

# Living in a different world

What we found out about hate crime against disabled people



This is an EasyRead version of:  
**A joint review of disability hate crime by  
HMCPSP, HMIC and HMI Probation. Living  
in a different world**

## Some of the words we use in this report

|                                        |                                                                                                        |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Arrested</b>                        | When the police tell someone they think they have broken a law and take them to the police station.    |
| <b>Charge</b>                          | When the police tell a person officially which law they think they have broken.                        |
| <b>Crime</b>                           | When someone breaks a law.                                                                             |
| <b>CPS (Crown Prosecution Service)</b> | The service that deals with crimes after a person is arrested and up to the trial in court.            |
| <b>Hate Crime</b>                      | When you become the victim because of who you are.                                                     |
| <b>Evidence</b>                        | Information to prove a person has broken a law or not.                                                 |
| <b>Investigate</b>                     | Find out what happened and get evidence.                                                               |
| <b>Probation Services</b>              | The services that work with people who are found guilty of a crime to help them not to do wrong again. |
| <b>Review</b>                          | A planned and organised way of finding out about something.                                            |
| <b>Sentence</b>                        | The punishment for a crime. For example, how long a person will go to prison for.                      |
| <b>Victim</b>                          | The person who the crime is against.                                                                   |
| <b>Witnesses</b>                       | People who tell the police about a crime and give evidence to courts about it.                         |

# What is in this report



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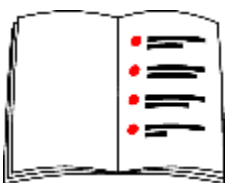
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# 1. About this report

This report is from 3 independent organisations that inspect or check what is happening with:



- the CPS
- the police
- the probation services.



We did a **review** about how these services deal with **disability hate crime**.

A **review** is a planned and organised way of finding out about something.



People understand the words '**disability hate crime**' in different ways and this can cause problems.

## 2. Why we did the review



There have been stories on TV and in the newspapers about the police and courts not dealing properly with disability hate crime.



We wanted to find out why this happens and how to make things better.



**When someone reports a crime:**

- the police **investigate** and collect **evidence**



- they talk to the CPS who decide which law they think the person has broken, then the police **charge** them with that crime



- the CPS tells the court which crime they need to think about





- the court will think about if it's a disability hate crime when they decide to sentence or punish them



- the probation services collect information when someone has said they did the crime or when the court has decided that they are guilty after a trial to help the court decide the sentence.



### What the law says

The words 'disability hate crime' are not written down in the law.

This means the police cannot charge someone with a disability hate crime, however, a court can punish someone more if the judge is happy that the law has been followed.



This only happens if the police, CPS and probation services get the right information and do things properly.

## Living in a different world



A disabled man said he is 'living in a different world' because he is treated worse than people who are not disabled.

We want the services we check to understand that disability hate crime is as important as any other hate crime.

Other people have written reports about disability hate crime and how to make sure:



- services get better at recognising disability hate crime and knowing how to deal with it



- more people know about disability hate crime



- more people report disability hate crime.

Things are getting better but we wanted to find out what else needs to change.



### 3. How we did the review



We thought about these questions:

- how good are the police and CPS at seeing disability as a reason for crimes?



- how well do the police, CPS and probation services deal with disability hate crime?



- what stops these services supporting victims of disability hate crime well and trying to make sure people get a bigger punishment for the crime?



To try to answer these questions we:

- visited 6 police forces, CPS offices and probation services in different parts of England and spoke to people who work there



- asked people in other areas who work in these services to tell us about ways to deal with hate crime properly



- spoke to judges, advocates and people from services that support **witnesses**



- we spoke to disabled people



- we spoke to victims and lawyers when we could



- looked at information about cases and thought about which crimes were disability hate crimes and whether these were dealt with properly



- spoke to organisations like Scope, Mencap, social care and the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)



- looked at what other people have found out and written about disability hate crime



- we did not have enough information to find out if disability hate crime happens more to some groups than others. For example:



- men or women



- people from different countries or backgrounds



- people who are older or younger.

We want to thank everyone who helped us with this review.

## 4. What we found out



### Telling the police about disability hate crime

The police and the law talk about disability hate crime in different ways.



This is confusing for everyone and means:

- many disabled people do not tell the police about hate crimes



- the police do not always think about why crime happens and do not see that some crimes against disabled people are hate crimes.



Services must work together with disabled people to find out more about disability hate crime and how many people it happens to.



We think things will get better if:



- there is an easy way to explain disability hate crime that everyone understands



- disabled people feel safe to talk about hate crime



- the police always check whether a person who tells them about a crime has a disability. This includes things that you cannot see like a learning disability



- disabled people get the right support to tell the police and courts about hate crime.



## How the police investigate crimes and police and the CPS make sure people go to court



The police do not always think about disability hate crime when they investigate a crime.



Many police officers do not understand about different disabilities or why someone might want to hurt or upset a disabled person.



This means they might not get the right evidence to prove it is a disability hate crime.



Lawyers and courts must think about whether crimes happen because a person is disabled and must give the court the right information so that the judge can decide if people need to be given a bigger punishment for these crimes.



## What happens in court



CPS lawyers can ask the court to decide whether a crime was done because a person felt a bad way about a disabled person but the judge can only give a bigger sentence if they have been shown everything the law says is needed.

This does not happen very often.



## Learning to do things better

We think the police and other services need better training to help them work with disabled people.



There are a lot of disability hate crimes that people do not tell the police about or the police do not recognise.

This can mean the police, CPS and probation services think disability hate crime does not happen very often and is not as important as other hate crimes.



Managers must make sure the people who work for them always deal properly with disability hate crimes, even when they are difficult or complicated.

## 5. What we decided



- disability hate crime can be complicated and different from other hate crimes where there are words written down in the law to make them a crime
- the police must get better at investigating disability hate crime and collecting evidence
- the CPS must make sure they get the evidence from the police, pass it on to the probation services and tell the court about it
- the probation services must make sure that they have the right information so that they can help the court to decide the sentence
- the police, CPS and probation services must get better at understanding, keeping information and dealing with disability hate crime and supporting more people to report it.

## 6. What needs to happen

### The police, CPS and probation services

Within 3 months of this review:

1. These services must work together to agree 1 clear definition to explain disability hate crime that everyone can understand.



Within 6 months of this review they should:

2. Agree how they will deal with disability hate crime better and try to make sure more people report it.



3. Know how to train their staff to:

- recognise disability hate crime
- collect the right information
- support disabled people
- make sure courts have the right information so that people are sentenced for disability hate crime and get the right punishment.



## The police



Within 6 months of this review all police forces should:

4. Think about how they get information to find out if a crime is a disability hate crime.

## The CPS



Within 3 months of this review the CPS should:

5. Check to make sure they have put the right information on the computers about if the crime is a disability hate crime.



6. Make sure lawyers understand how to ask courts to sentence people for disability hate crime and make sure that this information is kept.





## Probation services

Within 6 months of this review they should:

7. make sure that staff are more aware of disability hate crime and ensure that everyone involved has the correct information so that they can make good decisions.

## 7. Some examples of good work



- police students in Cumbria work with local community groups for disabled people.



This helps them understand different disabilities and disabled people feel safer about talking to the police.



- the police in Cumbria look at how often different people or groups of people are visited by the police.



This helps them plan who they need to work with.





- in the West Midlands the police make sure disabled people know that other people can report disability hate crime for them.



They gave information about disability hate crime to everyone who works for a health trust in that area.



- in the North West, local community groups and the CPS looked at a disability hate crime that the TV and newspapers said was dealt with badly.



This helped people to talk to each other so that they can learn from each other and think about how to do things properly.



- the CPS in the North West makes a list of all disability hate crimes.



Lawyers check these are dealt with properly. They need to make sure they show that people have done a disability hate crime when this has happened.



- in the North West the CPS worked with groups of disabled people and found out why many people do not report disability hate crime.



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