



Bedfordshire Police is committed to tackling hate crime

We are writing to you following the recent New Zealand terror attacks as we understand there might be some feelings of worry or unease within the Muslim community of Bedfordshire. We would like to reassure you that we are working in partnership with the Council of Mosques and Islamophobia Working Group to ensure harmony in the county, and that all hate crimes are taken seriously.

What is a hate crime?

A hate crime is a crime committed against someone because of their:

- Race
- Religion
- Sexuality
- Gender Identity
- Disability

What is Islamophobia?

Within the religious strand of hate crime is Islamophobia, which is described as “unfounded hostility towards Muslims, and therefore a fear or dislike of all or most Muslims.”

Bedfordshire Police recognises Islamophobia is present within our community, and takes active steps to address this form of hatred. We monitor levels by recording Islamophobic incidents or crimes under a separate category of hate crime.

How is it being tackled?

Bedfordshire Police boasts a dedicated Hate Crime Team which monitors and reviews all hate crimes and incidents on a daily basis. They also investigate these crimes in an effort to achieve a positive outcome for the victims involved. The force has the highest conviction rates for hate crime in the region, with 85 per cent of all cases brought to court achieving conviction.

Bedfordshire Police recognises that not all victims of hate crime wish to pursue matters to court, and ensure that victims' wishes are considered in all cases and, where possible, alternative civil disposals are sought. The Hate Crime Team also offers victims support via the Signpost Hub, as well as safeguarding.

The team also spends a lot of time engaging with local communities and schools in partnership with other agencies, such as the Anne Frank Trust, Council of Faiths, Council of Mosques, and Islamophobia Working Group, to educate and challenge prejudice and discrimination.

Sergeant Carl Perri, Tactical Hate Crime Lead, said: "My officers and I are committed to tackling hatred. Hate crime doesn't just affect the victim but also family, friends and the wider community and the effects can be wide reaching.

"Being threatened, attacked or abused because of identity can have a devastating impact, and can leave victims isolated and vulnerable.

"We cannot do anything, however, if incidents are not reported to us. I urge anyone who believes they have suffered a hate crime to report the matter, so we can work towards putting a stop to hate crime and show it won't be tolerated in Bedfordshire."

What can you do?

- You can report hate crime to police or encourage others to do so by contacting 101 (in an emergency call 999).
- You can also report online via www.report-it.org.uk.
- There are a number of community based third party reporting centres across the county where you can report hate crime and seek advice at a place where you may feel more comfortable speaking to individuals you know.