

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

Third Party Hate Crime Reporting Procedures

Introduction

WHBC has signed the County Agreement to become a Third Party Reporting Centre for Hate Crimes. The purpose of Third Party Reporting Centres are:

- To enable consistent, effective reporting of Hate Crime incidents to agencies who are in contact with victims
- To work together to improve and adopt safe and effective information-sharing between partner agencies
- To provide an initial point of contact for victims of Hate Crime to report an incident other than going directly to the police.

Third Party reporting centre recognise that victims of hate crimes do not always want to have direct contact with the police, or they may want to remain anonymous. This could be based on perceptions or expectations, or other factors such as the accessibility of police stations.

Welwyn Hatfield Council is committed to the Key Principles of the Third Party Reporting Centre Agreement that:

1. Hate crimes and incidents are not acceptable and should not be tolerated in the community
2. All hate crimes/incidents will be taken seriously and dealt with in a professional and supportive manner
3. Victims can face multiple forms of discrimination and experience a range of barriers in accessing services. Welwyn Hatfield will work to ensure that services are accessible to all.
4. A co-ordinated approach is required with different agencies to work together as partners. Welwyn Hatfield will make every effort to provide the best possible service with its available resources to avoid escalation or repeat victimisation.

Aims

The aims of hate crime reporting are:

1. To ensure that victims and families receive the appropriate support and to ensure they feel safe in the community
2. To improve information sharing between partner agencies and foster joint working to increase community safety.

Definitions

Hate Crime - *any incident which constitutes a criminal offence, which is perceived by the victim or any other person as being motivated by prejudice or hate towards their race, religion, gender identity, disability or sexual orientation.*

Hate Incident – *any incident which may or may not constitute a criminal offence, which is perceived by the victim or any other person as being motivated by prejudice or hate towards their race, religion, gender identity, disability or sexual orientation.*

Roles and Responsibilities

1. Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council:-

- a) The council will maintain an up to date Safeguarding Policies (one for children & one for adults) and train relevant staff on these procedures.
- b) The Strategic Lead for Safeguarding will be the main point of contact for County partner agencies regarding Third Party Reporting, and will be responsible for ensuring staff are aware that Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council is a Third Party Reporting Centre.
- c) All designated safeguarding leads will be offered the opportunity to undertake appropriate training to take Third Party Hate Crime Reports.
- d) Safeguarding steering group will be responsible for ensuring that there are always the appropriate number of front line officers trained, by liaising with the appropriate department managers within the Council
- e) Managers of those officers who are trained to ensure that training needs for those individuals is assessed through their regular 1:2:1 meetings.
- f) The council's Safeguarding Steering group is the responsible group for the oversight of the effective delivery of both the Campus East and the Hatfield Housing Offices being accessible to take 3rd party hate crime reports.
- g) The council will provide all 3rd party trained officers the appropriate means to assist in the reporting of incidents.
- h) There will be an updated list of those who have completed the Hate Crime training on the council's intranet.
- i) Key staff within the ASB Team and Housing Needs/Operations Services will be the first point of contact for dealing with third party reports that come into both the office at Campus East and Hatfield Housing Office.
- j) The council will provide a confidential area in both locations to speak to victims and take reports if necessary.

- k) Trained officers will forward all received reports to Hertfordshire Constabulary within 48 hours. Where a serious offence is reported, an immediate report will be made to the police.
- l) All hate crime reports will be stored in the relevant safeguarding folder (which is coordinated by the 2 Safeguarding support officers within the Council).
- m) Any officer dealing with a report will gain the consent from victims/witnesses to agree for their personal details to be disclosed to the Police and/or appropriate partner agencies. Where consent is not given, reports will be submitted anonymously by indicating on the form and withholding personal details. Referrals will be made using the True Vision website www.report-it.org.uk/home
- n) Where there is a significant risk of serious harm to the victim or any other person, information will be shared with Hertfordshire Constabulary without the consent being required.
- o) The council will publicise to its service users that it is a Third Party Reporting Centre
- p) The council will give victims the contact details for Beacon Victim Care Centre <http://www.hertfordshirebeacon.org/> The Victim Care Centre provides an enhanced service to victims of hate crime. The victim can be given the direct number 03000 115555 (7am-10pm, 7 days a week). Where personal details are provided to the police they should be automatically contact by the Victim Care Centre.

2. County Community Safety Unit (CCSU)

- a) Will offer support and advice to the designated officers trained to take the reports
- b) Will maintain contact with all Third Party Reporting Centres
- c) Will monitor reports on the numbers and types of reports received, action taken and outcomes.
- d) Act as a Single Point of Contact (SPOC).
- e) Contribute to on-going training to staff in the reporting centres when required.

3. Hertfordshire Constabulary

- a) Will deal with reports received via 'True Vision' www.report-it.org.uk/home in the same way as any method of reporting
- b) Will forward forms submitted to the Force Control Room inbox and assess them by the Crime Service team for allocation and a crime reference number will be provided.
- c) When dispatched the Hate Incident/Crime will be dealt with in accordance with the force Policy and Procedure.
- d) The SPOC – Hate Crime Policy Officer will monitor the forms and any other queries.