

Autumn 2020 Hate Crime Awareness Week

Hate Crime Awareness Week Webinars

This October we went online to mark National **Hate Crime Awareness Week in Barnet**. Thank you to all who joined our Webinars. Don't worry, if you missed our discussions, they will be available online via the Barnet Mencap's Hate Crime Awareness Week Webpage: <https://www.barnetmencap.org.uk/what-we-offer/hate-crime/hate-crime-awareness-week/>

Our first Webinar focused on **Disability Hate Crime and Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults**. Hate Crime against disabled people has no place in our community. Unfortunately, when disabled people are victims of harassment, bullying or abuse, too often these incidents are not prosecuted as hate crimes. This is despite evidence that the victim has been targeted because of who they are – they are seen as vulnerable or an “easy target”. The crime that has been committed against them is because in the perpetrator's eyes they are perceived as inherently vulnerable and this alters the way in which they are treated.

Presentations on Safeguarding and Disability Hate Crime covered issues such as Financial Abuse, Targeting Homes, Grooming and Online Bullying against vulnerable adults. Our Panel Members from Barnet Council, Barnet Adult Safeguarding Board, Barnet Mencap, The Barnet Group and the Metropolitan Police discussed how Barnet can ensure safeguarding of victims whilst ensuring that disability hate crimes by perpetrators are reported to the Police.

Our second Webinar focused on **Online Hate, Harassment and Extremism** and asked the question “*Are Hate Groups Still Active during the Pandemic?*”. With guest speakers from Facebook, ISD Global and Exit UK the discussion centered around how to detect online hate and extremism and protect ourselves and our communities using new reporting technology. Presentations focused on understanding how hate and extremism can be communicated through online video games and chat rooms and how to prevent spreading that hate from online platforms to out in the community.

Hate Crime Community Information Stands

The Metropolitan Police, Safer Transport Team have been out across the borough speaking to residents about any hate crime concerns they may have, whilst of course reminding people to follow social-distancing guidelines and wear face coverings on public transport. They were at Broadwalk Shopping Centre in Edgware at the start of the week where they spoke to over 30 residents about the importance of reporting hate crime. Residents signed up to become Hate Crime Reporting Champions pledging to report hate crime if they encounter it. Officers were also able to give on-the-spot urgent advice to three residents about hate crime concerns.

On Friday the team were at Golders Green Bus Station where they engaged with over 20 residents encouraging reporting of hate crime if they encounter it.

Autumn 2020

Could you be a Hate Crime Reporting Champion?

During Hate Crime Awareness Week 2020, we reached out to our community to encourage reporting of hate crime by becoming a **Hate Crime Reporting Champion**. Increased reports allow the police and their partners to build up a statistical picture of hate crime hotspots, so they can target resources towards stopping it. This could include more police patrols or community workshops to bring people together.

Last year, over 200 people signed up to become Hate Crime Reporting Champions, pledging to report hate crime if they witness it. Reporting Champions continue to receive regular Hate Crime Bulletins and opportunities to attend workshops for refresher training. This year, following the pandemic, registration to become a Hate Crime Reporting Champion took place online. For details of how to register to become a **Hate Crime Reporting Champion**, visit:

<https://www.barnetmencap.org.uk/what-we-offer/hate-crime/hate-crime-awareness-week/>

Is Hate Crime continuing during the Pandemic?

Although there has been a reported reduction in face-to-face crime by strangers out on the streets, anti-hate crime agencies have reported an increase nationally in hate crime where the victim knows the perpetrator. This is known as interpersonal crime. There has been an increase nationally in hate related neighbour disputes. With people spending more time at home and frustrations building during lockdown, emotions can spill into hate speech directed at those close by.

There has also been an increase nationally in online hate crime. This commonly takes place through text messages, e-mail or on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram or Twitter and also via gaming forums. We encourage all residents to speak to the Police or one of Barnet's Reporting Centres if you have any concerns.

News from the Metropolitan Police

Figures

The Metropolitan Police have recorded the following types of hate crimes in Barnet from January to August 2020: Race and Religious – 533; Anti-Semitic – 84; Islamophobic – 14; Disability – 9; Homophobic – 46. Transgender – 2 offences.

Safer Transport Team Update

Barnet Safer Transport Team continues to see a reduction in hate crime on transport following the lockdown. In July, a suspect was reported for Racial Abuse towards a passenger on board a 268 Bus. Unfortunately, CCTV could not identify the male suspect on this occasion. In September there was an incident reported of Racial Abuse towards a passenger on board a 251 Bus. The investigation is ongoing. Also, in September a suspect was arrested for an offence of Racial abuse at a Bus stop in Brent Cross. The suspect was apprehended, and the victim is happy that the suspect is receiving Mental Health Support rather than pursuing prosecution on this occasion.

PCSO Michelle Davies reminds us:

"If you have ever been a victim of hate crime always report ASAP online at:

www.met.police.uk or Call 101 where an officer will be assigned to your case. Always ask for a crime reference number to receive updates. Did you know that the bus driver can call the police on your behalf if an offence occurs on board a bus? In emergencies always Dial 999."

You can also contact one of Barnet's Hate Crime Reporting Centres, which continue to provide services throughout the pandemic.

Vulnerable adults can receive telephone support and information on how to report hate crime to the Police. There is also information on other specialist support organisations which can be contacted at this time. Contact Barnet's Hate Crime Reporting and Support Officer, Reshma Hirani on 020 8349 3842 or at:

reshma.hirani@barnetmencap.org.uk