



Policy statement

Definitions

The Home Office defines hate crime as “any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility of prejudice towards someone based on a personal characteristic”. There are five centrally monitored strands of hate crime:

- Disability
- Race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality or national origins
- Religion or belief
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender or gender identity

Hate Crimes are a criminal offence where *anyone* believes the victim has been targeted for one of these categories, or any other actual or perceived difference. This can include physical attacks, threats of attacks, verbal abuse or insults.

Hate incidents are incidents that do not constitute a criminal offence but cause alarm, distress or harassment, where *anyone* believes the victim has been targeted because of these categories, or any other actual or perceived difference. This can include bullying, hoax calls, graffiti, displaying or circulating discriminatory literature.

Housing Services approach

Hate crimes and hate incidents can have devastating and psychological effects on victims. Lewisham Council condemns all forms of hate incident and crimes. As well as the council's wider commitments and duties, we also have landlord duties where we own and manage residential housing. We will deal with all reports of hate crimes and incidents as an emergency, and will offer the victim an interview within 24 hours of the incident being reported to us.

We will record incidents as hate crimes/incidents, and keep records of types and perceived reasons of hate crimes/incidents.

We will handle all information sensitively and confidentially/ We will not disclose the victim's details to the alleged offender without their permission.

Lewisham Council's Housing Service has an ASB policy that works in conjunction with this policy. We set out how we will support victims and witnesses of hate crimes, and how we will investigate cases. This includes assessing the level of risk to the victim and any witnesses, signposting to support agencies where applicable, and involving the complainant in decisions about what action we can and will take.

Support is not limited to what can be provided within our immediate services, but may also include referrals to other agencies for assistance, such as victim support, counselling, or mental health support or specialist agencies that fit the victim's needs. For example support for the LGBTQ+ community or disability support groups.

Support may also include carrying out security assessments and providing additional security to the victim's home. On some occasions we may need to assist the victim to move home



temporarily or permanently. If this is needed, we will do this in line with our ASB policy and our Allocation's Policy.

We will encourage victims and witnesses to report hate crimes to the police, and will support them to do so. If a victim does not wish to make a formal report, they can report anonymously through Crimestoppers.

Partnership working

We work in partnership with a number of internal and external, statutory and non-statutory bodies, to help support victims and witnesses of hate crimes and hate incidents, and to help prevent incidents. This includes (but is not limited to):

- The Metropolitan Police
- Lewisham Council's Safer Communities team
- Lewisham Council's Housing Options Service
- Social services
- Mental Health services
- Support agencies
- Probation service

Housing is represented on the Safer Lewisham Partnership board and complies with their [Hate Crime Manual](#).

Related policies

ASB Policy
Vulnerable Residents Policy

Policy development and review

This policy was developed to work in conjunction with our ASB policy and procedure, which included an equality assessment. This policy and the processes that implement it will be reviewed at regular intervals, with regular monitoring. This will include feedback from residents and partner agencies.

Replacing: Hate Crime policy statement 2023 (Lewisham Homes)	
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