



LPA IAG Meeting Minutes

DATE: Wednesday 16th October 2024

TIME: 6pm-7.30pm

LOCATION: Kiln Farm Gurdwara, Two Mile Ash, Milton Keynes

Initials	Position
AK	IAG Chair
EB	LPA Commander, TVP
GB	Staff Officer, TVP
NS	CADO, TVP
JL	Guest Speaker
SB	IAG Member
RRK	IAG Member
LP	IAG Member
TLJ	IAG Member
AA	IAG Member
KM	IAG Member
HS	IAG Member
JW	IAG Member
JS	IAG Member
SBe	IAG Member
ZM	IAG Member
SS	IAG Member
IM	Guest
NU	Guest
AKe	Admin Support, TVP (Minutes)
Apologies	
DH	IAG Member
AKh	IAG Member
JH	IAG Member
NR	IAG Member
TG	IAG Member

- 1. Welcome & Introductions:** **IAG Chair**
AK thanked everyone for attending and to JS for hosting at the Gurdwara.
- 2. Previous minutes were ratified** **AA/TLJ**
The IAG Minutes are published on the TVP Website and can be viewed here: [Milton Keynes Independent Advisory Group | Thames Valley Police](#)
- 3. IAG Chairs Report - Communication** **AK**
Referring back to the summer riots, and social media driving fear and tension in communities, please fact check any posts you receive before sharing. Everyone is responsible for making sure the information you pass on is correct.
EB asked if, going forward, it would be acceptable to send messages to Councillors for onward cascade to communities via Group Social Media sites. This worked well during the riots.

RRK commented that the Rural Community already used a WhatsApp group, accessed by the PCSO, which was well monitored by Admins. Perhaps PCSOs /Officers could join their local WhatsApp Community groups? If anything needs reporting it is done via 101 as normal. Irrelevant or inappropriate comments are removed. No more than 50 per group works well. Strict rules must be adhered to.

NS: Mosques have WhatsApp groups already – messages to quell fear about the summer riots went out and were received well. KM corroborated this. The Oxford CADO has authority to be in a WhatsApp group so there is a precedent.

EB will consider the possible consequences of this.

EB made those present aware that there is a shake-up of IAGs force-wide. Will the IAG be happy to be part of ‘TV Alerts’?

RRK: TV Alerts can be specifically targeted. Need to look into setting management as may not be able to change own settings once in place.

ZM shared that her own mosque was very reassured by the messages from TVP around the summer riots.

4. LPA Commander’s Update: Guest Speaker – JL – Hate Crime from an LGBT perspective

JL spoke about her life as an LGBT woman growing up in the 1970’s and her experiences of hate crime, including her time spent working in the armed forces and the Police. JL explained her living situation and described it as different. Sharing what she has in common with those present, is being a minority, being different.

This week is National Hate Crime Awareness Week. The theme for 2024 is solidarity with those affected by Homophobic Hate Crime targeted towards the LGBTQ+ community. It was apparent that those present have coherent communities that give them strength.

LGBT is an ‘umbrella’ term. There is sexuality (LGB), Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and gender (T) - who you believe yourself to be. Being different means you are subjected to prejudice/bias, what people think about you and how they act on that. In the 70’s there was no social media, no internet or books, nothing on TV – nothing to say there was anyone else who was the same and that it was OK. There was a feeling of being alone and knowing you were different but not knowing why.

One experience early on in JL’s life was when her boss lied about her sexuality, saying she had a boyfriend so that she could be promoted, as her workplace believed gay people were inherently unstable and unfit for promotion. Later on, in the Air Force, being gay was prohibited, so everyone had to keep themselves to themselves, not be open or out and be very careful. Following on, in the Metropolitan Police as a forensic photographer, JL explained she had seen a lot of hate, when hate goes to the extreme and people end up killing other people. A colleague, in around 1991, even commented that the murder of a young gay man was a ‘service to society’. This was shocking because if the Police are not there to protect, who is? How can a gay person go to the Police for help if they will be subjected to bias? Not only that – but what if they are also your employer? It was frightening. Gay Officers were told if they pressed their emergency button on their radio to ask for help or back-up – no-one would come. It was a way of getting rid of gay people from the Force.

Happy to say – we are miles away from that now in 2024, but in the 70’s the institutions of the NHS, Schools, Colleges, the Police, the Governments – did not support gay people and the protectors would not protect. The definition of hate crime is a crime that is motivated by hostility and prejudice. Two thirds of all LGBT people experience hate crime. Shouting abuse is just as unacceptable, we feel it vicariously when our friends and loved ones are a victim of hate crime. Seven out of ten hate crimes are motivated by race. Yes, there is hate crime for LGBT but – by and large, religious hate crime (which has risen by 25% this year) is a huge problem. TVP Officers are also subject to hate crime. We have 73 Officers who have been subject to hate crime in the last 12 months. The impact can be physical, financial, psychological or emotional.

Some protected characteristics have socio-economic impacts, such as lack of opportunity or resources, but homosexuality is a moral issue and the currency of a moral issue is shame. Hate crimes re-inforce the shame. When you are subject to hate crime, it makes you angry and it can lead to pro-active behaviours, such as joining a group and working for change, but it can also lead to anxiety and being worried about security. You don’t want to do anything to invite behaviour from hateful people. Fear can spread through communities and social media amplifies that fear. We must not push blame onto victims – because someone is black or gay or Muslim – the perpetrator is to blame because they are homophobic or racist.

Why are people so obsessed with trans people? There are not that many of them.

Who commits hate crime? It's not motivated by hatred for the victim but is a prejudice against the victim's perceived membership of a group by which the offender is prejudiced. They maybe homophobic but may also be racist, misogynistic, ageist etc.

Hate crimes can also be a product of social environments or the way society is structured, which is to benefit those who already have power. Some people commit hate crime with impunity, knowing there will be no consequences for them. Systemic prejudice can be codified into policies and laws.

Why does hate crime happen? Research shows that most hate crimes are linked to perceptions of threat. There are realistic threats, perceived threats to economic stability, competition over jobs, housing and social resources – or physical harm. There are symbolic threats – people's values and social norms. This is where hate crime against LGBT people comes in. By being able to marry and raise children, a gay person is somehow seen as a threat to humanity and civilisation.

The CPS state that hate crime is unacceptable and no-one should be subject to fear or acts of crime because of who they are.

Victims are unlikely to report online or verbal abuse. We normalise hate. We feel it 'goes with the territory'. We must encourage our communities to report. We imagine policing won't be sympathetic and we fear consequences.

The LGBT community has a sense of shared suffering. A Family – together we are stronger.

Homosexuality was not de-classified as a mental illness until the 1990's.

Hate crime is a serious criminal offence, early intervention is important. If there is an aggravating factor, there can be an uplift in the sentence e.g. Brianna Ghey.

Police need to know what's going on, who are the repeat victims or offenders? Help Police build a picture. TVP do take hate crime seriously. Behaviours are challenged internally too. There is a Staff Network for LGBT. We engage with communities to foster a feeling of security and confidence in the Police. We have 45 LAGLOs in TVP who speak to victims. A reverse mentoring scheme is about to start involving Senior Officers.

All those present were thankful for JL's candid talk and sharing of her story.

Those present felt that education was the way forward, concentrating on what unites us.

RRK asked what percentage of the population were perpetrators? JL replied it depends on what is going on in the country at any given time. There are thrill seekers with a mob mentality, defender types who want everything to stay the same, you get the core haters and hangers-on who come and go.

EB commented that social media anonymity makes people feel they can say what they want.

SB said that she is aware that people have lost their jobs for posting hate online.

JL said some people hold strong views but never act on it or commit hate crime.

HS made the point that many different cultures that moved to the UK several years ago are sometimes stuck in time, a time of different beliefs that were held in the country of origin when they left – but which have now moved on.

EB: MK Hate Crime Stats – rises in racial and faith hate crime since the same period 12 m ago

All the other hate crimes against protected characteristics have come down.

Honour based crimes have increased by 6 since last year.

SB shared that there is more awareness training in place for those working with young people.

TLJ spoke about the Ghanaian community and hate crime where the feeling is, what's the point in reporting?

A prominent Ghanaian lesbian couple, who TLJ invited to attend a local event, resulted in them being bombarded with hate crime messages. TLJ also had negative messages from the Church.

TLJ to speak to NS after the meeting.

5. AOB

All

NS: It is National Hate Crime Awareness Week. There are activities at Bletchley College, a LAGLO went to Pink Punters, there are events at MK College and Wolverton Mosque.

JS felt the old generation of Sikhs still felt being gay was shameful compared with the new younger generation who are more accepting.

LP: AgeUK are offering free home energy checks for the elderly and those on low incomes.

HS: Since 15/10 – all flights out of Iran cancelled for the foreseeable future. HS met Emily Darlington, MP who said she wanted to attend the IAG.

KM spoke about a new boys football club that has started in the Somalian Community.

ZM mentioned 'Visit My Mosque' day on 23rd November.

RRK asked if there was any scope to have Police Officers spend a day on the Rural Area?

It happens elsewhere on the Force.

EB: Not all jobs are in the city so they should get used to the area. They are doing NHPT rotations but we cannot ring fence them for a day.

SS: Gas-lighting and social taboos cause under-reporting of hate crime in the Sikh community.

JW: The College reports hate crime whenever it can. 5 x safeguarding officers (with 4000 students) work with TVP and are looking to strengthen ties, perhaps with a station visit.

6. Next Meeting at 6pm on Wednesday 11th December 2024

All

Location: Wolverton Mosque, Church Street, Wolverton, MK12

The Chief Constable JH, and ACC CB, are planning to attend the next IAG Meeting, Operational Commitments allowing. Please start thinking about any questions you may like to ask, thank you.