



Hate Crime Scrutiny Panel

Minutes - Wednesday 15th April 2026, FHQ Enderby

1. Welcome, Attendees and Absences

Absent:

Nandini Chakraborty
Richard Chapman

Attending:

David Findlay - Chair
Rosie Klair
Bethan Greasley – Assurance officer
Letitia Thomas - OPCC admin
Sgt Angela Cartwright – Force
Barbara Czyznikowska
Ajay Aggarwall
Darren Goddard – Crime Registrar
Jenny Ardley Oakden
Brigitte Heller
Lisa Vine – Ethics and Transparency Panel

2. Introductions and Apologies

Introductions: Ben Orton – Hate crime officer
Apologies: Richard Chapman, Nandini Chakraborty

3. Urgent Business

No urgent business

4. Action Log and Officer Feedback

Action – feedback regarding the harassment case – the officer has explained the reason for how 2 of the suspects were referred to. This was a quote from the community that the officer recorded when investigating. The community use them to differentiate between members with very similar names.

A panel member notes this is very common within their community too.

5. Hate Crime Statistics (Data Performance Pack)

The OPCC explain what had been amended when the Performance Pack was resent - A statistic category was added, and a spelling mistake was corrected.

6. Panel Cases for Consideration

2 cases of closed hate crimes were reviewed by the panel. The following gradings were recorded:

1 (Appropriate and consistent with Police policies and procedures)	
2 (Appropriate but with observations)	1
3 (Inappropriate and inconsistent with Police policies and procedure)	1
4 (Panel fails to reach a conclusion)	

Case ID	Classification	Rationale
Case A	Grade 2	The VCOP was completed but not on the VCOP template. The Hate Crime officer took longer than 14 days to contact. The incident was not initially recorded correctly (this was corrected). One of the suspects was eliminated without sufficient proof. The case was investigated well but the assault was not recorded correctly according to the recording standards.
Case B	Grade 3	The OIC did not account for the history of reports connected to the case. The incident was not recorded as a racially aggravated offence. The victim was not contacted within 24hours by the allocated officer, but this was due to officer absence. The victim was consulted on how they wanted the matter dealt with, but the panel felt this was not sufficiently taken into consideration.

Case A – The panel discuss that despite there being 4 people subjected to homophobic abuse there is only 1 recorded victim. This is because the case was reported as public order in which the offence is against the “crown” not an individual/individuals this was an error as section 4 public order requires a victim. The panel query the amount of time it took to contact the victim as there was several weeks before the interview was conducted but the police clarify the officer conducted the interview as soon as he returned to work. The panel query if fingerprints or DNA could not be retrieved from an item thrown at the scene. The force explain this wouldn’t have been possible due to the surface texture of the item. When discussing the difficulty getting in contact with the victim, the panel reflect that calls from the police come through as ‘unknown number’ and it would be more helpful if officers logged whether they had left a message or not. Within the report victim appears unsatisfied with the police interaction and lacks confidence with the police. The police have recently made changes to how victim call backs are performed and have since recorded improved satisfaction. In this case, the victim has not engaged with the police (not answering police calls, not providing descriptions) but it is unclear why he had low engagement. The panel note it is not made clear, but the victim’s expectations may not have been managed appropriately for this case, especially given that the lack of evidence would make prosecution harder. The police did inform the victim that if they could provide more information, it would help the chance of prosecution. None of the other victims engaged either. The panel highlight that it was positive to see the amount of call attempts that were made to the victim. The panel ask if it would be possible to see the statistics for the improvement of victim satisfaction and timeliness of callbacks. Call back deadline has been changed to 14 days and victim satisfaction has since improved.

Points to note - The VCOP was completed but not on the VCOP template. The Hate Crime officer took longer than 14 days to contact. The incident was not initially recorded correctly but the panel reflect this was corrected in 1 day. Although it was recorded incorrectly the victim that was physically assaulted has been recorded separately as assault. One of the suspects was eliminated from the case but it is unclear if there was enough evidence to prove he was not the offender. The panel raise whether the phone footage was followed up, but it is reported the footage couldn’t help with identifying any of the suspects. The panel felt this case was dealt with well, but didn't believe it could be graded as a 1 due to the initial recording not following police policies and procedures.

NEW ACTION – Bring the statistics for the improvements to victim satisfaction since changing the system for call backs to victims.

The panel classified case handling as **[Grade 2]** with comments that it was investigated and followed up very well.

Case B – the panel highlight that the report states there is not a history of incidents despite submitting reports for several years. The suspect reported that the victim had been filming them. The panel ask if the suspect would have to report that separately or if it would be a counter allegation. This could be a crime in some cases, but it does not appear to meet the threshold in this case (for harassment or voyeurism for example). The panel note that the victim’s expectations may not have been managed correctly or as the victim reported this conflict as spanning several years, the charge doesn’t feel equal to the crime.

The panel query why with the evidence available the suspect was asked to do a voluntary interview rather than being arrested. The suspect didn’t come in for interview for 3

months which could have been a significant window for further incidents or potential escalation. The panel debate whether arrest would have been justified. The decision falls to the attending officer and the threat has to be deemed significant enough. An immediate arrest could have been justified, but equally, the officer chose to not make an initial arrest and justified the decision in the report. The panel debate if the suspect should have been arrested at a later point instead. Between the incident and the outcome there was no further incidents so at that point, arrest would have been more difficult to justify. The victim mentioned to the initial officer that they had previously reported harassment from the same suspects and the panel feel the officer didn't investigate the history enough. They are also concerned about the lack of timeliness handling the case and the lack of justification for the delays. There was a change in the investigating officer which accounts for part of the delay and the panel note that officers are not to list leave, duties or sickness in the reports which could have also been a factor. The panel discuss that the victim has listed vulnerabilities and although these may have been considered in the decision to not arrest, they don't seem to have been correctly accounted for in the rest of the report.

The incident was not recorded as a racially aggravated offence but the hate element of the incident has been acknowledged. The victim was not contacted within 24 hours by the allocated officer but this was due to officer absence. The victim was consulted on how they wanted the matter dealt with, but the panel felt this was not sufficiently taken into consideration. The occurrence was not correctly recorded and the rationale for a conditional caution is not given.

The panel classified the handling of the case as **[Grade 3]**

NEW ACTION – Force to give feedback to the officers involved in case A and B

7. AOB

No other business.

8. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 24th June 2026

Meeting ended 20:00