**Hate Crime Strategy Lived Experience Consultation report**

**YouthLink Scotland**

**Section 1**

**Engagement information**

1.1 Number of engagement sessions ran: 3 focus groups

1.2 Participation confirmed and purpose of engagement explained for all participants (tick): yes

1.3 Brief outline of engagement:

*This may include information such as the type of engagement chosen, the questions you asked, the community you engaged with, and any further information you feel is relevant to record.*

We met with three groups of young people, who had a variety of lived experiences based on different protective characteristics including race, disability, sexual orientation. We ran an interactive focus group session which included discussion and activities to support them to answer the questions as part of this consultation. As we were working with young people in an effort to avoid any re-traumatisation our questions were kept deliberately impersonal so that they could be answered in a supported and safe way. Participants could share their personal experiences if they wished to with the support of their youth workers. Our session plan can be seen below:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **OUTLINE** | **DESCRIPTION** | **MATERIALS** | **TIME** |
| Introduction | * About us * Children’s rights * About the consultation * About the session (recording, anonymity) * Group agreement |  | 10 mins |
| What is hate crime? | * Define ‘hate’ and ‘crime’ * Aggravator * Protected characteristics |  | 10 mins |
| Person experiencing; person responsible | *Person experiencing*   * What are they thinking? * Impact * What support they need?   *Person responsible*   * What are they thinking? * Where has it come from? * What support they need? | Flip chart\*  Pens  Post its | 25 mins |
| Reporting | Quadrant page   * Where/who do you report? * Why do you report? * Challenges/hesitations * Data/5Rights |  | 20mins |
| Mapping pt 1 | Draw a basic map of your community with key locations. | Flip chart  Pens  Stickers  Post its | 5 mins |
| **BREAK** |  |  | 5 mins |
| Mapping pt 2 | Mark on it where children and young people experience hate. ALSO INCLUDE ONLINE SHEET. | Flip chart\* | 15 mins |
| How do we prevent hate crime? | Chat.  Education? In communities? Campaigns? |  | 15 mins |
| Previous campaigns | Show previous examples of campaigns. Post its on what they like/don’t like. | Example posters  Post its | 10 mins |
| Conclusion | * What we do with this information (write report about all groups; send report to groups, SG and other key stakeholders; other opportunities to input into strategy; SG feed into hate crime strategy) * Evaluation | Evaluation sheets | 5 mins |

**Section 2**

**Experiences of hate crime (including whether or not reported):**

2.1 Please tell us about the type of hate crime(s) individuals experienced, and the impacts this crime had on them.

When we asked young people what they considered to be hate crime their answers ranged from name-calling to physical attacks.

One group of young people had experienced what is believed to have been a hate crime due to their Transgender Identity and Sexual Orientation. This group also experience frequent harassment and verbal abuse due to their transgender identity and sexual orientation. This is a daily experience, no matter where they were. They had experienced this in shops, school, on the street, really anywhere they went. They described verbal abuse as well as harassment.

While discussing hate crime we asked the young people to consider the thoughts and impact of a person causing harm and a person experiencing harm.

Person experiencing the impacts included:

* Mental health issues, PTSD
* Self harm, eating disorders
* Negative impact on education
* Potential homelessness, for example as a result of being outed.
* Financial impact due to needing to take time off work.
* Changed behaviour in order to avoid further incidents.
* Potential to go on to cause harm, ie revenge or paying it forward.
* Converting faith to avoid future hate.
* Feeling of isolation.

Person causing harm impacts:

* Negative impact on education and future prospects.
* Criminal record.
* Poor mental health.
* Felt a rush from incident and escalates to more crime.
* Fall in with the wrong group and enters a cycle of hate.

We also spoke about the spaces in the young people’s communities where they felt safe and where they felt they would experience a hate crime, this included online spaces such as social media.

Spaces young people felt safe:

Home; friend’s house; local youth centre; the community spaces in which we engaged with them; they felt safe on music apps.

Spaces young people felt they could experience hate crime:

The stairwell outside their flats; school; park; shops; social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tik Tok; public transport.

Fast food places were noted as safe or unsafe depending on the chain, one group identified McDonalds as unsafe while Greggs was safe. There were also a number of locations that were identified as ‘depends’ such as a gym, swimming pool, skate park. This came from a group of LGBTI young people and may have been specifically indicating the experiences of trans young people. This also linked in with timing, there were times to go to the gym or pool that were safer than others.

It is worth noting we asked them to draw their communities and use coloured dots to indicate where they felt safe and where they did not. There was a significant number of red dots, indicating not feeling safe, but there were also quite a few orange or yellow which indicated they felt they should feel safe but didn’t all the time.

2.2 Please tell us whether people reported this to the Police, or a third party reporting centre. If they did not, please outline why.

One specific incident was reported to police. The challenge they faced was that it was a very intense experience to have to explain everything that had happened repeatedly. They were re-traumatised in the telling of it. Following the report they were not contacted by police again to give them any update or follow up on the case. They felt that they had no idea if anything had actually been progressed, investigated or if any charges had been made. They felt nothing had been done and this has put them off reporting in future.

The groups were asked how they would report, why they would report, what challenges or hesitations they would have and what data should be collected.

The groups identified the following as challenges and hesitations:

* “I wouldn’t want to tell my parents as they would freak out and treat me as an insane person because of their worry for my mentality.”
* “police are naturally quite threatening”
* The feeling of being fobbed off by being told “if it happens again then come tell me” leaving them feeling that it will only be taken seriously if it happens multiple times, meaning young people need to experience things more.
* Lack of confidentiality, not wanting information to go back to their parents.
* Concerns over the situation getting worse if it is reported.
* Stigmatisation
* Previous experiences having impacted their mental health negatively.
* Feel like they are just a statistic, not a human experiencing hate.
* Language barriers for minority ethnic communities & deaf community. There aren’t always interpreters available in person. Lack of certainty that you would be understood. Also a lack of privacy due to small size of communities impacted.
* Lack of trust in the police coupled with a fear of facing racism from police officers.
* Fear of not being believed or taken seriously.
* Not enough proof or needing to provide proof.
* Onus being on victims to identify something as hate crime and police not making the connections. This included a lack of information in communities as to what a hate crime was. One of the groups needed more guidance to explain what a hate crime is to be able to participate.
* “I don’t (trust the police) because some police are racist and I don’t trust them but if I really need them I’ll trust them because there is no other option.”

Data that should be collected:

For the most part young people felt that only relevant data should be collected, but for some young people they were reluctant to share any person data with the police. What was identified as relevant varied from group to group but centred on what they felt the reason for being targeted was. For example if a hate crime targeted them due to their race they did not think the police needed to collect data on their sexuality.

There was a fear of what would be done with this data, so any data collection that takes place needs to have clear reasoning and be fully explained.

**Section 3**

**Solutions**

3.1 From engagement, please outline what people think would be the most effective ways for us to help tackle hate crime in Scotland.

* Support for people experiencing and for people perpetuating.
* Portraying difference in the media and in schools, especially for young children.
* Broader societal and cultural awareness through story books etc. Being more confident to talk about race and culture and difference without confusing them.
* Increasing mental health services.
* Providing opportunities to change, counselling services and rehabilitation services.
* MPs and MSPs need to be better role models.

We shared some real hate crime campaigns from different areas with the young people and asked their feedback. This included the ‘Dear Hater’ letters from the Scottish Government campaign. Feedback on these was mixed with some individuals liking that it set out exactly what the issue was and showing support for communities. Others felt that a person would not identify themselves as a hater so would not read it, while others said it wouldn’t be read unless you were bored at the bus stop.

**Section 4**

**4.1 Further areas of reflection**

Please use this space to reflect any other elements of the discussion not already covered in the reporting template.

We also held a Community of Practice session as part of the Hate Crime Week of Action organised by BEMIS with partners from the Hate Crime Strategic Partnership Group. This was not planned as an event that would feed into this consultation, however there were some pertinent comments made that should be shared.

The event looked at the grey area between bullying and hate crime and it was highlighted that there are many instances where a hate crime is clearly a hate crime and cannot and should not be labelled as bullying. There was also discussion about how we can move upstream and intervene early in order to combat hate speech and prejudice before it takes place.

There were many examples told of young people regularly having to move schools due to experiences of Islamophobia or racism as the line between bullying and hate crime was not clear. Anti-bullying policies need to be translated into everyday practice as was mentioned in the chat; “A policy statement only sets context and expectations - how it is then implemented consistently and fairly is imperative. Youth groups can co-produce policy/ ground rules/codes of conduct etc with both the leaders and the young people who shape the culture and set the tone.”

There was also a lot of discussion about how to repair relationships and build trust with young people, communities and police. One of the biggest takeaways was about youth work becoming a bridge and inviting police to engage with young people in a positive light, including not in uniform. Examples of this taking place were mentioned such as the officers playing football in the street with a group of young people and an example from Edinburgh where an officer brought his skateboard to engage with young people and connected with them over a shared interest. It was noted these examples are few and far between and a more concerted effort needs to be made to build these relationships and trust.

The other issue highlighted in discussion around reporting was the ‘grass’ culture that finds itself in Scotland. Another comment from the chat mentioned that “the 'grass' culture is toxic and compounded when met with a poor adult response - it's easy to see why young people are discouraged. We try to shift the narrative, to help yp see that when they speak up and 'tell' to keep themselves or their pals mentally and/or physically safe, rather than telling just to be malicious or get people into trouble, it can sometimes help them to reframe things.”

**Feedback from young people on focus groups:**

We felt it important to share that the young people in the groups fed back to us on their experience of taking part in these focus groups.

91% of the young people who took part felt strongly that they were listened to from the start, with all who fed back saying they felt safe giving their opinions. 83% felt that what they said would be taken seriously and 85% fully understood what was being discussed. The vast majority of young people felt they go the support they needed to have their voice heard and knew where their opinions were going next. This shows the value of this work with young people and taking talking to young people in spaces they feel safe using a youth work approach.

**Date: 01/11/2022**

**Signed: S Robinson Galloway**

**Signature (wet): **