



HATE CRIME AND HATE INCIDENT GUIDANCE NOTES

East Staffordshire Borough Council is committed to challenging discrimination, prejudice and harassment. The Council's Single Equality Scheme states that:

“Our aim is for discrimination, harassment and hate crime related to disability, sex, gender reassignment, race, age, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership or sexual orientation to not be tolerated, both in the community and in the workforce. Our aim is for everyone to have the confidence to report incidents of harassment, discrimination, victimisation and hate crime, and to be confident that it will be dealt with robustly.”

East Staffordshire Borough Council has zero tolerance towards hate crimes and incidents and encourages people to report hate crimes and incidents. This guidance provides information for Council staff and Members who experience or witness hate crimes or incidents relating to Council services or which take place on Council property. This guidance supersedes the Reporting of Racist Incidents Guidance Notes.

1. Definition of a hate crime and a hate incident

The Home Office defines a hate crime as any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a personal characteristic. The definition covers five main strands, in particular, disability, gender identity, race, religion or faith and sexual orientation. A hate incident may or may not constitute a criminal offence, that is motivated by prejudice or hate based on a personal characteristic. East Staffordshire Borough Council has adopted the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry definition of a racist incident,¹ which is: “a racist incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or by any other person.”

A victim of a hate crime or incident does not have to be a member of a minority group or someone who is generally considered to be a ‘vulnerable’ person. Anyone could be a victim of a hate crime or incident.

Hate crime can take many forms including physical attacks such as assault, damage to property or offensive graffiti; threats of attack such as offensive letters, abusive or obscene telephone calls; verbal abuse or insults including offensive leaflets and posters, abusive gestures, and bullying at school or in the workplace. Incidents could involve Council employees, members of the public or take place on Council property.

¹ The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, February 1999, <http://www.archive.official-documents.co.uk/document/cm42/4262/4262.htm>

2. Reporting Guidelines

Step 1 - Report the incident.

In an emergency (if there is an immediate danger to life or property) call 999 or 112.

Report the incident to your line manager or a member of Human Resources, whether you are a victim of a hate crime/incident or a witness. Your manager/appointed person will decide, in partnership with you, what action to take regarding this incident. Action could include:

- Contacting the police to report the incident. Call Staffordshire Police on their non-emergency number 101, or you can contact the hate crime team for support and advice on hatecrimeteam@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk
- Managing the incident through the Dignity at Work policy and / or the Violent, aggressive and threatening behaviour safety guidance notes.
- Reporting the incident using self reporting forms, anonymously if desired. Self reporting forms are available online. To complete a self reporting form, or for more information, visit the True Vision website www.report-it.org.uk.
- Reporting the incident anonymously through Crimestoppers. Crimestoppers is an independent organisation which allows people to provide the details of a crime, without revealing their identity. For more information visit the Crimestoppers website www.crimestoppers-uk.org or call 0800 555 111.

If it is unclear whether the incident is a hate incident, that is, it does not fit into the categories described in section 1, the incident can be reported through East Staffordshire Borough Council's Dignity at Work policy (G Drive > People > HR > Policies > Dignity at Work policy) and / or the Violent, aggressive and threatening behaviour safety guidance notes (to be found on the intranet, in the Health and Safety section).

Step 2 - Record the incident.

As soon as possible, write down everything that you can remember about the incident, including details such as the date, time and location of the incident and details of any witnesses. If possible, photograph any evidence before it is disturbed.

In addition to any action taken by the victim or witness, the incident should also be reported to the Corporate Officer (Equalities and Organisational Development). This will allow the Council to monitor levels of hate crimes and incidents, identify areas of community tension and ensure appropriate action is taken.

Step 3 - Get support.

Experiencing or witnessing a hate crime or incident can be a distressing experience. You can get support from your line manager or from a member of Human Resources. You can also contact Victim Support, which is an independent national

charity where staff and volunteers are trained to provide emotional support and practical assistance. Anyone affected by crime can contact Victim Support for help, regardless of whether they've reported the crime to the police or how long ago the crime took place.

What happens next

De-personalised information on hate crimes and hate incidents will be shared as appropriate with partner organisations. If trends are noted then further action will be taken to tackle and reduce reoccurrence.

Links to other policies

These guidance notes link to the Dignity at Work Policy and Violent, aggressive and threatening behaviour safety guidance notes.

Communication

East Staffordshire Borough Council staff will be advised of this guidance through Staff briefings. A copy will be placed on 'Insight', the E-Induction programme. Members of the equalities and health working group will also raise awareness of this guidance.

Appendix One – Useful contacts

Victim Support,

An independent national charity where staff and volunteers are trained to provide emotional support and practical assistance. Anyone affected by crime can contact Victim Support for help, regardless of whether they've reported the crime to the police or how long ago the crime took place.

Victim Support line: 0808 1689111. Lines are open Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm and 24 hours at the weekend. You can also request support online from the website homepage. Website: www.victimsupport.org.uk

Crimestoppers

An independent organisation which allows people to provide the details of a crime without revealing their identity. For more information visit the Crimestoppers website www.crimestoppers-uk.org or call 0800 555 111.

Staffordshire Police

Staffordshire Police has dedicated hate crime officers. For more information visit www.staffordshire.police.uk, call 101 or email the hate crime team on hatecrimeteam@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk.

True Vision

The 'True Vision' website, owned by the Association of Chief Police officers, provides online self reporting of hate crime, which is then sent to your local police force. Visit www.report-it.org.uk or pick up a self reporting pack from your local police station.

Chase against Crimes of Hate

CACH (Chase Against Crimes of Hate) is an organisation set up in Staffordshire (covering Stafford Borough, South Staffordshire, Cannock Chase, East Staffordshire, Tamworth Borough and Lichfield) to help victims of hate crimes and incidents. To report a hate crime or incident please call/text 0797 149 7988 website: <http://www.cachpartnership.org.uk>