# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE** | **National Hate Crime Awareness Week 2024** |
| **DATE** | **14 October 2024** |
| **BY** | **Jane Hutt MS, Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip** |

This week marks the launch of National Hate Crime Awareness Week 2024, the annual campaign that brings together partners to raise awareness of the impact of hate crime, the importance of reporting incidents and the support available.

The Welsh Government maintains our strong stance: hate has no home in Wales, and it will not be tolerated. These principles are at the forefront of our Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan, LGBTQ+ Action Plan, and our work to develop the Disability Rights Action Plan, which are all driving forward our ambition to improve the social and cultural well-being of communities in Wales and deliver a more equal Wales.

The National Hate Crime Statistics for England and Wales 2023/2024 were published by the Home Office on 10 October 2024. The statistics show a 2% decrease in recorded hate crimes across Wales compared to 2022-23.

There were 5,929 recorded hate crimes across the four Welsh Police Force Areas of which:

* 3,632 (61%) were race hate crimes
* 1,139 (19%) were sexual orientation hate crimes
* 752 (13%) were disability hate crime
* 346 (6%) were religion hate crimes
* 306 (5%) were transgender hate crimes.

It is difficult to interpret hate crime statistics as we know many victims do not report what has happened to them. A 2% decrease in recorded hate crime in Wales could mean more incidents may be going unreported or it could mean fewer hate crimes are being committed. Regardless, it is clear there is still much to be done to ensure Wales has no place for hate. We are concerned about a 21% increase in religious hate crime in Wales, in comparison to the previous year with significant events in the Middle East coinciding with this increase. We are extremely concerned by reports of hate crime targeted towards Jewish and Muslim communities in Wales. We encourage members of these communities to report any hate incidents. These can be reported by contacting the police or the Wales Hate Support Centre run by Victim Support.

These statistics cover 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 so they pre-date the impact of the violent disorder which affected the UK over the summer following the devastating attack in Southport. Although we did not see the level of disorder in Wales, the fear caused by the racist discourse which surrounded these incidents was palpable. Partner organisations sought to share information quickly and ensure communities were protected. We engaged with affected communities to provide reassurance at times of heightened community tensions. The convictions which have followed the unrest have demonstrated the value of reporting hate crime and the very serious consequences of targeting people because of who they are, whether online or in person.

We continue to fund the Wales Hate Support Centre, led by Victim Support, to offer targeted help and advocacy to all hate crime victims across Wales. The service supports children and young people, adults and families in their recovery journey and empowers them to progress beyond hate. This service provides victim-focused support, 24/7 over the phone, via email, web referral and live chat. The service is continually reviewed by its Lived Experience Advocacy Forum (LEAF), ensuring that the voices of victims are central in shaping the service to best suit the needs of those who need support.

Victim Support has again this year created a calendar of events to mark the week, collaborating with police, local authorities, and the third sector including their ‘People behind the numbers’ event.

We have continued to fund activity through our Hate Hurts Wales campaign this year, most recently in August when we delivered a burst of media activity in areas of Wales previously impacted by hate crime. This campaign continues to be an important and effective way of ensuring everyone is aware of the support available to victims of hate crime.

Online hate and misinformation remain a significant issue, as highlighted during the recent disorder across the UK. It is vital that social media and tech companies do everything they can to protect their users from online harms, such as hateful and misleading content. We remain committed to working with Ofcom in their new capacity as regulators of online safety in the UK.

The Welsh Government is proud to support National Hate Crime Awareness week. We will continue to tackle the root causes of hate and, as we stand up to hate, we will continue to support those who have been affected by it. We encourage communities across Wales to unite against those who seek to divide us and help us to continue to demonstrate that Wales is a cohesive community of communities.