



Hate Crime Scrutiny Panel

Minutes - Wednesday 15th January 2025, FHQ Enderby

1. Welcome and Attendees:

Clare Hornbuckle – OPCC
Sgt Angela Cartwright – Force
Alison Newcombe
Michelle Skingsley
Darren Goddard – Crime Registrar
Rosie Klair
Jenny Ardley Oakden
Nandini Chakraborty
Brigitte Heller
Richard Chapman
Lisa Vine – ETP

2. Introductions and Apologies

Apologies from David Findlay, Insp Will Prince and Barbara Czyznikowska.

3. Urgent Business

Panel elected Rosie Klair as deputy Chair and passed on congratulations. Rosie chaired remainder of meeting.

4. Action Log and Officer Feedback

No actions to update.

For the two cases reviewed in October 2024, Insp Prince contacted both OICs. For the first case reviewed, the officer in case did not respond and are not obliged to do so. However, the SPOC acknowledged the issues and the NPA commander was also contacted to prevent repeat of issues in future.

For the second case, Insp Prince spoke to the OIC over the phone to discuss the classification of inappropriate and inconsistent with policy and procedure. The officer responded well to the feedback and acknowledged the findings. Insp Prince also contacted the Neighbourhood Policing Inspector around the issues identified to raise awareness to prevent issue reoccurring within the NPA.

5. Hate Crime Statistics – Paper A

Lisa Vine queried the number of hate crimes reported by the transgender community as described within the paper, stating that this figure felt low and suspected this was under-reported. Lisa queried whether this figure was a true reflection of crime levels locally or if under-reporting was the issue. Lisa also clarified whether transgender was the correct term instead of gender reassignment. Clare provided clarity that there is under reporting across all hate crime with general exception of racially and religiously aggravated hate crime, although all reporting figures have reduced nationally since 2022. Regarding the term used in the paper, Angela clarified that transgender is the theme tag on the police recording system and is also used in APP therefore has been included in this report.

Jenny added that a decrease is always concerning, nothing that from her professional experience, she has not seen a decrease in people being hateful. Angela added that crime in general is underreported and to see this increase, confidence must increase in police forces nationally.

Continuing, Jenny cited the bystander walkaway campaign, giving really positive feedback that this is a great example of a campaign for deterring crime. Jenny asked if this could be replicated via social media with a hate crime focus. In response, Angela noted that the Hate Crime Team are working on a hate crime online hub which will capture some campaign messaging for partners and police. The hate crime team are hoping that this will be launched at the beginning of financial year (April 2025).

Darren Goddard stated that if the panel wish to look at social media cases, the panel can look at legislation put out from the home office on social media/free speech, and the panel would then have an opportunity to identify and discuss with the Force where things could be strengthened. To this, Clare reiterated that the panel themes are led by the members and they can do a whole session on online crime/social media-based hate crime if they wish to. Lisa and rest of panel confirmed that this would find this really helpful. Lisa noted that at the latest Ethics and Transparency panel a document from a think tank was brought as the ethical dilemma. Lisa noted that she found this paper challenging as felt very unbalanced, including statements with no evidence basis, no balanced view, and had what felt like inflammatory language, noting that reading the document reduced her own confidence in reporting a hate crime. The panel agreed that there was lots of misunderstanding around what hate crimes and hate incidents are. Lisa stated that she would like to learn more about when hate speech on social media becomes a hate incident which was echoed by the group – panel agreed next session will focus entirely on social media based hate crimes.

Citing the horizon scanning section of the stats report, Jenny voiced that schools are not always the best people to tell young people to be inclusive. Jenny noted that it is traditional for police to use schools to deliver educational packages but noted that there are many young people there who do not enjoy school and fear the police. The hate crime team understood this and said that they present to cadets and many other groups and organisations within the community, noting that any organisation can get in touch with the hate crime team to request a session to raise awareness of hate crimes.

Action: Next hate crime panel to be entirely focused on online based hate crimes.

6. Panel Cases for Consideration

Two cases of closed hate crimes were reviewed by the panel. The following gradings were recorded:

1 (Appropriate and consistent with Police policies and procedures)	1
2 (Appropriate but with observations)	1
3 (Inappropriate and inconsistent with Police policies and procedure)	0
4 (Panel fails to reach a conclusion)	0

Case ID	Classification	Rationale
Case 1	1 – Appropriate without observation	Related to a case of public order in which a male who was being arrested for an unrelated crime used a homophobic slur against the arresting officers. It was agreed by the board that this case was handled appropriately, and all policy and procedure followed correctly without observation.
Case 2	2 – Appropriate with observation	Related to a case of ABH in which victim reported an assault which she perceived to be hate motivated due to her identifying within the LGBTQ+ community. It was agreed by the board that while this case was investigated according to policy and procedure, there were a number of failings in good practice by the officer in charge. For example, the victim did not speak English, and while officer followed procedure by keeping victim updated via email/text, they did not use the victim’s first language. This case was also in conjunction with a second crime reported by the victim’s friend and witness, and these two cases were never lined up or investigated in unison, and some

		CCTV evidence was missed from this case.
Case 3		Did not review due to time constraints.

Action: Sgt Angela Cartwright to provide individual case feedback to handling officers and their Supervisors, informing them of the discussion and findings of the panel and requesting comment.

Case A –

Panel members read through the case provided for discussion. Case related to sexual orientation public order offence.

Sgt Cartwright added some context, stating that the police have attended for another matter. Suspect made off, was found, and arrested for original offence. At this point the male then made the homophobic slur and officers further arrested individual for public order with hate crime tag.

The Chair lead the panel through the scrutiny questions.

Nandini noted that the procedure is handled very quickly with this case. Offender interviewed, admitted, charged within days and all evidence is there in the log.

Hate element recognised at point of reporting. Victims Code of Practice (VCOP) completed, victim contacted within 24 hours and victim updated in line with their wishes or at least every 28 days.

Lisa queried whether the fact the victims are officers impacted the care of the victims. Angela cited Op Hampshire which concerns the welfare of officers. The usual route would be that the officer's supervisors would be responsible for the welfare of officers and provide that support, referring to specialist services if required.

Rosie queried what the support for victims of hate crime usually looked like. Darren responded that victim first provide support to victims of crime generally if accepted by victim. If sexual offence for example, this would go to an ISVA/Specialist support provider.

Lisa asked to what degree to officers may view verbal and physical abuse as 'part of the job'. In response, Angela stated that Force push out message continuously that abuse of any kind should not be tolerated and this is generally becoming more and more understood by officers, however it can be difficult to encourage officers to report these instances. Angela further noted that public witnesses of arrests can be impacted if language and abuse is not responded to robustly, stating that officers must consider the wider impact of showing that this kind of abuse to front line services will not be tolerated at any level.

Jenny noted that in her line of work the Force do really well in identifying hate crimes, stating that police often challenge findings made and identify where charges could be made for certain hate crimes.

Regarding the investigation plan in this case, compared to other cases Lisa noted that it did not seem like this case required the same level of investigation due to BWV and the officers being witnesses, resulting in sufficient investigation and admission from offender which was agreed by the Force.

Discussing whether the offence was correctly recorded, Darren stated that as the offender physically assaulted officer via kicking and because this was homophobically motivated, this could have all been dealt with under assault on an emergency worker, however, this was not necessarily an incorrect recording according to policy and procedure.c

Angela added that the correct hate flags are all present on the report and it has all been correctly tagged, therefore it is technically the appropriate recording for the crime. Rosie agreed and clarified that according to the information that the panel have to make an opinion, it has been correctly recorded.

Lisa added a further positive reflection, citing that as a queer woman it is really nice to see that the homophobic remark was dealt with quickly. Lisa stated that without knowing the sexual orientation of the officer, they should be proud for standing up for themselves and if they do not identify within that community, she felt grateful to the officer for standing up on behalf of the community and meeting this language with zero tolerance.

Darren agreed and referenced the officer's statement in the case, citing that the officer referred to this language as 'completely unacceptable' and notes that the comments are derogatory towards to LGBT community as a whole. This was met with praise from the board.

Panel classified case handling as **1 appropriate without observation.**

Case B –

Panel members read through the second case provided for discussion. Case related to sexual orientation prejudice ABH offence.

Jenny noted this crime was reported in person and emphasised the courage it takes for a victim to attend police station in person to report crimes.

A wider discussion was held regarding the fact that only racially and religiously motivated hate crime was its own crime type. The group echoed the need for all prejudices to have their own crime type and not just a NIICL qualifier but agreed that this was beyond remit of board and was more of a comment for record.

Lisa noted the use of 'she' throughout the enquiry log and queried if someone comes in and self identifies as a member of LGBTQ+ community, and niche records victim as 'female' whether this accurate to their pronouns, citing that in an ideal world all LSTOs

would ask for pronouns. Angela fed back that it was not possible to say whether these were assumed or provided by victim but agrees all should ask.

Regarding victim contact, Angela noted that the officer has not consistently used the victim contact template but has made frequent contact.

Panel agreed that the hate element was recognised at point of reporting and the officer had completed VCOP correctly. Panel identified however that the victim was not contacted within 24 hours of allocation of OIC as is procedure. The panel also noted that the victim stated English was not her first language and would need a translator. Officer in Case only sent emails in English which is not good practice.

Angela also pointed out that no contact was made by the hate crime SPOC, explaining that each NPA has a spreadsheet that monitors when contact should be made with the victim by the NPA SPOC as is standard practice with hate crimes. Angela states that this crime was never actually added to the spreadsheet, explaining that this could be for number of reasons such as sickness, turnover of SPOCs etc. Angela explained that the hate crime team found some things slipping through the net and changed procedure that hate crime team run searches on Niche and ensure every single instance is included on the NPA spreadsheets to avoid this in future.

Lisa noted that she found this case frustrating because this incident has resulted in the individual fearing Leicester. If victim had more meaningful contact, she might feel less afraid of Leicester and have more confidence, concluding that the victim seems to have been let down by police.

Darren noted that the Force also had not linked up the crimes nor referenced each-others crimes in their report, stating that in an ideal world the same officer would investigate both crimes. In this case, a letter was sent to the victim stating no CCTV available, but on other witness' crime, it is logged that there is CCTV of two suspects available. Facial ID of two people tried but to no avail, individuals not traced.

Lisa queried that without enough information, sexual orientation/transgender has been put as qualifier. If an individual kept stating that they are part of the LGBTQ+ community, and had this gone to the CPS and Force had to state what this was motivated by, how would the police find out what it was motivated by or could it be submitted under both?

Darren clarified that it could be submitted under both, for instance the police would give the slurs used and state that it if hostility based on the victim's perceived view and court would have to consider both elements.

Excellent work of LSTO agreed by the board who took full report and used translator appropriately, but OIC process had flaws throughout.

Panel also agreed that while supervisor review and rationale has been recorded prior to filing as is standard procedure, the supervisor could have done more to push for a more thorough investigation.

Jenny added that even if no result was obtainable for example the obtaining of CCTV, just doing the work to try and find the evidence would have been as meaningful to the victim

as the positive result, increasing trust and confidence. Lisa and Brigitte echoed this stating that making victims feel heard is essential to victim experience.

In view of the above, the panel classified the handling of the case as **2. Appropriate with observations.**

7. AOB

Lisa thanked the panel for being so open and honest, noting that she has observed a lot of respect between members in this panel. Lisa also noted the transparency from the Force and the honesty of the hate crime team for highlighting any further mistakes the panel have missed, stating that this increases the trust of the members present.

Clare informed the group that the panel will be managed by a maternity cover post from May 2025 – May 2026.

8. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 9th April 2025

Meeting end 20:24.