

Hate Crime

This briefing provides an overview of hate crime, identifies good practice and support in prevention and management for housing organisations.

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promoting equality in housing
hybu cydraddoldeb ym maes tai

Background

The past 12 months has seen an increase in protests and polarisation around social and racial issues. Hate crimes including, antisemitic, sexual orientation and anti-Muslim have been on the rise.

This summer saw race riots and protests throughout the UK, often fuelled by social media, targeting ethnically diverse communities, and leaving many people fearful for their safety and not leaving their homes.

Wales has ambitious plans to be both a Nation of Sanctuary and an Anti-Racist nation. Although riots seen elsewhere in the UK have not taken place in Wales on the same scale, it's naïve to be complacent about levels of hate crime and how our communities are feeling. While historically Wales may have been perceived as a welcoming and inclusive place, no community or organisation is immune from prejudice.

Hate crimes and incidents

A hate incident is any incident, perceived by the victim or any other person, as being motivated by prejudice or hostility towards specific personal characteristics:

- Disability
- Race
- Religion
- Sexual orientation
- Transgender identity

If a victim or witness first reports a hate act to police, it should be flagged on police systems as a 'hate incident.' For police forces, this triggers a hate crime investigation, as outline by South Wales Police in this [video](#). Should the hate incident(s) be an infringement of the law it is then determined a hate crime, and this gives police increased powers to prosecute. Hate crime is any criminal offence where the perpetrator is motivated by hostility or demonstrates hostility towards the above characteristics.

Housing organisations should also have systems and training which flags any Anti-Social behaviour perceived to be motivated by hate or prejudice as such. They should then investigate and deal with the incident(s) according to their hate crime policy.

Victims of hate crime are often more affected than victims of non-hate related crime with a deeper impact on confidence and mental health.

The biggest study of hate crime in Wales shows that it is highly likely to happen in and around people's homes. Social and private tenants are one of the most vulnerable groups in terms of impacts and effects of experiencing hate crime.

Hate Crime Policy

It is good practice for all housing organisations to develop hate crime policies. Tai Pawb have produced guidance on what to include. Tackling hate crime needs awareness raising and training for all staff, so they are aware of their responsibilities, which may differ depending on their role.



Our Hate Crime and Housing Toolkit outlines how housing organisations can tackle hate crime through awareness, prevention, increasing reporting, supporting victims, working with perpetrators, and tenant engagement.

Case Study: POBL GROUP



POBL have signed up to the Victim Support Cymru Hate Crime Charter and are now working with Victim Support Cymru to secure the trust mark. POBL are also developing toolbox talks for maintenance teams focusing on educating teams on how to recognise signs of hate crime when they are working out in communities and in customers' homes and what they should do if they suspect someone may be a victim of hate crime. In the future, this training will be extended to POBL's customer services teams.

Incorporating Hate crime awareness into processes

Housing organisations should consider the guidance provided in our [toolkit](#) and evaluate the extent to which these preventive measures are embedded in their service areas, processes and understood by their staff. Examples of this include:

Allocations

Where organisations know that there is a history of hate related incidents near the property considered for allocation, it is important to make aware the potential residents from diverse groups affected. Allocations teams should also be aware of applicants' potential history of victimisation, vulnerability, or history of perpetration.

Repairs and Maintenance

An individual may need similar repairs repeatedly (e.g., broken windows) or there could be a pattern in a particular neighbourhood of people with protected characteristics reporting similar types of repairs. Repairs staff and contractors could be trained to recognise patterns and report them.

Prevention

There is a need to shift the emphasis from intervention to prevention when addressing the rising tensions and worsening community relations – which can be a precursor for hate crime. These issues may be fuelled by various factors, such as negative media (and social media) coverage of topics like immigration, poverty, social housing, and disability. To proactively address this challenge, housing organisations can adopt strategies outlined in our [Toolkit](#).

Raising awareness and reporting

It is estimated around 70% of hate crime goes unreported. Victims do not report for a variety of reasons, including lack of belief that anything would be done about their report, fear of further victimisation and simply lack of awareness around hate crime. Increasing awareness of hate crime and reporting mechanisms, amongst staff and tenants/clients can address this.

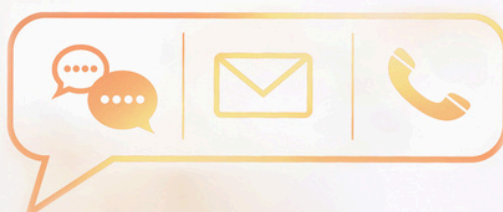
Tools to raise awareness include:

- Hate crime training, awareness sessions for trade staff/contractors
- Taking part in Hate Crime Awareness Week Wales coordinated by Victim Support, who provides partner packs, newsletter with ideas and calendar of events
- Signing up to Victim Support hate crime charter and get accredited by Victim Support Wales
- Promoting and support victims to report hate crime to the Wales Hate Support Centre

People can experience a wide range of barriers to reporting hate incidents directly to the police. On these occasions, Third Party Reporting Centres can function as an 'in-between,' that specialist link between the victim, the police and housing provider. Wales' major hate crime third party reporting centre is the Wales Hate Support Centre (WHSC).



Housing organisations should make sure that residents/clients are aware of a contact within their organisation where hate incidents can be reported.



Working with Perpetrators: trauma-informed approach

At times, perpetrators of hate crime, just like those perpetrating Anti-Social-Behaviour, may be dealing with unmet support needs which exacerbate or cause the hate incidents to occur. These may be mental health issues or distress, drug/alcohol dependency, learning difficulties, domestic abuse, and other well-being issues.

Trauma informed approaches, as advocated by [Shelter Cymru](#), recognises the need to safeguard the health, safety and rights of victims while recognising and understanding that many of the people perpetrating hate crime can also be vulnerable. This [blog](#) by Restorative Justice outlines further trauma-informed ways of working.

Since the changes associated with Renting Homes Act and approaches such as 'no eviction to homelessness,' organisations which reach the difficult decision to evict, should ensure that alternative accommodation is available, and all other avenues of support have been exhausted.

Participation and reviewing policies

We strongly encourage that all hate crime policies are developed with input from tenants/clients who may have experienced hate crime. This can help ensure support as well as building confidence in the process. Tai Pawb further recommend undertaking an [Equality Impact Assessment](#) on hate crime policies.

Further resources

Further information is available through our [Hate crime and Housing Toolkit](#). We also offer training for housing staff on hate crime through [E-Learning](#), as well as in person. Contact Info@taipawb.org for more details.