

THEMATIC REVIEW OF POLICING RACE HATE CRIME: TERMS OF REFERENCE

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. All human rights are universal, interdependent, indivisible and interrelated. The Human Rights Act 1998 requires the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), as a public authority, to uphold and protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals that are enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR). The Northern Ireland Policing Board has a statutory duty to monitor the performance of the PSNI in complying with the Human Rights Act 1998.

In recognising that discrimination and abuse based on race is an issue of grave concern within Northern Ireland, that must be addressed with some urgency, the Board through its Performance Committee, is commencing a thematic review to examine policing with and for all members of the community who may be identified as being within a minority racial group.¹ This thematic review will consider specifically race hate crime. The Board will use the definition recommended by the Stephen Lawrence enquiry and adopted by PSNI, namely “any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person.” A racial group is defined as being a group of persons defined by reference to race, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origin and references to a person’s racial group refer to any racial group into which he or she falls. Racial group includes Irish Travellers.

The thematic review will consider the PSNI approach to policing with and for those individuals and in particular its compliance with the Human Rights Act 1998 in, but not limited to:

- Identifying, recording and encouraging the reporting of race hate crimes, including offences of incitement to racial hatred;
- Supporting victims of race hate crime;

¹ PSNI records 6 different categories of hate crime: racist; homophobic; transphobic; disability; faith/religion (non-Sectarian); and Sectarian. The thematic review will consider racist hate crime.

- Investigating race hate crimes and arresting and prosecuting the perpetrators;
- Effectiveness of the police use of statutory powers to prosecute race hate crime;
- Strategies to combat race hate crime;
- Supporting police officers and staff from minority ethnic communities;
- Engaging with external partners and stakeholders.

This thematic will include a review of PSNI policy, operational effectiveness, training, staffing and the quality of service received by victims of race hate crime.

The Board is keen to hear from interested individuals and organisations on this issue and will facilitate roundtable discussions as part of the consultation. Written submissions should be received by Friday 20th February 2015 and sent to:

Human Rights Advisor
Northern Ireland Policing Board
Waterside Tower
BELFAST
BT1 3BG

Or by email to: information@nipolicingboard.org.uk