

## **Communities Network – Community Works Autumn Conference – 13 October**

The session started with an introduction from Duncan Blinkhorn about the issue of hate crime.

### **Presentation from RISE**

- There has been an increase in the reporting of violence against women and girls since 2009 – this has been linked to the economic situation.
- Working with local partners to change the way people think about abuse
- ‘Ask me ambassadors’ and safe spaces are all initiatives which seek to encourage people to report hate crime
- 90 ambassadors are being recruited in Brighton and Hove.

### **Key information**

- Safe Space Sussex directory
- Self-Evident app – can link the user directly to the police if required
- Reporting app – produces data and enables trends to be viewed
- There has been a 12% increase in rapes in Sussex
- 50% increase in incidents against women

### **What can we do as a city?**

- Equality monitoring
- Case work – listening to get people’s voices heard
- It is important to note that resources are stretched
- Clear focus on trans needs in the city
- Supporting individuals i.e through being aware of the intersectional issues/sensitivities
- It was noted that Nottingham now treats misogamy as a crime – is this something that could be followed in Brighton?
- People can contact the Community Safety Team

### **What is hate crime?**

- It was noted that there is often under reporting of hate crimes.
- Reports from the field provide details about what has happened
- Under reporting in disability hate crime – there is a tendency for lack of confidence amongst those who report – this could be why reporting levels remain relatively low
- The potential role of the voluntary and community sector in encouraging people to report crime was discussed. E.g the provision of safe reporting spaces, the provision of guidance on how to report a crime ect
- It was noted that the reporting of hate crime tends to be the tip of the iceberg

- It was noted that it would be useful if hate crime reported was to include 'women and girls' i.e cat calling.
- It was noted that in some cases anti-social behaviour is subjective and that it can be difficult to balance the needs of all members of the community.

### **Group discussions**

- A key document to refer to which gives guidance / useful information on how to challenge hate crime. It was noted that a few key phrases to use when challenging discrimination may be useful i.e gives people confidence
- Increased communication - breaking down isolation – connecting people
- Increased empowering of people to act and report crimes if they wish
- Increased opportunities for communities to mix to foster cultural understanding
- How to challenge the media – it was noted that the media has a very negative influence in community cohesiveness and can be very damaging
- The role of local action teams was noted (LATS) – what role can LATS play in ensuring community safety?
- Standing up visibly and as a community i.e LGBT vigil, ONE Voice
- The importance of such as Know My Neighbour
- Casserole Club
- Local community Facebook page - could be a space to encourage change

### **Practical Measures**

- Raise awareness of what hate crime is to increase understanding i.e one doesn't have to tolerate inappropriate behaviour
- Promote options for reporting and that you can report as an observer – you don't have to be a victim.
- A media campaign is needed to address hate not feed in as some media do.
- Duty to challenge e.g WEA (Workers Educational Association) are given support in how to challenge safely. It was noted that this can be a difficult but is an important principle.
- How to handle the above when there are cultural differences within group / managing expectations that a group /managing expectations that a group can be exclusive / when its mixed and open
- Group agreements and notes needed

### **Group discussion**

- Proactive as witness to hate crime
- Reporting as third party - offer of support of solidarity to victims
- Resources to different situations

- Community events – it was noted that food, music and sport can be unifying themes for communities and people
- Engage with people where they are – e.g go to local BME, faith or other cultural groups rather than asking them to come to ‘us’.
- Common aims – link up with those groups and organisations who have similar aims

### **Group discussion – challenging hate**

- Education – It was noted that education is fundamental in challenging hate as it encourages cultural understanding and prevents stereotyping
- Strong links – building partnerships and sharing good practise. An example was the Fishergate Community Centre – building community cohesion and resilience, breaking down barriers and being aware of common ground.
- Local Action Teams – how can we ensure that our voice is heard and that Local Action Teams are representative
- Liaising with communities
- Be aware of the sensitivities of dealing with / reporting hate crime
  - Anonymity is needed in terms of reporting and to enable the full picture to be gained
  - A safe space is needed for reporting
- There is uncertainty in BME organisations both in terms of funding and getting their voices heard.

### **Solutions**

- It was noted that it is important to be aware of the services available
- It was noted that advice networks are useful and that people often go to their own communities for advice and support
- Be aware of different usages of I.T
- Uncertainty of outcomes – due to lack of prosecutions
- It was noted that there is a importance to hold community events to bring people together
- PHSE – It was noted that schools hold an important role – for working together
- Need to be active in reporting hate crime
- Show racism the red card campaign was cited as a famous example of challenging discrimination.
- Preventing gate keeping – how do we ensure that everyone is able to get a seat at the table – both in terms of voices being heard and ensuring that BME engagement is not tokenistic
- Courses for staff – It is vital that staff/volunteers know how to engage people and are able to understand differences between communities