurs because barriers hinder disabled people from taking a full part in the community. Research by Mencap demonstrated that 8 in 10 people with learning difficulties had experienced bullying and harassment 66% of people with learning difficulties have been bullied regularly with 32% stating that bullying was taking place on a daily or weekly basis.

Hate Crime in Gateshead, the story so far

Strategic Framework

Partners within Gateshead have set out a far-sighted ambition for the borough, which is articulated through Vision 2030, Gateshead's Sustainable Community Strategy agreed in April 2007. Our vision recognises the deep-rooted challenges that still remain in Gateshead, but demonstrates our high aspirations for local people and our commitment that Gateshead is recognised as a safe and secure place for our residents, communities and businesses.

Gateshead's Next Generation Local Area Agreement 2008/09 –2010/11 reflects the journey of transformation Gateshead has undertaken over the last 20 years. This journey has been based on a long-term vision and commitment to unlocking the potential of Gateshead. The Gateshead Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP), collectively known as Safer Gateshead, has contributed to this transformation.

The Strategy Against Hate Crime and Harassment cuts across all of our service areas and strategic documents, and will inform work in a number of priority areas, for instance creating safer and stronger communities, tackling health inequalities and supporting children and young people.

This strategy will outline our challenges over the next three years, which will subsequently contribute to Safer Gateshead priorities and Gateshead's overall ambitious long-term vision.

The Safer Gateshead Strategy Against Hate Crime was developed and endorsed by the Supporting Victims of Crime Group, a sub-group of Safer Gateshead. The Supporting Victims of Crime Group will subsequently be responsible for the implementation of the Strategy. This group brings together senior professionals from a range of partner agencies as well as representatives of Diversity Forum, thus ensuring the project is embedded throughout partners but also remains owned and steered by the community.

Operational Structure

An operational team, the Racist Incident Management (RIM) team, brings together representatives from Gateshead Council, the Gateshead Housing Company and Northumbria Police to share information and intelligence, plan and implement joint operations and share best practice. The team has enjoyed a number of successes which could only have been achieved through joint working, from major interventions such as prosecutions and evictions to relatively small-scale, yet no less important interventions such as tackling racism in schools. The Racist Incident Management (RIM) team continues to address the issues of racism but is also expanding to address all forms of hate crime and harassment.

Gateshead Facts and Figures

From April 2007 to March 2008, 165 incidents of racial harassment were reported via the Gateshead Racist Incident Reporting Scheme compared to 252 during 2006/07. Over recent years, there has generally been a rising trend in the number of reports received relating to racist hate crime and harassment. It is difficult to evidence, (with the exception of the impact of international and national events on particular faith communities) whether this is attributable to an increase in confidence and awareness or an increase in the actual incidence of hate crime and harassment.

The true figures are almost certainly higher than those given; with studies showing hate crimes are under reported by a factor of four. Reasons for this may include: fear for safety, belief that there is no point in reporting (especially lower level incidents), mistrust or lack of confidence in responses and / or key agencies, lack of awareness of where to report, and other barriers like language.

The borough has had relatively low numbers of residents from diverse minority ethnic backgrounds. The 2001 census highlighted only 1.6% of its residents fell into this category, most of whom resided within the Bensham and Saltwell wards. The largest ethnic groups in Gateshead identified via the census are the Mixed and Asian or Asian British groups. At the moment, 1,112 of the 46,308 young people aged between 0 and 19 living in Gateshead borough are part of a minority ethnic group.

In addition, Gateshead has a large Orthodox Jewish community, also located in Bensham and Saltwell. According to the Gateshead Jewish Community Council it is estimated that there are around 4,500 Jewish residents living in Gateshead. These two wards became home to what is now one of the largest orthodox Jewish education complexes in post-war Europe. The Jewish Community has been an important stabilising influence on the area, and a key factor in its continued regeneration.

The following information from the 2001 Census gives an estimate of the number of disabled people and those with limiting long-term illness in Gateshead. Out of a population of 191,479: 23.9% residents of Gateshead currently state that they have a disability or limiting long term illness. It is important to bear in mind however that currently, there is no single measure or estimate of disability.

It is clear from national evidence and Gateshead's recent consultation that homophobia in the education system is still perceived to be an important issue. According to the Stonewall report: "The experiences of young gay people in Britain's schools", almost two thirds (65 per cent) of young lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils have experienced direct bullying. Over half of lesbian and gay pupils don't feel able to be themselves at school. Thirty five per cent of gay pupils do not feel safe or accepted at school.

One of our challenges identified later in this strategy is to enhance our intelligence led approach to tackling hate crime issues. This will involve the systematic collation and mapping of incidents to provide greater clarity as to the prevalence, location and trends of hate crime incidents in Gateshead.

Our Aim and Purpose

The Aim of this Strategy Against Hate Crime and Harassment is to enhance our partnership approach in Gateshead, working together to provide a more co-ordinated approach to hate crime issues and to eventually enable everyone in Gateshead to feel safe and secure. This strategy will be of benefit to all residents of Gateshead, not only those directly affected by hate crime and harassment. It will make Gateshead a safer place for all and promote the positive contribution that is made by diverse communities, which will in turn ensure the full participation of all residents in borough life.

For the purposes of this strategy, hate crime and harassment is defined as: “Any offence /incident committed against a person or property which is perceived to be motivated, in whole or in part, by the offender’s bias against a race, colour, religion, gender disability, sexual orientation, or ethnicity. It may also be where a person is targeted or selected because of their status, group characteristics or affiliation”.

The strategy focuses on hate crimes associated with:

- Race, faith and religion
- Sexual orientation
- Disability
- Transgender issues

There are many reasons why we need to provide a more co-ordinated response to tackling hate crime. These include:

- A variety of reporting options, mainstream and specialist support services and resolution options (i.e. eviction, relocation and mediation) need to be provided to meet the needs of Gateshead’s diverse communities.
- Gateshead schools were perceived to be the appropriate location for prevention and early intervention measures to address hate crime.
- There needs to be investment in the capacity of voluntary, community and statutory organisations.
- Organisationally, policies and procedures need to provide clear guidance on how to respond to hate crime and monitor and refer to support services.
- Front line staff must be enabled to implement policies and procedures through training.
- There is a need for publicity campaigns to challenge prejudice and discrimination within the wider community.
- Increasing the numbers of offenders brought to justice system.
- Increase confidence and satisfaction level by improving statutory, voluntary and community service providers’ responses to hate crime.

Changes within our communities

The scope of hate crime and harassment work in Gateshead has been almost exclusively focussed on racial harassment. Local and national evidence have identified harassment of disabled people, and other social groups, as a very prevalent and important issue.

The changing profile of the black and minority ethnic population, particularly in relation to newcomer communities, necessitates continual review of practice in this area, to ensure all communities are reached and that changing needs are met.

National and global events have had a dramatic impact on hate crime and harassment issues and in some ways altered the focus of hate to particular faith communities.

A detailed structure identifies the role of Safer Gateshead within the Gateshead Partnership structure in Appendix I.

To meet legal and strategic objectives:

- Tackling hate crime is a specific action within the Gateshead Equality Strategy, Safer Gateshead Partnership Plan, and will contribute to a reduction in crime and the fear of crime.
- The development of this strategy will contribute to satisfying statutory duties under equalities legislation (such as the Race Relations Act and the Disability Discrimination Act). Additionally, it will help Gateshead Council meet the requirements of the Equality Standard.
- Allows the partnership to provide a co-ordinated approach to our other strategies and policies in Gateshead such as Anti-Bullying in Schools, Anti-Social Behaviour and Domestic Violence Strategy.

Process for developing the strategy

The development of this strategy has been undertaken through consultation with a range of partner agencies via Safer Gateshead, Gateshead Lesbian Gay Bi-sexual and transgender (LGBT) forum, the Local Safeguarding Adults Board, Deaf and Disability Equality Partnership and the Cabinet Member for Safer, Stronger Communities and Culture Partnership. The draft strategy was consulted upon via the Gateshead Black Minority Ethnic Workers Forum, Deaf and Disabled Staff Forum, local youth and community groups and the Diversity Forum.

Gateshead Council and its partners carried out a series of consultation events across the borough with local residents from five target groups, in relation to race, gender, sexual orientation, age and disability. The purpose of the events was to generate ideas and build consensus about what are the key issues faced by the local Black Minority and Ethnic (BME), Faith, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) and disabled communities.

Each event was tailored to the needs and characteristics of the relevant social group, the events were clearly branded and strongly marketed and publicised. Over 300 people attended the events from the community, voluntary and statutory sectors. The feedback from discussion groups and workshops has been reflected in this strategy.

Priorities and Challenges

To build upon our significant achievements four priorities have been identified for the period 2008 – 2011. These priorities have been determined through extensive consultation with local agencies, particularly those working directly with the communities that are most likely to experience hate crime and harassment.

Against each of these priorities a number of key challenges have been identified:

- Improve and promote the hate crime reporting system to ensure that local people have confidence in reporting incidents of hate crime and harassment.
- Increase the number of third party hate crime reporting centres throughout the borough, and develop their capacity to respond.
- Procure a hate crime reporting database to strengthen our intelligence led approach.
- Continue to carry out regular appropriate publicity campaigns to promote the hate crime reporting scheme.
- Include information on the hate crime reporting scheme within welcome packs for all new Gateshead Housing Company tenants.
- Strengthen our approach to community engagement. Improve engagement with community groups, youth groups and voluntary organisation to promote the hate crime reporting scheme.
- Improve our multi-agency response to victims of hate crime and harassment to make victims feel confident that their complaints will be handled sensitively and effectively.
- Introduce clear protocols for front line staff in responding to hate crime and harassment incidents.
- Develop effective good practice guidelines for dealing with hate crime and harassment incidents within schools and colleges.
- Develop systems to maintain close contact with victims and witnesses, to keep them informed of developments and to explain what action has been taken and why.
- Develop a directory of support and advice services for victims of hate crime.
- Develop links with existing advice/support services to ensure hate crime and harassment issues are addressed.
- Ensure service user feedback mechanism is in place, with evaluation and monitoring of satisfaction rates.
- Introduce a formal, multi-agency agreed risk assessment process and subsequent procedures for key services, for higher risk serious cases.
- Reduce levels of actual and perceived hate crime in the borough via an improved partnership approach.

- Adopt an intelligence led approach to incidents of hate crime via regular performance updates for the Safer Gateshead Partnership to ensure hate crime is discussed at a strategic level.
- Develop appropriate local hate crime performance indicators.
- Develop regular, appropriate campaigns to challenge public perceptions and attitudes relating to hate crime and harassment.
- Monitor and improve statutory agency responses to hate crime incidents.
- Develop and implement training sessions on responding to hate crime and harassment for front line workers.
- Develop and implement a training programme for partner agencies on hate crime legislation and powers.
- Improve working relationship with community and voluntary agencies engaging with various communities to increase confidence in reporting hate crime and awareness of reporting options available in the borough.
- Improve performance in taking action against perpetrators which will lower levels of offending and re-offending in Gateshead
- Expand the Racist Incident Management (RIM) group to tackle all hate crime and harassment incidents. This group will discuss all incident reports and consider most appropriate action by utilising the capacity and powers of all partners involved in the team.
- Develop work with perpetrators of hate crime and harassment to prevent future offending, learning from the perpetrators work we are doing in relation to domestic violence
- Improve engagement between the police, housing providers and Crown Prosecution Service to deliver on bringing more offenders to the justice system.
- Ensure accurate and consistent recording, diligent investigation, and reporting and monitoring of all hate incidents

Performance Monitoring and Review

Overall responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of this strategy lies with the Supporting Victims of Crime Group, which is a sub-group of Safer Gateshead.

Disappointingly there are no statutory performance indicators relating directly to hate crime within the new National Indicator Suite.

However the following National Indicators will provide contextual information for the strategy:

- NI-1% of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area (PSA21).
- NI-2% of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood (PSA21).

Safer Gateshead has recognised the need for local indicators to support the Hate Crime Strategy. This will include:

- Former Best Value Performance Indicator 174, the number of racial incidents reported to the local authority and subsequently recorded (per 100,000 population), as a local indicator.

- Former Quality of Life Indicators on the fear of crime, the percentage of residents feeling 'fairly safe' or 'very safe' outside during the day, or after dark.
- The development of additional appropriate local hate crime performance indicators is included as a challenge within the strategy. These will be developed over the period in consultation with user groups.
- Qualitative monitoring of the priorities and challenges within this strategy will be undertaken on a quarterly basis by the Supporting Victims of Crime Group. Regular progress reports will be provided to Safer Gateshead, the Safer Stronger Communities and Culture Partnership and the Gateshead Strategic Partnership.

Although this strategy covers a three-year period, it will be refreshed on an annual basis to review the priorities, assess progress and set milestones for the following year. A key part of the process of continuous assessment and improvement will be the engagement of those who live and work in Gateshead.

Appendix 1 Safer Gateshead Structure

Safer Gateshead is encompassed within a clearly defined organisational structure:

The Gateshead Strategic Partnership

is made up of a 'family of partnerships' that work to deliver the priorities local people have identified as important to them as set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy – Vision 2030. The Partnership is made up of the Steering Group and the following 'themed' partnerships:

- Economy, Skills, Housing and Transport
- Safer Stronger Communities and Culture
- Children and Young People
- Health and Social Care

The Safer Stronger Communities and Culture Partnership sets the direction for policy in Gateshead for its theme and agrees priorities for improvement. The Partnership is responsible for delivery of the appropriate Improvement Targets and actions in Vision 2030 relevant to the theme and within the Local Area Agreement. The Safer Stronger Communities and Culture Partnership incorporates the statutory Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) duties.

Safer Gateshead is responsible for co-ordination, development and implementation of community safety policies, strategies and clearly defined workstreams which help achieve the identified priorities and targets. Safer Gateshead works in partnership with a number of other partnerships and boards to support the overall vision of the Gateshead Strategic Partnership. Members of Safer Gateshead and the Safer, Stronger Communities and Culture Partnership include a range of public, private voluntary and community sector organisations including:

- Gateshead Council
- Northumbria Police
- Northumbria Police Authority
- Gateshead Primary Care Trust
- Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service
- National Probation Service, Northumbria
- Empower Gateshead
- Gateshead Voluntary Organisation Council
- Nexus
- Victim Support
- The Gateshead Housing Company

Safer Gateshead

Safer People, Safer Communities

This strategy is available on request in different languages, large print, Braille and audiotape/cd. Please call 0191 433 2333.

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