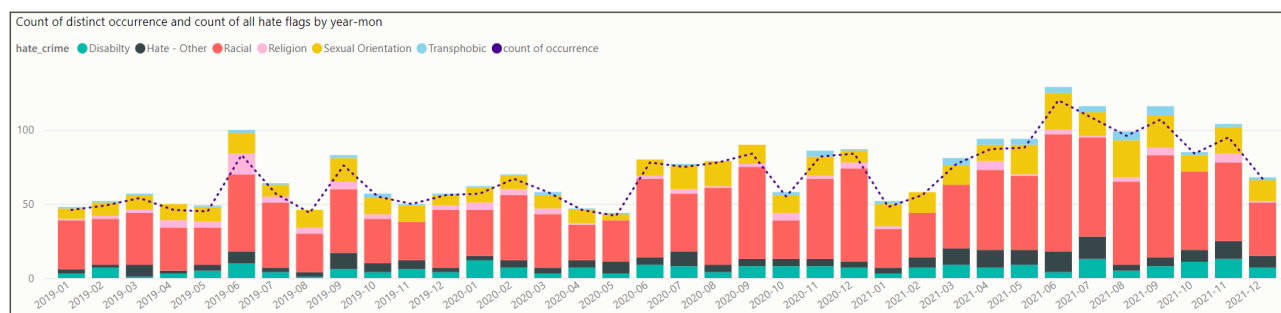


Tackling hate crime in North Yorkshire and York

The Commissioner is keen to promote the reporting of hate crime in North Yorkshire and York. Too often hate crime goes unreported and unrecognised, yet it has a high impact for victims. Much focus has been placed on ensuring North Yorkshire Police improve their response to hate crime so that victims have confidence in coming forward, and this is seeing higher reporting. The Commissioner's Supporting Victims in North Yorkshire Team has also been designated as an independent reporting centre so that victims of hate crime can report without having to contact the police, recognising that this can sometimes be a barrier.

Crime statistics



Nationally policing sees an annual increase in hate crime reporting of around 10%, which is also the case in North Yorkshire. This steady trend is reflective of an increased confidence in reporting and higher reporting rates which is very positive. There has been a particular increase in North Yorkshire over the last two years as our independent reporting centres have been established and awareness of this reporting option has grown.

Recent spikes also relate to incidents around Covid-19 where there were initial race hate incidents towards the Chinese community and more recently towards disabled people who are exempt from wearing a mask. There has also been an increase in homophobic and race hate towards teachers since pupils have returned to school after lockdown.

Race hate is the largest proportion of hate crimes, though it should be noted that this category is broad, including hate crime against ethnic white categories as well as ethnic minorities. Race related hate crimes in North Yorkshire are predominantly public order offences associated with the night-time economy targeting door staff, takeaway staff and taxi drivers. There is also a proportion of online crime centred around abuse over social media.

Disability hate tends to be related to violence and a proportion is also related to neighbour disputes.

Sanction

Hate crimes are punishable with a variety of sentencing options with the most serious resulting in prison sentences. The majority of incidents, however, stem from a lack of cultural understanding or awareness. Those related to the night-time economy are mostly due to drunkenness though this is not an excuse of course.

Working with the restorative justice service commissioned by the Commissioner, North Yorkshire Police have developed a Hate Crime Awareness course which is used in conjunction with a conditional caution. This sanction is used where it is supported by the victim and requires the perpetrator to attend the course. The course details the impact hate crime has on individuals and communities and also details the full range of outcomes possible within the law if they were to persist.

Misogyny

North Yorkshire Police is one of the only police services in the country that recognises misogyny as a hate crime. The challenge for this is that it is not recognised by the Crown Prosecution Service. North Yorkshire Police were invited to the House of Lords to present on these challenges and the benefits of the provisions made as part of the Misogyny Bill. As a result of this intervention there was high support from the Lords for the Bill which was passed. This provides a new sentencing remit to facilitate prosecution of misogyny.

The recognition of misogyny is particularly helpful in tackling crime against sex workers. Perpetrators of misogyny against sex workers often go on to commit worse offences, so reporting of misogyny can often be an early warning indicator that can help to prevent more serious crime.

Partnership approach

North Yorkshire Police work closely with the North Yorkshire Inclusive Communities Group and the York Hate Crime Working Group. North Yorkshire Police provide a quarterly performance report to both groups to help partners identify key trends and vulnerabilities.

North Yorkshire Police have also been working to expand the number of third-party reporting centres. The Supporting Victims in North Yorkshire service provided by the Commissioner and TrueVision are the main independent reporting centres. In York, North Yorkshire Police have worked with the York Traveller's Trust, York Race Equality Network, the York CVS and York Explore to train them to become independent reporting centres as well to support different groups (though anyone could report to them). These centres are important to increasing reporting amongst targeted groups as they will tend to report to organisations they can relate to rather than the police.

Future plans

The Commissioner and North Yorkshire Police are continuously looking at how their work to tackle hate crime and support the reporting of hate crime can be improved. North Yorkshire Police have been working with West Yorkshire Police to build a response to racism in football based on their best practice. They are also rolling out further training for officers on misogyny to ensure they are maximising understanding and awareness.

North Yorkshire Police are undertaking further work in schools to promote understanding of acceptable behaviours, and particularly in response to the recent increase in hate incidents

towards teachers. The Commissioner's Office is also considering the development of an Independent Hate Crime Scrutiny Panel to provide further assurance to the public about North Yorkshire Police's response.