

**Committee:** Overview and Scrutiny Commission

**Date:** 20 September 2016

**Subject:** Disability hate crime

Lead officer: Lyla Adwan-Kamara, CEO, Merton Centre for Independent Living

Lead member: Councillor Peter Southgate, Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Commission

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**Recommendations:**

- A. That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission discuss and comment on the report on “tackling hate crime amongst deaf and disabled people in Merton” provided by the Merton Centre for Independent Living (see Appendix A) and ask other questions as appropriate.
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**1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. The Commission, at its meeting on 7 July, agreed to ask Merton Centre for Independent Living to present its final report and to discuss with them the most effective way in which the Commission could support its work on disability hate crime. Members also agreed to ask Merton CIL to include information on the extent of under-reporting and reasons for this
- 1.2. An executive summary of the report from Merton Centre for Independent Living is provided in Appendix A.

**2 DETAILS**

- 2.1. Merton Centre for Independent Living (MCIL) have expressed concern that hate crimes against disabled people are under-reported and have therefore suggested this issue for scrutiny last year and again this year.
- 2.2. A hate crime is defined as a crime committed against someone because of their disability, gender-identity, race, religion or sexual orientation. It is perceived by the victim or any other person as being motivated by prejudice or hate.
- 2.3. A new Metropolitan Police initiative called Disability Hate Crime Matters has been launched to tackle the acknowledged under-reporting of disability hate crime. Many victims choose not to report it as they are fearful of retribution, lack confidence in police response or simply view hate crime as an inevitable occurrence in day to day life.
- 2.4. In 2014, 233 offences of all categories of hate crime (i.e. across all equality strands not just disability) were reported in Merton to the Metropolitan Police Service. This increased to 312 offences in 2015. In Merton, there are over 25,000 disabled people and extrapolation from the Crime Survey figures suggest that at least 125 people are estimated to have been a victim of a

disability hate crime. Comparison with the 6 recorded disability crimes in the 12 months to October shows the extent of under-reporting.

- 2.5. Merton Centre for Independent Living is working on hate crime against disabled people and have commissioned Stay Safe East to carry out research on hate crime in Merton, looking at disabled people's experiences and whether they report incidents, and how services respond to them, as well as the legal and policy background. The final report will look at how disabled people, the police and other services can work in partnership to ensure effective identification of hate crime against disabled people, and a positive response to victims so they get justice or resolution.
- 2.6. An executive summary of the final report is provided in Appendix A.

### **3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

Commission members may choose to ask questions and to identify further scrutiny work on this issue.

### **4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED**

- 4.1. Not applicable.

### **5 TIMETABLE**

- 5.1. Not applicable.

### **6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1. There are no property or resource implications at this time.

### **7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1. None for the purposes of this report.

### **8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1. None for the purposes of this report.

### **9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1. None for the purposes of this report.

### **10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

None for the purpose of this report.

### **11 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT**

Appendix A – Merton Centre for Independent Living report “tackling hate crime amongst deaf and disabled people in Merton”

### **12 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None