



“What Makes Hate Crime Different?”

ASCJB Victim and Witness Event 2008 Evaluation Report

AVON AND SOMERSET
CRIMINAL JUSTICE BOARD

Working Together for Justice



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1. Introduction and description of the event

The Avon and Somerset Criminal Justice Board held a Hate Crime event on 23rd April 2008, for members of the Criminal Justice System and members of the community. This was an action from the ASCJB Delivery Plan 07/08/

“Hate crime is any offence committed against a person or property which is motivated by the offender’s hatred of people because they are seen as being different. Examples of hate crimes include homophobic crimes, racially aggravated crimes and crimes targeted against disabled people.”

A small multi-agency team was formed, under the direction of the Victim and Witness Group to deliver the events and had a small budget of £1000 for each event.

Originally two events were planned, in order to promote involvement from around Avon and Somerset.

After a few weeks of planning the events, the group became aware of some overlap in the Somerset area with a series of events planned by the Somerset Partnership Against Hate Crime.

This duplication was highlighted to the ASCJB who took the decision to alter the Southern event to internal CJS only.

The aims of the event were:

- Introduce community groups and members to the Criminal Justice processes for hate crime.
- Demonstrate how the Criminal Justice System responds to victims and witnesses of hate crime.
- Encourage reporting of hate crime.
- Encourage internal practitioners and community groups to work together to improve the Criminal Justice process for victims and witnesses of hate crime.
- Demonstrate the Victim’s Code of Practice

2. Attendees:

The Northern event was aimed at:

- Community groups and individuals who are not currently engaged with the Criminal Justice System and who would like to share their views or experience of hate crime
- Employees and volunteers in the Criminal Justice System

The Southern event was aimed at just the latter of these.

The events were promoted within the Criminal Justice System via the management structure. Each agency was responsible for promoting the event internally. In terms of the external attendees for the Northern event, the group

deliberately tried to target those individuals who were not already engaged with the Criminal Justice System. The ASCJB community contacts list was used as the basis for targeted emails and letters to community groups, representatives and individuals highlighting the event and offering places. In addition the college venue was offered a small number of places to enable students to attend.

Unfortunately take up for the Southern event stood at 20 people (excluding organisers) the ten days before the event, and therefore the event was cancelled as it was not viable to run it for so few people.

Applicants for the Northern event were:

Agency/Organisation	Number booked onto the event	Number who attended the day
A & S Probation	12	8
A&S Constabulary	24	19
ASCJB Office	2	2
CPS	4	4
HMCS	2	3
HMPS	1	1
YOT	4	3
Victim Support	7	6
Non CJS statutory Bodies	4	1
Community Members	10	8
Students	10	3
TOTAL	80	58

On the day there were a number of people who were not able to attend the Northern event. This was partly due to unexpected operational commitments for the police although the college were also not able to fill all 10 spaces due to proximity to the Easter holidays which resulted in them being unable to publicise the event adequately. This was disappointing as it was felt that the event would have been relevant to a large number of courses and students.

70% of attendees were staff or volunteers from the criminal justice system, 25% were community members or students and 5% were from organisations such as Local Authorities.

One attendee wrote on their feedback form:

“Were there representatives of all the ‘hate crime’ stakeholders i.e. racially, religiously motivated crime plus homophobic crime? This was not made clear to me.”

A delegate pack was provided which contained a list of attendees and the organisation which they represented. The organisers felt that this was a difficult criticism to overcome as many diversity strands are not visible and without labelling attendees from a specific minority group this would have been difficult to achieve!

3. Structure of the Day:

Kevin Hamblin, Principal of Filton College opened the day and made attendees feel welcome. He highlighted the links between the needs and experiences of students at Bristol Academy of Sport and the content of the event, drawing attention to the fact to the appropriateness of the environment.

Speakers were chosen to demonstrate the CJS response to Hate Crime, to describe voluntary sector support for victims and witnesses and to demonstrate the impact that hate crime has on victims, witnesses, and communities.

Programme

9.30	Arrival and Registration
10.00	Welcome from Chair – Suzy Dymond-White, SW Region Prison Liaison and Diversity Lead for the ASCJB
10.05	Address: Barry Hughes, Avon & Somerset Chief Crown Prosecutor and Victim and Witness lead for ASCJB
10.20	Address: Russ Kent, Victim Support
10.45	REFRESHMENTS
11.00	Address: Shobha Das, Support Against Racist Incidents (SARI)
11.30	Workshops
12.30	LUNCH
1.30	Workshops
2.30	REFRESHMENTS
2.45	Feedback from workshops
3.15	Question Panel
3.45	Closing remarks
4.00	Close.

4. Venue

A school/college venue was deliberately chosen to enable involvement by students and young people. It was well placed in terms of transport links (motorway and rail), had good parking and necessary disabled access and facilities.

The venue provided the refreshments which were good and plentiful and they clearly made an effort to cater for the various dietary requirements of the attendees. There were many positive comments about the venue on the feedback sheets, it was a venue that most people had not previously been to and the majority thought it was a good venue. There were a small number of comments about the noise of the air conditioning and the fact that the room was cold.

The organisers felt that the staff at the venue were very helpful which assisted in the event running smoothly.

5. Information available to Delegates:

Delegate packs were prepared in advance containing the following:

- Programme for the day
- Avon and Somerset Criminal Justice Board Leaflet
- Delegate list of attendees (including
- List of leaflets and information available about the criminal justice system

- Biographies of the Speakers, Chair and Question and Answer Panel
- PowerPoint Slides for the Victim Support and SARI presentation
- EACH (Educational Action Challenging Homophobia) information leaflet
- Event evaluation form

6. Cost of the event:

The budget for the event was £1000 and the event came in on budget.

7. The Speakers:

The speakers were chosen to meet the following requirements

- Demonstrate and showcase the CJS response to Hate Crime (Barry Hughes)
- Description of the support in place for victims and witnesses (Russ Kent, Victim Support)
- Description of the impact that hate crime has on victims, witnesses, and communities (Shobha Das, SARI)

Although it would have been beneficial to hear from all representatives/victims of all the diversity strands, it was felt that there was not sufficient time for this and as such it was more appropriate to hear from one person who would be able to generalise the findings. This was contained within the brief written for SARI. Despite this on one of the evaluation forms an attendee asked the question:

“Why no input regarding homophobic/disability/gender issues?”

In view of this, perhaps the rationale behind selecting just one strand to represent the view of the victim could have been better explained in the introduction.

All comments, without exception about the speakers were positive. Comments that cropped up regularly about the speakers included ‘useful’ and ‘interesting’. One comment in particular summarised the comments well:

“All speakers were very knowledgeable on their subjects and were concise giving relevant information without the waffle”

8. The Workshop Sessions

There were four workshops, each ran twice enabling those attending to attend two of the workshops. Attendees were asked to state their preference for the workshops on their application form in order that people could be assigned to workshops in advance of the event. Almost all attendees were able to attend their first choice of workshop sessions.

- a) Hate Crime: Confidence in Reporting
- b) What do witnesses want when called to give evidence?
- c) Post sentence: the Victim's Voice
- d) Victims Code of Practice

The facilitators had done a significant amount of preparation for their sessions, and found that delegates needed encouragement to participate. The cause of this is not known although facilitators speculated that it could be due to concern/cautious about saying the wrong thing about a sensitive topic. Having said this, the facilitators felt the length of the workshop sessions was about right and there were no adverse comments about the workshop facilitation.

The facilitators felt that different levels of knowledge of the CJS caused a barrier in some of the workshop sessions. This prompted the suggestion to have some sort of input on the remit and role of each of the CJ agencies, and the processes and systems involved in terms of victims and witnesses. There were several suggestions as to how this could be achieved – insert in handouts, pre-read in advance of the day, a workshop specifically covering this issue.

It was thought there could be training to increase knowledge of other agencies – open to both staff and community.

A summary of each of these sessions is provided below.

Workshop A

Hate Crime: Confidence in Reporting

These two workshops explored the reasons why victims often have difficulties in reporting hate crime and harassment, and the barriers they experience when reporting. Some ideas and solutions to help improve the victim experience and make reporting easier and more effective were then explored.

The workshops identified two main barriers to reporting hate crime. Firstly, lack of information and difficulties in understanding what help is available, fear of reprisals and repeat victimisation, and secondly, if reporting does take place, distrust that the Criminal Justice System and its agencies will take the reports seriously and act to support the victim and bring perpetrators to justice.

Discussion on the first barriers threw up these examples of difficulties. Many victims do not know what to do and where to go for help. Language is often a barrier to reporting, particularly when a victim does not speak English or has literacy skills which allow for written information to be accessible. In addition, language and communication create further barriers. An incident might not be recorded as 'hate crime' because a victim does not know the 'terminology' or 'jargon' to express fully what has happened and the CJS agencies unthinkingly use terms which are not accessible to the lay person. Lack of local police stations and 'places to go' to report can be a barrier, and for others, picking up the phone and speaking to the police service-centre can feel daunting, and can result in misunderstandings on both sides. Some victims experience dual or multiple vulnerabilities – i.e. BME or disabled victims who are also members of the LGBT communities, and who might not therefore want to report the full extent of the crime.

Discussion on barriers regarding distrust and poor services by the CJS threw up the following points. The police often don't respond in a timely way, the police appear not to believe the victim's story, evidence is needed over a long period which requires repeat victimisation and difficulties in collecting 'hard evidence' by the victim, putting the onus on the victim to keep producing evidence. Victims may get told that their reports cannot be followed up because of 'lack of evidence', the reasons for which are not explained to the victim. This therefore becomes a meaningless statement for the victim and adds to their distress and frustrations. If a perpetrator is arrested, then the process of follow-up and court proceedings can take a long time, which still exposes the victim to continued harassment or vulnerability. Lack of explanation as to what is happening and any progress on a case also creates barriers to victims being able to trust that the CJS is taking the report seriously.

There was also an underlying concern that the CJS agencies are target led and driven and so individual cases may easily fall through the 'net' of the CJS agencies.

DELIVERABLE ACTIONS

The workshop focussed on deliverable actions rather than more global aspirations. Actions were identified which the relevant CJS agency can easily incorporate into its practice.

Victims/Community support workers:

- Always report hate crime – and use ‘3rd party’ centres and systems if you are reluctant to go straight to the police

Police actions: -

- Always offer to take a Victim Impact Statement, explain carefully what it is, as the victim won't know! Explain why it is helpful.
- Always take time to listen fully to what the victim is saying and reporting, and bear in mind that language barriers are manifold, as described above.
- Always explain what ‘lack of evidence’ actually means and why the evidence in an individual case is not sufficient to enable a prosecution. Victims have a very different perception as to what constitutes evidence to the police and CPS
- Always give victims good and regularly updated information as to case progression, which should anyway be done under the Victims Code of Practice.
- Always check the victim is being currently supported.

CPS:-

- In conjunction with the police, always check whether bail restrictions should be applied for if bail is not opposed.
- Always notify the victim immediately of the decision at the end of any court appearance – i.e. bail decision, sentence decision, trial outcome and sentence.

All agencies:-

- Collective responsibility to ensure that accessible information is continuously rolled out in various formats – written, web sites, given to local community groups, and written in accessible, plain English which can be easily translated and interpreted by community support groups as well as victims.
- Support the victim in the case.

Workshop B

What witnesses want when called to give evidence

Two workshops lively workshops were held discussing perceptions of what witnesses who are called to give evidence really want.

The main thing they want is to feel safe and while that is possible during the trial, with the assistance of witness service, once the trial is concluded, witnesses felt they were just left adrift.

The group felt more use of house alarms; alarms to police station and even 'safe' houses would be appropriate in some case.

The group felt that witnesses are not always given the full picture when giving their statement and were often left the impression that they would not have to attend Court or at the very least had a choice about whether they continued to support the prosecution. The groups felt that information was empowering and that all possible scenarios should be explained to the witness, such as the necessity to attend Court, guilty pleas or evidence agreed S9.

Special measures were also discussed and there was a need, the groups felt, to balance the needs of the victim with the need to get the right people convicted. One group felt that the needs of the victim should come ABOVE the desire to get a conviction and the case should be dropped if the witness was, for example, too scared to come to Court.

The groups felt that it would be advantageous for the CJS to be involved with community groups so they better understood the cultural difference. An example was given of some groups who would be terrified of any person in a uniform (as in some Countries the police have abused people). If the police knew this, could they not send a non-uniformed officer to take the statement?

All group members agreed that by assisting community groups in this way was not giving them 'special treatment', it is about making appropriate adjustments to meet the needs of the witness.

The groups agreed it was dangerous to assume what a witness may want and much better to ask, it does not mean the person is ignorant; it actually builds trust and shows interest.

It was felt that Judges and Magistrates' do not always protect witnesses when they are giving evidence and that they should not allow the witness to be badgered. In Weston-super-Mare all witnesses are called into Court pre-trial and the process is explained to them by the bench (including the fact that there may be some short delays). All felt this was a really good idea.

Waiting periods were discussed and they were longer than they should be, without enough updates. This leaves witnesses feeling undervalued and unlikely to engage in the process in the future. Witness timing schedules (batting orders) are considered vital to the smooth flow of the case.

Expenses should be properly explained to witnesses and should be quickly available.

Sentences do not appear to stop the behaviour, they are not a deterrent and many defendants are repeat offenders.

Much tougher action is required when a defendant breaches his/her bail conditions or a sentencing order.

It was felt more work could be done in schools to target potential bad behaviour and also to let young people know what help is available if they do become the victim of a crime.

DELIVERABLE ACTIONS

- Ensure minimum requirements of NWNJ are complied with
- Ensure VCoP complied with in particular timely information on progress of case
- Ensure all special measures are properly explained to appropriate witnesses so that they can make an informed decision as to which would best serve their needs.
- Police officers to fully explain, when taking a statement, that the witness may be called to give evidence. No false promises of guilty pleas.
- Encourage Magistrates and Judges to thank witnesses for attending
- Encourage Magistrates and Judges to explain to witnesses the reason behind a trial being adjourned.
- CPS to provide clear and early list of witnesses required and times they will be required (barring orders) to enable witnesses to have clarity of time and reduce waiting times at Court.

Workshop C

Post Sentence: This Victims Voice

Liz Spencer gave a short presentation on the post sentence work of the Victim Liaison Team from Avon and Somerset Probation Area and associated literature, with additional information about the work of the Probation Service in Public Protection.

Discussion then focussed on the needs of victims from a wide range of crimes after the offender had been sentenced, and also when they were due for release. Some discussions were also held reflecting people's concerns about bringing offenders to justice and sentence in the first place.

In both groups, much interest was shown in the possibilities for Restorative Practice and whether it could be effective or not, and in which agencies it was already being used. All participants were interested in the work of Youth Offending Teams in this sphere and many would like to know more and be better informed about this area of work and its approach.

SUMMARY of feedback from both groups.

- The need to share as much information about the different agencies and different approaches: Probation, MAPPA, Police, Police Neighbourhood teams, Victim Contact officers, YOTs, Restorative Justice and voluntary agency work. A number of agencies are not sufficiently aware of other agencies' work and how they operate and increased learning will help victims
- Public Perceptions – more information and explanations specifically to victims but also to the Public about process and sentencing will help to improve confidence and understanding – a media campaign, more individual contact with victims
- Information about release of offenders – to reduce repeat victimisation, police neighbourhood teams and victims need greater information.
- Same Race/gender counselling – and reporting. Who is the right person to speak to for the victim to feel comfortable? Does this question need to be asked each time in order to secure the person's confidence?
- Not making assumptions – asking relevant questions ie about literacy numeracy, the type of help or support someone wants.
- Housing departments/councils/anti social behaviour units – more liaison is better – greater communication between LCJB and criminal justice agencies and local authorities at all levels.
- Communication – improving the speed and sharing of relevant information to assist victims – consent can be gained for this from the

victims –and also from the offender if necessary, if Data Protection is an issue. In risk cases this is covered in any event.

DELIVERABLE ACTIONS

- Inform more staff in the Criminal Justice agencies about what is available for victims post sentence, Victim Liaison Scheme, Restorative Practice in YOTs, Mediation, recourse to law. This is so that staff working with or communicating with victims can inform them.
- Communicate better and more fully with the public via the media and websites and other forms of communication the work that is being done with victims and for victims to encourage more people to come forward.
- Ensure that the police are joined up in their approach, for instance Force Intelligence notifying local Beat Managers of releases of prisoners (especially short term prisoners to their patch) and better liaison from prisons to Force Intelligence for this purpose.
- Further information via the Victims and Witnesses Task group about Restorative Practice with offenders and victims to relevant personnel.
- Consideration when taking initial reports over the telephone, via call centre, or in the police stations etc as to the personal situation of the victim, asking them who they would best feel able to report to, and considering their culture or if their culture is not known that they might have differing needs. Important not to make an assumption that everyone can read, write or tell the time.
- Greater information to be passed to victims and to local Beat Managers when Bail conditions are changed, and also when sentence is passed.
- Greater resources to Probation to develop programmes/interventions with hate crime offenders.
- Joined up approach with local authorities and Criminal Justice agencies.

Workshop D

The Victims Code of Practice

These workshops focussed on the above legislation which has been in place since 2006.

Each workshop began with a general introduction about the scope and extent of the code – i.e. which agencies were covered, who is entitled to the service, can you opt out etc?

This led the groups into some very useful discussions based on experiences of the Code in action, observations on where there were problems in complying and some suggestions on how contact could be improved.

In no particular order the following issues were raised during the sessions –

- Issues with mobile phones where the police call would show up as a withheld number
- New Police crime recording system (Guardian). This new system has fundamentally changed the way that crimes are initially recorded and then subsequently monitored / updated. There have been some problems experienced as each Police District has rolled out.
- The volume of crimes held by an officer (frequently very high) can place a collective burden in terms of compliance.
- Difficulties for victims in contacting a specific officer
- Being able to access information easily about the code – especially for the most vulnerable
- The difference between witnesses and victims, especially in major incidents. Witnesses would not be covered under this code but other support agencies would still be available.
- The 'quality' of the communication – especially for those with learning difficulties.
 - has the information been received?
 - danger of overuse of acronyms
 - simpler language
- Maintaining continuity of contact – i.e. the same point of contact and seeing it through to the end.
- Overcoming a big hurdle for crime referrals in offender focussed agencies.

- Frustration of staff from YOT that a strict interpretation of the Code by managers is preventing them from completing their duties to their satisfaction. There appears to be less of a compulsion to comply than with other CJ partners.
- Choice over method of communication used - the victim's choice vs practicalities
- The importance of managing expectations – be clear in what we will provide, provide it and tell them when we have done it.

DELIVERABLE ACTIONS

- Do all possible to manage expectations - explain what will happen and tell them once its done
- Ensure that deadlines as set out in VCoP (or as stated in Force Policy for the Police) are complied with
- Ensure that where necessary the victim has the correct contact details for a point of contact in your agency and knows how to reach them appropriately
- Take all possible steps to ensure the quality of communication i.e. has it been received and understood

9. Feedback from workshop sessions to the main group

Due to the fact that each workshop was only run twice, the facilitators were asked to report back to the main group a summary of what had been discussed during the sessions so that attendees could get a flavour of what had taken place in the workshops they had not participated in. One attendee commented:

“I would like to have taken part in all of the workshops rather than listen to the feedback.”

Another attendee felt that only one workshop facilitator had spent time preparing feedback and that the other three had reeled off lists of what was said or gave their own view/agenda. In light of this it is recommended that if a similar format is used in future, time should be built into the agenda to allow facilitators to adequately summarise the discussions.

10. Question and Answer Session:

The organisers felt this was the weakest component of the event partly because they felt it was apparent the police representative on the panel had not attended the event all day. This was perhaps an oversight by the organisers which could be considered for future events.

Interestingly, comments from attendees about this session were overwhelmingly positive. Many attendees thought the questions were answered directly and honestly well and added insight. Several comments about the need for a roving microphone. The only significant negative comment about this session was:

“Poor. Due to lack of difference between workshops maybe? Attendees mainly agreeing with each other, not enough food for thought.”

11. Feedback from Attendees:

Attendees were asked to rate the speakers, the workshop sessions, the Question & Answer session and the event overall, using a scale of “Excellent” to “Very Poor”. The responses are summarised below:

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Poor	Very Poor
Speakers	8	17*	8*		
Workshop A (both sessions)	1	7	8	1	
Workshop B (both sessions)	2	8	5		
Workshop C (both sessions)	2	5	12		
Workshop D (both sessions)	3	5	7	2	

Q&A Session	2	12	18	2	
Event overall	4	18	12**	1**	

*Three people circled both Very Good and Good

** One person circled both Good and Poor

The numbers above show that overall the event was well received by the vast majority of those who attended. The speakers and workshops were the sessions that people were most satisfied with.

Each workshop took place twice and therefore the table below shows attendees satisfaction for each of the sessions:

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Poor	Very Poor
Workshop 1A	1	1	3	1	
Workshop 1B		4	3		
Workshop 1C	1	2	7		
Workshop 1D	1	3	6	1	
Workshop 2A		6	5		
Workshop 2B	2	4	2		
Workshop 2C	1	3	5		
Workshop 2D	2	2	1	1	

Noticeably, the majority of attendees rated the workshop sessions as very good or good. Of interest is that each workshop that was rated as poor by one attendee, was also rated excellent by another attendee! This demonstrates the variety of perspectives and that people benefit differently from the same workshop session.

This is demonstrated in one workshop, where very different comments were made about the same session:

“Got hijacked by single personal issue and was engaged with over and over and over”

“Good to see the effects from multiple sides, building a better understanding on how to encourage reporting”

“Interesting way of workshop, mainly dialogue between service user and provider very effective.”

12. Post event publicity:

A press release was written and published shortly after the event. No media enquiries were received for interviews, and due to resource issues there was no scope for a media scan to record uptake.

HATE CRIME EVENT HIGHLIGHTS HELP AVAILABLE FOR VICTIMS

On Wednesday 23rd April, the Avon and Somerset Criminal Justice Board (ASCJB) hosted an event at the Bristol Academy of Sport, Filton College for Criminal Justice staff and members of the community to show how the Criminal Justice System responds to victims and witnesses of hate crime.

The event aimed to demonstrate the help and support available for victims and witnesses of hate crime and increase confidence in the criminal justice process in order to improve reporting of this type of crime.

Hate crime is any offence committed against a person or property, which is motivated by the offender's hatred of people because they are seen as being different. Examples of hate crimes include homophobic crimes, racially aggravated crimes and crimes targeted against disabled people. A recent high profile example of a hate crime is the attack on Robert Maltby and murder of Sophie Lancaster in Lancashire, targeted simply because they were dressed as 'Goths'.

The principal of Filton College opened the day and welcomed the wide variety of people who attended and Suzy Dymond-White from the Prison Service chaired the event. Attendees heard from Shobha Das of SARI (Support Against Racist Incidents) about what it is like to be a victim of hate crime and Russ Kent of Victim Support provided information about the support available for victims.

From the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), Barry Hughes, Chief Crown Prosecutor for Avon and Somerset and Victim and Witness lead for the ASCJB, spoke about the measures in place for victims and witnesses of hate crime. Closing the event, Barry Hughes said:

"The Avon and Somerset Criminal Justice Board is committed to increasing the reporting and conviction of hate crime. It is unacceptable that someone is targeted as a victim just because of who they are. This was a valuable day as it allowed us to showcase what we are doing to try to tackle this type of crime. It allowed us to listen to those who have been victims and those who represent them, consider what we can do to better meet their needs and with their help bring more offenders to justice."

Comments from those who attended the day included:

"Definitely worth the time and effort to attend. I leave this conference with a greater knowledge and understanding of my criminal justice co-workers."

"Gave me another perspective on hate crime. Enabled me to understand more about the effect to victims and the role of all the criminal justice agencies."

13. Summary of recommendations:

Victims/Community support workers:

- Always report hate crime – and use '3rd party' centres and systems if you are reluctant to go straight to the police

Police actions: -

- Always offer to take a Victim Impact Statement, explain carefully what it is, as the victim won't know! Explain why it is helpful.
- Always take time to listen fully to what the victim is saying and reporting, and bear in mind that language barriers are manifold, as described above.
- Always explain what 'lack of evidence' actually means and why the evidence in an individual case is not sufficient to enable a prosecution. Victims have a very different perception as to what constitutes evidence to the police and CPS
- Always give victims good and regularly updated information as to case progression, which should anyway be done under the Victims Code of Practice.
- Always check the victim is being currently supported.
- Police officers to fully explain, when taking a statement, that the witness may be called to give evidence. No false promises of guilty pleas.
- Ensure that the police are joined up in their approach, for instance Force Intelligence notifying local Beat Managers of releases of prisoners (especially short term prisoners to their patch) and better liaison from prisons to Force Intelligence for this purpose.
- Greater information to be passed to victims and to local Beat Managers when Bail conditions are changed, and also when sentence is passed.
- Consideration when taking initial reports over the telephone, via call centre, or in the police stations etc as to the personal situation of the victim, asking them who they would best feel able to report to, and considering their culture or if their culture is not known that they might have differing needs. Important not to make an assumption that everyone can read, write or tell the time.

CPS:-

- In conjunction with the police, always check whether bail restrictions should be applied for if bail is not opposed.
- Always notify the victim immediately of the decision at the end of any court appearance – i.e. bail decision, sentence decision, trial outcome and sentence.
- CPS to provide clear and early list of witnesses required and times they will be required (barring orders) to enable witnesses to have clarity of time and reduce waiting times at Court

The Judiciary

- Encourage Magistrates and Judges to thank witnesses for attending

- Encourage Magistrates and Judges to explain to witnesses the reason behind a trial being adjourned.

All agencies (where relevant):-

- Do all possible to manage expectations - explain what will happen and tell them once its done
- Collective responsibility to ensure that accessible information is continuously rolled out in various formats – written, web sites, given to local community groups, and written in accessible, plain English which can be easily translated and interpreted by community support groups as well as victims.
- Ensure minimum requirements of NWNJ are complied with
- Ensure VCoP complied with in particular timely information on progress of case
- Ensure all special measures are properly explained to appropriate witnesses so that they can make an informed decision as to which would best serve their needs.
- Inform more staff in the Criminal Justice agencies about what is available for victims post sentence, Victim Liaison Scheme, Restorative Practice in YOTs, Mediation, recourse to law. This is so that staff working with or communicating with victims can inform them.
- Communicate better and more fully with the public via the media and websites and other forms of communication the work that is being done with victims and for victims to encourage more people to come forward.
- Ensure that where necessary the victim has the correct contact details for a point of contact in your agency and knows how to reach them appropriately
- Further information via the Victims and Witnesses Task group about Restorative Practice with offenders and victims to relevant personnel.
- Greater resources to Probation to develop programmes/interventions with hate crime offenders.
- Joined up approach with local authorities and Criminal Justice agencies.
- Take all possible steps to ensure the quality of communication i.e. has it been received and understood

14. Governance of recommendations:

The Victim and Witness Strategy group commissioned these events and therefore are best placed to consider the actions, with the assistance of the Confidence and Diversity group where appropriate.

15. Conclusions:

In summary the event was well received by attendees, demonstrated by some of the comments below:

“Definitely worth the time and effort to attend. I leave this conference with a greater knowledge and understanding of my criminal justice co-workers”

“Interesting and useful to network with so many diverse agencies, great venue, speakers were all excellent”

“Gave me another perspective on hate crime. Enabled me to understand more about effect to victims and role of other agencies”

All agencies were represented although some sent few delegates and there were several people who were unable to attend on the day, largely due to a police operational issue. Although not as many communities groups and representatives attended as originally desired, those who did attend were predominantly ‘new’ to the CJ process and not those who have previously engaged with us.