

# Don't stand by

Ending disability hate crime together    Ending disability hate crime together

## Summary report



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# Introduction

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The *Stand by me* campaign was launched by Mencap as part of Learning Disability Week, in June 2011.



Mencap wants to work together with the police, the **criminal justice system** and the courts to stop disability hate crime. The **criminal justice system** makes sure people are punished if they commit crimes.



Mencap asked the **Office for Public Management** to look at what police around England do to stop hate crime against people with a learning disability. The **Office for Public Management** helps change important things that affect lots of people.



This report looks at what the police are doing right and what is working well. It also looks at what needs to get better.



We spoke with 14 police services in England to find out what work they are doing.

We included some police services from big cities and some from smaller **rural** areas. This helped us see if there were any differences in different areas. **Rural** means in the countryside.



We also talked to people with a learning disability about their experiences of the police and disability hate crime.

# What the report has found out

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## Being ready to deal with hate crime



The police services did not agree on how to be ready to deal with disability hate crime.

Many police did not have any officers or departments that are experts in stopping hate crime. This is worrying as these expert people and groups have an important job to do. They make sure hate crime is spotted. They also make sure victims of hate crime are supported in the right way.



Police community support officers have an important role to play. This is because lots of people think they are more easy to talk to than other police officers.



Lots of different police officers have a part to play. It is important that they all work together. This means they must all know what area of work they look after so that they don't miss any disability hate crimes.



This is important where there are different teams for stopping **antisocial behaviour** and hate crime. **Antisocial behaviour** is when people do bad things that are not crimes.

## Reporting hate crime



Most police have different ways for people to report disability hate crime. The police said that most of the reports came from meeting the victim in person.



People with a learning disability said that they would rather tell someone they already knew, like a social worker. It is worrying that only a few police know this.



Some police are using new ways to help people with a learning disability report hate crime. For example one police service helped people meet police community support officers in their area. This helped them to get to know the officers and feel more confident that they could report a crime.



Some police also made it possible to report crimes at places people feel more comfortable in such as libraries or day centres. However, very few police services are doing this.



## Spotting hate crime

Only one police service said that it made a note of the type of disability of the person reporting the crime.



Most police said they didn't make notes about if a crime was a disability hate crime or something else, like racist hate crime.

If the police do not spot disability hate crime properly, or make good notes about when it happens, they can't see how well they are doing to stop it.



One problem is that most police officers only get a small amount of training about hate crime. Mencap wants all police officers to get more training about hate crime and about learning disability.

### **How often hate crime happens**



All of the police said that most disability hate crime is not reported. If police do not know about all the hate crime that happens, it is hard for them to make a plan to stop it.



Police say they need to understand why people do not report disability hate crime. One reason may be that people with a learning disability do not feel they get a good result when they tell the police about crimes. This means they do not always report it if it happens again.

## Supporting victims of hate crime



Most police do not have departments that support victims. This means that people may not get the support they need. This often happens if someone has a learning disability as they may need more support.

Many people with a learning disability said some police officers did not know how to talk to people with a learning disability and were rude or **patronising**. This means they talked to them like they were stupid.



If police had more training to help them understand and talk to people with a learning disability this could be made better.

## How police look into disability hate crime



Most police services said they would look into a report of crime against a person with a learning disability in the same way as any other crime. Police need to see that some people with a learning disability might have needs that affect how they should look into the crime.



If police do not make **reasonable adjustments**, it can stop people with a learning disability reporting other crimes. **Reasonable adjustments** are things the police, or other people, can do to make it easier for someone with a learning disability.



Some people with a learning disability thought police did not take them seriously or believe them. The police may need more support to make sure they look into reports of disability hate crime in a way that support victims.

# What the report says and what we think needs to happen



## What the report says

Some police are getting better at stopping disability hate crime. But not all of them are doing so well.

## What we think needs to happen



Every police service should have officers whose job is to stop disability hate crime. All officers should know how their work helps to stop disability hate crime.

Police should make sure they are working well with disabled people and organisations.



Police should work with other organisations including the courts and the **Crown Prosecution Service** to make sure they are supporting each other to stop disability hate crime. The **Crown Prosecution Service** helps make sure people are punished if they commit crimes.



Police should learn to spot disability hate crime and record it properly.



It should be easy to report crimes in lots of ways, like giving people the chance to report crimes in places they feel comfortable or by talking to people they know and trust.



All police officers should be given learning disability training. They should know how to spot that a person has a learning disability. They should also be able to talk to and understand people with a learning disability. This will help police support them better.

## For more information or advice

🖥️ Find out more about the *Stand by me* campaign at [www.mencap.org.uk/standbyme](http://www.mencap.org.uk/standbyme)

### If you live in England

☎ Phone: **020 7696 5613**

@ Email: **campaigns@mencap.org.uk**

✉ Write: Mencap, 123 Golden Lane, London EC1Y 0RT

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☎ Phone: **028 9069 1351**

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✉ Write: Mencap, Segal House, 4 Annadale Avenue, Belfast BT7 3JH

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🖥️ To find out more about Mencap's campaigns go to [www.mencap.org.uk/campaigns](http://www.mencap.org.uk/campaigns)

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