

Research Summary Report

Hate Crime in Wandsworth

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Executive Summary

Hate crime is on the rise. During the most recent period (2016-17) the UK saw the largest yearly percentage increase since reporting began in 2011-12¹.

While this includes a number of different factors including race, sexual orientation and religion, there has been a clear increase in xenophobic attacks since the EU Referendum in April 2016. In response, the UK Government released the 'Hate Crime Action Plan 2016' to work in partnership with local communities and ensure best practice is drawn upon.

Our report considers the state of hate crime experienced by the religious communities in the borough of Wandsworth, London. Drawing from a survey of religious leaders across the borough, it reports the experience of hate crime in Wandsworth, the nature of these crimes, and how religious leaders are responding.

Awareness

The study found that 32% of faith leaders are aware of hate crime in the borough, although only 10% through personal experience or observation. The main drivers for these crimes, according to religious leaders, are race (39%) and religion (23%). During the interviews, leaders raised key issues including racial communities being targeted, young people being specifically vulnerable, and the effect of the media on anti-Islamic crimes.

Action

In response, 37% of leaders are taking action to address hate crime. The range of activities is broad, including mediation, a hate crime forum, inclusive leadership in their organisations and the two most common responses – working with the Police and other faith groups, as well as teaching their own members how to deal with crime that they may experience. 20% of leaders are keen to do more however. Ideas put forward include increasing the work of a multi-faith forum in the borough, community projects and engagement with schools or youth groups. 22% suggested that action could be taken by the Police and / or Council, and 30% are interested in joining a multi-faith panel.

For Wandsworth Council, these results show that hate crime is not currently at crisis point within the borough, but that it does affect a minority of people acutely. There is certainly more that can be done, and a willingness from religious groups to engage on this issue together.

In line with the national Hate Crime Action Plan, this desire to work across faith groups and in partnership with public authorities should be harnessed. Not only will this collaboration increase the effectiveness of Wandsworth's response to future hate crime, it will also strengthen a shared commitment to address this issue across all communities in the borough.

32%
of faith leaders
are aware of
hate crime.

37%
of leaders are
taking action
to address
hate crime.

30%
of leaders
are interested
in joining a
multi-faith panel.

Hate Crime – UK background

Definition

Hate crime is defined as a range of criminal behaviour where the perpetrator is motivated by hostility or demonstrates hostility towards the victim's disability, race, religion, sexual orientation or transgender identity². A hate crime may include verbal abuse, intimidation, harassment, assaults and bullying, damaging property or violence.

Hate crimes in the UK are due to a number of different reasons: 78% are race hate crimes, 11% sexual orientation, 7% religious, 7% disability and 2% transgender. All five categories increased between 2015/16 and 2016/17, reflecting the general improvements in crime recording.

Increase

Recent statistics from the UK Government have shown that hate crime is on the increase in the UK. From 2015/16 to 2016/17 there was an increase from 62,500 hate crimes recorded by the police to 80,400 – this was the largest percentage increase since the series began in 2011/12³. This increase is thought to be due to a combination of ongoing improvements in police recording, as well as a genuine rise in hate crime around the time of the EU referendum, particularly xenophobic attacks.

Data on racially or religiously aggravated offences show an increase from April 2016, reaching a peak in July 2016 but remaining at a higher level than prior to the Referendum. The level of these offences in

July 2016 was 44% higher than the previous year. There have since been a number of spikes in race hate crimes around significant events - such as, the March 2017 Westminster Bridge attack, the May 2017 Manchester Arena bombing and the June 2017 London Bridge attacks and Finsbury Park mosque attacks.

The Hate Crime Action Plan

In response, the Government released the 'Hate Crime Action Plan 2016'⁴, which includes spending £2.4m on protecting places of worship, a further £1m for vulnerable faith institutions and £900,000 to support community projects⁵. This four-year plan focuses on five key areas: preventing hate crime by challenging the beliefs and attitudes that can underline such crimes; reducing the number of hate crime incidents by increasing security measures, increasing the reporting of hate crime through improving the reporting process and working with groups who may under-report, improving support for victims of hate crime, and building our understanding of hate crime through improved data. Underlying this plan are two key themes – working in partnership with communities and joining up work across the hate crime strands to ensure that best practice is understood and drawn upon.

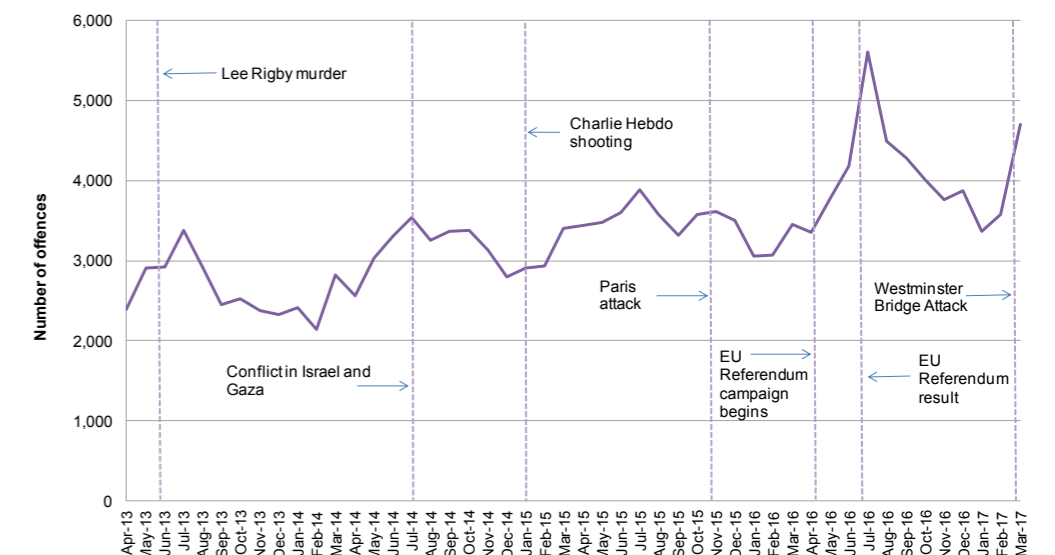


Chart from Home Office Statistical Bulletin [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/652136/hate-crime-1617-hosb1717.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/652136/hate-crime-data/file/652136/hate-crime-1617-hosb1717.pdf)

Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office

Methodology

Sampling technique

Between October 2017 and January 2018, 95 religious leaders were interviewed face-to-face in the London Borough of Wandsworth. There is no master list of religious institutions, so interviewers employed a “snowball” sampling technique, where each respondent was asked for introductions to all the leaders of religious groups that they personally knew. Religious organisations were also tracked through online searches and council directories. Once the list had reached 150 there seemed to be a natural point at which none of the sources that were pursued yielded any further contacts. Inevitably, there will be some groups that remain unknown to us currently. However, the religious groups that were contacted reflect a similar proportion to the religious affiliation represented in the 2011 Census by the Office for National Statistics.

	Percentage of individuals living in Wandsworth (2011 Census, ONS)	Percentage (Institutions) Interviewed in the research
Christian	81%	87%
Buddhist	1%	1%
Hindu	3%	2%
Jewish	1%	1%
Muslim	12%	5%
Sikh	0%	2%
Other Religion	1%	1%

Table 1: Which religions were represented?

Photo featuring faith group leaders discussing hate crime in Wandsworth Town Hall meeting



Response rates

This simple check has many deficiencies, but it does indicate that the sampling was not overly biased. There are slightly fewer Muslim groups represented than the proportion of individuals in the population and we observed that it was generally easier to locate and interview Christian organisations. However, because of this, all groups were contacted several times to arrange interviews, and interviewers travelled to meet the respondent at a time and place that suited them.

Using this method, Eido Research achieved 100% response rates from most minority religious organisations (all those approached were interviewed, except some of the Muslim groups). There was also a diverse range of Christian denominations included. More of some denominations were surveyed than others e.g. Anglican. However this reflects the higher proportion of Anglican churches in the area.

Each interview was completed face to face and the interviewer filled out a computer questionnaire while talking to the religious leader. Leaders were asked a range of questions both on their experiences and opinions about hate crime, and about the voluntary activities that their groups conduct to serve society (results published separately at <http://www.eidoresearch.com/wandsworthvolunteering/>).

In the hate crime section of the survey, religious leaders were asked 5 questions:

1. Are you aware of any hate crime in this area?
If yes, please give details on the nature of the crime and whether it is targeted towards a particular group of people?
2. Are there things your group are already doing combat this?
If yes, please give details about what you are doing
3. Are there things you would like to do?
If yes, please give details about what you would like to do
4. Are there things you would like to be done by the council, the police or others?
If yes, please give details about what you would like to be done
5. Would your organisation be interested in becoming a member of a multi-faith panel which seeks to prevent and combat hate crime in the borough?

Summary

Responses were varied and interesting, and interviewers attempted to capture the feel of the conversation in the way that they recorded the detailed answers.

In summary, the Eido Research team are pleased to have engaged with a wide range of faith groups, reflecting the community at large, and to have received such high response rates.

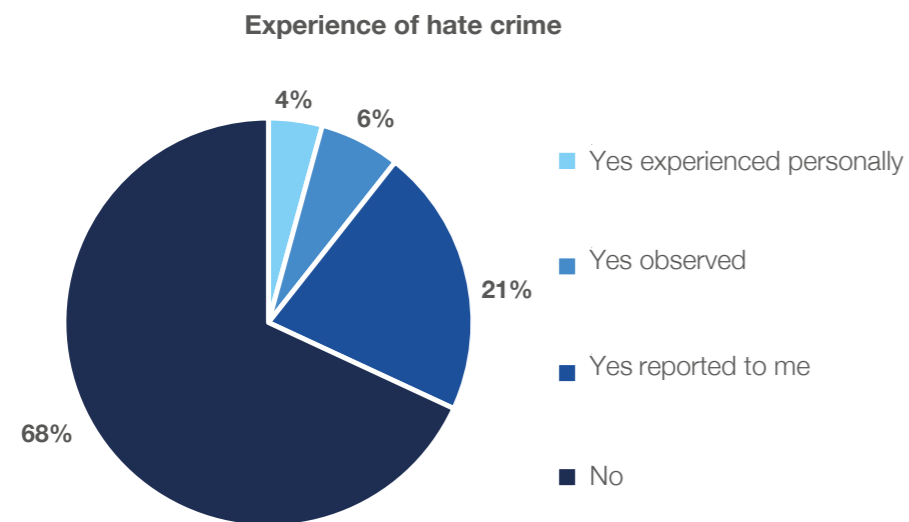
We are very grateful to the religious communities in Wandsworth for their participation.

Hate Crime Analysis for Wandsworth

In order to understand hate crime in Wandsworth and find useful ways forward, the analysis first focuses on religious leaders' experience of hate crime, then examines the nature of these crimes, and finally the organisations' responses and willingness to do more.

Experience of hate crime

As shown by the graph below, 68% of religious leaders in Wandsworth are not aware of any hate crime in the borough. Those who are aware, have mainly had crimes being reported to them by others. Only 10%, or 10 of the 95 leaders surveyed, have either experienced or observed hate crime personally.



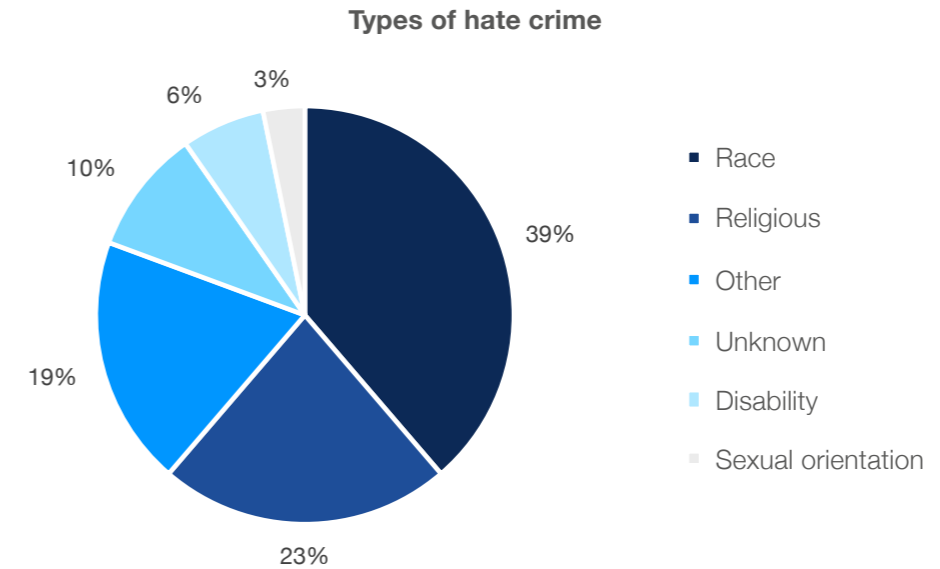
Interestingly, of the four leaders who have experienced hate crime personally, three come from different faiths – Muslim, two different Christian denominations, and Bahai. This suggests that hate crime is not just limited to one particular religion in this borough.



68%
of organisations surveyed are not aware of hate crime in the borough.

Nature of the crimes

Of those religious leaders who had any awareness or experience of hate crime (30 in total), a number of different types (motivations) were reported:



The graph shows that the largest motivator for hate crime in Wandsworth was race. However, religion and 'other' were also significant motivators. The 'other' crimes were all gang-related.

Additional dynamics were mentioned during the interviews too.

Race:

- One dynamic mentioned several times was the increase in verbal abuse since the EU Referendum.
- One leader mentioned a fear that people are sometimes targetted just by looking similar to a particular people group, even if they are not a part of it.

Age/young people:

- Physical abuse of teenagers from Black Caribbeans towards Black Africans.
- Two leaders associated an increase in youth crime (including stabbings) with funding cuts for youth groups, and the ending of 'football stadium provision'.

Religion:

- There were reports of 'anti-Islam' hate crime, and an even larger fear in the community that it could occur. "The media doesn't help", one leader talked of fear in their group after "the media portrayed an event badly from point of Islam [by showing] women getting Hijabs pulled off".
- The Ahmadiyya community were also mentioned multiple times, both as the victims of hate-leaflets and one particular event when they were targetted by the National Front. In this instance the police came and "handled it beautifully", which "strengthened confidence in the police".

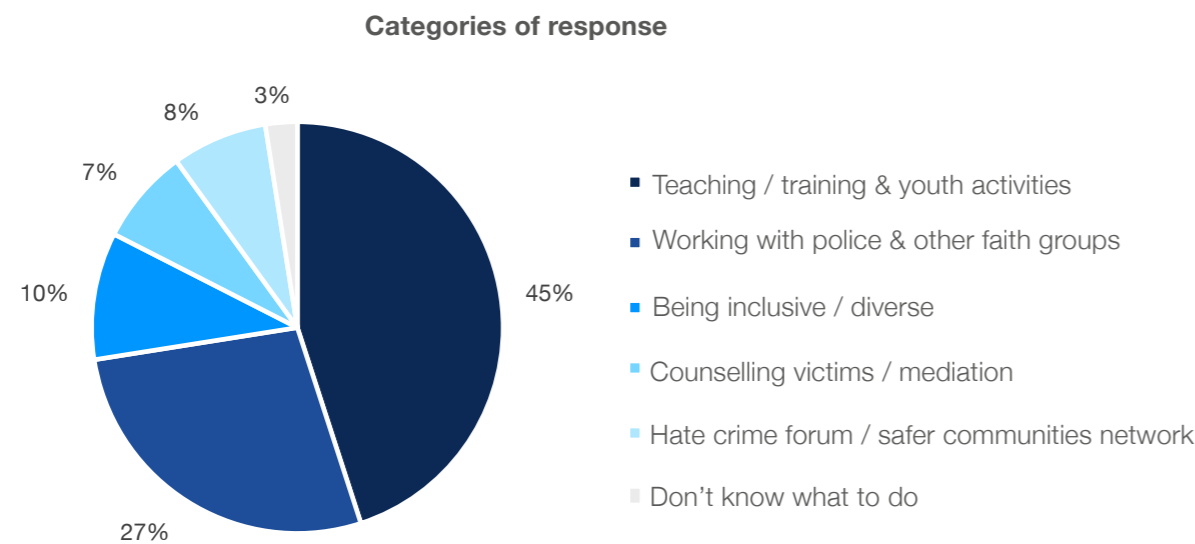
The largest motivator for hate crime in Wandsworth was race.

Organisations' response to hate crime

Of the 95 leaders surveyed, **37% are actively doing something to combat hate crime. Significantly, this is more than the 32% who reported any awareness or experience of hate crime occurring.**

It is encouraging that a number of organisations that had not experienced hate crime were doing something about it (20 leaders in total). On the other hand, there were also 16 leaders who were aware of hate crime, but not doing anything about it.

As shown in the graph, **there are many ways that groups are responding to hate crime:**



Most commonly, groups are offering teaching and training, often specifically aimed at young people (45% of responses). This could be anything from vicars teaching “Christian values” and “preaching the gospel of love and peace” to running specific programmes addressing hate crime: “[We are] trying to teach people to embrace differences, to appreciate the diversity that exists in Wandsworth.”

A significant number of organisations are working with the police, or other faith groups (26%). Some leaders hold a ‘community day’ between Christian and Muslim groups once a year. Others mentioned they were building relationships informally or through the neighbourhood planning forum.

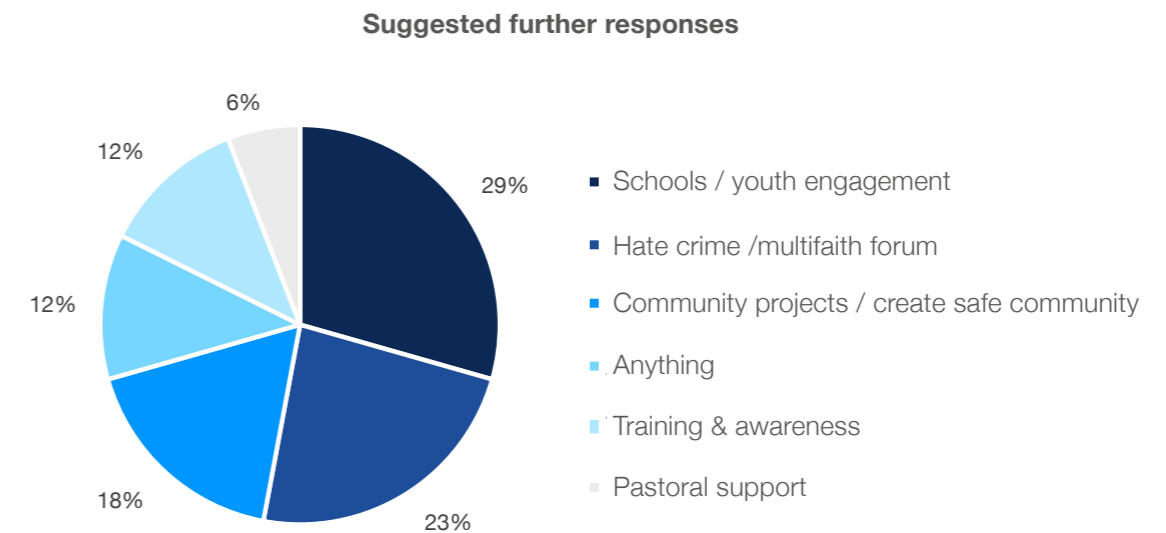
It is clear that the hate crime forum and safer communities network also play a role, and some religious groups mentioned directly counselling victims of hate crime known to them.

‘Being inclusive or diverse’ included religious groups intentionally welcoming different sub-communities, working hard to appoint leadership from different ethnic groups, and/or using their venues for the wider community.

Organisations' willingness to do more

Of the 95 organisations, **19 (20%) are keen to do more in response to hate crime.** Half of these are aware of (or directly experiencing) hate crime, and, again, around half are already responding in some way.

The graph below shows the main suggestions for what more could be done in response to hate crime:



Most commonly, leaders suggested increasing their engagement with schools and young people, and running projects to increase the safety of their local areas. Leaders also recommended furthering the work of the hate-crime forum or a multi-faith group. Other ideas included running community projects that at-risk youth could get involved with, offering pastoral support to victims, and developing a centre for reporting and training regarding hate crime.

Interestingly, 12% (2 of the 19) offered to do “anything” but didn’t know how to respond.

Multi-Faith Panel

Moving forward, 30% of leaders said they were interested in becoming part of a hate-crime forum, and a further 30% could be interested in the future and wanted more information. However, noting that 87% of the participants would “definitely like to stay connected to the Wandsworth Faith Based Network”, and the remainder are “willing to receive more information”, it may be more productive to create only one group through which religious leaders could communicate on all community issues.

20%
of organisations
are keen to
do more.

Help from the Public Sector

There was a feeling that more could also be done by the public sector.

22% of leaders provided specific ideas that would involve the Council, Police or others. These mainly focused around raising awareness and educating young people. There were also some more specific requests around the number of CSPOs present (particularly patrolling at weekends) a joined up system for reporting processes and additional provision for youth.



**“Building awareness...
Fear comes from not
knowing each other.”**

**“Invest in
Youth work!”**

**“Better communication from
the community support police
officer – I can't find out who
they are.”**

**“More patrolling
on the weekends
- on Friday and
Saturday nights.”**

**“Making the reporting
process easier,
especially third-party
reporting.”**

*Photo featuring 24 faith group leaders
at report presentation in Wandsworth Town Hall*



Conclusion

The study has shown that although the majority of faith leaders are not aware of it, there is a significant amount of hate crime experienced in the borough of Wandsworth. Although hate crime is not currently an endemic issue across Wandsworth it occurs quite acutely in pockets of the community.

The principal drivers for hate crime in Wandsworth are race and religion. This roughly lines up with what is reported nationally, although race is relatively less of a driver in Wandsworth (39% as opposed to 78% nationally) and religious motivations more so. This is very likely to be due to the respondents of the survey all being religious leaders, but there may also be less racial tension in the borough. A more in-depth investigation would be required to answer this question fully.

Response to Religious Tensions

To be specific, several leaders were aware of issues that could be addressed for the Ahmadiyya community who have been victim to many hate crime incidents and have become the first religious group in the borough to require airport style security checks to enter their premises. There were some very encouraging stories of how the police had responded to this community, but more can be done. As has been reported nationally, the media have a big role to play in fuelling race and religion-based crimes, especially in how they portray Islam. Local Wandsworth residents backed up these concerns, suggesting that the media are unfortunately responsible for racial and religious tensions.

Youth Engagement

The number of crimes involving young people highlights the importance of engaging with them as key players in the community. Currently, the most common response to hate crime from religious organisations is to offer teaching and training specifically aimed at young people but faith leaders stressed that more could be done in schools and youth centres particularly.

An Opportunity To Achieve More Together

The fact that so many religious leaders are responding in some way to hate crime is encouraging, but critically, there is now an opportunity to do more. 22% of leaders specifically identified ways that the Council or Police could improve in their support, but equally this research and follow-up meetings have created a momentum and leaders want to be involved themselves. 30% of leaders expressed a direct interest in becoming part of a multi-faith panel. Moreover, 87% of leaders are keen to stay connected to the Wandsworth Faith Based Network. Given this interest, organisations from all sectors should be encouraged to plug into these networks and invest in their development and success.

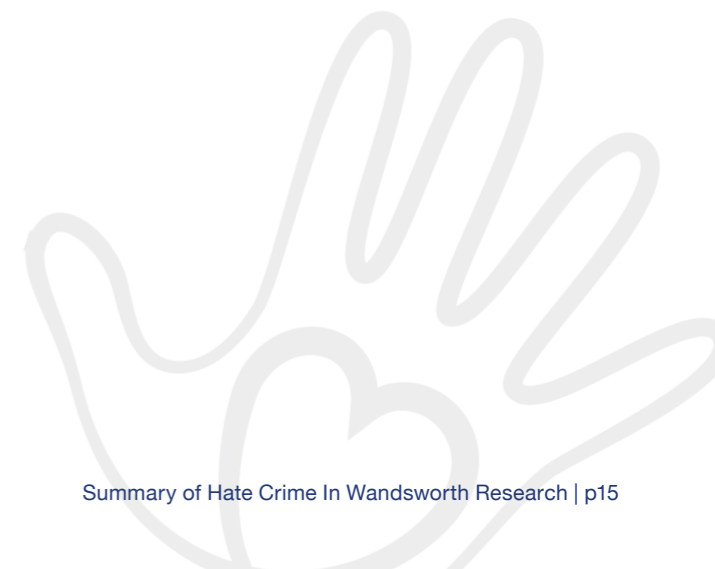
Recommendations

We recommend that Wandsworth Council respond by continuing their efforts to engage with leaders from multiple faiths, to hear their ideas, share best practice and help them to build partnerships with the public authorities. This would be done most effectively through existing networks which are currently bolstered by the momentum of this work. By focussing on the strengthening of existing multi-faith networks, the public sector will also increase the capacity these communities have to care for victims, and will help challenge attitudes and beliefs that underlie hate crime. Additionally, the police could improve the reporting of hate-crime by working with these groups and meeting members from communities that tend to under-report.

These suggestions strongly echo the national Hate Crime Action Plan (covering all of the five key areas).

In summary, we believe that through continued investment in multi-faith networks and conversation across sectors, religions, and people, we can draw the diverse communities of Wandsworth together, making it increasingly difficult for those wanting to commit hate crime to gain any traction in our borough.

Organisations should be encouraged to build partnership opportunities with public authorities, and develop the multi-faith panel.



References

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This report is one of two that were produced from the research conducted of faith leaders in Wandsworth by Eido Research. The first report, detailing the voluntary activities of religious groups can be located at www.eidoresearch.com/wandsworthvolunteering. Religious groups were shown to have contributed over 270,000 hours of voluntary services to the borough during 2017.

Photos in this report were taken during an event in Wandsworth Council Chamber on 4th July 2018: Celebrating the community benefit of Wandsworth faith groups. For more information about attending future events like these please email ben@eidoresearch.com



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