

Dudley Borough
Community Cohesion and Hate Crime Strategy

2020 - 2023

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Introduction

Dudley has a proud tradition across the borough of people of all backgrounds getting on well. We have a rich mix of people living and working harmoniously within the borough. We work closely in partnership across agencies and organisations, and with communities to ensure that Dudley continues to be cohesive and any threats to this cohesion are addressed quickly and appropriately.

Our hate crime levels are currently reported as one of the lowest across the West Midlands Police Force area and we are committed to reducing levels and raising awareness of hate crime and incidents, in addition to supporting individuals that have been affected by these issues.

This strategy aims to illustrate how we can work together in order to retain high levels of community cohesion across the borough whilst identifying and responding to any arising tensions. It will also demonstrate how Dudley will continue to work to further reduce the incidence of hate crime, improve reporting and increase support for those affected.

This is a borough wide strategy setting out some key principles. Specific work streams, both themed and geographical, will be identified in conjunction with community and partners and work in relation to these progressed via annual action plans that will be developed. (action plan available on request from community.safety@dudley.gov.uk 01384 814735)

The 2020 – 2023 version of the strategy has been updated, taking into account comment from people that live and work within the borough following a consultation exercise.

Legislation and National Context

The legislative context is provided by the Equality Act 2010 which sets out the framework of protection from discrimination, for people defined by the protected characteristics of:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

While the Equality Act applies to all organisations, section 149 of the Act – the public sector equality duties – applies only to listed public authorities (including all local authorities). These require public authorities to do more than other bodies and be at the forefront of making positive changes in respect of equality, specifically to pay due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the Criminal Justice Act 2003 allow sentences to be increased if the offence is classed as a hate crime.

Nationally a significant amount of work is taking place to improve cohesion, challenge extremism and reduce hate crime. Work that takes place in Dudley will reflect these national strategies and action plans¹, in a way that is meaningful to people that live, work and visit the borough.

Demographics

'The latest population estimates from 2018, published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), show that Dudley Borough has a population of around 320,600. The population has been growing at a modest but sustained rate in recent years, with 15,800 more people in the Borough now compared to the estimate in 1998. Dudley is the fourth largest local authority district in the West Midlands Region based on population.'²

Age

The ONS states that 18.2% of the population are aged under 15 and 20.3% are 65 and over.

Ethnicity

'According to the 2011 Census, 88.5% of the Borough population are White British. Dudley has become more ethnically diverse since 2001 when this figure was 92.5%. Asian groups constitute 6.1% of the population, with the largest individual groups in the Borough being Pakistani (3.3%) and Indian (1.8%). 1.8% of people are from mixed ethnic groups, 1.5% Black ethnic groups and a further 1.5% from White groups other than British.'³

Religion

The 2011 census also reported that 65.3% of Dudley's population identify themselves as Christian, 4.1% Muslim and 1.2% Sikh. 22% identify as 'no religion'

'Dudley has a lower representation of some religions compared to England with Hindu (Dudley 0.6%, England 1.5%), Buddhist (Dudley 0.2%, England 0.5%) and Jewish (Dudley 0.02%, England 0.49%) religions where the percentage populations are at least half of those nationally.'⁴

Sexual Orientation

According to the Office of National Statistics, in 2017 an estimated 2.0% or 1.1 million people of the population (2.2% in the west midlands) identified themselves as lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB). This comprised 1.3% identifying as gay or lesbian and 0.7% identifying as bisexual. A further 0.6% identified as "other", meaning that they did not consider themselves to fit into the heterosexual or straight, bisexual, gay or lesbian categories. A further 4.1% refused, or did not know how, to identify themselves.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/integrated-communities-action-plan>
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hate-crime-action-plan-2016>
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counter-extremism-strategy>
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counter-terrorism-strategy-contest-2018>

² <https://www.allaboutdudley.info/home/the-borough/>

³ <https://www.allaboutdudley.info/home/the-borough/>

⁴ <https://www.allaboutdudley.info/home/the-borough/>

Disability

20% of Dudley residents stated that their day to day activities were limited to some extent by a long term health condition or disability (2011 census)

Deprivation

'Dudley Borough is ranked as the 104th most deprived of the 317 local authority districts in England (where 1 is most deprived), ranking it as less deprived than five of the other six districts in the West Midlands conurbation. While this suggests Dudley has relatively low deprivation for an urban area, it masks the disparity in levels of deprivation across the Borough. The latest national Index of Multiple Deprivation from 2019 showed that 28.1% of the Dudley borough population live in areas in the 20% most deprived in England. These are principally found in a zone covering Dudley, Pensnett, Netherton and Brierley Hill, but also include parts of Coseley, Lye, Halesowen and Stourbridge'⁵

Integration of new and existing communities

As previously mentioned the population of Dudley is made up of 11.5% existing and emerging BAME communities, and we continue to see new and emerging communities choose Dudley as their home, in addition to some travelling communities who may only be in the borough for a short time. It is imperative that we do our best to understand the needs of these communities, and understand how best to work together to enable integration with established communities, and to resolve issues arising in relation to transient communities in a sensitive and fair manner.

As part of this integration however, as outlined in the [Casey Review 2016](#), it is also imperative to ensure that all communities within the borough, existing and new, understand the common British values of tolerance, democracy, equality and respect.

Everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect and everyone should have an opportunity to achieve their potential. To allow residents and communities to integrate within Dudley we want to ensure that all communities and residents living in the borough are aware how to access services available to them and are also aware of the expectations of them, both culturally within our local communities and legally.

['Living In Dudley Borough'](#) includes information for residents that are new to the borough in relation to housing, health, education, staying safe and the law, in addition to signposting to various community information and services. This document can be accessed via the [Community Cohesion 'Helphub page' on the Safe and Sound website](#)

Community Cohesion

Essentially, Community Cohesion is about human relationships and how well people get on together. In Dudley it is recognised that Community Cohesion is vital for the maintenance of a safe and peaceful community where:

- People **interact and engage** with each other in a positive way
- People are **committed** to what **we have in common** rather than focusing on things that make us different
- **Mutual respect, fairness and justice** are actively sought

⁵ <https://www.allaboutdudley.info/home/the-borough/>

The Council has a duty to promote good relations between groups and the actions identified within a variety of strategies and plans across the Authority and partners contribute to and underpin this goal.

Although strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds within neighbourhoods, education settings and in the workplace is at the core of cohesion, it isn't the only issue that needs to be addressed. Economic exclusion and inter-generational issues also have a major bearing on cohesion.

Local perceptions of regional, national or international events aimed at specific communities will also influence cohesion. Therefore at the heart of any attempt to build or improve cohesion will be the necessity to involve and educate communities in order to influence attitudes and behaviours.

We will work with partners and our communities to identify effective ways raise awareness of different cultures within the borough

Community Tensions

In Dudley the definition of tension is:

“A situation arising from acts or events that cause Dudley people to feel negative towards one another and/or services provided, putting at risk public order or threatening the peace and stability of local communities.”

Good community relations cannot simply be taken for granted or left to chance and identifying tensions at an early stage is vital in order to prevent escalation, reduce conflict and avoid undermining community cohesion. Ideally, it is preferable to prevent tensions arising in the first place and mainstream community cohesion work is essential in moving towards this goal.

Tensions may manifest themselves through mistrust, miscommunication, the breakdown of community relationships, hate crime, extremism, isolation, criminal/physical damage or damage to the reputation of specific communities.

The Community Cohesion Strategic Group (CCSG) is a multi-agency strategic meeting and includes representatives from the Statutory, Voluntary, Community and Faith Sectors. The group reports to Safe and Sound Strategic Board (incorporating Dudley's Police and Crime Board). Key areas of work considered by the Group include:

- Tension Monitoring and responses to tensions
- Hate Crime – Monitoring and responses
- Preventing Extremism
- Channel Panel
- Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking
- Gang issues that impact on community tensions

Local tensions are considered under the following headings:-

- Political
- Community
- Immigration, Asylum and Refugee
- National and International
- Racial and religious
- Gang, knife or other weapon related
- Criminal
- Sexual Orientation
- Disability and/or Age
- Future

Residents and partners are encouraged to complete and submit the '[tension monitoring form](#)' when any tensions are identified, to allow the partnership to address issues before they escalate.

The CCSG is also responsible for the Community Cohesion Contingency Plan which sets out guidance to the Council and its partners to enable a fast coherent and proportionate response to incidents which are likely to jeopardise peace and stability within the borough. It outlines actions necessary to combat the impact of 'critical incidents', defined as:

'Any incident where the effectiveness of the partnership response is likely to have a significant impact on the confidence of the victim, the family and/or the community.'

Hate Crime

There is no legal definition of a hate crime. However, the police and the CPS have an agreed definition of hate crime as:

"any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's race or perceived race; religion or perceived religion; sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation; disability or perceived disability and any crime motivated by hostility or prejudice against a person who is transgender or perceived to be transgender."

A crime or incident is classed as 'hate' crime or incident if the person the act is aimed at, or a person witnessing the act, perceives it to be because of any of the below characteristics of the victim.

- race or ethnicity
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- gender identity
- disability

A victim of a hate crime/ incident does not have to be a member of a minority group or someone who is generally considered to be vulnerable. Effectively anyone can be the victim of a hate crime/ incident.

Incidents may involve physical assault, damage to property, bullying, harassment, verbal abuse or insults, offensive graffiti or letters / emails, text messages or comments over gaming or various social media platforms

The Picture in Dudley

Hate crime trends across the borough are monitored via quarterly reports received by the Community Cohesion Strategic Group and actions identified as appropriate. West Midlands Police also monitor incidents on a daily basis to ensure swift Responses as appropriate. We are working with the Crown Prosecution Service to highlight successful hate crime prosecutions to members of the public.

387 Hate crimes were recorded in Dudley in 2018 / 2019. It is acknowledged that work taking place locally and regionally to raise awareness of what constitutes hate crime and reporting routes, such as our third party reporting centres could be resulting in increased reporting.

Overwhelmingly name-calling stands out as the predominant cause of recorded racially / religiously aggravated intentional harassment alarm or distress. Which tend to be triggered by an incident such as road, traffic or parking / parking space related incidents.

Offences directed at victims through their occupation are also high, these included Police Officers, Security Guards, Door Staff, Taxi Drivers, Bus Drivers, Support Workers, Environmental Protection Officer, Shop Staff, Bar Staff and Library staff members.

A number of offences took place as a result of the offender being identified and challenged for inappropriate behaviour such as re-entering a premises from where they had already been banned, prevented from stealing, recognised from a previous offence, or whilst under arrest.

Partners in Dudley from statutory and voluntary, community and faith sectors work closely together to raise awareness of what constitutes a hate crime or incident and encourage those that experience hate crime or incidents to report what has happened to them. We will also signpost victims of hate crime and incidents to support services

Education and early intervention is required to prevent our children and young people from growing up with prejudices against other groups within the borough. Existing stereotypes need to be addressed and the reality behind negative myths needs to be exposed. Work will continue to take place via the safe and sound communications plan to raise awareness of what constitutes a hate crime and how to report.

Educational resources are available to access on the [safe and sound website](#) and will continue to be updated and promoted

Reporting Hate Crime

National research has shown that incidents of hate crime are under-reported.

Partners in Dudley are committed to offering a variety of reporting mechanisms to ensure people are able to report in confidence and where they feel most comfortable. These include the traditional route of reporting to West Midlands Police, online via the true vision website or via the boroughs [Third Party Reporting Centres](#), which allow victims to report acts of hate confidentially. These centres are across a mixture of venues, and represent different strands

of hate crime. There are a minimum of one centre for each specific strand, and several 'generic' centres, such as Dudley Council Plus, Family Centres and Victim Support.

[Information around reporting routes](#) can be accessed via the [Safe and Sound website](#) and via our Hate Crime leaflet.



Hate crime leaflet
Aug 2019.pdf

Support for victims

Locally, Victim Support have support workers specially trained in Hate Crime to work with victims.

Additional advice for victims to access is highlighted on the safe and sound website.

<https://www.dudleysafeandsound.org/hatecrime>

Prevent

Prevent is part of the UK's counter terrorism strategy, preventing people from becoming involved in terrorism or supporting terrorism. In recent years we have seen an increase in attacks across the world, with the perpetrators of those atrocities justifying their actions on the basis of a wide range of extremist causes. Prevent activity has been taking place in Dudley since 2007, and our priority is safeguarding individuals and communities from the risk of extremism by building resilience to extremist influences.

There is a correlation between extremist views and an increased risk of hate crime, prejudice, and fragmented communities, so it is a priority for all of us to work to prevent extremism where possible.

The prevent agenda is taken forward via the Prevent Delivery Group and detailed in the prevent strategy and delivery plan

Resilience Forum

Dudley's Resilience Forum is a multi-agency partnership made up of representatives from the local authority, Emergency Services, West Midlands Counter Terrorism Unit, Health organisations and supporting agencies which work together to address specific local issues and build capabilities to plan, respond to and recover from a wide range of civil emergencies.

The Prepare and Protect elements of CONTEST (The United Kingdom's counter-terrorism strategy) are incorporated into the scope of this Forum in order to help reduce risk in the local area and improve community resilience.

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

Modern Slavery is the term used within the UK and is defined within the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

Modern slavery is a hidden crime of indeterminate duration, frequently involving multiple victims and offenders, who may be involved at different times.

Modern slavery offences tend to involve, or take place alongside, a wide range of abuses and other criminal offences. The Home Office (2017)⁶ has identified 17 different types of modern slavery offence in the UK, which fall broadly into four overarching categories:

- **Labour Exploitation;** including being subjected to poor / cramped living and / or working conditions with low or no payment and building of debts
- **Domestic Servitude;** where the victim is forced to undertake household chores either for immediate or extended family members or strangers, this can also include forced marriage and other types of domestic abuse;
- **Sexual Exploitation;** including child sexual exploitation, trafficking for sex work and sexual abuse for the perpetrators own gratification
- **Criminal Exploitation;** including forced gang and drug related activity, forced labour for illegal purposes such as cannabis cultivation, forced acquisitive crime and begging, financial fraud (including benefit fraud) and trafficking for forced or sham marriages

The partnership works together to raise awareness of modern slavery and human trafficking and ensure an appropriate response to potential victims and perpetrators. This work and associated identified actions are overseen by the Community Cohesion Strategic Group.

Additional information including reporting routes, e'learning and information for businesses can be found at <https://www.dudleysafeandsound.org/modernslavery>

Links to the DMBC Council Plan, Corporate Priorities and the Borough Vision

The Community Cohesion and Hate Crime agendas align with the DMBC corporate priority of 'stronger, safer communities', however it can be linked to many aspects of the Council Plan⁷, in particular:

- Educational Outcomes: Closing The Gap For Disadvantaged Pupils:
- Children's Social Care: Building Strong Partnerships; Safeguarding In Practice
- Adult Social Care: Reducing Social Isolation
- Health & Wellbeing: Growing Resilient Communities
- Housing: Supporting Vulnerable People

In Dudley Borough key stakeholders came together to define the borough's vision and aspirations for 2030⁸. This vision is split into seven aspirations for the Borough, one of which is *'#Home Of Warm Welcomes And Close-Knit Communities. A place of healthy, resilient, safe communities with high aspirations and the ability to shape their own future'*

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-typology-of-modern-slavery-offences-in-the-uk>

⁷ <https://www.dudley.gov.uk/council-community/plan-policies-and-strategies/council-plan/>

⁸ <https://www.dudleyboroughvision2030.org.uk/community>

A borough-wide partnership approach to community cohesion helps in **recognising** and **celebrating** diversity and **valuing difference**, Community cohesion remains vital for the forming **welcoming and close-knit communities**, where:

- *people interact and engage with each other in a positive way*
- *people are connected and committed to what we have in common, value the things that make us different*
- *mutual respect, fairness and justice are actively sought*
- *people make things happen for themselves and their communities*

Governance and Implementation

The Community Cohesion Strategic Group will oversee the work included in the annually created partnership action plans, which will be aligned to this strategy, in order to minimise the potential negative effects of tensions and hate crime, prevent escalation and reduce conflict.