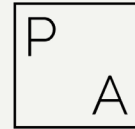




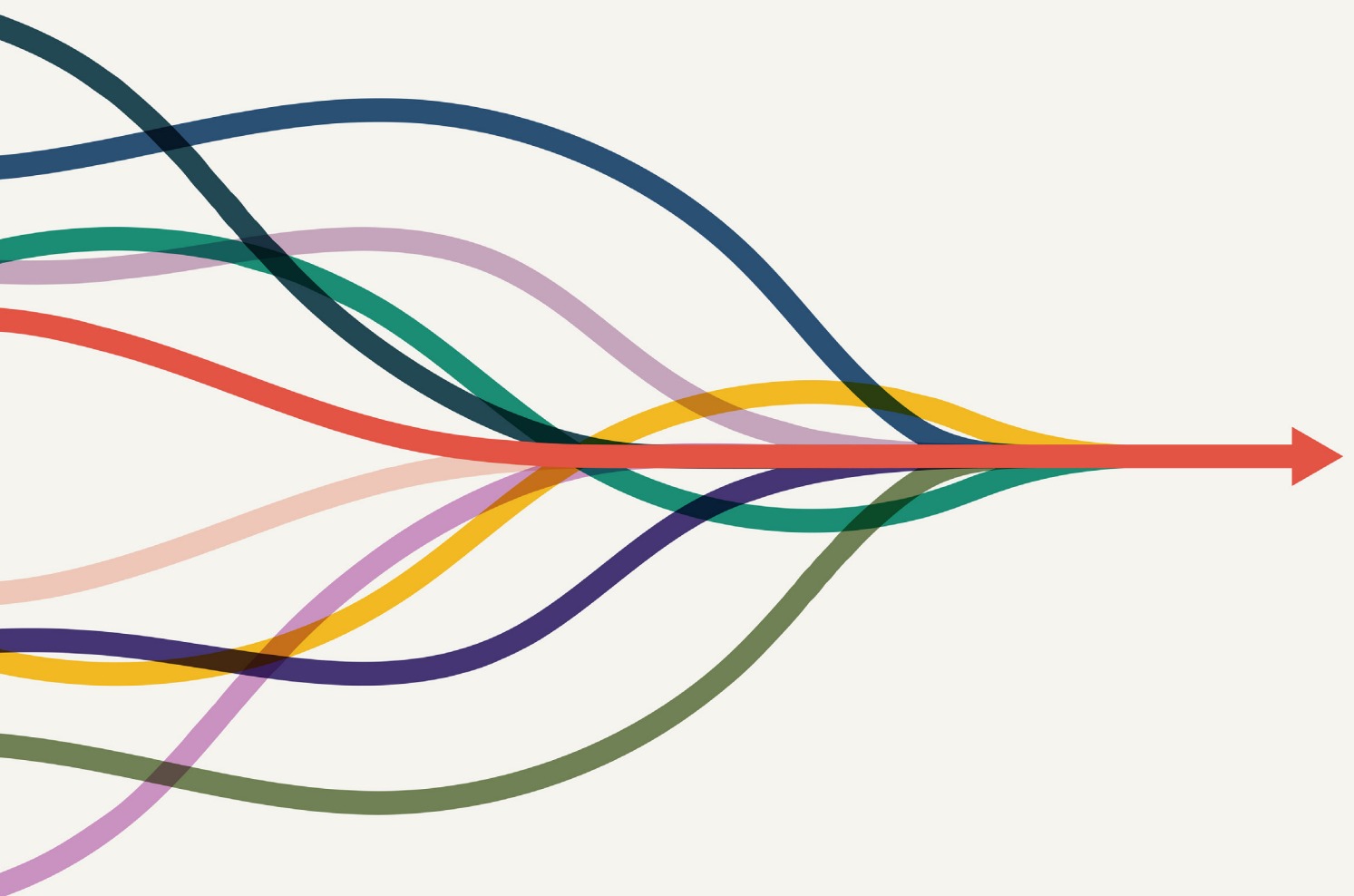
UNIVERSITY OF
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Protection
Approaches

Manifesto for Change

Centre for Hate Studies



Organisations behind this Manifesto

Centre for Hate Studies

A world leading research centre whose core mission is to transform responses to hate through ground-breaking research. The Centre shapes policy and practice by enabling professionals across different sectors to engage with diverse communities, to support victims and to tackle hate. Driven by a desire to effect lasting change within disadvantaged communities, the Centre for Hate Studies places co-creation with marginalised victims at the heart of its research design, analysis and recommendations.

Protection Approaches

A UK-based charity working on the prevention of identity-based violence. Through a combination of community-led initiatives, cutting-edge research, technical advice, and policy advocacy, its work focuses on addressing the root causes of prejudice, division, and discrimination in society. At the same time, the charity works to ensure that those targeted receive the protection and support they need.

This Manifesto also draws from and is supported by a nationwide consultation with a range of stakeholders including civil society groups, statutory bodies, expert academics, practitioners, third sector organisations and individuals with lived experience. While individual names have not been included within the Manifesto for security reasons, we remain deeply grateful to everyone who engaged in this work.

With thanks to the Economic and Social Research Council Impact Accelerator Account (ESRC IAA) for their Partnership Builder funding.



Introduction

Levels of hate crime in England and Wales have escalated over the past ten years. Throughout a decade of increased political uncertainty, economic volatility and social unrest, research evidence has highlighted a continued upsurge in online and interpersonal hostility towards minoritised groups and communities. However, these challenges are exacerbated by the absence of formalised, evidence-based guidance to inform responses to hate crime. With the most recent Government Hate Crime Action Plan last published in 2016 and expiring in 2020, there remains a lack of clarity, consistency and certainty in responding to the needs of victims and wider communities.

The Centre for Hate Studies and Protection Approaches have come together to address this lack of direction. We have drawn from both organisations' extensive body of research evidence and have undertaken a sector-wide consultation to develop ten solution-led recommendations which address the spiralling levels of hate crime and deepening community divisions.

It is our recommendation that the ten points outlined in this Manifesto are enacted where appropriate by relevant stakeholders such as national, regional and local government, police forces, the Crown Prosecution Service, funders, and civil society as a starting point to address hate crime. However, we also strongly propose that this evidence base is used as a foundation for a renewed Hate Crime Action Plan to provide long-term commitment and oversight.

The solutions proposed within this Manifesto are responsive to the prevailing climate and have been designed to be achievable, measurable and resource-efficient. Enacting these solutions will not simply address hate crime in isolation, but will also facilitate improved support for all victims of crime and for initiatives that seek to address wider issues such as cohesion, resilience and community safety.

Develop awareness raising strategies to improve understanding of hate crime

Context

Criminal justice agencies and many other public and third sector organisations devote considerable effort and resource to developing awareness-raising campaigns within local communities. However, our studies have shown that these initiatives are routinely failing to reach people. This has been a consistent issue for those who belong to socially and economically disadvantaged communities where experiences of hate crime may be especially commonplace and yet knowledge of what a hate crime is, and how to secure support, is low. This lack of awareness has implications for a wide range of actors, including potential and actual victims, witnesses and professionals who may be required to recognise and respond to hate within the context of their work without having the requisite knowledge.

Consultees told us that for many, hate crime incidents are so frequent that they are seen as the norm, and incidents that are not physically violent would be considered too low level to report or to be able to access support.

A lack of understanding of hate crime results in vulnerable people remaining in dangerous situations and without support. It increases the likelihood of hate incidents being ignored or trivialised; of victimisation being prolonged; of community tensions being exacerbated; and of inadequate guidance being provided.

Consultation evidence — lived experience

“We need spaces for voices to be heard and dialogue to occur.”

What does good practice look like?

- Promote and resource community-informed or community-led campaigns to ensure that key messages resonate with specific groups.
- Draw on existing, or establish where needed, advisory groups that include relevant organisations and community members to design and deliver awareness campaigns.
- Training for frontline practitioners across statutory bodies, community organisations and beyond so that they can support victim and wider community understanding of hate crime, reporting and support options.
- Use accessible, community-based spaces for campaigns including entertainment venues and other large social spaces such as coffee shops, supermarkets, public transport, places of worship, and GPs and health centres.

What are the benefits?

- Allowing for earlier interventions, the chance for escalation and negative impacts on victims is reduced, which saves police and public health resources.
- Can deter offending and improve informed reporting by clarifying unlawful behaviour, easing pressure on police and strengthening the accuracy of police data to help inform policy, practice and resource allocation.
- Aligns with the Government’s ‘Safer Streets’ mission, the Integrated Communities Strategy Action Plan and the Resilience Action Plan.

Establish bystander intervention programmes throughout the country

Research evidence — lived experience

“Everywhere I go I expect to be verbally abused because it’s happened that often. If I don’t get abused it’s a bonus.”

Context

Evidence highlights that victims feel a heightened sense of humiliation and isolation when bystanders simply observe their victimisation without offering to assist, directly or indirectly. While the onus for reporting hate crimes often falls upon the individual victim, witnesses can play a pivotal role within those situations including by supporting victims to understand where and how they can report their experiences.

Research shows that such interventions can prevent immediate escalations in hostility and violence, prevent longer term feelings of alienation and isolation, and increase levels of reporting. Consultees told us that supporting individuals to have the confidence and skills to appropriately challenge intolerance or negative biases is a crucial part of preventing escalation to more harmful attitudes and behaviours.

What does good practice look like?

- Commission/fund bespoke bystander intervention training, particularly for those who work in public facing roles.
- Publicise campaigns which promote why and how to be an active bystander.
- Review police data in order to better understand where hostility is amplified and where interventions should be targeted.

What are the benefits?

- Raises confidence and understanding within local communities, and enables victims to feel a stronger sense of connection and reduced alienation, in alignment with current cohesion action plans, including the Integrated Communities Strategy Action Plan and the Resilience Action Plan.
- Increases public understanding of how and where to report hate crime or prejudice, ensuring that incidents are more likely to be recorded and addressed.
- Reduces immediate escalation and quells violence which protects people from harm thereby saving police, NHS, criminal justice and public health resources.



Offer appropriate victim support services across the country

Context

Our evidence shows that less than one in ten hate crime victims access support. Within some particularly marginalised communities, this figure falls even further. In fact, one in five victims do not know that support services exist. However, for those who do access specialist and/or community-based victim support, satisfaction rates are consistently high, as is improvement in victims' reported wellbeing. There is also less criminal justice attrition amongst those who access independent advocate support. Unfortunately, support services available to victims in England and Wales operate under a post-code lottery. In some places, there is a total absence of support, and in others, the issue is communicating support options to those in need. Both of these areas urgently need addressing for victims' safety and wellbeing.

Not all victims in need of support will have made a formal report. However, research shows that positive experiences of support can result in an uplift in subsequent reports, which can act to repair damaged relationships between communities and law enforcement.

Our evidence shows that effective support must be time-sensitive, flexible, accessible, culturally competent, communicated, streamlined, responsive to emotional and practical needs and above all else, demonstrate empathy, kindness and compassion.

Research evidence — practitioner

“While support services exist, they are not uniformly available across all areas, leaving gaps in assistance for some victims.”

What does good practice look like?

- Recognise that victims often have multiple, intersecting needs, and ensure that relevant multi-agency support is available locally.
- Conduct reviews of what support provisions currently exist locally and regionally. Continue to fund support services that already exist at national, regional, local, and hyper local levels. Where there are gaps, consider partnerships with neighbouring locales to help commission necessary services. The full suite of support service options should be advertised clearly on relevant websites.
- Commission a national or regional platform to map national and local support services for victims and signposts them accordingly.
- Train frontline practitioners across statutory bodies, local authorities, community organisations, and other public services to provide initial, basic victim support and refer them to specialist services where needed.

What are the benefits?

- Prioritising sustainable, fully-staffed support agencies provides victims with direct access to specialist assistance without needing to embed expertise across services, resulting in a streamlined, resource-efficient system.
- Reduces wellbeing impacts on victims by helping to prevent isolation, mental health deterioration, and long-term harm. This not only benefits individuals but also eases pressure on the NHS and welfare systems, while fostering stronger community cohesion.
- Aligns with the principles set out in the Civil Society Covenant.

Implement specialist hate crime expertise within police forces

Context

There are significant and longstanding issues between the police and minoritised communities. Victims repeatedly report that they fear their experience will not be taken seriously by the police; that the police are not sufficiently trained in hate crime to fully understand its impacts; and that the criminal justice process is confusing, intimidating and emotionally draining. As a result, many do not ever make a formal report, withdraw their report and/or are left feeling dissatisfied and unsupported. In turn, divisions between the police and victims, particularly those from minoritised groups, widen.

Our research evidence has highlighted multiple examples across the country of where those with specialist expertise in hate crime working within the police have provided meaningful and effective support to victims. Overall, the presence of dedicated hate crime specialists within the police enhances investigative quality, strengthens victim support, fosters greater community trust, and promotes consistent, informed handling of hate-related incidents across the force.

Research evidence — lived experience

“Our local hate crime officer was fantastic. She understood that, due to my speech problems, I preferred email contact. I’m sure this was less convenient for her but she never complained. She was thorough and empathic ... she took it very seriously, was very thorough, and had excellent communication skills.”

What does good practice look like?

- Approaches to implementing expertise might include: a designated police staff or police officer role, or training a single point of contact (SPOC).
- Embed at least one point of contact for officers seeking guidance within each force. They should have oversight of all active hate crime cases, the ability to advise investigating officers, and the capacity to provide upskilling and training where needed.
- Commission evidence-based hate crime training within forces.

What are the benefits?

- Informed local policing supports the Government mission of Safer Streets and supports College of Policing initiatives to transform police culture.
- Engagement with officers or staff with specific expertise results in higher victim satisfaction levels, improved trust and confidence in policing, and a decreased chance of a victim withdrawing their support for, or participation in, the criminal justice process.
- Improved investigative quality, especially in the early stages of hate crime cases, increases the likelihood of an appropriate and just outcome being reached.

Prioritise rehabilitation focused interventions

What does good practice look like?

- Recognise and build on the strong evidence base and existing programmes in education, rehabilitation, and restorative justice by undertaking and publishing an independent review to highlight and share examples of good practice.
- Develop strategies to widen access and participation in restorative and educational interventions for both hate crime victims and perpetrators, ensuring existing models of success are scaled and replicated.
- Invest in and evaluate community-based resolutions as appropriate alternatives to criminal justice where appropriate, drawing on the wealth of evidence and experience already available.
- Include victim satisfaction levels as a metric of effective practice.

What are the benefits?

- Addressing the needs of ‘at-risk’ first-time offenders and those at risk of reoffending aligns with the Government’s mission for Safer Streets.
- Alleviates pressure on overburdened courts and overcrowded prisons, while prioritising the reduction of future engagement with the criminal justice system.
- Drawing from existing evidence-based programmes, approaches and interventions designed to holistically combat criminal behaviours reduces the need to develop new or untested initiatives.

Context

While the prison estate and full use of robust legal frameworks should be reserved for the most serious offenders, rehabilitative and non-custodial interventions are especially important for lower-level hate crime perpetrators. Such approaches are essential for reducing reoffending, and for addressing underlying causes of multiple forms of criminal behaviour. Successive governments and state agencies have been reluctant to publicly support non-custodial approaches to tackling hate crime despite the wealth of evidence to support their deployment in the right contexts.

Our research shows that hate crime victims overwhelmingly support rehabilitative and educational approaches to tackling offending. Victims often want assurance that the offender understands the harm they have caused and that they will not repeat it. As such, restorative approaches can empower victims, providing a rare opportunity for their views, feelings and priorities to be platformed and prioritised. Peer learning programmes, restorative justice and perpetrator-centred spaces that allow for difficult conversations are all supported by evidence and rigorous evaluations as effective interventions.

Research evidence — lived experience

“The only punishment for those people is to educate them. We are all human beings, what they did is wrong. So this is my only request: if they be punished, be it through education.”

Share best practice across criminal justice agencies

Context

Over the last decade, there have been significant improvements in understanding and addressing hate crime from within the criminal justice sector. Unfortunately, many of these advancements happen in silos. As a result, broader networks of colleagues and wider society are unaware of effective practice that might influence their own decisions.

What does good practice look like?

- Support and strengthen local, regional, national, and sector hate crime forums to share good practice and address common challenges. Where such forums do not exist, encourage their establishment. Develop national guidance on how to support people through a multi-agency perspective.
- Provide updates on uptake, practice and developments through events and social media with local, regional and national communities to instil confidence and promote dialogue.
- Utilise and, where necessary, establish external advisory and consultation groups and scrutiny panels to ensure transparency and accountability.
- Review, adapt and incorporate effective practice from other sectors, such as domestic and sexual violence models of response and support.

What are the benefits?

- Reduces the occurrence of a postcode lottery in victim access and experience. More effective practice throughout the country also directly aligns with the Government's Safer Streets mission.
- Requires little upfront resource and investment and, with effective participation and engagement, offers cost and resource saving initiatives to be shared.
- Communicating improvements to the public can result in increased confidence in the police, supporting more positive relationships and influencing victim satisfaction, as well as encouraging the uptake of reporting and support options, which can deter escalation in cases. It can also support improved wellbeing and morale amongst criminal justice professionals who work in this space.



Research evidence — practitioner

“The current justice system’s handling of hate crime cases varies significantly depending on the county, region, and the specific mechanisms in place to address these crimes.”

Establish parity in legal provision



Context

Presently, the identities of race, religion, disability, sexual orientation and transgender status receive different levels of protection within hate crime legislation for England and Wales. The 2014 and 2021 Law Commission review of hate crime called for parity in legal provision relating to aggravated and stirring up offences. Specifically, they claimed that “the current inconsistency in the way that hate crime laws treat different characteristics is unprincipled and causes significant injustice and confusion”. This is a recommendation widely supported by organisations working to support hate crime victims.

Without parity in the law, disproportionate criminal justice expectations, powers and outcomes send unclear and confused messages to communities, victims and perpetrators around the boundaries of acceptable, unacceptable, lawful and unlawful behaviour. This amplifies challenges for social cohesion initiatives, as well as prevention work and victim trust and confidence in criminal justice engagement.

What does good practice look like?

As per the Law Commission’s guidance, there is a strong need for:

- The creation of homophobic, disability and transphobic aggravated offences.
- The creation of new offences of stirring up hatred on the basis of disability and transgender status.
- The extension of the racist chanting offence at football matches to cover other characteristics.

What are the benefits?

- Improved victim satisfaction due to renewed government commitment to tackle the existing ‘hierarchy of hate’ created by legal disparity.
- Allows for legislation and police powers that can more actively respond to areas with escalating need. Post-conviction, parity will help statutory agencies to be more aware that an offender has been convicted of a hate crime in order to better address the rehabilitation and educational needs of the perpetrator.
- Communicates boundaries of unacceptable behaviour and acts as a deterrent for offenders.

Consultation evidence — academic

“[There is] inconsistent sentencing or enforcement of hate crime laws and a lack of parity across the hate crime strands.”

Introduce appropriate responses to tackling online hate speech

Context

Online hate and the production of hateful content is rising, often evading the requirements of the Online Safety Act 2023 and regulatory powers held by Ofcom. Concern for this issue is rooted in both the escalating real-world, violent consequences of online hate and the growing sophistication of how it spreads and embeds itself via content algorithms, AI, and private, encrypted channels.

Currently, the UK lacks the dedicated infrastructure for effective online hate crime monitoring, unlike terrorism prevention which draws from the expertise of specialised units. However, even existing extremist content regulation poses significant challenges. Strict timeframes for the removal of content and ambiguous definitions of hate speech and extremist content leads platforms to rely on machine-learning moderation methods that increase risks of over-blocking, errors and bias. At the same time, smaller platforms that are often more attractive to extremists, struggle to comply with blanket regulations.

Without coordinated monitoring that addresses the varying capabilities and resources of different platforms, hate incidents online can escalate unchecked, spreading to offline violence and community tensions, while regulatory gaps allow migration of harmful content to less monitored spaces.

Consultation evidence — practitioner

“The lack of robust action (or perceived lack of robust action) against online hate leading to spreading of misinformation.”

What does good practice look like?

- Establish a National Online Hate Referral Unit with direct partnerships with major tech platforms and support pathways for smaller platforms.
- Create specialised hate crime investigation units within police forces with dedicated digital expertise, mirroring counter-terrorism resource allocation models.
- Consult smaller alternative platforms when developing regulatory frameworks to prevent migration of hate content to less monitored spaces.

What are the benefits?

- Early intervention prevents online hate from escalating to offline violence which keeps communities safer and reduces the need for resource-intensive public order policing.
- Real-time monitoring enables proactive community protection during high-risk periods, which supports ongoing Government resiliency work.
- Clearly defined regulation protects free speech while ensuring effective hate crime prevention.



Recognise victimisation beyond the monitored strands

Context

Criminal justice agencies in England and Wales monitor hate crimes based on five strands: race, religion, sexual orientation, disability, and transgender status. However, research shows that other groups also face comparable levels of victimisation and harm, despite not being recognised in current hate crime policy.

Our evidence has consistently demonstrated that people are often targeted on the basis of multiple and intersecting aspects of their identity and many of those factors sit outside of the monitored strands. For instance, victims have discussed being targeted on the basis of their gender, alternative identity, age, homeless status, political beliefs, their dress and appearance, refugee, asylum seeker and other migrant statuses and many other characteristics.

In 2020, the College of Policing issued updated guidance which reaffirmed that the five official hate crime strands are the *minimum* required, while allowing individual forces to extend protections to other groups based on local needs.

The most recent Law Commission review of hate crime that concluded in 2021 strongly advocated for a transparent, evidence-based and criteria-based process that could allow for the inclusion of new groups in the future, noting that it was a legitimate area for further public dialogue.

What does good practice look like?

- Review of police force data the usage of extra monitoring and trends within the forces that do actively use this provision.
- Ensure access to support provisions for all victims, regardless of their legal hate crime status.
- Establishment of a working group comprising of hate crime leads from each police force to share best practice on approaches to additional monitoring.

What are the benefits?

- Greater security for established groups of victims who are currently without recognition and legal protections.
- Tailored and effective policing which tackles specific problem areas, communicates unacceptable behaviours and boundaries, acts as a deterrent and prevents escalation, ultimately saving criminal justice and public health resources.
- Supports ongoing Cohesion initiatives, including the Integrated Communities Strategy Action Plan.

Research evidence — practitioner

“We need to recognise ALL hate crime, and reinforcing the monitored versus the unmonitored strands only seeks to make justice for people from alternative subcultures (and other groups from unmonitored strands) even harder to obtain.”



Appoint an independent hate crime commissioner

Context

In the absence of an enforceable national strategy or action plan for tackling hate crime, responses to preventing hate crime and supporting victims remain piecemeal and disjointed. As such, the need for overarching independent and coordinated responsibility for hate crime has never been greater.

The Commissioner would have a mandate to coordinate and align responses to hate crime across government departments, statutory agencies and

civil society stakeholders, ensuring a unified and strategic approach that maximises impact and reduces duplication.

A Hate Crime Commissioner should exist separate to the Victims' Commissioner due to the unique features and escalating nature of hate crime.

What does good practice look like?

To ensure that this position is more than simply a symbolic figurehead and can become an effective, fast-acting and legally empowered driver of change, the Hate Crime Commissioner should be:

- Granted statutory powers to effect meaningful change. Powers to compel data disclosure from relevant agencies, authorise Serious Case Reviews where hate crime cases have resulted in fatality as standard practice, to require formal responses to recommendations and to escalate non-compliance to Parliament where necessary would create more sustained accountability.
- Prescribed a clear remit with regard to the independent oversight of the Criminal Justice process from treatment and engagement with victims, investigation and prosecution.
- Given an operational rapid response team to coordinate immediate actions and statements when reacting to major incidents.
- Subject to an Impact Assessment to monitor the use and efficacy of their work.

What are the benefits?

- Allows cases to be closed or progressed more efficiently, saving resource and money, whilst also identifying areas of strength and development that may require more or less future investment.
- Offers protections that due diligence has occurred in the case of a major incident or failing.
- Champions improvements for victims, thereby increasing victim satisfaction levels. This role provides reassurance to communities that hate crime is taken seriously at a national level, directly addressing the concerns of many victims.

Research evidence — academic

“Establish an independent body to review hate crime prosecutions and sentencing outcomes, identifying gaps and ensuring accountability.”

Conclusion

This Manifesto has offered the following ten solution-led recommendations to address hate crime in England and Wales. This is based upon a nationwide consultation, expert input and a review of more than a decade's worth of research evidence from both the Centre for Hate Studies and Protection Approaches which collectively has engaged with over 10,000 hate crime victims and practitioners.

These recommendations respond to various longstanding and newly emerging key issues, including a lack of social cohesion; under-reporting; poor police practice; low levels of trust and confidence in the criminal justice system; low levels of victim satisfaction; insufficient legal frameworks; increasing online harassment; poorly promoted and inconsistent support provisions; confusion surrounding the boundaries of freedom of speech; misinformation and disinformation; and increased radicalisation, extremism and the adoption far-right ideologies.

By adopting the recommendations set out in this Manifesto and embedding them within a renewed Hate Crime Action Plan, Government departments,

agencies and other key stakeholders can deliver tangible improvements to the experiences and outcomes of not only victims of hate crime, but also wider communities across the England and Wales. This approach will strengthen trust, cohesion and resilience in our society, whilst also offering clear economic benefits at local, regional and national levels through reduced demand on criminal justice, health and social care systems.

The evidence is clear: sustained and coordinated action now will reduce violent crime, enhance community safety, reinforce social connectedness and make our streets safer. Without decisive intervention, however, these challenges are set to intensify, placing greater strain on public services and risking the lives and wellbeing of countless future victims.

1. Develop awareness raising strategies to improve understanding of hate crime.
2. Establish bystander intervention programmes throughout the country.
3. Offer appropriate victim support services across the country.
4. Implement specialist hate crime expertise within police forces.
5. Prioritise rehabilitation focused interventions.
6. Share best practice across criminal justice agencies.
7. Establish parity in legal provision.
8. Introduce appropriate responses to tackling online hate speech.
9. Recognise victimisation beyond the monitored strands.
10. Appoint an independent hate crime commissioner.

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Supporting evidence

We are grateful to all who offered their expertise and support during the creation of this Manifesto, demonstrating a powerful collective commitment to driving meaningful change. We would like to extend our special thanks to the organisations below:

17-24-30 National Hate Crime Awareness Week

Becontree Heath Islamic Society (Dagenham Central Masjid) Ltd

Black Voices Cornwall

Brereton Big Local CIO

Bridging the Bar

British Society of Criminology Hate Crime Network

Caritas - Diocese of Salford

Communities Inc

Community ConneX Ltd

Compassion in Care

Cwm Taf People First

Disability Hate Crime Network

Galop

GATE Herts (Gypsy and Traveller Empowerment)

Holocaust Learning UK

International Community Organisation of Sunderland

MASH (Manchester Action on Street Health)

National Independent Advisory Group on Hate Crime for Policing and Criminal Justice

National Police Chiefs' Council for Hate Crime

One to One Enfield

Plus Importance Project

Race Equality First

SARI

Space Youth Project

Stonewall

Stop Funding Hate

Stop Hate UK

StreetlightUK

Tell MAMA

The Sophie Lancaster Foundation

The Vavengers

Translucent

Why Me?

Yaran Northwest CIC

Manifesto for Change

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