

Equalities Monitoring – Services

Appendix C – Community Safety

Annual Report - 2015-16



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1. Introduction

The 1998 Crime and Disorder Act set up Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) throughout England and Wales to make key agencies work together to reduce crime and disorder. These partner agencies are the Local Authority, Police, Fire Service, the Health Service (Clinical Commissioning Group), the National Probation Service and the Community Rehabilitation Company. The Bracknell Forest Community Safety Partnership has worked hard for the past ten years to make Bracknell Forest a safer place.

The purpose of equalities monitoring is to ensure the council is providing a fair and equitable service to all residents. Although the Community Safety Team does not provide a service directly to the public, it has an impact in improving the health and wellbeing of the community by working with partners to eliminate victimisation, discrimination and harassment. These are crucial elements in terms of equalities.

To ensure the service is having an impact in terms of equalities, monitoring has been undertaken in terms of:

- Performance/Outcomes

The monitoring in this report is an assessment of how successful the team is in working with partners to reduce levels of crime and anti-social behaviour in the following areas:

- Reducing Hate Crime
- Reducing racist incidents
- Reducing domestic violence
- Reducing repeat incidents of domestic violence
- Reducing homophobic incidents

The areas to be monitored above affect all residents but have particular relevance to the following protected characteristics:

- Race
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Religion or Belief
- Disability
- Gender reassignment

The data below has been taken from:

- Thames Valley Police performance team

2. Outcomes/Performance

Hate Crime is any criminal offence committed against a person or property that is motivated by hostility towards someone based on their disability, race, religion, gender identity or sexual orientation. Hate crimes are taken to mean any crime where the perpetrator's hostility or prejudice against an identifiable group of people is a factor in determining who is victimised.

Hate Crime includes transphobic, homophobic, racist, disablist and faith related crimes. The table below shows the trend over the last five years.

	Racist	Faith	Homophobic	Disablist	Transgender	All Hate Crime
2011/12	39	1	4	2	1	47
2012/13	28	0	3	1	1	33
2013/14	46	3	2		3	54
2014/15	29	0	0	3		32
2015/16	25	0	5	10	1	41

Source: Thames Valley Police Crime Recording System – Niche RMS¹

The 2015/16 level of Hate Crime is up slightly when compared to the previous year, however is exactly in line with the average number of offences over the past 5 years, at an average of 41.4 crimes per year. Numbers of Hate Crimes in Bracknell Forest remain very low, and we continue to compare favourably to other areas of the Thames Valley. In particular, levels of racist Hate Crime have fallen for the second year in a row despite significant new communities in the Borough, which includes Black Minority and Ethnic (BME) communities, as well as new housing developments.

Whilst this is a positive sign and there are no indications that this is not reflective of the experience of minority communities living within Bracknell Forest, the partnership remain aware that there could be issues with under-reporting and as such are

¹ **Note:** The above Hate Crime data is for all recorded crimes based on the Occurrence Type, Classification, NICL Qualifier and specific hate crime Incident qualifiers.

Note: Data for all years has been refreshed, therefore may differ from previous supplied data.

Note: The data provided is taken from TVP's crime recording system. This is a dynamic system. Additional information identified during the investigation may lead to a reassessment of the crime classification. Information held on the system is also subject to review to ensure compliance with the Home Office Counting Rules for Recording Crime and the National Crime Recording Standard. As a result of this crime levels and classifications may change over time and this data may not match data previously published or data published in the future. For this reason, the data should only be used as an indicator of crime trends.

working with the Milton Keynes Equality Council to raise awareness of Hate Crime both amongst professionals and community members.

Comments

The hate crimes in Bracknell Forest are predominantly racist incidents. Bracknell Forest has amongst the lowest number of racist incidents within the Thames Valley area despite a growing population and an increasingly diverse community. The partnership recognise that this may reflect an issue with under-reporting and work is underway to raise awareness amongst professionals and local communities about how to report Hate Crime and the support that is available.

Whilst there has been a significant increase in both disablist and homophobic hate crime in percentage terms, the numbers remain exceptionally low.

Work continues to be done to reduce Hate Crime. Throughout the year the Council, Police and Voluntary Sector have supported the 'One Community: Stop Hate Crime Now', campaign. The Community Cohesion & Engagement Partnership which is made up of representatives from partnership statutory organisations has regularly monitored Hate Crime incidents and has been consulted and involved in the delivery of the One Community: Stop Hate Crime Now campaign.

The Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner has commissioned the Milton Keynes Equality Council to work on improving third party Hate Crime reporting across the Thames Valley. This is the second year of contract to provide support in Bracknell. They continue to offer support to victims of Hate Crime, investigate cases and refer to the police or local authority for further action where necessary and ensure victims are referred into local support services where ongoing support is required.

3. Local Views

General Fear of Crime

Fear of crime in Bracknell Forest is also very low. The results from the online survey that informed the 2015 Strategic Assessment demonstrate that the majority of respondents felt that Bracknell Forest has either become a better place to live or there has been no change over the last year. The perception from the vast majority of people is that levels of crime and anti-social behaviour have either gone down or stayed the same. The 2014 Bracknell Forest Residents' Survey asked respondents to indicate the three things they liked best about living in the borough. This was an entirely spontaneous question and respondents were not prompted with answers. The low level of crime in the borough was one of the top 5 responses given. Every opportunity is taken to inform the community of the low level of crime and disorder within the borough and various media outlets are used to convey falling numbers of recorded crime throughout the year.

4. Actions from last year's equalities monitoring

- £100k was made available to address domestic abuse in 2015/16. The intention was to achieve 3 targets agreed by the Bracknell Forest Domestic Abuse Forum (DAF):
 - Reduce the number of reported criminal offences committed by the Domestic Abuse Service Co-ordination (DASC) cohorts
 - Reduce the number of children on Child Protection Plans (CPPs) where domestic abuse (DA) is a factor and the perpetrator has participated in the Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Service (DAPS) programme
 - Achieve the detection rate for domestic abuse assaults with injury.

5. Domestic Abuse

In terms of domestic abuse (DA) reporting, the following table shows the figures for domestic abuse crime across the Thames Valley. Bracknell Forest is the only borough in the whole Thames Valley to have achieved a reduction in DA crime during 2015-16. This can be attributed to excellent partnership working, a focus on early intervention and repeat victimisation and work with perpetrators.

Area	2014-15 figures	2015-16 figures	% change
Bracknell Forest	589	564	4% <u>decrease</u>
Berkshire Hub	-	-	16% increase
Thames Valley	-	-	21% increase

In terms of repeat DA crimes for the same period (Apr 2015 – March 2016) in Bracknell Forest, this shows as 349 unique victims, broken down as 303 victims reporting once, 41 victims reporting 2-3 times, and 5 victims reporting 4-6 times. This means that the repeat victimisation rate in Bracknell Forest is one of the lowest across the whole Thames Valley region and the lowest in Berkshire.

The majority of the reports of DA show women as victims, particularly in cases of repeat victimisation. Where men are recorded as victims these cases can involve counter-allegations of abuse. DA can also involve same sex relationships. The last domestic homicide in Bracknell Forest (Sept 2012) was between two men.

Domestic Abuse is a strategic priority for Bracknell Forest Council. Several projects have been delivered in the borough to support both victims and perpetrators of DA such as:

- Training for frontline staff on identifying, risk assessing and supporting victims – *Introduction to domestic abuse course run June 2016 with 16 attendees, multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) and Domestic Abuse*

Stops Here (DASH) course run May 2016 with 13 attendees. Both courses are run four times a year.

- Monthly Domestic Abuse Service Coordination (DASC) meetings to discuss progress on medium and low risk cases – *Continuing to meet monthly, adopting more flexible cohort to include not only intimate partner relationships but familial domestic abuse.*
- The Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Service (DAPS) – *A total of 37 children removed from CP plans after DAPS intervention in 2015/16 (an increase of 2 from 2014/15).*
- Plain Talking, one to one sessions with offenders to address issues in behaviour and how to change these – *10 new referrals in quarter 4 of 2015/16, 2 did not start, 8 engaged with the process, with 4 ongoing, and 4 completing the Plain Talking programme.*
- www.itsneverok.co.uk, Bracknell's dedicated domestic abuse website where victims and perpetrators can find out which services are available to them and where to get help – *updated December 2015 to make more user friendly and intuitive.*

The work of the partnership is having a positive impact on victims and in changing perpetrator behaviour but an area for concern is the lack of services for children and young people affected by DA.

6. Conclusion

Crime continues to fall in Bracknell Forest and despite local campaigns to raise awareness of Hate Crime and DA in particular; the number of reports remains low compared with other CSPs and local authority areas within the Thames Valley. The annual strategic assessment of the CSP has not found any evidence to contradict the low numbers of reported incidents.