

MORE THAN A TICK-BOX? THE ROLE OF TRAINING IN IMPROVING POLICE RESPONSES TO HATE CRIME

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Abstract

In the years since the publication of the Macpherson report, many countries across the world have implemented policy and legislative frameworks in order to respond more effectively to hate crime. Within the UK, and despite laudable progress in some contexts, a set of significant challenges remains in relation to the under-reporting of hate crime, widespread victim dissatisfaction with police responses and inconsistent recording practices. This broader landscape of flawed responses illustrates the need for and importance of effective training for police professionals. However, little is known in connection to what training is delivered and to whom, despite a series of government action plans committing to the rollout of a national training package.

Drawing from a body of empirical evidence gathered from Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, in-depth semi-structured interviews and observations of police training, this article highlights that although hate crime training is being delivered within forces, a series of structural, organisational, operational and individual barriers are undermining its delivery and effectiveness. At a time when levels of hate crime are rising, it is imperative that police officers and staff are equipped with the necessary understanding and skills to deliver a service which meets the needs of diverse communities. This article identifies how existing training provision can be improved in order to facilitate such an outcome.

Keywords

Policing; Macpherson; hate crime; training

Introduction

The racially motivated murder of Stephen Lawrence by a gang of white youths in 1993, and the flawed police investigation that followed, are commonly referred to as the catalyst for the development of the UK's hate crime policy (Hall, 2013; Travis, 2013). Led by Sir William Macpherson, the judicial inquiry into the police investigation of Lawrence's death found that it was 'marred by a combination of professional incompetence, institutional racism and a failure of leadership by senior officers' (Macpherson, 1999:365). Macpherson (1999) proposed 70 recommendations which sought to eliminate racism within the police and to improve levels of trust and confidence amongst historically marginalised communities. Hailed by many as a watershed moment in the context of policing and race relations, Macpherson's report brought about key changes with regard to police training in an effort to enhance officers' understanding of and engagement with the diverse communities whom they serve (Bennetto, 2009). This included the implementation of equality and diversity training, and commitments made by the Association of Chief Police Officers and subsequently the College of Policing to tackle under-reporting and provide a better service for hate crime victims (ACPO, 2005; Hall et al., 2009; College of Policing, 2014).

Despite laudable progress, the police continue to struggle to provide an appropriate and effective response to victims of hate crime. Indeed, recent evidence illustrates that, when compared with victims of crime that is not motivated by hate, victims of hate crime are less likely to be satisfied with the police response in terms of both the fairness and the effectiveness of the service provided, and these negative experiences are likely to deter victims from reporting to the police again in the future (Hardy and Chakraborti, 2016; Home Office, 2018; Sharrock et al., 2018). Within this context, the availability and delivery of training is imperative to help address such shortcomings; and yet a recent report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) found that while forces stated that they offer hate crime training to new recruits, most officers had received no such training (HMICFRS, 2018). Furthermore, the report found that in the absence of a national hate crime training package, the training that is being delivered across forces is 'neither co-ordinated nor provided to everyone that needs it' (HMICFRS, 2018:19).

Currently, there is a dearth of knowledge pertaining to the content, mode of delivery and impact of hate crime training delivered to police officers. While the HMICFRS (2018) report provides valuable insights into the availability of hate crime training across forces in England and Wales, it does not consider the impact that such training has on officers' understanding of hate crime. To date, Trickett and Hamilton's (2016) review of hate crime training is the only study that considers officers' perceptions of such training; however, the study's sample was limited to officers within one police force. In this context – and grounded in a substantial body of evidence gathered from Freedom of Information (FOI) requests and in-depth semi-structured interviews with a wide range of police professionals and policy-makers – the present study offers a unique insight into both the availability and perceived effectiveness of current hate crime training. As outlined in subsequent sections, this study found that the availability of dedicated hate crime training is limited across forces in England and that while forces recognise the need to implement such training and to ensure that it is meaningful for officers and staff, a series of interconnected barriers operating at strategic, organisational, operational and individual levels are preventing them from doing so.

Recognising a need for hate crime training

The murder of Stephen Lawrence brought hate crime to the forefront of the UK's social and political agendas by opening up a discussion pertaining to the injustices of targeted victimisation on the basis of race and other characteristics (Hall, 2013). Timed to coincide with the publication of the Macpherson report, the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and its future amendments established specific offences for racially and religiously aggravated crimes. Hate speech legislation was updated to prohibit the stirring up of hatred on the basis of race, religion or sexual orientation, and enhanced sentencing provisions against offences motivated by hostilities towards the victim's disability, sexual orientation, or transgender identity were put in place (Public Order Act 1986; Criminal Justice Act, 2003; Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006). As the political focus began to shift from preventing discrimination towards proactively promoting equality, an onus was placed on public authorities – including the police – to eliminate unlawful discrimination on the basis of an individual's protected characteristics (Rollock, 2009; Equality Act 2010).

In response to Macpherson's (1999) recommendations relating to the need for training, the police engaged a panel of representatives from diverse communities to advise on the content and delivery of diversity training (Clements and Jones, 2009). The ensuing community and race relations training prompted officers to assess how their own beliefs and values impacted on their conduct with diverse communities (Foster et al., 2005; Rowe and Garland, 2013). However, a HMIC (2013) assessment found that the effectiveness of such training was mitigated by unclear content, unqualified trainers, a lack of evaluation and an absence of community involvement. Prompted by the HMIC evaluation, the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) developed a National Learning Requirement for all police staff,¹ which established how equality and diversity training should be designed, delivered, assessed and evaluated (Stuart and Cragg, 2004). This led to the development of the Police Race and Diversity Learning and Development Programme (PRDLDP), which aimed to embed the values of equality and diversity into all aspects of policing in order to build a 'citizen-focused service' (Home Office et al., 2004:1). Expanding on the previous community and race relations training, this programme covered a wider scope of targeted discrimination on the basis of age, disability, gender, race, religion and belief, and sexual orientation, and it encompassed targeted hostilities faced by individuals from traveller, immigrant and asylum seeker communities (Home Office et al., 2004). The PRDLDP provided trainees with personal workbooks and eLearning materials that were developed and delivered by the National Centre for Applied Learning Technologies (NCALT). Although the National Learning Requirement established that it was mandatory for forces to deliver equality and diversity training, the uptake of the PRDLDP training materials was optional, and forces could choose the extent to which they implemented them within their own training programmes (Home Office et al., 2004).

A 2009 assessment of the PRDLDP by the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) found that the programme had helped to strengthen police-community relations by enabling forces to establish and to engage with independent advisory groups in the

¹ This included police officers at all ranks, police staff, special constables, and police and community support workers (NPIA, 2009).

development of training. While learners responded positively to the PRDLDP training materials, the extent to which the NCALT modules and workbooks were completed varied both across and within forces (NPIA, 2009). The NPIA assessment also found that officers' and staff's achievements in equality and diversity competency were hard to assess, because each force had a different view as to what competency entailed and how it was measured (NPIA, 2009).

Currently, the College of Policing – which replaced the ACPO in 2014 as the coordinating body for police standards in England and Wales – sets the national learning requirements through the National Policing Curriculum (College of Policing, 2018). While it is mandatory for forces to cover equality and diversity learning, the ways in which they develop, deliver and assess such training depends on their respective abilities. Moreover, there remains no mandatory requirement for forces to deliver hate crime learning to officers and staff. This is especially worrying in light of the fact that under-reporting remains one of the biggest challenges faced by officers in terms of their management of hate crimes (Wong and Christmann, 2016; Chakraborti, 2018). As service delivery is contingent on the reporting of such offences, it remains crucial that victims are encouraged to come forward and to share their experiences, and that they feel safe in doing so (Hardy, 2019). However, hate crime victims are often reluctant or unwilling to report to the police, citing fears of not being taken seriously or distrust of the police, which is primarily based on direct or indirect negative experiences in the past (Hardy and Chakraborti, 2016; Hardy, 2019).

While elements of hate crime learning are peppered throughout other training modules that officers must take on entry to the force, it is unclear how many forces have dedicated hate crime training (NPIA, 2009). Although the ACPO and Home Office produced hate crime guidance for forces, it was 'beyond the remit of [the] guidance to determine the format or content for hate crime training' (2005:3). This remained the case until 2011, when the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) found that public authorities were failing to protect disabled people against daily harassment and violence (EHRC, 2011). This finding resulted in the College of Policing, as the new governing body, formally committing to delivering specific hate crime training (ACPO and College of Policing, 2013). As a result, an NCALT learning package specific to disability hate crime was produced, and the ACPO and College of Policing published the Hate Crime Manual to support officers and staff in recognising and managing other forms of hate crime (ACPO and College of Policing, 2013). However, the ensuing EHRC (2013) progress report highlighted that the police continued to experience difficulties in responding to disability hate crime, in particular in relation to the continued under-reporting and under-recording of this strand, irrespective of any improvements made in terms of identifying cases of disability hate crime. Recognising that hate crimes 'must be correctly recorded if the police are to meet the objective of reducing under-reporting' (EHRC, 2013:5), the College of Policing produced operational guidance to support forces in their understanding and management of hate crime cases and victims – but no training materials.

As such, forces remain responsible for designing and developing their own hate crime training programmes. In their study of hate crime training within Nottinghamshire Police, Trickett and Hamilton (2016:2) found that 'the training officers had received on hate crime

was piecemeal, overwhelmingly on-line and did not engender confidence in dealing with hate crime'. Similarly, the most recent HMICFRS inspection (2018) of police responses to hate crime found that the level and quality of hate crime training, and the target audience, varied markedly by force. Within this context, this article draws from research which examined the training that is currently being delivered across forces in England and Wales, and the extent to which such training is having a positive impact on officers' understanding and practices. The methods utilised within this research are outlined below.

Methods

This study operated within a pragmatic paradigm, which ontologically holds that while an external reality exists, the nature of this reality is not absolute; rather, it is interpreted by researchers according to its usefulness and practicality (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998). Rather than being restricted by a fixed paradigm or a single predetermined methodology, pragmatic research allows scholars to follow leads as they emerge throughout the data-gathering process, and it prompts them to consider mixed-methods approaches that can bring both quantitative and qualitative insights to the study (Hammond and Wellington, 2013). While some critics contend that this methodological flexibility may lead to relativism, whereby any interpretation of reality is valid, the strength of pragmatism lies in its ability to capture an interpretation of reality that provides accessible, practical and actionable knowledge for its society (Kempster and Parry, 2011).

This study set out to explore the availability of hate crime training and officers' perceptions of the effectiveness of such training. In order to collect the evidence needed to build the first national picture of training provision, FOI requests were sent out to the 39 police forces in England asking them to respond to the following questions:

1. Do you offer hate crime training? If so, what is the mode of delivery of this training?
2. Can you provide a brief overview of the content of the training?
3. Who is required to take this training?

Of the 39 forces contacted, 38 provided a response. A data matrix summarising the quantifiable aspects of the FOI responses (e.g. the number of forces that offered training and the mode of delivery) was produced, and this is discussed within the next section. The knowledge gained from reviewing the wide-ranging responses to the FOI request acted as a conceptual springboard from which the interview guide was designed.

Although the FOI data afforded insight into the training currently delivered by each force, it failed to capture the perceived effectiveness of these programmes on police officers' and staff's learning experience and understanding of hate crime. In order to complement the findings from the FOI requests, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with 43 participants. Although an interview guide was developed and generally adhered to within the interviews, the questions asked were progressively refined to accommodate the exploration of new concepts arising from the new data.

In terms of the sample, a wide range of police officers, police staff and policy-makers were contacted via email in order to achieve a representative sample in terms of geography, occupational role and experience of receiving or delivering hate crime training. The initial interviews highlighted that frontline officers and those involved in designing training were best equipped to offer insights on the content, delivery mode and perceived effectiveness of training. In order to draw up a list of potential participants who fell within such parameters, the staff pages of force websites and hate crime news reports within the past year were reviewed to find relevant individuals and their contact details. The sample included sergeants ($n=7$), police constables ($n=6$), superintendents ($n=5$), hate crime coordinators ($n=4$), inspectors ($n=4$), chief inspectors ($n=4$), training managers ($n=3$), chief superintendents ($n=2$), diversity officers ($n=2$), and a police staff investigator ($n=1$), along with representatives from the College of Policing, the HMICFRS, the Ministry of Justice and non-government organisations ($n=5$). The interviews were conducted via telephone, digitally recorded, transcribed and anonymised. Participants were provided with the details of the project prior to the interviews, and agreement to participate was documented via email exchanges. Consent to be recorded was obtained verbally over the telephone, prior to the commencement of the interview. Of the 43 interviewees, one participant did not consent to a recording but still wished to partake in the interview; in this case, detailed notes were made during the interview.

Due to its compatibility with the tenets of pragmatism, grounded theory was employed in the analysis of the transcripts (Oliver, 2011). Using constant comparative analysis, open coding of the transcripts was undertaken as they were produced, and these codes were compared in order to generate concepts. While the analysis was conducted, theoretical concepts emerged, and these were recorded separately from the substantive codes to ensure that the emerging data was not forced into these pre-existing categories. As previously mentioned, the interview guide was modified to allow for the comparison, verification and/or rejection of theoretical concepts arising throughout the process of inquiry. Through this iterative, abductive process, the substantive and the theoretical concepts were explored and verified against new codes emerging from each transcript. Finally, the saturated concepts were grouped into core categories, which form the basis of the next section.

Findings

The responses received from the FOI questions were organised into the following data matrix. It is worth noting that while the FOI responses were helpful in providing a general overview of the training, they may not necessarily represent what training is actually available as much as they represent what *information* on training is available. In addition to being bound by time limits, the FOI respondents noted that the information provided was dependent on what data was available for them to report on. As the recorded data on training programmes varies by force, some were able to provide entire training plans, whereas other forces were not able to respond to certain questions at all.

Table 1: Overview of FOI responses

FOI Response Data Matrix						
				Number of forces	Percentage of forces*	
Hate Crime Training	Do they offer training?	Yes	Offered as part of initial police training	19	50%	
			Offered as part of initial police training and as a specific package	8	21%	
			Unclear	6	15%	
			Offered as a specific package	3	7%	
		Did not respond to question			1	2%
		No			1	2%
	What is the method of delivery?	Combination of classroom and eLearning		20	52%	
		Classroom		14	36%	
		Delivery methods unclear/not specified		3	7%	
	Who is required to take it?	New recruits		12	31%	
		New recruits and role-dependent		8	21%	
		Unclear		5	13%	
		Role-dependent		4	10%	
		All staff		3	7%	
		All officers and role-dependent		3	7%	
All officers		2	5%			
*Percentages calculated on the basis of the total number of forces that responded to the FOI requests (n=38).						

Of the 38 forces that responded to the requests, 94% ($n=36$) reported that they offered hate crime training, with half of the forces ($n=19$) providing it as part of the initial training programme for officers, 21% ($n=8$) offering it during initial training and as a specific package,² and 7% ($n=3$) offering it only as a specific package. The context of such training varied across forces; those that offered it during officers' initial training commonly covered hate crime as part of broader learning packages, whereas others offered a dedicated package on the subject. The amount of time spent on such training also varied, ranging from a two-hour input to a full day package; and the frequency at which such training was refreshed was unclear. Considering that the majority of the forces ($n=27$) delivered hate crime training as part of officers' initial training programme, this raises questions about the saliency of such training, particularly for officers who are well into their careers; for if there are no opportunities for it to be refreshed, the impact of such training will inevitably be undermined. This finding was corroborated through interviews, as one of the common challenges raised by participants in relation to the delivery of meaningful hate crime training was the limited time frame and the lack of frequency of provision – if it was repeated at all.

I joined the police in 2001, so I received quite a bit [of training] and, you know, the odd sort of refresher since. But it was interesting when I got your email and I was thinking about it, I don't think I've had anything for quite some time. And I can't remember when the last time was I had any kind of refresher [...]
– Chief Inspector

Occasionally, there will be a cyclical training programme where things that are considered by the constabulary to be important, such as changes in mental health legislation or perhaps domestic violence, or they'll have a theme that they want to make sure that officers are reminded about. But we haven't had one of those in relation to hate crime for quite some time.
– Sergeant

In terms of training delivery, over half ($n=20$) of the forces reported that hate crime training was delivered through a combination of in-class and eLearning methods. The interview data revealed that depending on the force, classroom training was developed either in-house or commissioned externally and was delivered by dedicated trainers, civilian employees, other officers or outside experts. Within the matrix, eLearning encompasses predominantly the NCALT training packages used by forces, but it also includes other online training or learning materials that may have been developed internally or externally. When prompted to share their experiences of the delivery of training, the overwhelming sentiment among participants was that because NCALT training lacked engagement and interactivity, trainees were not particularly invested when completing the packages. This in turn led to low pass rates for the tests embedded within the packages, to cheating via the sharing of answers, and to varying rates of module completion. Additionally, participants remarked that while NCALT packages were useful for delivering the technical aspects of training pertaining to

² Examples of this included bespoke hate crime training developed in-house, masterclasses in dealing with hate crime, and hate crime training delivered to forces by community groups.

legislation and policies, they failed to convey the harm caused by hate crime in a compelling manner or to challenge officers' perceptions or biases.

I find it very boring, it's not productive at all, cos I just switch off, I just press the button to get rid of it. I'm a practical person, I like to listen to people and ask questions and be in a classroom. Whereas if I'm in front of the computer I'll just switch off. – Hate Crime Coordinator

While participants spoke more favourably of classroom inputs, a concern was that trainers who lacked the expertise to deliver training had a negative effect on trainees' engagement with the learning. This was of particular concern for in-house training that was delivered by staff whose primary role was not to deliver training, or who lacked experience in training delivery. Participants suggested that training delivered by qualified experts through interactive methods – including role-play, case studies and victim testimonies – was the most impactful and conducive to their learning.

When you get someone like [expert trainer], who really knows her subject matter, is really engaging – I'm not saying police and staff trainers are not engaging, but, we've had a number of outside speakers come on in and, you can really tell are professional speakers and they'll actually interact and deliver the training package to officers. – Detective Sergeant

With regard to who received hate crime training, 31% ($n=12$) of forces reported that it was given to all new recruits, and 21% ($n=8$) delivered it to all new recruits and additional staff depending on their role. Of all the FOI data, the level of detail provided by forces pertaining to who received hate crime training varied the most and proved the most challenging to quantify within the data matrix. However, considering such results within the wider scope of the FOI data and the insights provided by the interviews helps to form a clearer picture of the current state of hate crime training for forces in England. While at first glance it appears promising that 94% ($n=36$) of forces reported offering some form of hate crime training, the context of such training – namely, that it is delivered most commonly as elemental learning within broader mandatory training to new recruits – raises questions about the impact of such learning on trainees' understanding of hate crime. Although some forces ($n=11$) offered a specific hate crime package, more often than not, the availability of such training was limited to certain employees based on their roles and their proximity to encountering and investigating hate crime reports, and this varies across forces.

[...] what we found is, depending on what role you are in within the police force, you can go years and years without ever going on any training courses. If you do not move between departments, so you don't get promoted, you could probably spend ten years of your life never being put through any training – Detective Sergeant

Similar to previous research (Birzer, 2003; Honess, 2016), this data shows that when trainees are exposed to interactive, engaging and creative training methods which promote debates and discussion, they are more likely to gain a better understanding of the materials

and apply such learning to their work. The current study reveals that while NCALT packages provide a more time- and cost-efficient method of training, their impact on officers and staff is minimal 'as [they] limit the opportunity for discussion, reflection and checking understanding' (HMIC, 2014a:9; Honess, 2016; Trickett and Hamilton, 2016). However, despite the consensus among participants on their preferred modes of delivery, it was evident that the forces faced a series of interconnected barriers operating at the strategic, organisational, operational and individual levels, which hampered the quality of the training, the experience for the learner, and the long-term impacts on their understanding.

Strategic barriers

The interview participants revealed that one of the key barriers faced by police forces in delivering hate crime training pertained to the lack of hate crime resources made available to them by the College of Policing, which is responsible for supporting the development and delivery of police training and setting standards for policing. Although the College of Policing has produced an operational guidance document (College of Policing, 2014), it has yet to develop any authorised professional practice dedicated to hate crime (HMICFRS, 2018). Furthermore, while it has been three years since the Home Office (2016:s.97) tasked the College of Policing with building a comprehensive hate crime training package, there have yet to be any updates on if, when, or how such training will be rolled out.

[...] usually the police are very good at having central training [...] For hate crime, there's less of it so there's the College of Policing operational guidance available for officers and I think there are a couple of briefings available around disability hate crime in particular. But in respect of anything else, there is nothing centrally mandated. – Inspection Officer

Nationally, there is very little [hate crime training] and I think it's something nationally that people want to do, but there is no drive or there is no joined-upness around it. And as with most things, everyone's very busy and everyone has different priorities. – Chief Inspector

Organisational barriers

Perhaps the most frequently cited barrier to offering hate crime training was cost. Since 2010 police forces have faced a 30% reduction in funding from central government, and a 19% reduction in total funding (National Audit Office, 2018). The challenge of providing effective service delivery within this increasingly tightening budget has been exacerbated as demands on policing have increased (Home Affairs Committee, 2018). The tightening budget has meant that all forces have faced cuts across all departments, with business support roles – which include those responsible for training – facing a decrease of 21% since 2010 (HMIC, 2014b; Hargreaves et al., 2018). Within this context, many forces have relegated training development or delivery duties to existing officers and staff who, depending on the subject matter, may not always be best equipped to deliver impactful training.

When the cuts first hit, training departments were certainly slimmed down ... so we didn't have localised trainers anymore. And it was about supervisors

identifying the training needs of their own staff. They're not trainers, they're not necessarily best placed to do that. – Chief Inspector, Hate Crime Lead

The cuts to staff and training departments brought about by austerity have also meant that forces are struggling to find the time to pull officers off the front line to undertake training. While participants recognised the value and importance of dedicated hate crime training and the need for refresher training, some worried that the additional time it required would negatively impact their service delivery.

I think time is a big issue. We've now got reduced officers on the ground, to actually release officers for training means that we haven't got people there on the ground ready to respond to calls that are coming in. So, I think that's a really big issue. – Police Inspector, Diverse Communities Team Manager

Participants also noted that forces were struggling to deliver all of the training that they would ideally wish to implement, particularly through the in-class methods, which they felt would have more impact on trainees. It is for this same reason that forces are pushed to rely heavily on NCALT packages.

If you want to reach a lot of officers quickly, NCALT is useful. We do a lot of training over NCALT and I think officers become a bit weary of it. And I'm not convinced to what extent it provides that quality training. It certainly doesn't provide that personal touch. [...] I would always advocate face-to-face training, but training time is at a premium, there's a pressure on the officers to then go out and deal with other incidents that are queuing up and stacking up. So, it is a juggling act. – Chief Inspector, Hate Crime Lead

Operational barriers

Within the context of austerity, it is understandable that forces are struggling to implement training beyond what is mandatory, and to ensure that such training is transformative. In echoing findings from previous research, this study found that while NCALT packages do offer a cost- and time-efficient way of delivering training, they fail to provide a meaningful, engaging, and subsequently impactful learning experience for officers (Honest, 2016; Trickett and Hamilton, 2016). In addition to such challenges, some participants remarked that their forces struggled to regulate the completion of NCALT training. They noted that the lack of monitoring of NCALT packages by senior leadership resulted in varied levels of completion and pass rates by officers and staff.

[...] For some officers they're not perhaps finding the learning that interactive, or that they're getting a lot from it, and then subsequently the actual pass rate for the tests are a little bit lower, or we end up with a cheating rate.
– Hate Crime Officer

For NCALT, there's an awful lot of lip service that our cops go through when they have to – it's almost [...] people just skip through, and there is almost no control as to completion. – Superintendent

However, one participant pointed out that the challenge with completion rates was that although officers were given certain courses to complete, they were not given a time allotment within their working day in which to complete it. This affected completion rates, as officers struggled to find time within their already full working day to do the NCALT courses. The lack of monitoring of training – NCALT or otherwise – by some forces points to a wider operational issue; namely, that if force leaders are unable to carve out time for officers to engage in training within their working day, it is unlikely that they will complete it or do so satisfactorily.

We are not particularly good in identifying protected learning time for our officers. [...] Because we're not too good at doing that, the officers will rush, or they will try and click through. And then we have this thing about, well, our system shows you've not completed it properly. And they say, well, I have, I've done it. But they've clicked through it so fast that they've missed maybe some of the key points. – Initial Training Manager

Individual barriers

For training to be effective it needs to be understood, respected and supported by trainees. However, some participants remarked that officers may be sceptical of how useful such hate crime training will be in their efforts to apprehend perpetrators. Specifically, it was felt that the gap between what victims need and what officers think that victims need must be appropriately addressed if officers are to fully buy into the value of hate crime training.

An awful lot of what is reported is not crime, so there will be no criminal justice outcome for people who ring up and report this stuff. And one of the messages that officers need to be really clear on is that, although I think it's natural for a police officer to want a criminal justice outcome, they feel as though that's their job to deliver justice in that form. But in many, many cases, first and foremost, the people that ring up just want it to stop. And even when the behaviour is not criminal in nature, if we can intervene and make it stop, then we've delivered what they're asking. Now, officers feel as though that's not a good outcome for them ... that if they don't deliver a criminal justice outcome, they've not done their job as the police. And I think it's really important that officers understand that just listening, taking people seriously, and perhaps stopping non-criminal behaviour from happening, can make a huge difference to somebody's quality of life and is actually a really valid use of their time. So, any training needs to be very clear that the non-crime stuff is just as important as the crime stuff when it comes to hate crime in totality. – Superintendent, Former Hate Crime Lead

[...] hopefully we will internally gain a much better understanding that actually the outcome isn't necessarily a criminal justice outcome, the outcome is sympathy, is victim support, and people feeling that they've been listened to and that we're doing everything we can to make this kind of behaviour stop. – Chief Superintendent, Head of Community Engagement

This barrier is particularly acute within the context of hate crime, and the legacy of institutionalised racism that has affected, and continues to affect, the police service (Dodd, 2018; Evans, 2018). In particular, the idea that hate crime is not a serious enough issue for the police to deal with continues to be pervasive. This idea is only reinforced when there are senior officers claiming that the police should focus on burglaries and violent crimes before they turn their attention to ‘incidents that are not crimes’ (Dearden, 2018:online), or, in other contexts, claiming that it is neither appropriate for nor the job of the police to deal with particular hate crimes (Quinn, 2018). Any attempts to challenge officers’ cultural biases through training and to convey the considerable damage caused by hate crime becomes increasingly difficult when senior officials declare that it is not a policing priority.

Conclusions

While police forces tend to recognise the importance of dedicated and engaged hate crime training, they are ultimately constrained by challenges that have largely been brought about as a result of austerity measures. Although such challenges can be difficult to overcome, it is imperative that forces seek to address them in order to improve the availability and effectiveness of hate crime training for officers and staff. An important first step in this direction would be for the College of Policing to provide a dedicated set of hate crime resources to all forces across England and Wales. As it stands, the availability and quality of materials varies across forces: while some can rely on their hate crime coordinators, training departments or expert trainers to produce training programmes, others depend on the comparatively limited expertise of existing staff to do so. Discrepancies in the availability and quality of training across forces invariably mean that officers’ understanding and responses to hate crime and its victims will vary by force, as will victims’ experiences. While access to dedicated hate crime materials by the College of Policing will not in itself trigger an immediate and universal improvement across all forces, it would offer much-needed impetus and support for forces by improving their existing training resources.

However, for training to be impactful, it is not enough that forces are provided with comprehensive training materials; they must also be equipped with appropriate trainers who can deliver the learning in ways that police professionals can buy into. Within the wider context of cuts to police budgets, it is understandable that some forces are struggling to engage external trainers or to commission the development of dedicated hate crime training. However, the fact that some of the forces represented in the interviews had been able to do so successfully – and with positive results³ – suggests that there are ways in which forces can support the delivery of effective training notwithstanding the constraints imposed by financial challenges. Alternatively, to help mitigate the costs of commissioning external training, forces can better engage the services of their independent advisory groups and community groups to develop and deliver specialised hate crime training. In doing so, they would be able to not only develop cost-effective training but also promote better community-police relations which, in keeping with the Macpherson

³ One of the participants noted that their force had brought in a dedicated expert to deliver hate crime training, which had been received positively by trainees. They remarked that shortly afterwards, the force had seen a rise in hate crime reporting; while the participant was cognisant of the fact that this was not exclusively the result of the dedicated training, they believed it had played a large part in what they perceived to be improved community confidence and trust in the police.

recommendations, would aid in restoring the fractured trust that has tarnished relationships between diverse minority communities and public authorities.

For training to be impactful, trainees must be willing to actively engage with it. However, if officers and staff do not feel that hate crime training will help them to respond to incidents then they will be less inclined to engage with training, irrespective of its delivery. Our findings suggest that in order to address those concerns, police leaders could play a significant role by conveying that success in hate crime cases does not rest exclusively on officers' ability to charge perpetrators but that it is heavily dependent on the interaction with and support provided to victims. Ensuring that the goals of hate crime training are communicated will not only help officers to better understand their roles and responsibilities, but will help them to realign their priorities so that their actions are driven by a desire to support the victim rather than a need to catch the perpetrators. If the expectations of hate crime training are readjusted in this way, it will be easier in turn for forces to get buy-in from officers, as they will be more likely to have confidence that the training will enable them to provide a better service to victims.

In light of the prevailing political climate, and the fact that both real and recorded rates of hate crime have risen in recent years, it is imperative that the police are equipped with the knowledge to identify and appropriately respond to victims of hate crime. In order to do so, it is important to ensure that officers have access to impactful training whose development and delivery is not disproportionately determined by time- and cost-saving efficiencies, but which recognises and prioritises the learning needs and preferences of trainees. While there are pockets of good practice among some forces with regard to hate crime training, this article has highlighted the limitations of existing provision across England and Wales and the various strategic, organisational, operational and individual barriers that constrain its reach and effectiveness. Although the process of addressing these barriers is not without its challenges, our evidence suggests that doing so is key to generating a sustained improvement in the police's understanding of hate crime. Without this improvement, victims will continue to suffer without getting the support that they need.

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