# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **National Hate Crime Awareness Week 2022** |
| **DATE**  | **10 October 2022** |
| **BY** | **Jane Hutt MS, Minister for Social Justice** |

National Hate Crime Awareness Week is an annual campaign of action to raise awareness of hate crime, highlight the importance of reporting incidents, and signpost people to the support available.

This year, our Wales Hate Support Centre provider, Victim Support Cymru, has helped to co-ordinate a range of activities across Wales to mark the week, collaborating with police, local authorities, and the third sector. These activities have been developed under the theme, Wales Together, which underlines the importance of communities uniting against hate in all its forms. Victim Support Cymru has also co-produced a partner pack with resources to help stakeholders to deliver themed messaging throughout the week, with each day focusing on a different strand of hate crime.

On 11 October 2022, I will be speaking at the [Young People and Hate in Modern Wales](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/pobl-ifanc-a-chasineb-yng-nghymru-fodernyoung-people-hate-in-modern-wales-tickets-425417544327) event hosted by Victim Support Cymru. The event will explore the harmful and isolating impact of hate crime on the lives of children and young people and provide a forum to highlight best practice in supporting those who have experienced hate.

It has been another important year of progress in Wales. We have embedded action to tackle hate crime in both the forthcoming Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan and the LGBTQ+ Action Plan, demonstrating a strategic approach to this issue. Our plans have been shaped by the views of the people of Wales, and it is clear from their input that tackling hate crime is a priority. The Welsh Government is committed to creating an anti-racist nation by 2030, where everyone is valued for who they are and the contribution they make. Tackling hate crime is a pivotal to this vision, and the actions contained in the plan are driving us forward towards this goal.

These action plans have fed into the work plan of the Welsh Government ‘s Hate and Community Tension Board Cymru. Through this board, we are working alongside the four Police forces in Wales, British Transport Police, Crown Prosecution Service Cymru-Wales, the Offices of the Police and Crime Commissioners, and Victim Support Cymru to take the work plan forward.

A fundamental part of our work to tackle hate crime is the Wales Hate Support Centre. In April, the Welsh Government launched this new support service, run by Victim Support Cymru, to provide an independent and high-quality support and advocacy service which promotes victim-centred choices for all victims of hate crime across Wales. The Centre is using innovative outreach and engagement methods to ensure it is reaching socially and geographically excluded communities and is focused on inclusiveness and intersectionality. The service is free and available 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

As part of this new service, the Wales Hate Support Centre is providing support to children and young people. Last year, the Welsh Government commissioned research into their experiences and their awareness of hate crime. The research highlighted gaps in knowledge and support for children and young people who experience hate, and a clear requirement for a service which better suited their needs. In response, this service will provide tailored and appropriate support and advocacy together with awareness-raising and engagement work with children and young people and the professionals that support them. This is part of a wider training and engagement programme delivered by the Centre to diverse audiences from all sectors across Wales.

To coincide with National Hate Crime Awareness Week, the Welsh Government is delivering a short burst of its anti-hate campaign, *Hate Hurts Wales*. This will include television and online advertising, running across ITV, S4C, Facebook, and Instagram. The aim is to supplement the awareness-raising activities happening across Wales and to encourage people to report. We are currently in the process of procuring the contract to deliver the next phase of *Hate Hurts Wales*, which will run until at least March 2024.

The Hate Crime in Schools Project ended in March 2022, with 145 schools across Wales receiving hate crime awareness raising training and critical thinking sessions. The Welsh Local Government Association delivered the project on behalf of Welsh Government and has produced an evaluation report. We are now considering how best to take forward the recommendations and learning from the project.

We have recently agreed to fund the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust to employ a support worker to encourage communities in Wales to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day 2023 through community events and activities. The Trust’s mission to highlight the dangers of allowing hate to go unchallenged is as important as ever and strongly links with our wider work to make Wales an anti-racist nation.

The National Hate Crime Statistics for England and Wales 2021/2022 were published by the Home Office on 6 October. The statistics show a 35% increase in recorded hate crimes across Wales compared to 2020/2021. There were 6,295 recorded hate crimes across the four Welsh Police Force Areas of which:

* 3,888 (62%) were race hate crimes;
* 1,329 (21%) were sexual orientation hate crimes;
* 227 (4%) were religion hate crimes;
* 864 (14%) were disability hate crimes; and
* 247 (4%) were transgender hate crimes.

It is uncertain to what degree the increase in police recorded hate crime is due to continued recording improvements, alongside the range of work to encourage victims to report incidents. For example, our *Hate Hurts Wales* campaign ran during half of 2021/2022 (October 2021 to March 2022) with digital communications, targeted outdoor advertising, and television advertising all aimed at increasing the confidence of victims to come forward and report. Nevertheless, any increase in hate crime is concerning and an indication of why our continued work in this area is required.

We are still waiting a response from the UK Government to the recommendations of the Law Commission’s Final Report on Hate Crime Laws, published in December 2021. I wrote to the UK Government this year to ask that it accept with immediate effect the recommendation that the aggravated offences which currently exist for race and religion should be extended to all other existing characteristics within the hate crime legislative regime, including sexual orientation and transgender identity. This would send out a clear message that hate crime motivated by sexual orientation, transgender identity, and disability is unacceptable and there are serious consequences for those perpetrating these hateful actions, but no action has been taken yet by the UK Government.

We want a Wales where everyone thrives and feels valued. The National Survey for Wales 2021 to 2022 showed that 84% of adults agreed that people from different backgrounds get on well together, while 82% agreed that people treat each other with respect and consideration. This is a positive indicator that we have connected communities with shared values in Wales, and a solid platform to work together to eliminate hate and prejudice from society.