INTRODUCTION

Hate Crime is motivated by hostility or prejudice towards individuals, groups and communities and can have a devastating impact on social, psychological and physical well being of the victims(s). The Hate Crime Partnership acknowledges that Hate Crime cannot be allowed to go unreported and unchallenged.

Victims of hate crime, hate incidences or hate related anti-social behaviour can be subjected to verbal abuse, physical attacks, offensive literature, graffiti, damage to property, arson and even murder, because of characteristics. The five identified characteristics for Hate Crime, known as ‘strands’ are:

- Race
- Religion
- Gender identity
- Sexual orientation
- Disability

The purpose of this document is to set out what we intend to do to prevent and tackle Hate Crime over the next two years

Please note that the term hate crime has been used to represent hate crimes, incidences and anti-social behaviour.

CORE PRINCIPLES Effective responses to hate crime require a strong coordinated partnership approach to address and tackle the issues; offering support to victims, intervention and to perpetrators and education to communities and supporting services. Work will be implemented to prevent repeat victimisation, especially to those identified as particularly vulnerable.

Transparency is also essential, to ensure that swift and effective action is being taken and that local communities have confidence and trust in local services’ commitment and ability to tackle the issues.

BEDFORDSHIRE HATE CRIME PARTNERSHIP

The BCHP is the steering group behind the work to tackle hate crime across the county. We have agreed common priorities and goals which are then translated into local deliverable action plans. We meet regularly to share ideas, work programmes and best practice to provide consistency and value for money across the county.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

We have identified three key areas that need to be strategically addressed. First to prevent hate crime from occurring through education, early help and intervention, challenging attitudes which underpin prejudice and acting quickly to deal with issues and tensions before they escalate in seriousness. Secondly to raise awareness of hate crime – how to report it and what support is available to victims including training officers, increasing third party reporting provision and enhancing the support available. Thirdly to improve our operational responses to hate crime when it occurs through swift and effective action, minimising repeat victimisation and dealing effectively with offenders.

GOVERNANCE This strategy will be overseen by the BCHP which reports to the three Bedfordshire Community Safety Partnerships’.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES As a Partnership we have considered current, emerging and under-reported issues in Bedfordshire which will be the focus of the work around hate crime for 2016-18. We have created specific performance measures to allow us to review the outcomes of our work:

- Increase the number of reports of disability related hate crimes
- Increase the number of third party reports of hate crime
- Reduce the number of hate crimes which are not pursued because the victim withdraws from the process
- Target repeat offenders of Hate Crime
**PREVENT**

- Work with schools and education providers to deliver a targeted programme around hate crime and prejudice
- Identify and provide support to individuals or families at risk of becoming victims and/or perpetrators of hate crime, via early help, stronger families and other support services.
- Working with the Community Cohesion Committee Planning Group (CCCPG) to monitor tensions and look to take affirmative action to prevent escalation of hate filled disorder
- Work with Luton in Harmony, local charities and voluntary groups to foster strong and positive local communities and perceptions of the diversity of the town.
- Offer safe spaces in the town centre for residents with learning difficulties, dementia and other mental health illnesses

**AWARENESS**

- Improve and increase the third party reporting provision across the hate crime strands
- Provide additional training to frontline officers to increase understanding of hate crime and awareness of what to do if they become aware of a hate crime which has taken place
- Create and deploy a strong communications strategy around hate crime, how to report it and how to challenge it
- Increase the partnership’s awareness and understanding of hate crime through research and analysis

**OPERATIONAL RESPONSES**

- Provide victim centric case management and investigation services alongside victim support resources
- Deploy the preventing youth ASB operating protocol for young people to prevent repeat offences
- Carry out targeted work with offenders who are convicted of hate crimes to address their social identity, views and thought process to adopt new ways of behaving which do not entail hate
- Ensure that enhanced sentencing powers are deployed whenever they are available
- Track and review the outcomes in reported cases to continually improve our approaches to hate crime
- Make sure that we have the right resources available to get the best possible outcomes for victims