

# HATE

WE DON'T TOLERATE HATE CRIME IN ISLINGTON

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## No place for hate

Islington's strategy for tackling  
hate crime (2016 – 2020)



# Foreword

Islington has one of the most diverse and vibrant communities in the UK. This is something of which we are proud. Our vision for Islington is a cohesive and inclusive community where diversity is valued. We want our borough to be a place where there are strong and positive relationships between people of all backgrounds and identities. The vast majority of people here do treat each other with dignity and respect, but a small minority do not uphold these values and instead perpetrate acts of hate. People can become the target of hate crime simply because of who they are, or even who they are perceived to be.

Hate crime affects people on the basis of their race, faith or religion, sexual orientation, transgender or disability and can be both traumatising for individuals and deeply damaging for whole communities, leading to resentment, fear and isolation. We recognise that there is significant under-reporting of hate crime across London, including in Islington. We want to do all we can to give people the confidence to report it, provide appropriate support to victims and those affected by it and ensure effective action against its perpetrators.

Across London, racial and religious offences represent the largest volume of reported hate crime. The impact of national and international events can be significant on the levels of hate crime targeted against particular communities. This has been apparent, for instance, following the murder of Lee Rigby in May 2013 and the terrorist attacks in Paris in November 2015 which saw an increase in faith hate offences directed at Muslims here and the conflict in Gaza in July 2014 which saw an increase in hate crimes against Jewish communities in the UK.

Our aim is to ensure that every victim of hate crime in Islington has the confidence in our services to report it. We will work with our partners to ensure that victims receive a timely and effective response with appropriate support and protection to ensure that they feel safe and secure. Critical to that is making sure that perpetrators of hate crime are held to account and that at all levels hate crime is challenged.

Improving community safety and residents' quality of life is key to achieving our vision of a Fairer Islington. This strategy for tackling hate crime forms part of the wider Safer Islington Partnership approach to reducing crime and anti-social behaviour in Islington. It sets the agenda for working in partnership so that fewer people have to suffer as victims of crimes motivated by hatred in our community. Here in Islington there is no place for hate.

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# What is hate crime and why is it important?

**Hate crimes and hate incidents are acts of violence or hostility** directed at people because of who they are, or who someone thinks they are. There are five strands of monitored hate crime and all police services are required to record hate incidents based on these personal characteristics. Victims of hate crime are attacked or abused because they are disabled or because of their race, faith or religion, transgender identity or sexual orientation.

Incidents based on other personal characteristics such as age, marital status, gender, sub-culture (including Punks and Goths), sex workers or other street-population individuals can still be reported but will not be classified officially as hate crimes by the police and the Crown Prosecution Service.

**Hate crime and hate incidents include a range of behaviours such as:** verbal abuse or insults, offensive letters, emails or posts on social media, abusive or obscene phone calls, groups hanging around to intimidate, unfounded malicious complaints, abusive gestures, graffiti, dumping rubbish outside homes or through letterboxes, pulling of clothing, bullying and physical attacks.

**Hate crime and hate incidents** can take place online via social networking sites, at home, at school, in the workplace, in the community, on public transport or elsewhere.

In 2014/15 in England and Wales there were 52,528 hate crimes recorded by the police, an increase of 18% compared with the previous year<sup>1</sup>, of which:

- 42,930 (82%) were race hate crimes;
- 5,597 (11%) were sexual orientation hate crimes;
- 3,254 (6%) were religion hate crimes;
- 2,508 (5%) were disability hate crimes; and
- 605 (1%) were transgender hate crimes.<sup>2</sup>

However, it is widely held that incidents of hate crime are significantly under-reported. Hate crime affects whole communities and can destroy lives. It causes real fear for both victims and witnesses. If these crimes are not tackled, it can lead to isolation and further victimisation of vulnerable groups, along with the polarisation of communities. Islington's Community Cohesion Policy provides a vision for a cohesive and inclusive community where diversity is valued.

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<sup>1</sup> Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2014/15. Hannah Corcoran, Deborah Lader and Kevin Smith, Statistical Bulletin

<sup>2</sup> It is possible for one hate crime to have more than one motivating factor which is why the above numbers total more than 52,528 and 100%.

To make our communities safer, building community confidence and encouraging people to report hate crime must be a priority, not just for the police and council but for all agencies working with residents and communities.

We also want to increase the likelihood of perpetrators being brought to justice through increasing detections and sanctions.

This strategy seeks to respond to local voluntary and community sector organisations, particularly those representing faith communities, who have asked the police and council to do more in this area.

The 2014 *London Calling* report by the Respond Action Group<sup>3</sup> highlighted some issues with Islington's response to learning-disability hate crime and an action plan was drawn up with the Power and Control Group, supported by the Elfrida Society, to address the areas of concern. This progress needs to be incorporated within an overall strategy and action plan for dealing with all strands of hate crime.

There is strong anecdotal evidence from voluntary sector organisations of increased incidence of racial and religious hate crime and hate crime against disabled and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in Islington. However, police statistics do not necessarily reflect these reports. The number of reported offences is lower than the anecdotal evidence would suggest ought to be the case, particularly for disabled people. This indicates under-reporting of hate crime. Additionally, when incidents are reported, the numbers which are successfully resolved through sanctioned detections are low. If victims think nothing will happen when they report a crime and the perpetrator will not get caught or punished, this will deter them from reporting such crimes in the future.

Hate Crime has been identified as a priority for our equalities work, and increasing reporting and increasing positive outcomes for victims of hate crime are among the council's equality objectives.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> London Calling: Local Authority Responses to Disability Hate Crime – Chiara Mantovani / Louise Wallis, Respond. April 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Corporate Plan 2015-19

# The Islington context

Nationally, hate crime has gone up consistently over the past three years. As stressed by the Home Office in their annual report about hate crime nationwide, this growth is linked to an actual increase in the number of offences as a social response to recent national and international events (such as ISIS-inspired atrocities and the recent Brexit vote) but also to an increased awareness around this type of crime and an improved recording process implemented by police services.

The same trend is identifiable in London, with its particular demography, diversity, population density and churn, especially in its central boroughs. Considering these factors, we might expect to see a higher volume of hate crime in Islington compared with outer London boroughs.

Indeed, analysis of the hate crime data produced by the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) for the year ending 27 March 2016 identifies Islington in the top five boroughs in London for total number of offences motivated by hatred against race or religion.

If we look at the racist and religious hate crime rate (number of offences per 1,000 population), Islington (with its 2.81 crimes for every 1,000 people) is second highest behind only Westminster.

However, because of the importance of population flux mentioned earlier, a different picture can be seen when calculating the crime rate based on the daytime population. Islington's population increases by more than 120,000 people during the day and, because almost 65% of hate crime occurs during a 12 hour period between 8.00am and 8.00pm, it is useful to carry out the same analysis on the daytime population. The picture that arises from this analysis is somewhat different, with Islington down to 18<sup>th</sup> position among London boroughs for offences motivated by racist and religious hatred during the last financial year.

The movement of people in and out the borough can also partially explain why only 62% of hate crime victims live in the borough. Of those living elsewhere, the highest proportion come from neighbouring boroughs such as Hackney and Haringey (4.3% and 4.4% respectively).

Looking at the gender and age of hate crime victims in Islington, these follow the general pattern of crime victims: males represent almost 65% of total victims, with the largest group of them being in their 20s (31%).

As mentioned above, more than 80% of hate crime is motivated by racial or religious hatred and this is reflected in the demographics of the victims in the borough. Black people are four times more likely to become a victim of hate crime in Islington compared to people of White European ethnicity. Asian people are the second most disproportionately affected group.

Further investigation is needed to identify the locations where these groups are victimised. If the offences are occurring within a residential area where a minority community is concentrated, as opposed to a transport hub, for example, then the communal impact of the offences could be exacerbated, leading to a widespread fear of crime and feeling of being targeted.

This will be achieved by carrying out research to identify where minority communities reside in the borough linked to analysis of the type of hate crime occurring in those specific areas, and the demographic of the victims and where they live. The results will give us a better understanding of the incidence of hate crime within those communities and inform future efforts to address these issues.

More also needs to be done about the number of hate crime incidents and offences that go unreported, particularly by young people. Frontline staff and supporting agencies must be better equipped to recognise hate crime and have a deeper understanding of victims' needs. More should be done to increase people's confidence in reporting.

Perpetrators, in most cases, carry out criminal actions that are perceived by the victims as "minor" crimes. This is one of the reasons why victims do not report them. Statistics in Islington shows that 52.4% of racist hate crime over the past financial year was recorded as "harassment". Crimes that involved some degree of violence accounted for 21.5% of the total number of hate crimes. Of these, 2.4% resulted in serious injury for the victim.

Whilst we can expect that serious violent crime is more likely to be reported, crime perceived as "minor" (such as verbal abuse) is sadly often accepted as the norm by the victim. It is on addressing this problem that some of our analysis, research and partnership work should be focused.

An in-depth analysis around hate crime of each motivation (race, homophobic, faith, disability, transgender) is needed to understand the characteristics of these different victims and perpetrators, and the locations where the interactions between them take place. Even though they all fall under the general umbrella of hate crime, there may be important differences in the patterns associated with each. An aggregate analysis is useful to form a general picture of hate crime in the borough, but detail about each motivating strand is necessary to help inform an action plan to support victims, bring perpetrators to justice and prevent further crimes.

# Where do we want to get to?

By 2020 we will have turned the corner on hate crime, with:

- Increased community confidence in the local police, council and partners;
- Increased reporting of hate crime by all groups;
- Improved victim support; and
- Increased detections and sanctions, including community resolution.

# How will we get there?

This strategy has four main strands.

In Islington, we will:

1. Raise awareness about hate crime and increase community confidence to report it, focusing our efforts in particular where under-reporting is thought to be highest.
2. Ensure that the operational response to hate crime is effective and results in perpetrators being detected and facing proportionate sanctions.
3. Respond to hate crime in a joined-up way to ensure that the right support and safeguarding is provided to vulnerable victims.
4. Work in partnership with the community to tackle hate crime in the borough, including by supporting an effective, community-led Hate Crime Forum to hold the police, council and partners to account for dealing with hate crime appropriately and effectively.

# 1. Raising awareness about hate crime and increasing reporting

## Why is this important?

Raising awareness is needed to address three key issues:

- What the term 'hate crime' refers to;
- Why victims and witnesses should report hate crime; and
- How victims and witnesses can report hate crimes.

While there has been an increase in all recorded hate crime, we know that hate crime is still significantly under-reported. The 2014 Crime Survey for England and Wales indicates that 43% of hate crimes are not reported to the police. This may be for a number of reasons, including a lack of confidence that the authorities will take them seriously. There are some communities where victims are even less likely to report crime, including new migrant communities and transgender victims, and we need to ensure that their specific needs are addressed.

Even if the perpetrator of a specific incident cannot be identified, reporting hate incidents can provide the police and partners with intelligence that can help to identify particular places of concern and support other investigations or the targeting of resources. By reporting hate crime, victims can also access support and advice to help them to cope with the effects and increase their future safety.

## What are some of the challenges?

During recent meetings held with Muslim women in Islington to raise awareness about hate crime, they were unaware that incidents including verbal abuse and pulling of clothes amounted to hate crime. Distressingly, it was the 'normalisation' of these experiences that was preventing the reporting of these incidents.

While a negative perception of police was reported by some participants as a barrier to reporting incidents, many also considered that reporting incidents such as verbal abuse would be a waste of police time and not serious enough to be worth it.

They also reported a reluctance to travel on public transport due to the occurrence of hate crime on it and hostility directed at them by fellow passengers. Due to improved CCTV coverage, perpetrators of hate crime on London's public transport system are more likely than ever to get caught. Regardless, hate incidents and the fear of crime or harassment do affect some people's willingness to travel, particularly if they have been victims or have witnessed such behaviour.



Research in 2014 found that disability hate crime is a 'fact of life' for people with learning disabilities.<sup>5</sup> Mencap reports that 9 in 10 people with learning difficulties have experienced bullying or harassment.

Research in Leicestershire in 2015 found that, in line with the observations above, the majority of LGBT people spoken to as part of the study thought that hate crime was associated exclusively with violent acts and that homophobic and transphobic verbal abuse was 'part and parcel' of being LGBT. When asked about the forms of hate crime that would warrant police involvement, it became evident that frequency and severity were key factors in shaping a victim's decision to report.<sup>6</sup>

Racist and religious hate crimes are the most commonly reported hate crimes. The number of recorded disability hate crime offences is extremely low. However, Scope's 2011 discrimination survey found that 56% of disabled respondents had felt that a stranger had acted in a hostile, aggressive or violent way towards them because they were disabled.<sup>7</sup> Disabled victims are considered those least likely to report hate crime incidents to the police. The volume of homophobic and transgender hate crime appears relatively low, although there has been an increase in recent years.

Some local authorities and voluntary and community organisations have developed third-party reporting mechanisms which offer an alternative to reporting hate crime directly to the police. This involves trained members of community organisations taking details of incidents on behalf of victims and providing reports to the police and/or other relevant agencies, such as the council, Transport for London and so on. An advocacy function can also be provided with specialist knowledge, skills and provision of support to encourage more victims to come forward.

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<sup>5</sup> London Calling: Local Authority Responses to Disability Hate Crime – Chiara Mantovani / Louise Wallis, Respond. April 2014.

<sup>6</sup> University of Leicester; LGB&T Hate Crime Reporting: Identifying Barriers and Solutions, Professor Neil Chakraborti and Dr Stevie-Jade Hardy; April 2015

<sup>7</sup> Scope NDPP survey February to March 2011

# Key Actions

- LBI will work with partners to develop and deliver a targeted communications plan in partnership with (among others) the community, police and Transport for London, to raise awareness about the nature of hate crime, encourage people to report it and explain the support available to victims and witnesses.
- LBI and the police will publicise positive outcomes arising from hate crime investigations, specifically in terms of detections, sanctions and prosecutions, in order to encourage future reporting.
- LBI will work with the police and partners to deliver awareness-raising sessions with groups in those communities most likely to be affected by hate crime in order to provide reassurance, improve community confidence, encourage reporting and identify issues of concern that require a response.
- To promote the use of the True Vision ([www.report-it.org.uk](http://www.report-it.org.uk)) online hate crime reporting tool and appropriate hate crime reporting apps as alternatives to reporting hate crime directly to the police.
- To explore the prospect of establishing effective and sustainable third party reporting mechanisms with the statutory, voluntary and community sectors in the borough.

## 2. Ensuring an effective operational response

### Why is this important?

When victims report hate crime it is important that there is an effective response to that report, including, where possible, swift action against the perpetrator. This is more likely to aid the recovery of the victim and to increase confidence in the community. We are committed to holding perpetrators to account and challenging their behaviour to prevent further harm. The operational response should also focus on the needs, rights and concerns of the victim.

### What are some of the challenges?

One of the main barriers to reporting hate crime to the police is the perception that the reporting process will be time-consuming, confusing and unlikely to yield a successful outcome. The Leicestershire LGBT study found that where people had reported hate crime to the police on previous occasions, they felt jaded by that experience, particularly when they had received no further information or updates about the incident<sup>8</sup>. Messaging needs to be improved to explain that even if the perpetrator of a specific incident cannot be identified, reporting hate incidents can provide the police and partners with intelligence that can help to identify particular places of concern and support other investigations or the targeting of resources.

Some community members have also voiced concern about the attitude of police officers when hate crime is reported. The combined crime surveys for England and Wales between 2012/13 and 2014/15 show that victims of hate crime were less likely to think the police had treated them fairly or with respect compared with victims of crime overall. For example, in 59% of hate crime incidents the victims thought the police treated them fairly, compared with 81% for crime overall. Similarly, in 79% of incidents of hate crime, victims thought the police treated them with respect, compared with 89% of incidents of crime overall.<sup>9</sup>

In London, of 11,075 hate crime offences recorded by the police (from June 2013 to May 2014), 38.2% resulted in a sanctioned detection<sup>10</sup>. While sanctioned detection rates for hate crime are almost double that for other crimes, the data indicates that sanctioned detection rates for all hate crimes have remained broadly static or have declined.

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<sup>8</sup> University of Leicester; LGB&T Hate Crime Reporting: Identifying Barriers and Solutions, Professor Neil Chakraborti and Dr Stevie-Jade Hardy; April 2015

<sup>9</sup> Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2014/15. Hannah Corcoran, Deborah Lader and Kevin Smith, Statistical Bulletin 05/15, 13<sup>th</sup> October 2015, Home Office.

<sup>10</sup> A sanctioned detection occurs when all of the following conditions are satisfied: 1) a notifiable offence (crime) has been committed and recorded; 2) a suspect has been identified and is aware of the detection; 3) the Crown Prosecution Service evidential test is satisfied; 4) the victim has been informed that the offence has been detected, and; 5) the suspect has been charged, reported for summons, or cautioned, been issued with a penalty notice for disorder or the offence has been taken into consideration when an offender is sentenced.

The number of hate crime defendants prosecuted at magistrates' courts in London for racially or religiously aggravated offences (the most commonly reported types of hate crime) has increased in the last 10 years. The conviction rate has also improved and was 65% in 2012. However, further work is needed to improve the number of cases that proceed to court and the conviction rate.

## Key Actions

- To use data and analysis to identify any specific groups, locations or hotspots particularly affected by hate crime, including repeat victimisation, in order to inform our interventions to prevent hate crime from occurring.
- To deliver hate crime awareness training to our staff and partners responsible for frontline services, including police, housing, ASB teams and Contact Islington to encourage an appropriate victim-centred response to hate crime when it occurs.
- To ensure that training on effective responses to hate crime is delivered to teachers, in partnership with the Safer Schools Police and the Schools Improvement Service, so that teaching around hate crime can be effectively incorporated into the Personal Social Health and Education (PSHE) curriculum along with the 'Prejudice Motivated Bullying and Harassment Toolkit for Schools'.
- To ensure that multi-agency processes are in place for sharing information about victims and perpetrators of hate crime so that appropriate interventions, including potential tenancy action against perpetrators and support packages for victims, can be provided. This includes sharing information about repeat offenders to ensure appropriate sanctions are imposed.
- The police will ensure they have effective processes for keeping victims of hate crime informed about progress with the investigation into their case.
- To work with Victim Support to ensure that victims of hate crime are sufficiently supported, particularly regarding their involvement in the criminal justice process.
- To work with the police to consider ways to increase sanctioned detection rates for hate crime in the borough.
- To explore the use of solutions such as community resolution and restorative justice for those hate crime victims who want it.

# 3. Supporting vulnerable victims

## Why is this important?

The Crime Survey for England and Wales shows higher rates of repeat victimisation for hate crime compared with other crimes overall. In the survey, victims were asked if they had an emotional reaction after the incident and, if so, in what ways. According to the 2012/13 to 2014/15 surveys, victims of hate crime were more likely than victims of crime overall to say they were emotionally affected by the incident (92% compared with 81% respectively). Of those who were emotionally affected, more than twice as many hate crime victims said they had suffered a loss of confidence or had felt vulnerable after the incident (39%) compared with victims of crime overall (17%). Hate crime victims were also more than twice as likely to experience fear, difficulty sleeping, anxiety, panic attacks or depression compared with victims of overall crime.<sup>11</sup>

## What are some of the challenges?

Hate crime victims are not a homogenous group and may have a wide range of support needs. The partnership needs to ensure that there are appropriate referral pathways and specialist services in place to meet their needs.

Hate crimes can impact negatively on many aspects of a victim's health and wellbeing in a number of ways, including the following:

**Physical health:** injuries sustained from an attack, ranging from minor and short term to permanent disability or disfigurement. Chronic health symptoms related to stress, sleep disturbance, eating disorders and increased substance misuse.

**Mental health:** all victims of crime are at risk of psychological trauma, but the problems associated with hate crimes are known to last longer than for other crimes. In some cases individuals may continue to experience high levels of stress for many years, sometimes resulting in self-harm or suicide. Victims often experience a heightened sense of personal danger, vulnerability, and powerlessness. They may also suffer depression and anxiety.

**Social exclusion:** victims can avoid certain locations or activities, withdraw from groups matching the perpetrator profile and stay indoors for safety. Some victims change their whole way of life to avoid being targeted, such as only leaving home at certain times of the day and not participating in social, community or religious activities because of fear of repeat incidents.

**Disrupted education:** this includes missing school or avoiding school if incidents are occurring there, and the emotional and physical impact of incidents on victims either at school or within a learning environment as well as the disruption caused if a family moves home to feel safer.

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<sup>11</sup> Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2014/15. Hannah Corcoran, Deborah Lader and Kevin Smith, Statistical Bulletin 05/15, 13<sup>th</sup> October 2015, Home Office.

**Financial loss:** victims may suffer loss of earnings due to sickness or if they avoid work as incidents are taking place there. Damage to property and additional home security may also result in financial loss.

**Feelings of rage, bitterness and hatred** towards people displaying the perpetrator's characteristics can fuel community tension.

**Loss of confidence** in the public authorities to protect individuals and uphold justice.

The Leicestershire study into LGBT hate crime found that LGBT communities held the view that frontline practitioners were unaware of the day-to-day challenges they were facing and therefore lacked the necessary knowledge and skills to be able to appropriately provide support<sup>12</sup>.

## Key Actions

- To map existing support for victims of hate crime to identify any gaps and develop ways in which these can then be addressed.
- To identify the specific support needs of victims and communities experiencing hate crime because they are disabled or transgender or because of their race, faith or religion or sexual orientation.
- To collate details of relevant support services and share details with case workers and third sector organisations across the partnership.
- To consider the role of health professionals, including GPs and mental health services, in providing support to victims.
- To ensure voluntary sector organisations funded by the council are aware of issues related to hate crime, so that they are able to provide victims with support or refer them to a relevant organisation.
- To promote the Community Risk Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (Community MARAC) so that those supporting vulnerable people are aware of it and are encouraged to make appropriate referrals of hate crime victims to ensure multi-agency support.
- To monitor the impact of referrals to the Community MARAC to identify good practice in supporting victims and evidencing outcomes.

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<sup>12</sup> University of Leicester; LGB&T Hate Crime Reporting: Identifying Barriers and Solutions, Professor Neil Chakraborti and Dr Stevie-Jade Hardy; April 2015

# 4. Working in partnership with the community

## Why is this important?

Improving safety and tackling hate crime is key to promoting community cohesion, integration and a sense of belonging. The borough's diversity is one of its greatest strengths and assets. Effective engagement involves listening to the borough's diverse communities and acting upon their advice where appropriate to help improve performance.

The borough has a range of faith and community groups with an interest in hate crime. These groups can play an important role in raising awareness about hate crime, in encouraging reporting, in supporting victims and potentially in identifying perpetrators. There is also an important role in holding statutory agencies to account for their delivery of an effective response to hate crime in the borough.

## What are some of the challenges?

The partnership must ensure that the voices and specific needs of people across all hate crime strands are heard, bearing in mind that hate crime victims are not a homogenous group. This includes hearing from young people who, research shows, are especially reluctant to report hate crime and less likely to be involved in existing community engagement activity. It is important to ensure that young people from all backgrounds are aware of what constitutes hate crime and that they play a part in holding relevant agencies to account.

## Key Actions

- To support an effective, community-led Hate Crime Forum with a clear remit to hold the partnership to account for its performance in addressing hate crime in the borough, including through case scrutiny and reviews, and crime dip-sampling.
- To ensure individuals from all five strands of hate crime are consulted about their experiences and specific support needs to help inform local partnership provision.
- To train members of community groups to act as advocates and develop opportunities for them to engage with services to share experiences and expectations.
- To ensure community involvement in the development of local hate crime policies and practices.
- To raise awareness of hate crime through existing community engagement channels such as Ward Partnerships and Safer Neighbourhood Ward Panels.

Over the next four years, by implementing this strategy and performing the actions detailed above, the Safer Islington Partnership aims to raise awareness of hate crime in Islington and increase confidence in the community to report it; improve our operational response to it in order to detect and sanction more of its perpetrators; better support its vulnerable victims; and do all of this in concert with the local community. That way, together, we can help make Islington a safer and a fairer place to be.

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