



Hate Crime Scrutiny Panel

Minutes - Wednesday 9th October 2024, FHQ Enderby

1. Welcome and Attendees:

Clare Hornbuckle – OPCC
Insp Will Prince – Force
Sgt Angela Cartwright – Force
Darren Goddard – Crime Registrar
David Findlay
Barbara Czyznikowska
Jenny Ardley Oakden
Rosie Klair
Nandini Chakraborty
Brigitte Heller
Ajay Aggarwall
Richard Chapman
Lisa Vine – ETP
CEO Claire Trewartha (Observer)

2. Introductions and Apologies

Chair welcomed new panel members Ajay and Richard.

No apologies received.

3. Action Log

Insp Prince provided an update against the open actions. Current only open action relates to Lisa Vine highlighting an incorrect meaning recording against gender expression on Niche, stating that their current definition insinuates that a person's presentation reflects their identity choice. Insp Prince updated the board that he has raised this formally with Niche system operators and the change has been proposed regionally for approval. The board were updated that these changes are slow but see no reason this won't be amended on Niche in time.

4. Hate Crime Statistics – Paper A

David Findlay queried the drop in positive outcomes by -1.2% in relation to hate crime locally over the past quarter. Insp Prince responded that this statistic relates only to

finalised crimes which could be up to a year old. Insp Prince explained that Leicestershire Police are above average for Force's positive outcomes for hate crimes, sitting around 17.5% in October, compared to the average of 14% seen across other Forces.

Insp Prince provided further context to the figures, explaining that often hate crimes that take place in a public setting can have multiple victims. As there would then be multiple reports for once instance, this can result in multiple negative outcomes if prosecution cannot be pursued. Darren Goddard noted that a common issue across Force's is victims withdrawing support for the investigation, which is classed as a negative outcome. Darren explained that this can often be due to time lengths of investigations and ongoing impact on the victim having to re-live the incident, adding that more work is being done locally on how Force's can keep victims engaged and supported. Board agreed that this will be captured in the horizon scanning for the panel.

Rosie Klair observed that there had been a significant increase in the last 3 months in racially aggravated hate crimes and queried the reasoning behind this. Insp Prince explained that the Southport incident had resulted in an increase in hate crimes, and that all crime rises during summer months, likely a result of increased socialising and alcohol consumption in public places throughout June-August.

Ajay Aggarwall queried whether increases were trackable by location, which Force confirmed is in place and monitored locally. These often coincide with events such as the East Leicester disorder, or are skewed by significant locations such as hospitals where there are higher volumes of reporting.

Richard Chapman queried if graphs could be included within the stats paper as a visual representation of trends, which was agreed by the board.

David Findlay added that graphs could also be included in the annual report that is provided to the Ethics and Transparency Panel. David went on to clarify that while the Force want to see most crimes decrease, Force's want to see Hate Crime increase as it is commonly under-reported, and an increase in reporting reflects confidence and trust in policing.

[Action: Clare to include graphs in paper A for future panels.](#)

5. 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)	0
2 (Appropriate but with observations)	1
3 (Inappropriate and inconsistent with Police policies and procedure)	1
4 (Panel fails to reach a conclusion)	0

Case ID	Classification	Rationale
Case A	2 (appropriate without observations)	Related to a case classified as 'Public Order' involving alleged threatening behaviour to a pedestrian by an individual driving a vehicle. Reported via online reporting tool. Victims need assessment fully completed and victim kept updated in line with wishes, however no SPOC contact recorded. Crime recorder also should have recorded that the offence was religiously aggravated at first point of contact, and that given the nature of report, this should have started as recording of GBH according to the crime report and then been downgraded to section 4a public order offence to reflect the report.
Case B	3 (inappropriate and inconsistent with police policies and procedures)	Related to ABH/common assault of a 12 year old boy with autism. Victim assessment fully completed, support services offered and declined and victim kept updated through guardian regarding case. Investigation plan evident and supervisory footprint seen, however allocation of an OIC occurred 9 days past required time period (24 hours), and officer did not pursue offender, citing 'no suspect identified' despite this offence being one of a number reported by victim. Panel also agreed this should have been classified as harassment due to ongoing nature.

Action: Insp Prince 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 religious prejudice.

The Chair lead the panel through the scrutiny questions. Panel members deemed the victims needs assessment to be fully completed based on the Niche report. Nandini queried whether the needs assessment is free text and if vulnerability is completed by officer or victim. Insp Prince clarified that officers must check vulnerability with victims and not assume.

Jenny Ardley stated that the use of SMS to keep the victim updated does not seem an appropriate method of communication for gravity of offence. Jenny stated this SMS may have come after a failed attempt at a call, but stated that a text felt inappropriate and that in the time it would have taken to text, a call could have been made. Lisa Vine commented that in the report it states that the officer was due to visit the victim in person that day, so a text may have sufficed if individual knew officer was visiting in person. Sgt Cartwright said that phone or email was in line with victims wishes and this includes SMS text, stating that often, victims of crime prefer texts to have information in one place. Panel felt overall that the communication should have been a telephone call, however accepted that they could not determine if an attempt to call had been made and accepted that the method was still technically compliant.

The panel agreed that the victim had been kept updated in line with their wishes, and that the victim had been contacted within 24 hours of allocation of an Officer in Charge. However, panel observed that based on the report, there had been no contact from a Hate Crime SPOC at the 7-day point, as is protocol in Leicestershire Police. Panel further observed no SPOC contact at all, however it was later understood that this was because no hate crime element had been added at this stage, so a SPOC technically wasn't required at that point according to guidance. Panel later learn that a hate crime element should have been added.

Panel agreed that support services were offered but not accepted and that the victim was consulted in line with wishes.

Lisa queried why there was 'sufficient evidence' to show that the suspect is responsible for the offence, but that this was then followed by evidential difficulties to prosecute. The Force responded that this was because the suspect was identified as the owner of the vehicle, however the evidence for the alleged threats were not there.

The panel agreed that an investigation plan was evident and that a supervisory footprint was evident, with three different supervisors showing footprint on the case.

Panel discussed whether public order felt the right classification for the offence. Darren Goddard suggested that based on the crime report, this should have initially been classified as an assault or GBH and then downgraded through investigation to a section 4a public order. Sgt Cartwright further pointed out that at no point was 'religiously aggravated' added to the offence, which it should have been at point of creation and throughout. Sgt Cartwright added that because the offence came through online reporting it could have been downgraded as the crime recorder worked through it, however added that even as a public order offence it should have been classed as religiously aggravated regardless.

Panel had a brief discussion regarding the importance of the online reporting tool, noting that it captures individuals who may otherwise not report or realise at a later time they

were a victim of a crime and want to record it without phoning the police. Lisa added to this point stating that she has lived experience of feeling as though she did not want to waste police time, and while the board agreed that a call would have also been appropriate, it was understood why people may feel this way. Richard added that some individuals also need encouragement from peers to report crimes and online reporting provides a space for people to report crimes with support from others. Ajay added from his experience of community work that many communities are reluctant to phone the police or visit police stations, further emphasising the importance of online reporting and the communication channel this opens to members of marginalised communities.

Panel agree that while the case was handed appropriately by the officer in charge, there were some observations. Crime recorders should have captured the hate crime element earlier and classified the offence as a section 4a Public Order rather than Public Order. Panel agreed that victim compliance was very good, and that lots of rationale was provided throughout the investigation with a good supervisory footprint.

Panel classified case handling as **2. Appropriate with Observations.**

Case B –

Panel members read through the second case provided for discussion. Case related to disability prejudice.

Panel held a brief discussion as to whether providing information on Neighbourhood Link counted as victim contact. Force responded that this was likely sent in addition to communications.

Panel noted compliance with the victims needs assessments, and timely updates were provided to the victim in line with their wishes. Panel also noted that the OIC made contact with the victim within 1 hour of allocation, however panel identified that it took 10 days to allocate an OIC which should be done within 24 hours. Force explained that this case had been allocated to an officer who was due to be on maternity leave and therefore had to be picked up and re-allocated. Lisa noted concern that as this offence related to an ongoing issue, there could have been escalation within the 10 day period which posed potential risk.

Barbara queried whether the allocation would be flagged as urgent due to the nature of the crime. Force explained that allocations aren't generally prioritised as should all be done within 24 hours, and delays can be caused by current priorities of the Force and current demand, further explaining that sometimes the sheer volume of offences can result in delayed allocation.

Panel agreed that a supervisory footprint was evident as was an investigation plan, and the victim was offered support however declined.

Darren explained that although this case was handled appropriately for the most part, it is a missed harassment offence. Darren stated that as the caller was a repeat victim from the same offender, this should have flagged harassment due to the continuation of behaviour. The panel were also informed that there were existing youth panels that this

case could have gone to for review however this was not done for this case and is not mandatory.

The Panel noted that the officer could have identified the perpetrator due to the ongoing nature of offences, however did not record offenders details on report or make any visits to offender. The report is filed as 'no suspect identified' however this is not in line with nature of the report.

In view of the above, the panel classified the handling of the case as **3. Inappropriate and Inconsistent with Force Policy and/or Procedure.**

Insp Prince clarified that new policy and procedure for hate crime went live on 20th September and has been rolled out force wide since, and this should have a positive impact on cases going forward.

6. AOB

Volunteer's Christmas Dinner.

[Action: Clare to send details via email to ascertain availability.](#)

7. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 15th January 2025

Meeting end.