

NORTH EAST

RACE EQUALITY FORUM

INFORMATION BRIEFING

No. 11



Parliamentary Inquiry into Hate Crime

The House of Commons Home Affairs Subcommittee has announced an inquiry into hate crime. This Information Briefing provides information on the scope of the Inquiry, the timetable, and ways of becoming involved in submitting information to the Inquiry. NEREF encourages all organisations either singly or collaboratively to submit as detailed information as possible.

Background

Hate crime is defined as any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a personal characteristic. Hate crime can be motivated by disability, gender identity, race, religion or faith and sexual orientation.

The days immediately following the EU referendum saw a rise in the number of attacks on people from ethnic minorities and of non-British nationality, including on their community centres and places of worship. The killing of Jo Cox MP has also raised serious questions about how to address the potential for violent action from those holding extremist or fixated views.

The Government announced on 30 June 2016 that the Home Office would be publishing a new action plan on hate crime.

Terms of reference and call for evidence

The Home Affairs Select Committee intends to carry out an inquiry into hate crime and its consequences. This will include hate crime motivated by extremism, and actions carried out by fixated individuals (“lone wolves”).

Written evidence is invited on, but need not be restricted to, the following issues:

- The effectiveness of current legislation and law enforcement policies for preventing and prosecuting hate crime and its associated violence.
- The barriers that prevent individuals from reporting hate crime, and measures to improve reporting rates.
- The role of social media companies and other online platforms in helping to identify online sources of hate crime and to prevent online hate incidents from escalating.
- The role of the voluntary sector, community representatives, and other frontline organisations in challenging attitudes that underpin hate crime.
- Statistical trends in hate crime and how the recording, measurement and analysis of hate crime can be improved.
- The type, extent and effectiveness of the support that is available to victims and their families and how it might be improved

The Chair of the Committee, Rt. Hon Keith Vaz MP, said:

"The Committee is launching this inquiry following a number of deeply concerning and tragic incidents, such as the appalling murder of Jo Cox and racially motivated attacks against individuals following the EU referendum result.

Hate crime and violence have no place in a 21st Century democracy like the United Kingdom, and we will be hearing evidence on how to address the risks those with extremist or fixated views can pose.

Specifically, we will be assessing how well the current system of prevention and prosecution is functioning, the influence of the internet and the role of community and mental health services."



Submitting written evidence

Written submissions for this inquiry should be submitted online, by noon on 1 September 6 via this web page:

Hate crime written evidence portal

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/home-affairs-committee/inquiries/parliament-2015/inquiry7/commons-written-submission-form/>

Each submission should:

- a) Be no more than 3,000 words in length;
- b) Be in Word format with as little use of colour or logos as possible;
- c) Have numbered paragraphs;
- d) Include a declaration of interests.

Please note that:

Material already published elsewhere should not form the basis of a submission, but may be referred to within a proposed memorandum, in which case a web link to the published work should be included. Once submitted, evidence is the property of the Committee. It is the Committee's decision whether or not to accept a submission as formal written evidence.

The Committee normally, though not always, chooses to make public the written evidence it receives, by publishing it on the internet (where it will be searchable), by printing it or by making it available through the Parliamentary Archives. If there is any information you believe to be sensitive you should highlight it and explain what harm you believe would result from its disclosure. The Committee will take this into account in deciding whether to publish or further disclose the evidence.

Select Committees are unable to investigate individual cases.

Further guidance on submitting evidence to Select Committees is available on the parliamentary website.

The remit of the Home Affairs Committee is to examine the expenditure,



administration and policy of the Home Office and its associated public bodies.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Inquiry information: Hate crime and its violent consequences

Media bids and information:

Jessica Bridges-Palmer: bridgespalmerj@parliament.uk; 07917 488 489



Contact: *For further information, back copies of Information Briefings or Research Briefings, or to join the Network, email gary.craig@galtres8.co.uk*

The North East Race Equality Forum is a Network of around 300 individuals and organisations in the North East Region committed to promoting racial equality in the context of social justice. No one organisation is necessarily committed to every idea published in the name of the Forum. The Forum is supported by the 'Race', Crime and Justice Regional Research Network, which includes researchers from each University in the region.