



**NORTHERN IRELAND  
HATE CRIME CAMPAIGN**



**WE STAND TOGETHER  
M A N I F E S T O**



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## Hate Crime & Northern Ireland

Hate crimes and incidents in Northern Ireland have risen over the past decade. They reached a nine-year high in the twelve months leading up to September 2023.

The context of how hate crimes and incidents manifest and who experiences them has also changed, as society has become more diverse.

New hate crime legislation – which we believe will enhance outcomes for victims – is still awaiting implementation at the time of writing. With hate crime trending upwards and taking on different contexts in contemporary Northern Irish society, Victim Support NI has decided, in conjunction with external stakeholders, to continue our commitment to highlighting the ‘Voice of the Victim’. This Hate Crime Manifesto collates lessons learnt from supporting those who have experienced hate crime to provide steering and insight to the wider public on how we can collectively better support victims and curb hate in society.

*“Northern Ireland has worked hard to address hate in its past and it has the ability to do it again.”*

Michael Avila, Hate Crime Advocacy Service



**\*For more information on hate crime in Northern Ireland, please also consult the [PSNI Hate Crime Dashboard](#)**

## What is Victim Support NI?

Victim Support NI is an independent charity supporting people affected by crime. We offer a free and confidential service, whether or not a crime has been reported and regardless of how long ago the event took place.

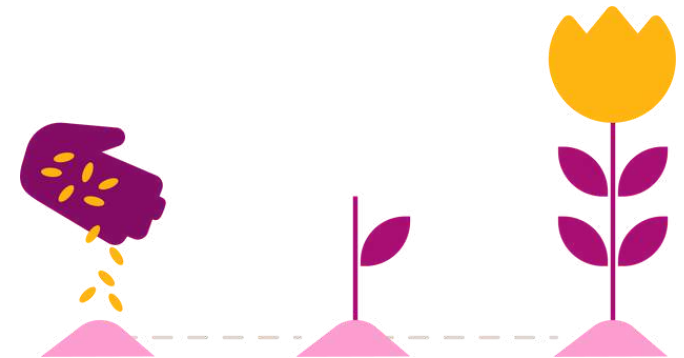
Our vision is:

A society that ensures appropriate support and information is available for people affected by crime

We pledge to continue to work for as long as is necessary to ensure that this vision becomes a reality and that those affected by crime are treated with respect and dignity while receiving the services and support they are entitled to.

## History

Victim Support NI has focused on addressing the harm caused to victims and witnesses of crime since 1981. On a daily basis we witness the impact crime and the Criminal Justice System can have on an individual, their family, friends, and the local community.



Our 'Beyond Crime: A Victim's Journey - Redress, Restore, Recover' strategy for 2020-24 aims to address the recovery and wellbeing needs of victims and witnesses by addressing the harm and vulnerability caused by crime. It broadens our focus on the justice journey to include the wider recovery journey and needs of victims of crime, and allows us to respond to the needs of victims while utilising our core values: Integrity, Respect & Compassion, while upholding the [Victim Charter](#).

## Victim Charter

Overview of entitlements:

- be treated fairly, professionally, and with dignity and respect
- be understood and to understand what you are told – in your first language if necessary
- be updated at key stages and given relevant information
- have your needs considered by service providers
- be told about available support and bring someone with you to give support
- apply for compensation (within two years of the incident causing the injury), if you were a victim of violent crime
- ask for a court familiarisation visit and be kept separate from the accused as much as possible at court
- have the opportunity to tell the court how the crime has harmed you
- ask to be told how the offender's sentence is managed
- let service providers know if you are unhappy with their service

**We believe our experience in supporting victims in accordance with the Victim Charter, along with our links to international Victim Support organisations, gives us a strong platform to put forward the proposals outlined in this Manifesto.**

## Victim Centred Approach

The Victim Charter employs a 'victim-centred' approach to the justice system. This is front and centre to Victim Support NI's ethos and is embedded throughout this Manifesto.

Victim Support NI's publication, 'A Victim Manifesto for Northern Ireland', goes into detail on the measures we believe could make NI's justice system more 'victim-centred'. We acknowledge improvement on many of these fronts since publication of that document in early 2022 and ensure readers that these tenets are infused throughout this Manifesto, though specifically relate to 'Hate Crime'.

A victim-centred approach is a way of engaging with victims that prioritises listening, avoids re-traumatisation, and systematically focuses on their safety, rights, well-being, expressed needs and choices. The purpose is to give back as much control to victims as feasible and ensure the empathetic delivery of services in a non-judgmental manner.

**(United Nations definition)**

### Our 'asks' from the 2022 Victim Manifesto:

Broaden the scope of the Victim Charter and strengthen it to include the right to redress/remedy for victims of crime

Put pathways in place to meet the specific & unique mental health needs of victims of crime

Provide financial redress for victims financially disadvantaged by crime

Greater investment in the prevention of technology enabled crime and tech support services for victims of cyber-crime

# What is the Hate Crime Advocacy Service (HCAS)?

HCAS is one of Victim Support NI's many services providing advocacy and support to vulnerable victims of crimes. It offers a safe and confidential space to provide support to victims of hate crime in Northern Ireland. It is a free service and is delivered in partnership, which includes:

- Victim Support NI
- Migrant Centre NI
- The Rainbow Project
- Leonard Cheshire (until 2023)



It is contracted by the PSNI and the Department of Justice.

The service has been coordinated in consortium by Victim Support NI since 2013 and annually supports around 1000 hate crime victims as they move through the criminal justice system.

Our Advocates help victims through the criminal justice process by providing information on the courts, aiding victims in reporting and following up with police, and signposting onto other community services. They provide advocacy across the different 'protected characteristics'.



Crime – any crime – can be traumatic, and even more so when you are targeted for 'who you are'.

[www.hcasni.com](http://www.hcasni.com)

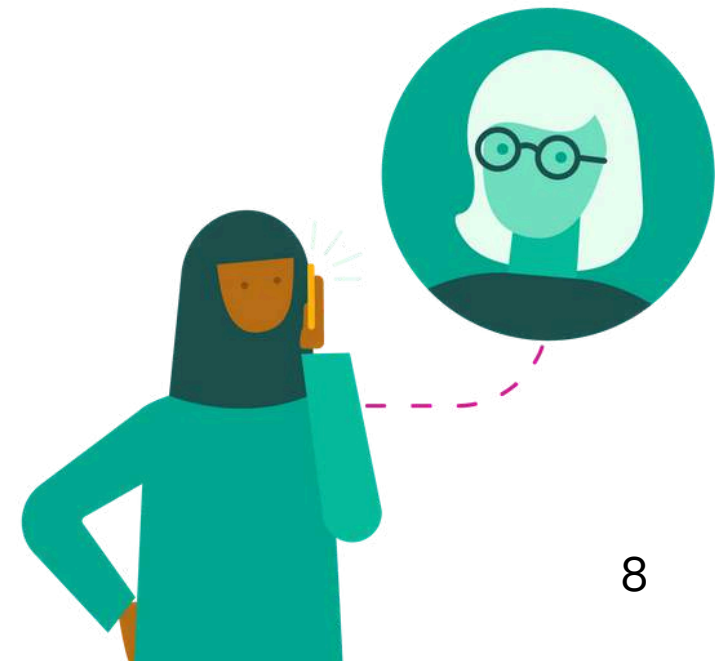
## Rationale for Manifesto

The general rise in hate crimes and incidents, as well as the evolving context and trends of hate crime in Northern Ireland, have led Victim Support NI to create a Hate Crime Manifesto that can help inform the public and foster partnership working to better address hate crime and support victims. Victim Support NI **commits** to continuing to work with partners across sectors to ensure that victims of hate crime are properly supported.

The foundation of this Manifesto was established at Victim Support NI's 'We Stand Together' event held on 19th October 2023, which brought together the majority of statutory, community and private sector partners working collaboratively to seek ways to increasingly ensure there is #NoPlaceForHate in Northern Ireland.

This document draws together the themes, asks and commitments Victim Support NI and its partners have designated in order to continue to foster a #SafePlaceForAll. See Appendix 2 for a list of signatories.

Many victims of hate crime find it helps to talk to someone who understands. That's precisely why we are here.





# Theme 1

## Integrated Approach & Partnership Working

*Addressing hate crime is not just a criminal justice issue;  
it takes a community*



## Subthemes:

### Housing



Insufficient housing policies remain one of the biggest roadblocks to properly supporting victims.

We **ask** that Northern Ireland's housing sector implement mechanisms within its rehousing, eviction and homelessness policies to ensure its system accounts for repeat victimisation and intimidation – particularly in cases where there is no paramilitary involvement.

The current Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) (re)housing points system / housing priority list does account for hate motivated intimidation and other mechanisms to accrue rehousing points. However, it approaches each individually reported incident and crime in *isolation* of each other, rather than taking in account the 'whole picture' of the trauma a resident is exposed to over time.

Adopting the following mechanisms within the rehousing points system would help shore up gaps in the system:

- 1) create mechanisms to account for and allocate points if/when repeat victimisation occurs.
- 2) instil tools that consider different severity levels of incidents/crimes.
- 3) considers the different impacts and 'lived experiences' of victims.
- 4) recognises the amount of time a resident is subject to repeat abuse.
- 5) employs a 'trauma-informed' approach that coincides with the Victim Charter.
- 6) Should include, consider and account for intersectionality with other vulnerabilities, such as domestic abuse and sexual violence.

The intimidation points system should be retained and expanded, focusing on the severity of the crime and impact on the resident, rather than just who is perpetrating the crime.

At present, intimidation points are largely only allocated when a paramilitary is involved in ongoing threats, which we feel is outdated.

*Victims are not concerned with who is carrying out crimes, just that they stop.*

Victim Support NI is aware that many crimes and incidents of intimidation that fall under the 'paramilitary' umbrella are often perpetrated by people on the periphery or coerced by the organisation to carry out these acts, rather than prominent members of proscribed organisations.

**Out of 158 sectarian cases supported by HCAS in 2020–21, 22 were confirmed to have some sort of paramilitary element in the case (13.9%)**

**Base 2**, the Housing Executive funded project within NIACRO, needs to be resourced sufficiently to meet the demand of the service if it is going to be the primary mechanism used by NIHE to verify paramilitary involvement. The project needs to cover all types of intimidation, including outside of the 'paramilitary umbrella'.



We **ask** that the NI Housing Executive standardise their statistics and use the findings to effect change where it's most needed and clarify any information gaps that may exist regarding those presenting as homeless.

We also **ask** that the NI Housing Executive publishes statistics on alleged paramilitary involvement in neighbour disputes, intimidation, criminal damage and/or in rehousing cases so that the housing and justice sectors can begin to demarcate trends and better address issues collaboratively. (Note: this is also requested of criminal justice institutions below).

The housing sector should work together with justice institutions to provide itself with more powers to evict residents who are repeat perpetrators of hate crime, harassment and intimidation.

The system lacks a 'victim-centred' approach and puts the onus on repeat victims to take responsibility to rehouse themselves rather than considering moving the perpetrator who is responsible for causing the issues in the first place:

- Early intervention in hate incidents should be prioritised before crimes escalate, i.e., preventing incidents from becoming crimes (relates to 'Restorative Justice' sections below).
- Employing a proactive rather than reactive approach where possible.

Hate Incident Practical Action (HIPA) scheme: requires awareness raising and accessibility amongst support agencies.

Private housing: We are aware that people within the private housing sector may not have the same flexibility as residents in social housing.

- Victims should not have to suffer further on account of previously being a victim of hate crime.
- We **commit** to work with Housing Rights NI and other sector partners to ensure policies are enacted to prevent hate-motivated behaviours.

## Community Safety & Provision:

There are gaps in support for hate crime victims when:

- a victim needs to remain in a home that is subject to repeat harassment / abuse / intimidation / criminal damage.
- a victim needs to be rehoused out of safety concerns.



### Home Safety & Security:

We **ask** that a uniform and centralised home safety equipment service be installed across NI, in partnership with PSNI and NI sector partners, which can allocate various safety and security items to keep residents safe when a victim has been repeatedly intimidated in their home as outlined below:

This can include modest household safety items and appliances, such as:

- Door stops
- Door, motion sensor and personal alarms and lights
- Various window and door locks / reinforcements
- Ring or Eufy doorbells / cameras

*We want to acknowledge great progress has been made in this regard with the 'Home Security Project' in Belfast City Council with Bryson Energy and the Belfast PCSP – we would like to see this duplicated and joined up across Northern Ireland.*

- A few districts have similar projects but they lack consistent accessibility, promotion and oversight.
- Such a uniform approach may help alleviate issues associated with 'postcode lotteries'.

## Rehousing:

Additional costs incurred by hate crime victims are rarely considered when a victim needs to be *immediately* rehoused in an emergency.

When vulnerable victims are rehoused, often the following burdens and costs are incurred by families through no fault of their own.

A previous project was administered by the Red Cross and the OFMDFM. We **ask** that a similar, modest '*Hate Crime Hardship Fund*' be re-established to support victims across the protected characteristics which considers the following costs/burdens for families:

- Increased travel
- Loss of income
- Childcare
- Medical & dental
- Mental & emotional health
- Pet care





## Health & Support

### Health Sector:

Victim Support NI **commits** to continue fostering partnership working with the Health & Social Care Trusts (HSCs) to identify, utilise and strengthen signposting opportunities and mechanisms to ensure that victims are supported in regard to their health and wellbeing needs, in addition to criminal justice advocacy.

*Progress has been made to date and Victim Support NI **commits** to continue to enhance this relationship.*

### Support Hubs:

Community Support Hubs are set up in each jurisdiction but lack accessibility, awareness and consistency across districts.

- We **ask** that inconsistencies are remedied and that Support Hubs are properly advertised and accessible across jurisdictions.
- We acknowledge there is good practice in some jurisdictions and our **ask** is only that services are more joined up within and across areas.

## Hate Expression & Hate Speech

When public hate expression manifests itself, such as graffiti, targeted, inflammatory or intimidating symbols / messaging towards a certain community or culture (and are associated with reported hate crimes and incidents), there is little clarity to whose responsibility it is to remove it. This lack of clarity undermines public confidence in institutions.

We **ask** that Judge Marrinan's Recommendation 15 is implemented:

### Recommendation 15

There should be a clear and unambiguous statutory duty on relevant public authorities including Councils, the Department for Infrastructure and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, to take all reasonable steps to remove hate expression from their own property and, where it engages their functions, broader public space.

We **ask** justice and infrastructural institutions to resolve this issue and establish a clear pathway for citizens to be able to access, report and resolve issues.

We **ask** that an agreed approach is firmly established with a 'single point of contact' designated for the public and third parties to refer to.

When applicable, advocacy organisations should lobby local and regional politicians and parties to apply pressure on authorities to properly address these issues.

We **commit** to providing steering and insight to the wider sector when lobbying for positive change for victims.

We acknowledge best practice of removing hate expression by ABC Council's 'Clean Neighbourhoods' initiative.





## Hate Speech

Victim Support NI **commits** to collaborating with sector colleagues to consider Judge Marrinan's recommendations (25 – 30) in the '[Hate Crime Legislation in Northern Ireland: Independent Review](#)' on hate speech – online and in public – and continuing to work with relevant stakeholders to help shape legislation that strikes an *appropriate balance* between protecting free speech while deterring hate speech that 'stirs up' hatred and leads to corrosive and/or violent behaviour, incidents and crimes.

## Migrant Issues

Many industries rely heavily on migrant communities. Without migrants' presence in Northern Ireland there would be significant labour shortages. Crimes which are committed with the intention of intimidating migrant communities into leaving NI has a tangible, real and immediate negative effect on everyone living in NI. Migrants' contribution to society is as essential as anyone else's. If we cannot effectively curb rising racial hate crimes, the quality of life of everyone in NI will suffer as a result.

## Restorative Justice:

Restorative justice is a mechanism that can help resolve many community issues and at times restore justice and relations between alleged victims and perpetrators, whether or not substantial harm has been experienced.

### Community Restorative Justice:

Restorative Justice is particularly helpful in hate incidents and to help diminish neighbourhood disputes and anti-social behaviour as an early intervention measure.



- While in hate incidents it is true that law enforcement has not found evidence of a crime, it does not mean one did not occur.
- Moreover, the effects of hate incidents on victims can be as impactful and traumatic as recorded crimes.
- In these situations, a traditional criminal justice route cannot be pursued.
- A way to resolve these issues (which often include repeat victimisation and reporting) is to get victims and offenders engaged in mediation to help resolve issues outside of the courts and before crimes occur.
- This is also a great tool to prevent younger alleged offenders from attaining a criminal record, promoting personal responsibility, promoting reconciliation and curbing instances of anti-social behaviour.
- There is a difference and also a desired balance to be struck between 'social' and 'criminal' justice. Community Restorative Justice provides support to communities in cases where traditional criminal justice mechanisms may not have all the answers to restore balance to relations.

Victim Support NI promotes restorative justice organisations and **commits** to continue signposting appropriate victims.

Victim Support NI **asks** that the use of '*Restorative Circles*' be promoted and utilised by restorative justice organisations in grassroots communities across NI.

Victim Support NI promotes *choice* in restorative justice providers:

- While we will always refer to providers familiar in local areas, we ask that victims be given a choice of organisations to carry out restorative practices.
- We believe choice will provide more opportunities to seek the greatest possible outcomes in cases and prevent potential or perceived biases and give greater agency and ownership to victims.

**A restorative circle is a technique that builds and restores relationships through equal opportunity sharing and listening. These talking circles proactively build the skills individuals need when conflicts arise because they give every individual the opportunity to speak and be heard. Restorative circles are especially beneficial for youth learning how to negotiate conflict, as they help them practice respectful listening and healthy self-expression.**

***"Restorative justice processes offer the opportunity to victims to enter into dialogue with the perpetrator, to have their voice heard and to see that the harm of hate crime is understood by perpetrators. Through this, the injustice of hate crime may be acknowledged, the dignity of the victim maybe restored and relations within society may become more respectful, more just and safer."***

**Tim Chapman, University of Strathclyde**

# Theme 2

## Justice

*It is also a criminal justice issue...*



## New legislation

Victim Support NI overwhelmingly agrees with the recommendations put forth in Judge Desmond Marrinan's 'Hate Crime Legislation in Northern Ireland: Independent Review'.

- While we understand and very much welcome that different statutory and community bodies will have different points of view on the minutiae within the proposed legislative changes, we feel there is general consensus that enhanced legislation, and the core of what Judge Marrinan has proposed, is the legislative step NI needs.
- Victim Support NI believes that legislation can provide the following positives:
  - 1) Makes it clear to the general public and victimised groups that hate crime is not acceptable.
  - 2) Provides a deterrence to repeat perpetration with its statutory aggravation model.
  - 3) Modestly increase successful hate crime convictions and more positive court outcomes for victims.
  - 4) Instil more public confidence in the criminal justice system by providing a more robust definition of hate crime enshrined in law.
  - 5) Provides more legitimacy within the criminal justice system by being able to charge offenders specifically for 'hate crime' and officially recording it on offenders' records.
- We very much welcome open dialogue regarding the intricacies of new legislation and we **commit** to continue working with justice partners to help discuss, enhance, promote and steer potential legislative changes.
- We also **commit** to further discussions with partners regarding the potential additions of other '*protected characteristics*', namely 'age' and 'gender'.

***“Legislation is an important component in combatting hate crime and Judge Marrinan’s review should inform and shape future legislation. Our Assembly has an opportunity to make sure our hate crime legislation is both victim-centred and developed in consultation with victims so that it accurately reflects their needs and concerns.***

***It is critically important that measures are in place to allow for post-legislative scrutiny to make sure it continues to be effective.”***

**Geraldine Hanna, Commissioner Designate for Victims of Crime NI**



## Public Policy

Though legislation is contingent on passing through the Northern Ireland Assembly, the *policies and framework* adopted by individual statutory organisations is not.

We **ask** that each statutory institution and Executive department (along with community organisations) adopts and enacts policies within the framework that encompasses Judge Marrinan's core recommendations:

- 1) to ensure public institutions are pre-emptively actioning and adapted to incoming legislation if/when it is passed through the Assembly
- 2) so that NI's policies fall in line with other jurisdictions



## Hate Assessment

It has been found that the policing and PPS processes for assessing hate motivations in investigations are not aligned.

We **ask** that these processes are brought into closer symbiosis and best practice between the two systems is fostered and shared so that the hate elements within cases are not lost through criminal justice processes.

- These should be pursued with or without new legislation.
- This is necessary to ensure consistency throughout the 'victims' journey' as victims move from agency to agency along the criminal justice process.

## Intersectionality

Alongside the above, we **ask** that legislation includes clauses on 'intersectionality' as outlined in Judge Marrinan's recommendations, as we are aware of many victims that are targeted on the basis of two or more perceived or real characteristics:

### **Recommendation 9**

All current protected characteristics in Northern Ireland – race, religion, disability and sexual orientation should continue to receive protection under the proposed model set out in Recommendation 2, together with the new recommended protected characteristics of age, sex/gender and variations in sex characteristics. For the avoidance of doubt, the protected characteristic of sex/gender includes transgender identity. The protected characteristics will be protected for all purposes including any amended public order provisions.

### **Recommendation 10**

Provision should be made for any future legislation to be framed in such a way as to allow any other protected characteristic to be added to the list of protected characteristics referred to in Recommendation 9 above by statutory instrument if sufficient evidence emerges to show such a group or groups are victims of hate crime or hate speech. The reasoning behind this recommendation is to allow suitable protection to be provided in the changing circumstances of the time.

### **Recommendation 11**

Any new legislation should provide appropriate recognition of the importance of intersectionality and be reflected in the drafting of the statutory aggravations to existing offences referred to in Recommendation 2.



## Define Sectarianism

While the other 'protected characteristics' are defined and enshrined in law, 'sectarianism' lacks a legal definition.

We **ask** the following recommendations from Judge Marrinan's 'Hate Crime Legislation in Northern Ireland: Independent Review' are included in any potential legislative changes to hate crime law:

### **Recommendation 12**

The findings of the report of the Working Group on defining sectarianism in Scots law in November 2018 should be applied in Northern Ireland – subject to any necessary adjustments.

### **Recommendation 13**

There should be a new statutory aggravation for sectarian prejudice. It is recommended that the introduction of the new offence of statutory aggravation for sectarian prejudice should be carefully monitored by the proposed Hate Crime Commissioner on an annual basis and provide an annual report to the Northern Ireland Assembly

### **Recommendation 23**

The work of the Hate Crime Advocacy Service should be expanded and placed on a permanent statutory footing to ensure a more sustainable funding model with specialised advocates appointed to support victims for all protected characteristics thus ensuring that the right to advocacy acknowledged in the Victims Charter is guaranteed. For the avoidance of doubt, such specialised advocates should include a dedicated religious hate crime advocate who can also deal with sectarian hatred. The proposed dedicated advocate for sex/gender could also deal with any victims regarding variation of sex characteristics.

## Further Considerations

In Northern Ireland, 'sectarianism' should be clearly defined and enshrined in any new hate crime legislation and prioritised by all justice institutions as an immediate mechanism to ensure victims across all categories are sufficiently and equally protected under the law.

We **ask** that Judge Marrinan's further recommendations and considerations are included in legislation:

- Sectarianism in Northern Ireland should account for 'community background' and 'nationality' associated with NI's unique history and legacy of conflict.
- Sectarianism should include all ethnic, cultural and national 'identifiers' in addition to or alongside of 'religion'.
- While someone's religion may signify their community background, it is not the sole identifier that can be used to assess whether a sectarian hate crime has occurred.
- The law should include members or perceived members of communities regardless of whether they practice or adhere to a particular religion / denomination or not.
- Clauses on perception should be included, as often someone may be a victim of a sectarian motivated crime based on the community background they're perceived to be from, whether or not this is accurate.
- Legislation and the definition should also conform to and comply with international standards.

Not including these tenets will only continue to undermine confidence in public institutions.

## Organised Crime

We **ask** that the justice system ensures that victims of organised crime should receive the same state interventions and support as victims of paramilitary violence, and generally the public sector should continually review the distinction between organised crime and paramilitarism, while monitoring both and demarcating where they are intertwined.

We also **ask** that justice institutions put their prime focus on dismantling paramilitarism and organised crime leadership and structures from the 'top down', rather than on periphery members, who often act under the influence of or are coerced by prominent members of these organisations.

We **ask** that when there are high instances of organised crime/paramilitary intimidation in certain estates related to hate crime that these are demarcated by justice institutions as trends and that local organised crime leadership is held to account.

- This would aid the justice sector in being proactive in addressing root causes of crimes rather than reacting to symptoms.
- This will also help avoid 'siloed thinking' that treats individual crimes carried out at the behest of organised crime groups in isolation of each other.
- Doing so can help diminish intimidation and hate crimes across different severity levels as these organisations begin to relinquish control on communities.
- This will also diminish the prevalence of loan-sharking and financial coercion that often leads periphery community members to perpetrate crimes on behalf of these criminals.

We also **ask** that PSNI, the PPS and the Executive Programme on Paramilitarism, Criminality & Organised Crime begin to record every time a paramilitary/organised crime member and/or organisation is alleged or perceived to be involved in cases so that these statistics and trends can be collated and researched.

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*“Lack of accurate and transparent data on paramilitary involvement in hate crimes, prevents effective state and civic society responses to this issue. It is essential that all agencies begin collating and disseminating information on paramilitary involvement in hate crimes, including when it is based on perception by the victim.*

*Things will not get better unless there is a change of approach: the existing proliferation of hate expression has a very harmful effect on those communities it is targeted against. It is time to move away from non-intervention towards zero tolerance.*

*The recommendation for a statutory duty on relevant public authorities to take “all reasonable steps to remove hate expression from their own property and, where it engages their functions, broader public space” has received widespread support. Work needs to be taken forward to ensure this recommendation is reflected in upcoming Hate Crime legislation. In the interim, we urge relevant public authorities to amend their (written or unwritten) policies and formally commit to taking reasonable steps to remove items when they constitute hate expression.”*

Úna Boyd, Committee on the Administration of Justice



## Ideology

We acknowledge the rise of different populist groups and ideologies across the political spectrum that are often organised around or characterised by 'in vs out group' thinking, behaviour and actions.

We **ask** that the justice sector continue to monitor the activities and evolution of these groups and ideas, identifying intersectionality with hate crime issues and, if/when necessary, form task groups and strategies to curb these issues when they arise.

It is hoped that the monitoring and diminishing of paramilitaries, organised crime and extremist ideologies, over time, will reduce the need for and prevalence of targeted intimidation of protected groups in various communities.

While hate on the individual level may persist, the coercive elements that often lead to these crimes will be less prevalent.



## After Court Restorative Justice

We **commit** to continue to promote and enable the use of restorative practices post-court to help seek resolutions/closure not always afforded through traditional criminal justice for victims.

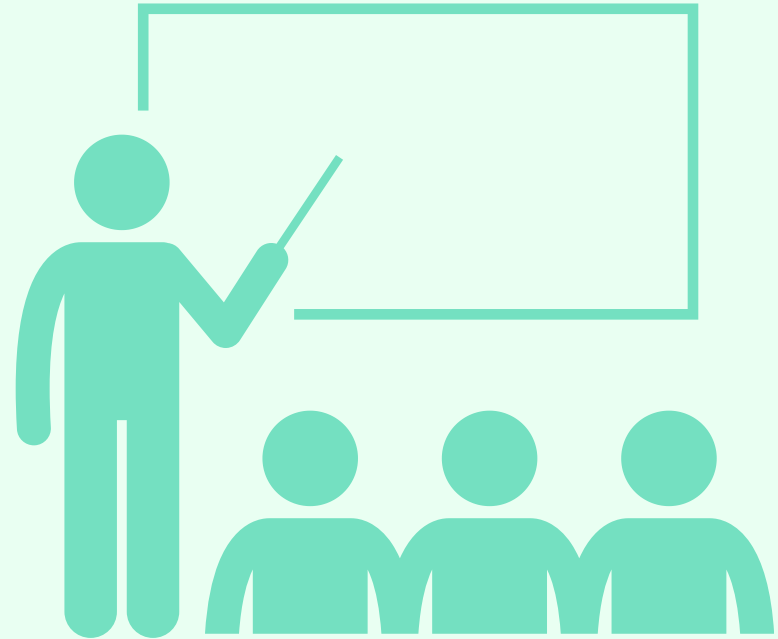


# Theme 3

## Education, Training & Capacity Building

*The central theme coming out of National Hate Crime Awareness Week was 'education'.*





## Schools & Young People

Age-appropriate education initiatives and training on diversity and inclusion should start as early as possible to diminish the significance of 'difference'.

- Victim Support NI **commits** to work with the Department of Education, the Education Authority, local schools, youth organisations and alongside PSNI to provide presentations, engagements, events, training, tools and awareness-raising to help promote diversity and diminish the presence of hate and bullying in schools.
- This way, students are more adapted to an increasingly diverse NI as they journey through their formative years onto adulthood.

## Bullying Type Behaviour

Victim Support NI also upholds and promotes the tenets of the 'Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016' (and its 2021 updates).

Victim Support NI has demarcated inconsistencies in reporting and handling of hate-motivated 'bullying-type behaviour' in schools.

We **ask** that additional legislation, policies, procedures, norms, pressure and onus is bestowed on all schools to report *all* instances of bullying to the Education Authority and the Department of Education.

While we think it is vitally important that all bullying statistics and trends per school are made available to the public...

- at a *minimum*, we ask that overarching youth 'bullying-type behaviour' incidents are recorded per 'protected characteristic' category and made available so that these statistics can be compared and contrasted to wider hate crime and incident statistics and trends.

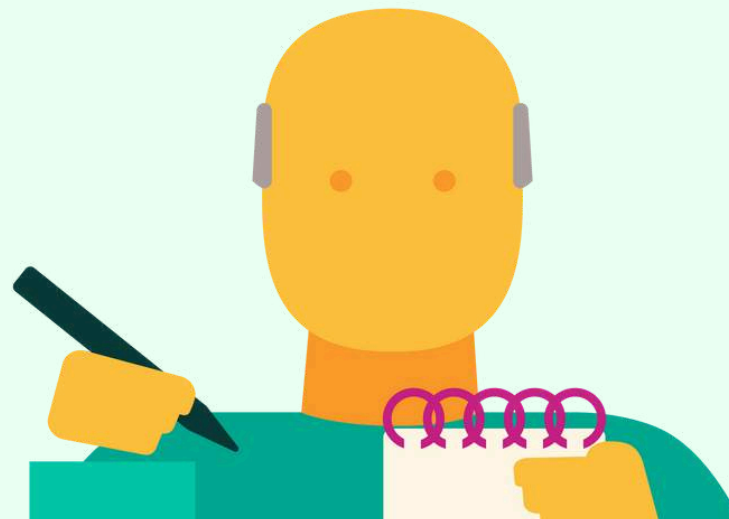




## Community

Victim Support NI, alongside sector partners, **commits** to facilitate diversity/inclusion and 'capacity building' training with community groups/organisations and private businesses to foster good relations, build resilience and the capacity of communities to advocate for themselves independently if and when hate-related issues occur.

- This training will be 'bespoke' and tailored to the individual needs and trends of the areas/communities training is provided to.
- It will incorporate the 'lived experiences' of trainers and trainees wherever possible and relevant.
- This will include 'how to be an active bystander' training, which will aid individuals and communities in gaining 'soft skills' in order to be effective witnesses and safely intervening where possible to prevent further crimes and report to police



### ***How to be an Active Bystander:***

*Being an active bystander means being aware of when someone's behaviour is inappropriate or threatening and choosing to challenge it. If you do not feel comfortable doing this directly, then get someone to help you, such as a friend or someone in authority.*

*When we intervene, we signal to the perpetrator that their behaviour is unacceptable. If such messages are constantly reinforced within our community, we can shift the boundaries of what is considered acceptable and problem behaviour can be stopped.*

*Learning to recognise when someone is in danger and how you can intervene safely is an essential skill. Safely intervening could mean anything from a disapproving look, interrupting or distracting someone, not laughing at a sexist or a violent joke, talking to a friend about their behaviour in a non-confrontational way, to caring for a friend who's experienced problematic behaviour. Other times, it means asking friends, staff, or the police for help.*

## **Ongoing Training**

While employees, practitioners and business leaders across the public, private and third sectors may receive anti-discriminative and various diversity trainings, Victim Support NI **asks** that ongoing 'refresher' and 'levelling-up' anti-hate training be readily available, prioritised and delivered across sectors and organisational ranks.

- Victim Support NI **commits** to develop, tailor and facilitate this training, alongside other sector partners.
- We also plan to aid trainees in better understanding how and why hate manifests itself, focussing on underpinning societal issues that may result in destructive behaviour, actions and harm.

## Newcomer Induction

Northern Ireland can be a confusing place for incoming migrants that poses unique challenges and complexities.

Victim Support NI **asks** that statutory organisations, the community and migrant sectors are resourced to curate and facilitate an induction programme available to all newcomers that also involves members of local communities to foster good relations between locals and migrants:

- Prioritises racial hate crime 'interface areas'.
- Prioritises the most vulnerable members of society, i.e., asylum seekers, refugees and socioeconomically deprived local communities.
- Centres on 'busting myths' that may exist across and within communities to help foster better relations.

*We want to acknowledge that this type of training has progressed in south Belfast.*

*"Training provided by people with lived experience can be a powerful and meaningful way in which to help people relate to one another in a safe non-judgmental environment. Learning together can empower each of us as individuals to be more knowledgeable about diversity, equity and inclusion. This will give us the tools to be able respond to situations in a constructive and positive manner."*

**Fergal Quinn, Building Communities Resource Centre**



# Theme 4

## Public Knowledge & Confidence

*An informed people is one of the best guarantees of  
a continuing democracy*

Harry F. Banks



## Awareness Raising

One of the greatest barriers to effectively addressing hate crime is lack of knowledge of hate crime, how to report it, how to navigate the courts and access available support.

- Victim Support NI **commits** to facilitating the 'We Stand Together' anti-hate crime campaign to raise awareness and promote the themes and commitments put forth in this Manifesto.
- Our goal is to foster confidence in police, the criminal justice system and the courts.

We recognise best practice and are here to work alongside of other initiatives, including the PSNI's very successful 'Put Yourself in Their Shoes' campaign.

*"Our hope is that the campaign and the tenets of this Manifesto will reverberate across decades and generations to come, positively transforming this place we call home"*

**Michael Avila, Hate Crime Advocacy Service**

*"The better people can understand their rights and access them, the better the system is"*

**Jolena Flett, Victim Support NI**

We see the We Stand Together Campaign as only the beginning of our cross-sector collaboration to better address hate crime.

# Conclusion

We have discussed the many 'gaps' in addressing hate crime, but not the *benefits* of effectively tackling it...

## Socioeconomic Benefits:

We feel it is pertinent to acknowledge the many socioeconomic benefits that come with more effectively addressing hate crime in partnership:

### Tangible benefits:

Less public money spent on:

- Medical care & Mental health
- Police & fire services
- Advocacy
- Justice
- Property repairs
- Infrastructure

Boost to the economy & productivity

Boosts to tourism

Boost to employment & skills attainment

### Intangible benefits/Quality of Life:

- Less physical, mental & emotional pain/suffering
- Better cohesiveness & sense of community
- More safety & security in society
- More confidence in the criminal justice system

We want people to be able to make informed decisions that lead to a more respectful and peaceful society for all. We want to work with people of different backgrounds to ensure that any biases or prejudices that may persist are not acted upon.

***“Safety is not the absence of threat; it’s the presence of connection”***

**Gabor Maté**

Northern Ireland has the roadmap and possesses a distinguished history in diminishing ‘hate’; it just needs to manifest these ideals again.

***“NI has the mechanisms, via the Good Friday / Belfast Agreement, to navigate contemporary issues of hate and create a more empathetic and understanding society. All we have to do is use the same principles that served us in the past in the present.”***

**Takura Makoni, ACSONI**

**‘We Stand Together’, 19th October 2023**

# Asks



- 1) We **ask** that Northern Ireland's housing sector implement mechanisms within its rehousing, eviction and homelessness policies to ensure its system accounts for repeat victimisation and intimidation.
- 2) We **ask** that a uniform and centralised home safety equipment service be instilled across NI which can allocate various safety and security items to keep residents safe when a victim has been repeatedly intimidated in their home.
- 3) We **ask** that a modest 'Hate Crime Hardship Fund' be resurrected to support victims across the 'protected characteristics' and considers the costs/burdens for families (see page 14).
- 4) We **ask** that inconsistencies are remedied, and that Support Hubs are properly advertised and accessible across jurisdictions
- 5) We **ask** justice and infrastructural institutions to establish a clear pathway for citizens to be able to access, report and resolve issues related to hate expression
- 6) We **ask** that victims be given a choice of organisations to carry out restorative practices



- 7) We **ask** that each statutory institution and Executive department (along with community organisations) adopts and enacts policies that encompasses Judge Marrinan's core recommendations, whether legislation progresses or not.
- 8) We **ask** that Judge Marrinan's recommendations relating to the implementation of definition for sectarianism are implemented in any new hate crime legislation.
- 9) We **ask** that the justice system ensures that victims of organised crime should receive the same state interventions and support as victims of paramilitary violence.
- 10) We **ask** that ongoing 'induction', 'refresher' and 'levelling-up' anti-hate training be readily available, prioritised and delivered across sectors, ranks and backgrounds.

# Commitments



- 1) We **commit** to continuing to work with partners across sectors to ensure that victims of hate crime are properly supported.
- 2) We **commit** to continue fostering partnership working with the Health & Social Care Trusts (HSCs) to identify, utilise and strengthen signposting opportunities.
- 3) We **commit** to continue signposting appropriate victims to and working with restorative justice institutions.
- 4) We **commit** to continue working with justice partners to help discuss, enhance, promote and steer potential legislative changes.
- 5) We **commit** to work with the Department of Education, the Education Authority, local schools, youth organisations and alongside PSNI to provide presentations, engagements and awareness raising activities to help promote diversity and diminish the presence of hate and bullying in schools.
- 6) We **commit** to facilitating diversity / inclusion and 'capacity building' training with community groups / organisations and private businesses to foster good relations and build the capacity of communities to advocate for themselves independently.
- 7) We **commit** to facilitating a 'We Stand Together' anti-hate crime campaign to raise awareness and promote the themes, asks and commitments put forth in this Manifesto.

### 'We Stand Together'

On 19th October 2023, Victim Support NI, along with the Belfast Policing & Community Partnership (Belfast PCSP), the Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ), HSBC and Housing Rights NI, hosted the 'We Stand Together' event for National Hate Crime Awareness Week (NHCAW).

The event hosted guest speakers, Professor Tim Chapman of Strathclyde University and Ruth Walker on behalf of the Belfast PCSP, to discuss restorative justice and assess the needs of victims of hate crime in Belfast and beyond.

The event included filmed interviews, two facilitated panel discussions, wider discussions and thought-provoking interactive activities with the following representatives and organisations:

Crucially, the event included contributions from various stakeholders with 'lived experience' of hate crime and focused on the importance of continuing to advocate on behalf of their own and other communities.

Signatories

- Victim Support NI
- Migrant Centre NI
- The Rainbow Project
- Committee on the Administration of Justice
- Professor Tim Chapman
- African & Caribbean Support Organisation Northern Ireland
- Disability Action
- Building Communities Resource Centre
- Training For Women Network