

**Understanding Hate Crime**

**Living in Harmony forum, 13th October 2016, at PCHP, 73 Boswall Parkway.**

Attending: PC Sarah Hall, Wilson Masih, George Melville (Bethany Christian Trust), Sara Taylor (Edinburgh College), Cllr. Vicki Redpath, Aynsley McGurk (Muirhouse library), Jill Marple (Granton and Stockbridge Library), Helen Bourquin (Community Learning and Development), Sarah Neal (Children and Families worker RWCC), Nick Greener (Edinburgh Lothian Regional Equalities Council), Leda Mappouridou (ELREC), Anna Baran (Pilton Community Health Project), Anita Aggarwal (PCHP), Hannah Kitchen (Living in Harmony Development worker), Adam Farquhar (New LIH development worker), PC David Clark, PC Prince Durant, Melanie Ward (Procurator Fiscal), Kelly Phillips, Susan Vivers, Kenny Cameron (Spartans Community Football Academy).

Apologies: Donna Munro (Muirhouse Medical Practice), Dave McNab (Granton Youth Centre), Lynn McCabe (Community Learning and Development).

**Hate crime and reporting session – PC Prince Durant**

Please see slides for more detail. The session covered what a hate crime or hate incident is; how to take a report about a hate crime, what happens when a hate crime is reported.

We discussed reasons why people would not want to report a hate crime or incident to the police. This included lack of trust in police due to experiences in other countries or here, a sense that the incidents are a normal part of life and not worth reporting; not wanting to be a ‘snitch’; not wanting police to come to their house or flat.

This is part of why third party reporting (being able to report a hate crime to a community centre etc or other safe space) is so important.

**Nick Greener from Edinburgh Lothian Regional Equality Council**

Nick will shared about his work with young people in North Edinburgh. ELREC looked at hate crime statistics from 2014-15 and found that 10% of all race related hate crime in Scotland happened in this area.

There was some discussion around why this might be – factors such as North Edinburgh being one of the most densely populated areas in Scotland, and one of the most multicultural were raised by Nick. It was also pointed out by others that it could be that the levels of reporting here are higher because there are good levels of trust in professionals, and good initiatives in schools, youth clubs etc aimed at raising awareness and challenging bullying.

Nick explained that he has been running 5 session workshops with young people who have already been involved in some sort of anti-social behaviour. These usually start with an exploration of phobias and fears, helping people to understand that fear of the unknown is often at the root of racism, Islamophobia etc. They then move onto to explore empathy and how to put yourself in someone else’s shoes.

There was a lot of interest in the work. Helen Bourquin asked if ELREC could train other youth workers to run the sessions. Nick replied that they might do something like this at the end of the project but don’t currently offer this sort of training.

**Discussion**

There was a lot of discussion all the way through the session about the themes covered and other concerns.

* One issue that came up which it would be good to return to/follow up is that there doesn’t seem to be anyone in the council responsible for equalities at present since the last person, Diana Dodd, retired. This means that staff are not sure who to report incidents to, how information collected about racist incidents in schools etc will be disseminated. Cllr Vicki Redpath agreed to ask a question about this.

We talked about how we could respond to some of what we have heard, and how we could raise awareness about reporting hate crime in the area.

**Ideas/comments raised:**

* For anti-bullying week Sarah Neal is making bookmarks from pictures by local babies and toddlers and putting them in books in the library with a welcoming message on them. This was something she felt she could do in the opposite spirit of hate within her remit of children and families work.
* We need an ongoing dialogue with people we work with about these issues, and need to challenge casual racist/prejudiced remarks as they come up so they don’t become ‘normal’
* A few of us are hearing about an increase in negative experiences since the EU referendum – how do we build up a general picture of people’s experiences? Could the LIH forum play a role in pooling what we hear from people to raise awareness of day to day racism?
* Community hate crime session, raising awareness of how unacceptable hate crime and hate incidents are.
* Or visiting existing groups to discuss this
* It was also raised that some families one person works with have ‘disengaged’ and don’t see any point in challenging racism anymore as it has become such a normal part of their experiences.
* This is known as ‘minority stress’ and can lead to a lot of isolation. It is up to us as workers to try to re-engage with these people to ensure they do not become isolated.

**Evaluation**

Hannah asked that people take a moment to fill in an evaluation form about the forum. This will particularly help us to plan future meetings. Hannah is going on maternity leave on 3rd November and Adam Farquhar will be in the role while she is away. Filling in a form would really help Adam in understanding people’s feelings about the forum and how we can continue to ensure it is useful for people. (Form attached to email).