

Safer Sefton Together  
Partnership  
**Hate Crime Strategy**  
2025 – 2027



## Foreword by Councillor Liz Dowd



**Councillor Liz Dowd**

Cabinet Member Communities  
and Partnership Engagement

Creating strong, safe, and resilient communities is a key priority for Sefton Council, and the Council has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of hate crime targeted at people because of their race, religion or belief, disability, sexual orientation, or transgender identity.

The impact of hate crime can be devastating for victims and their families and also has the potential to divide communities and damage neighbourhoods. Working with our partners, we will strive to raise awareness of hate crimes and hate incidents, provide support for victims, and continue to develop the confidence in the community that they can report incidents and that reports will be dealt with effectively.

The Sefton Hate Crime Joint Agency Group (JAG) is a partnership between the Council, Merseyside Police, and other local and regional partners who are involved in responding to hate crimes and supporting victims. This strategy outlines the aims of the JAG over the next 2 years, and the actions that it will take to support those aims.

The JAG reports to the Sefton Safer Together Community Safety Partnership, and this strategy and the action plan will be reviewed annually to ensure we are delivering against our priorities and those of our key partners.

By working together with our partners and the community, we will focus on the aim of building resilient and empowered communities, where everyone feels safe and supported.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'E.C. Dowd'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

## 2. About Sefton

Sefton has a combined population of around 275,000 people, with the large towns of Southport and Bootle accounting for the lion's share of that total. Like most of the Liverpool City Region, the borough was originally a part of Lancashire. Formed in 1974, the borough stretches along the coast from Bootle in the south to Southport in the north, extending inland to Maghull and Aintree.

The area has seen the emergence of many new communities in recent years, in part as a result of the dispersal of asylum seekers by the Home Office but also international migration to the UK following the enlargement of the European Union, with the largest increase in numbers being from Poland and other central European countries. We aim to be an inclusive and diverse community; we have an active voluntary sector and are home to renowned tourist attractions, attracting tens of thousands of visitors to the area each year.

Sefton is home to the Liverpool Superport, Aintree Racecourse and Royal Birkdale golf club.

### Sefton Vision 2030 and Core Purpose.

Sefton Council's Vision 2030 was agreed in November 2016, together with the Vision Outcomes Framework and Sefton Council's Core Purpose.

Part of the vision for Sefton 2030 is that Sefton residents look out for each other, that we focus on our similarities and the strength that comes from diversity, but never on our differences. The Council pledges to work together to encourage people to make their homes and communities safe, with the outcome that people feel safe and supported and are free from discrimination and harm.

Tackling hate crime matters to us all, not just because of the devastating consequences it can have for victims and their families, but also because it can divide communities.

This strategy reflects the objectives and aims set out in National, Regional & Local Frameworks to prevent hate crime, increase public confidence to report hate crime and improve the response of agencies charged with tackling hate crime.

We will continue to do this by working in partnership with statutory partners and local support agencies, to ensure victims of hate recognise when a hate crime has occurred, understand why they should report it and know who to report it to.

## 3. What is a Hate Crime?

A hate crime is any criminal offence, which is perceived by the victim, or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice towards someone's:

- Disability
- Race
- Religion
- Sexual Orientation
- Transgender status

These are the five monitored 'strands' of hate crime. Merseyside Police may also record crimes against sex workers as hate crimes.

## 4. Sefton Context

Incidents involving racial hatred accounted for more than half of hate crimes recorded by police in Sefton in 2022/23. Disability was a factor in almost 12% of recorded crimes, a higher proportion than in any other Merseyside area in 2022/23.

At the heart of this strategy is a recognition that the recorded levels of hate crime are unlikely to reflect the actual levels of hate-based behaviour. Hate crimes motivated by stereotypes and prejudice are corrosive and damage the lives of individuals, their families and the communities within which they live, affecting those living, working, studying and visiting Sefton.

## 5. Reporting a Hate Crime

Hate incidents in Sefton are predominantly reported to the police; hate incidents can also be reported to the local authority and via a network of hate incident reporting centres and key partners including Stop Hate UK, funded by Merseyside's Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to operate across Merseyside.

This flexible approach to reporting recognises that everyone should have a choice as to who and when they report and be able to provide consent as to what happens with their report.

## 6. Priorities

Action Against Hate, the UK Government plan for tackling hate crime (2016), proposed five key areas:

1. **Preventing hate crime** by dealing with the beliefs and attitudes that can lead to hate crime. We recognise the importance of preventing hate crime happening in the first place and are committed to challenging those attitudes that can lead to discrimination and divisions within our society.
2. **Responding to hate crime in our communities** with the aim of reducing the number of hate crimes and hate incidents. We will focus on a number of high-risk environments for hate crime, including public transport, the night-time economy and the internet. Target resources to areas showing any significant increase in community tensions; work with local communities and interest groups to reduce tensions and increase confidence in the community.
3. **Increasing the reporting of hate crimes**, we will continue to work to make it easier for those affected to report incidents of hate crime including through third party reporting centres. To give everyone the confidence that their complaints will be taken seriously we will work with the police and Crown Prosecution Service to publicise successes in prosecuting hate crime.
4. **Improving support for the victims of hate crime**, research has shown that hate crimes cause victims greater distress than similar crimes without the same motivation. We will work to ensure victims are provided with timely and effective support both at the time of reporting their crime and through the criminal justice system.
5. **Building our understanding of hate crime**, in order to tackle hate crime, we need to understand the scale and nature of the problem. We will work with Merseyside Police to improve data collection on hate crime and improve our analysis and understanding of the drivers of hate crime and how these can be addressed.

## 7. How strategy will be delivered?

Delivery of the aims of this strategy will be the responsibility of all the partner agencies within Sefton. A list of the partners who take part in the hate crime Joint Agency Group is given in appendix A.

### **Agencies and partners will work together in order to:**

- Focus and coordinate multi-agency resources and responses to prevent hate crime,
- Educate those committing hate-based behaviour, across all age groups, in order to advance equality across Sefton so everyone can live safely,
- Increase reporting of hate crimes,
- Improve the monitoring of all hate-based behaviour and market a common response across Sefton,
- Increase access to support, as well as to improving the operational response to hate crimes,
- Provide consistent and effective support for victims and a minimum threshold for access to services,
- Provide effective target hardening security measures to protect victims and reduce repeat victimisation,
- Promote collaboration and the sharing of lessons learnt, what works and best practice across all agencies,
- Support Restorative Justice Interventions,
- Bring offenders to justice,
- Promote community cohesion.

## 8. How will we know it is making a difference?

Our Hate Crime action plan sets out detailed outcomes we want to see by 2026, and how we will measure them. We will use a variety of data sources, including the views of service users, to ensure we have different perspectives to offer an evidence-based approach. We will also incorporate consistent outcome measures into all our commissioned services and encourage partners' services to use comparable measures, so we can clearly evidence effectiveness and monitor trends.

## Appendix A – Hate Crime JAG Partners

- Sefton Council - [Sefton Home](#)
- Merseyside Police - [Home | Merseyside Police](#)
- Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner - [Hate Crime: Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner](#)
- Stop Hate UK - [Home - Stop Hate UK](#)  
PCC-funded anonymous 24hr hate crime reporting helpline
- Anthony Walker Foundation - [Anthony Walker Foundation | Racism & Hate Crime Charity](#)  
PCC-Funded support service for victims of race and/or religion hate crimes
- Daisy Inclusive UK - [Disability Hate Crime - Daisy Inclusive UK](#)  
PCC Funded support service for victims of disability hate crime
- Citizen's Advice Liverpool - [Hate Crime | Citizens Advice](#)  
PCC Funded support service for victims of sexual orientation and/or transgender hate crime
- Probation Service  
Victim Support Service
- Irish Community Care - Irish Community Care (irishcc.net)  
Support service for Irish and Irish Traveler communities
- Venus - [Venus Charity](#)  
Community Support Service, including resettlement support
- Sefton CVS - [Sefton CVS | Supporting Local Communities](#)  
Community Support Organisation.
- Sahir House - Home - [LGBTQ+ and HIV Charity in Liverpool City Region - Sahir](#)  
LGBTQ+ support service
- One Vision Housing - [Welcome to One Vision Housing - OneVision](#)
- Sanctuary Housing - [Sanctuary | Leading Housing and Care Provider](#)

