



**Fairness, Respect, Equality
Shropshire Ltd**

Scoping research for Shropshire Hate Crime Reporting Group

**Under-reporting of hate
incidents in Shropshire**

**Executive Summary
January 2016**

Executive summary

1. Background

In November 2014 FRESH were commissioned by Shropshire's Hate Crime Reporting Group to carry out scoping research in Shropshire to provide:

- a) An initial estimate of hate crime under-reporting levels in Shropshire
- b) Evidence about the level of need for full research
- c) Data on which to base a full research proposal.

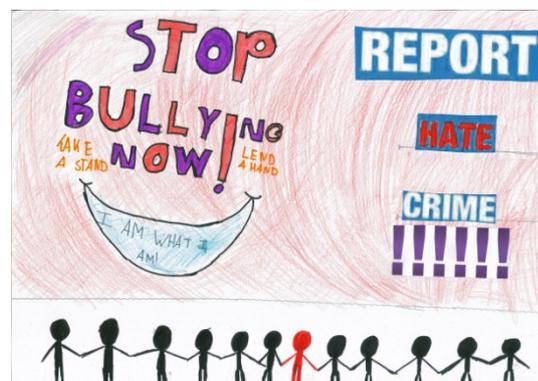
This report presents the findings from the project, which has involved extensive background research into other studies, a half-day workshop with representatives of interested local agencies, a survey conducted through on-line and paper responses, and a series of interviews with people who have been the victims of hate incidents and crimes in the county.

Anonymised case studies were abstracted from these interviews. Illustrative extracts are used throughout the report.

Data from other sources (including meetings of the Shropshire Hate Crime Reporting Group, recent FRESH research for the NHS in Shropshire, and feedback from two workshops held at the December 2015 meeting of the FRESH Equality Forum) has been included where appropriate.

2. Key findings and recommendations

- a) There is widespread lack of public understanding of or engagement with hate incidents and crime in Shropshire. A number of messages need to be put across to the wider public:
 -  What hate incidents are, so they can be recognised
 -  That hate incidents are unacceptable. This needs to be a sustained message, encouraging a cultural shift similar to that created by the campaign on drink driving
 -  That no incident is trivial; even where it may seem small or trivial. When it is repeated again and again it becomes major and has major repercussions
 -  That reporting isn't just about an individual incident or perpetrator; it's about building up a picture of how many incidents, where they happen and what kind they are, so that something can be done about hate incidents and crimes. It is important that incidents are reported, even when the names of victims or perpetrators are unknown
 -  That incidents can be reported anonymously
 -  Where victims can go to be safe (Safe Places¹) and where victims and witnesses can go to report
 -  What will happen as a result of reporting.



One of the winning entries in FRESH's 2015 Cultural Diversity Day schools poster competition © FRESH 2015

¹ Safe Places are places in the community to which people who have experienced violence or abuse can go for immediate safety and help.

- b) There is a powerful argument for developing a consensus on a wider definition of hate incidents and crimes to include (among others) relevant cases of domestic abuse, harassment and crimes motivated by sexism or hate or prejudice against girls and women, harassment and crimes against homeless people, people with HIV/AIDS and people who are seen as fat.
- c) Underreporting of hate incidents in Shropshire is very likely to be within the range 50% to 70%; leaning towards 70%. This is supported by our desk review, by responses from the small survey sample and by comments from interviewees.

If the numbers of hate incidents reported to West Mercia Police in 2012 – 2015 were increased by 70% to allow for those that are likely to have been unreported, the following picture would emerge:

Table 1: Projections based on Warwickshire and West Mercia Police figures Shropshire annual hate incidents – 2012 to 2015²

	Race		Homophobia		Disablism		Total	
	Police figures	Projected						
2012	110	367	24	80	12	40	146	487
2013	107	357	27	90	18	60	152	507
2014	108	360	21	70	24	80	153	510
2015	103	343	39	130	19	63	161	536

The research also highlighted other aspects of underreporting:

-  There is a complex mixture of reasons for victims and witnesses failing to report
-  There are 'hidden' hate incident and crime figures – essentially because they are defined as other kinds of incident such as anti-social behaviour, bullying and domestic abuse
-  Incidents reported to national reporting centres may not be included in the police figures for Shropshire
-  Incidents on social media are likely to be reported to Twitter or Facebook rather than to the police or a reporting centre
-  Our research suggests that incidents with multiple triggers (intersectionality) are probably over-represented in figures reported by the police to FRESH and the Shropshire Hate Crime Reporting Group.

Recommendations include:

-  Continuing research is needed into how much and where hate crime is happening
-  Hate incident reporting, recording and management systems and processes should be more joined-up, both within and between organisations
-  Understanding and awareness within organisations of the underlying issues such as disablism, racism, homophobia, etc, need to be improved
-  Work is needed with and within Shropshire's Deaf community and reporting centres to enable hate incident reporting in British Sign Language.

² The statistics on which table 1 is based are supplied to FRESH by Warwickshire and West Mercia Police, and do not include figures for religious discrimination and transphobia.



- d) The research raised issues about the prevention of hate incidents and crimes, including:
-  There is a need to develop and run workshops on prevention and how to handle evidence (including social media incidents) with people who are likely to be hate incident victims and their carers This should include adults with learning disabilities and people with mental health issues,
 -  Information should be systematically gathered and collated about the impact of hate crimes and incidents on individuals and groups and their direct and indirect impact on services and wider communities, to demonstrate the social and economic value of prevention
 -  There is also a need to feed this information into campaigning and training
 -  Support should be made available to victims to talk to students in schools, colleges and university about their experiences and the consequences of hate incident and crimes
 -  Emphasis is needed on building knowledge about perpetrators, to help inform prevention work.
- e) Knowledge needs to be developed of how best to support victims
- f) There is a need to resource work with existing and potential local groups and networks which provide support to people who are at risk of hate incidents, in order to encourage:
-  Awareness of hate incidents and crimes
 -  Reporting of hate incidents and crimes.

Examples might include groups which work with women, people from BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) communities, transgender people and other groups without local support networks.

- g) There is a lack of information about whether local third party (community) reporting centres are still operating, and if so who is the contact person for each centre and when staff or volunteers have last been trained. This suggests the need to carry out a review of the work and siting of these centres, which should be located not only by geography, but also on their accessibility for groups with particular (protected) characteristics.
- There should be clear guidance on what it means to be a reporting centre, and the requirements for organisational commitment, staffing and reporting processes, together with a systematic and sustainable training plan.
- h) Further research is needed on how to support victims of social media hate incidents.
- i) We recommend community-based action research to further these findings. This would disseminate information, train people and raise awareness of hate. It would also generate a statistically more reliable estimate of hate incident under-reporting in Shropshire.

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