

**Question from Pervez Choudhury**

I have a constituent who as a disabled person living in Hertsmere, that is gravely concerned at the process and perhaps more seriously how they are implemented, by Hertfordshire Constabulary when responding to and dealing with Disability Hate Crimes.

My constituent has been relentlessly subjected to 'disability hate' by their neighbours, but the Police Officers have refused to acknowledge it as such when they report the crime.

Though they are harassed for reasons of their disability on a daily basis, the officers at Borehamwood choose to file my reports as disability hate incidents requiring no further action.

The resident has now lost all confidence in Hertfordshire Constabulary, their willingness or ability to respond to 'disability hate' crime reports.

This has resulted in the resident now giving up on reporting the daily harassment they are subjected due to their disability.

What robust processes are in place for appropriately investigating a disability hate crime when reported and that all the front line officers have received suitable training in 'disability awareness', 'safeguarding of vulnerable persons' and the 'equality act 2010'?

**Deputy Chief Constable Michelle Dunn's response:**

Dear Cllr. Choudhury,

I have been passed the below from the PCCs office. In relation to the question at the bottom of your email please see the below response:

Hertfordshire Constabulary deals with disability hate crime as per National Police Chiefs guidance and the National Crime Recording Standard.

The force has a specific Hate Crime Standard Operating Procedure which deals with the five monitored strands of hate including disability. This procedure outlines the expectations of the force of its police and staff when dealing with a disability hate crime or incident.

The force procedure clearly states that a disability related crime / incident is any crime / incident which is perceived to be based on prejudice towards a hatred of the victim because of their disability or is so perceived by the victim or any other person. Every Hate incident must be recorded on the Crime Recording System (CIS) as a crime or non-crime incident. (A non-crime incident is 'Any non-crime incident which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice', and does not meet the crime recording threshold.) Evidence of an offence is not a requirement for a hate incident to be recorded. If the facts do not identify any recordable crime but the victim perceived it to be a Hate Crime, it should be recorded as a hate incident.

Force policy is clear that it is not up to police officers to decide whether a hate incident has occurred – a hate incident must be recorded where any victim or witness perceives the motivation to be one of hate.

To support victims of hate crime the force has a team of dedicated Hate Crime Officers whose role includes acting as a point of contact for the victim in relation to their crime; to assist frontline officers investigate hate crime providing specialist knowledge in this area and work with partner agencies to deal with repeated offending.

Officers are given hate crime training during their initial course with an input from a Hate Crime Officer and then it continues as a theme throughout the training with lessons and practicals on specific crime types and recording. All frontline officers were given a specific Disability Hate Crime input throughout the training cycle in 2014. There are dedicated resources from this training on a dedicated Hate Crime page on the force intranet including the training materials and a video prepared by the force where victims of disability hate crime give their experiences.

There are specific procedures in Hertfordshire to deal with Hate crime including disability and officers have been trained and continue to be trained in dealing with these incidents.

Cllr. Choudhury I hope that answers your question? I am sorry that your constituent feels that they have not had an appropriate service from us and if your constituent is happy for you to pass on their details, I will arrange for a review of their case and examine the service we have provided.

Kindest Regards,

Michelle Dunn  
Deputy Chief Constable