

Guidance Notes

Hate Crime will not be tolerated in any form, and the reporting of it will be treated sensitively. Any information given will only be shared with agencies that need to know. The Hate Incident reporting form has been designed to be completed by any person who feels they have been a victim or a witness of a Hate Incident.

In addition to this, the form allows people to report any incident that they know about, but may not have witnessed themselves. This is known as third party reporting. The form is also designed for people in the work environment to report any Hate Incident which they have suffered.

The form is designed to allow people to provide reports anonymously, however if contact details are provided the person reporting may be able to receive additional support from other agencies who may be able to take action on their behalf.

What is a Hate Incident?

A Hate Incident is motivated by a person's hatred of other people because of their actual or perceived...

- Race, Colour, Ethnic Origin, Nationality or National Origins
- Religion
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender or Gender Identity
- Disability
- Age

In 1999 a nationally recognised definition of a racist incident was developed and adopted as a result of the inquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence. It is this definition that guides our approach to recording, investigating and acting on all incidents motivated by Hate.

Therefore, a Hate Incident is defined as

"Any incident, which may or may not be a criminal offence, which is perceived by the victim or any other person as being motivated by prejudice or hate".

Hate Incidents can take many forms including:

- Physical attacks – such as physical assault, damage to property, offensive graffiti, neighbour disputes and arson
- Threat of attack – including offensive letters, abusive or obscene telephone calls, groups hanging around to intimidate and unfounded, malicious complaints
- Verbal abuse or insult – offensive leaflets and posters, abusive gestures, dumping of rubbish outside homes or through letterboxes and bullying at school or in the workplace

A victim of a Hate Incident does not have to be a member of a minority group or someone who is generally considered to be 'vulnerable'. For example, the friend of a minority ethnic person, lesbian or refugee may be victimised because of their association.

Completing the Form

When completing the form please provide as much detail as possible.

Section A – Asks for details of the incident(s) including the type of incident, when and where it happened and whether the person reporting is the victim, a witness or a third party. It is important that we know if these incidents have happened before and also if they have been reported to any other agency.

When providing a description of the incident please include how the incident made the person reporting it feel and expand on why they feel this hate incident has happened. For example, was it motivated by any issues relating to their religion and if so, is the victim Christian, Muslim, Sikh or Hindu. In addition please include details of whether any other family members have been affected by either this incident or a similar incident.

Section B – Asks for details about the victim. This information will enable us to record and deal with incidents in the most appropriate way. If the person reporting is a witness or third party they should be asked to provide as many details as they can about the victim of the incidents.

Section C – Asks for details about the perpetrators. It is important that we gather as much information as possible about the people who may be carrying out these incidents in order to identify patterns in behaviour and prevent further incidents. Names, addresses, descriptions or

even nicknames could provide links to other incidents and all information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Section D – Asks for the person reporting the incident's contact details and authorisation to share any personal information provided. Reports can be provided anonymously however we would like people to give their details so that we can provide them with additional help and support.

The Hate Incident reporting scheme is operated by a multi-agency panel. Partners include the local Borough Council, West Mercia Police, Local Housing Associations and Victim support. This multi-agency approach means that all relevant agencies will work together to offer professional support, take effective action to stop harassment and abuse and with the victim's consent prosecute the perpetrator. If the person reporting provides authorisation for details of the incident to be disclosed, the information will be shared with appropriate agencies in order to identify what action can be taken and what additional support can be offered. The person reporting will be kept informed and any proposed action will only take place with their knowledge and agreement. If the person reporting chooses not to provide authorisation for the incident details to be disclosed then the information provided will be used for monitoring purposes only. If an incident is reported when there is immediate danger to a victim and authorisation is not given the details WILL have to be referred on to the police.

In some circumstances if the victim is a child (under 18 years old), there may be a duty of care to disclose certain information. In these circumstances the victim will be contacted to discuss how to get the help and support that is needed.