

Crime and Community Safety

It is widely accepted that disability harassment and hate crime can affect people with any kind of impairment. Research carried out by the Equality and Human Rights Commission found that disabled people are at greater risk of experiencing violence or hostility than the wider population¹. We know disabled people feel unsafe walking outside in their local area in the evening alone². Other research has found that of 50 serious crimes against disabled people, none were investigated or prosecuted as hate crimes, despite a sentencing provision in place to allow this³.

What we have done

Some of our recent conferences and workshop events aimed at developing a better understanding of prevalence of crime against disabled people, and strengthening the police's response includes the following:

- in April 2009, the GLA hosted the People First Campaign Network meeting on hate crime; and previously in January 2009 the Disability Hate Crime Summit, was organised with Scope, Disability Now and UK Disabled People's Council.
- the MPA Domestic & Sexual Violence Board held a thematic event focusing on sexual violence and disabled.
- the Mayor worked closely with the London Criminal Justice Board to support a Mental Health Awareness Raising Conference at City Hall on 28 September 2009.
- in February 2010 the 'true vision' disability hate crime reporting packs were launched within the MPS
- in March 2010, the MPA Hate Crime Forum held a disability hate crime themed meeting, that provided a focus on:
 - disability hate crime statistics and performance
 - a review of high profile case studies
 - assessing the quality of service, and user satisfaction surveys
 - cascading best practice and lessons learnt across London boroughs
- in April 2010 Mencap & MPS held training seminar for Bromley Safer Neighbourhood Team, the Safer Transport Teams and local residents to ensure police provide best possible services to people with learning difficulties.

Following concerns about failures to recognise disability targeted hate crime, the MPS Violent Crime Directorate carried out an examination of vulnerable adult flagged crimes, and all Disability Targeted Hate Crime flagged crimes⁴. Based on the findings, in December 2008, working through the advice of the Disability Independent Advisory Group, the GLA and MPA, changes were made to the Crime Reporting Information System (CRIS). These changes will:

- allow the accurate identification of Disability Targeted Hate Crime through automatic 'flagging' of all hate crimes.
- identify particular impairment of victim/witness (e.g. physical, sensory, learning difficulties)
- identify victim'/witness' access needs

¹ Promoting the safety and security of disabled people, EHRC 2009

² Annual London Survey, 2009

³ Disability Now Magazine & UK Disabled People's Council, August 2008

⁴ MPS Equality Scheme 2006-2010 Disability Annual Report 2008, P14

- Identify preferred means of communication for victim/witnesses and any medical or care concerns.

The Mayor's Violence Against Women Strategy takes account of the needs of disabled women, who were involved in its development. Some of the key issues identified included:

- a lack of physically accessible support services for women;
- women who experience domestic violence are more likely than other women to misuse drugs and alcohol;
- many survivors of domestic violence have mental health problems.

Transport for London (TfL) works closely with the British Transport Police and the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) to ensure that people can travel around London in a safe environment. TfL produces a community safety plan every year and is developing a hate crime strategy to support disabled and Deaf people and others who are the target of verbal or physical assault.

The MPS Disability Independent Advisory Group provides advice to the MPS to improve the quality of policing services in London.

The MPS Disabled Staff Association promotes the development of positive and fair workplace practices. This group has supported the following activities:

- monitoring workforce diversity profiles; with additional encouragement and support to staff in post to complete monitoring data requirements
- training and guidance for staff on addressing barriers to fairness
- job vacancies and information available in alternative formats, recruitment is conducted in accessible locations and reasonable adjustments are made available, where appropriate

What we plan to do

The GLA, in partnership with the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) and the MPS Disability Independent Advisory Group are lobbying for performance indicators on Disability Targeted Hate Crime that would require the MPS to collect data, measure detection rates and disabled people's satisfaction rates, to ensure that the issue obtains a systematic focus across the Capital. The specific performance indicators would be:

- increase in number of people with disabilities reporting hate crimes
- increase in the sanction detection rate, following reports of disability targeted hate crimes
- increase in the number of prosecutions for disability targeted hate crimes that are supported by the Crown Prosecution Service
- increase in the satisfaction levels of victims of disability targeted hate crimes, with MPS overall service.

The GLA is considering including specific questions on Disability Targeted Hate Crime in its Annual London Survey. The GLA will also lobby the Home Office to include questions on Disability Targeted Hate Crime within the British Crime Survey.

Mandatory questions will be included in the creation of a CRIS Report that will enable the correct identification and flagging of offences. As a result, more reliable and accurate information on Disability Targeted Hate Crime will be available. This should

enable secondary investigators to conduct their enquiries more efficiently, leading to effective identification and detection of offences.

The MPS Violent Crime Directorate (VCD) is developing a training pack that will be delivered to all new recruits, focussing on improving awareness and understanding and the correct identification of disability hate crime.

We will

- Continue to involve deaf and disabled people in the scrutiny of police response to hate crime.
- Help organisations campaign for more access to support services such as Rape Crisis Centres. The focus in 2011 will be on disabled women.
- Work for an increase in the reporting of hate crimes, including disability hate crime.
- In partnership with disability rights organisations and stakeholder groups hold a Disability Targeted Hate Crime Conference in Autumn 2010

The Violence Against Women Strategy proposes some relevant initiatives, for example

- finding ways to reduce violence against women with learning difficulties;
- training for local Adult Safeguarding Boards, so that professionals who come into contact with disabled people can better identify violence against women and girls.