

NORTHERN IRELAND
HATE CRIME CAMPAIGN



WE STAND TOGETHER
M I N I - M A N I F E S T O
ADDRESSING HATE CRIME
IN SOUTH BELFAST



Introduction

Hate crime remains a significant concern in south Belfast, exacerbated by upheaval over summer 2024.

To effectively address these challenges, a collaborative and proactive approach is required, ensuring that all communities feel safe, valued and included.

This 'Mini-Manifesto' has been developed based on insights gathered from 'We Stand Together' OCN Level 3 Pilot Training delivered by Victim Support NI between 10-12 February 2025, incorporating feedback, workshop discussions and responses from key stakeholders across south Belfast and beyond.

This Mini-Manifesto builds upon Victim Support NI's 'Northern Ireland Hate Crime Manifesto' launched in June 2024.

The workshops and compilation of this model were accomplished by using participative approaches. This means the resolutions proposed below were arrived at by people who live, work and are personally invested in south Belfast and its future.




These are community solutions to community issues, from the community



The Issues

Several key issues contribute to hate crime in south Belfast:


- **Social housing shortages and gentrification** – The reduction of social housing, loss of businesses and economic opportunities, and increased gentrification lead to frustration and a perceived lack of opportunity among long-standing communities.
 - **Political disconnect** – A gap exists between policy decisions and the lived experiences of local communities. [Note: Add design of the cycle of political conversation idea here.]
 - **Lack of cultural awareness** – Insufficient education on cultural diversity, local history and nuances among both locals and newcomers.
 - **Under-reporting and lack of trust** – Many victims of hate crime do not report incidents due to fear of repercussions or lack of trust.
 - **Fragmented responses and duplication of efforts** – Inefficiencies exist in the coordination of public sector and community-based initiatives.
 - **Empathy fatigue and resource limitations** – Public and community sector organisations struggle with workload and sustained commitment.
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The Issues

- **Youth engagement and address anti-social behaviour** – Anti-social behaviour, particularly among young people, contributes to division and tensions.
- **Scapegoating of issues** – There is a tendency within communities and society to deflect day-to-day frustrations onto different groups rather than being able to tackle systemic issues head-on.
- **Disinformation in media** – Both traditional and social media contribute to the spread of misinformation about local community issues, while some disinformation is deliberately spread from within communities outwardly toward different groups.

Generally, it was agreed that the main issues in south Belfast come down to class rather than divisions across the six 'protected characteristics' of hate crime. If more efforts were seen to bridge class differences—irrespective of cultural or ethnic background—it is believed that vast improvements would be seen across this part of the city.



Our Asks

(of the wider community & governance)
The vision for south Belfast is one of inclusion, safety and shared prosperity, with the following goals:

- Increased cultural awareness through two-way training and education.
- Stronger interfaith and intercultural dialogue to build understanding.
- Effective restorative practices to repair harm and foster reconciliation.
- Improved accountability in public services through better reporting mechanisms and service standards.
- Stronger partnership working across sectors to maximise impact and resources.
- Active bystander training incorporated into public, youth and professional settings.
- Policy advocacy and legislative change to reflect the evolving needs of diverse communities



Our Aims

- Economic and social empowerment for all communities, including support for local small businesses, apprenticeship schemes, vocational training and entrepreneurship.
- Engagement with young people and schools to normalise diversity and challenge prejudices from an early age.
- Holding media/social media accountable for their role in spreading misinformation and typecasting communities
- Utilising myth-busting approaches to counter misinformation and prevent the scapegoating of communities
- Promoting wrongdoers taking responsibility for their actions and engaging in restorative processes.



Our Asks

- Organising 'town hall' dialogue events – Providing a space where similarities, differences, issues and problems can be openly discussed among community members
- Creating environments that bring people together – Utilising engaging activities as the 'glue' to bring people together, rather than overt community initiatives.

It was generally agreed that if the practical, economic and resourcing issues in these communities improve – i.e., housing, employment, entrepreneurship – that good relations would increase across the district and tensions eased.



Our

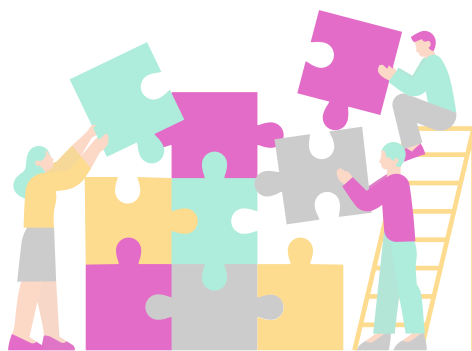
Commitments



(what we plan to do)

To achieve these goals, the following commitments will be implemented:

- **Youth Empowerment Programmes** – Training young people to become community advocates.
- **Newcomer induction programmes** – Bringing both locals and migrants together to learn from each other, understanding the nuances of navigating NI society, and recognising that integration is a ‘two-way street’ and much can be learned from each other.
- **Localised hate crime reporting centres** – Enhanced community-based support systems in local areas to aid in reporting and build community confidence.
- **Utilising international examples of best practice** – Promoting shared history through historical relationships with other countries, peoples and places.
- **Commissioning a city/regional comparison** to gain lessons learned from other jurisdictions.

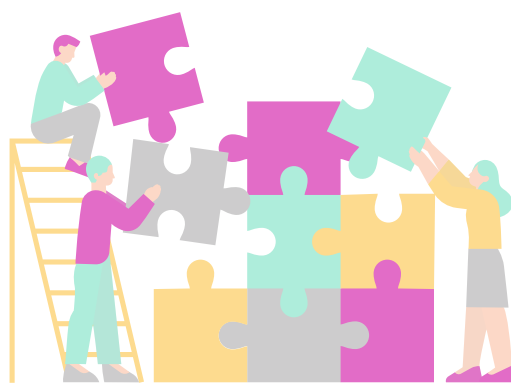


Our

Commitments



- **Promoting community ownership of change** – Ensuring communities feel they are an integral part of transformation rather than having change imposed upon them.
- **Asking locals what 'diversity' means to them** – Rather than prescribing a definition, engaging communities in dialogue to shape meaningful and relevant diversity initiatives.
- **Utilising campaigns and social media effectively** – Sharing 'wins' and recognising progress, helping to break negative news cycles and stories.
- **Dispelling myths about community identity** – Clarifying that being from a certain background does not equate to holding specific ideologies or opinions, helping prevent typecasting toward and within communities.
- **Utilising effective public institutions** – Public bodies (i.e. the Equality Commission and NIHRC) should provide grassroots workshops explaining, in plain language, the importance and benefits of equality and anti-discrimination laws, ordinances and norms.



Pursuing the above will create more ‘buy-in’ and understanding in communities most in need of these initiatives, helping bridge the gap between policymakers, academia and grassroots communities while promoting a culture of collaboration and shared responsibility.






Impact

By implementing this model, south Belfast will benefit in several key ways:

- Safer and more cohesive communities with reduced hate crimes and incidents.
- Increased trust in public institutions through clear accountability and responsiveness.
- Greater cultural understanding and social cohesion as a result of education and dialogue.
- Economic growth and sustainability by supporting local businesses and community-led initiatives.
- Empowered young people who are more likely to reject hate and embrace inclusivity.
- A replicable model that can be expanded beyond south Belfast to other areas facing similar challenges.

***The last point is crucial – we will be looking to duplicate these workshops and create Mini-Manifestos in localities across NI. Please contact us to avail of the workshops and aid your communities:
admin@hcasni.org.uk***

We want to thank the people of south Belfast for their willingness to have difficult conversations to arrive at the above initiatives. We look forward to continuing working with you to achieve them!





HATE CRIME ADVOCACY SERVICE

Support for you each step of the way

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