

Safer Bristol Partnership

Multi-Agency Learning Review Following The Murder of Bijan Ebrahimi

Safer Bristol Partnership's Response to report's recommendations

1. Avon and Somerset Constabulary should ensure that when a crime is reported to police, it is recorded in compliance with the National Crime Recording Standard. If there is genuine justification for a decision not to record a crime that has been alleged, the rationale for that decision should, without exception, be clearly documented on the command and control log and be available for audit. In such circumstances, the person reporting the crime should be advised of that decision and the rationale for it.

Safer Bristol Partnership Response

The responsibility for the compliance of crime and incident recording standards is overseen by the Force Crime and Incident Registrar (FCIR), who was appointed to role in 2014. The FCIR has introduced a reviewed 'Crime and Incident Recording Policy' to clearly outline expectations. This includes that crimes can only be classified by a member of the Incident Assessment Unit, and the introduction of Dedicated Decision Makers who can authorise a 'No Crime' decision. The local Neighbourhood Manager reviews all response plans and sets actions around the investigation and safeguarding. This process is further supported by the growing use of predictive analytics to inform existing Area screening processes. There is an internal audit and review process overseen directly by the Force crime registrars team, this process ensures monitoring, auditing and review of compliance with Home Office Crime Recording standards.

2. When deciding how to proceed following the reporting of a crime to Avon and Somerset Constabulary, there should be a supervisory oversight of that decision and that oversight should provide leadership and specific direction to the investigation that is proportionate to the crime and its background circumstances, including any previous allegations that may have been made. It should also ensure that any risk of harm that is evident is appropriately assessed and proportionately responded to.

Safer Bristol Partnership Response

There have been significant changes to the way in which the Communications Centre operates. In January 2015 the dispatch and call handling teams were brought together in a combined Communications Centre alongside Live Intelligence and the Incident Assessment Unit. A new call scripting system - SMARTCALL – was introduced in March 2015 which grades calls using a matrix that assesses the levels of threat, harm, risk and vulnerability of the victim in relation to an incident, together with considerations relating to the complexity of an investigation and public engagement (THRIVE – Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation and Engagement). Now calls can also be upgraded or downgraded as appropriate by operators and supervisors.

3. The level of respective priority given by Avon and Somerset Constabulary to the management and investigation of incidents brought to their attention should be determined not only by their individual seriousness but also the known background context in which they occur including the nature, number and frequency of previous incidents and an informed assessment of identified risk of harm factors present.

Safer Bristol Partnership Response

The correct identification of repeat victimisation and incidents is supported by the call scripting system. Calls are prioritised in line with threat, risk and harm and the system helps to identify vulnerable callers and grade calls.

Built-in questions establish and identify whether callers are repeat victims and the system prompts further questions such as the frequency of the victimisation and the effect on the caller's health and wellbeing. The system grades the call accordingly before sending to Dispatch.

Vulnerable victim identification and referral is now a key focus. If a call handler chooses 'yes' to certain questions on the call script then the incident is given a Lighthouse (enhanced victim support) auto-tag. This tag allows the Incident Assessment Unit to make sure the victim and the incident are referred for consideration of enhanced service.

4. Recorded hate incidents should be subject of automatic notification to a source of support such as SARI or Victim Support in the same way as other crimes.

Safer Bristol Partnership Response

The Lighthouse Victim and Witness Care team was launched for victims of crime on 1st October 2014 and for victims of ASB on 3rd November 2014. It offers enhanced services specifically to vulnerable victims including those who are persistently targeted and subject to hate incidents, irrespective of whether they are crime-related or ASB. A Constabulary Lead for hate crime, a superintendent, was appointed in 2015 to set strategy, drive continuous improvement and maintain oversight of service delivery and work with partners to do so. Work to audit and assure how effectively we identify and flag hate crime at all stages of our systems, and what support victims receive from internal and external services such as Lighthouse, AVoice and SARI has been completed.

5. Through a programme of awareness raising and leadership, representatives of all organisations contributing to this review should develop a hard edged operational culture within which intra and inter-agency challenge and, if necessary, escalation is both encouraged and welcomed and reflection without defensiveness is the norm.

Safer Bristol Partnership Response

Whilst the release of the report is some four years after Mr Ebrahimi's death we have not waited to deliver on the recommendations in this report. As part of the Multi Agency Learning process all agencies linked to the case provided individual chronologies and some individual reflections on learning that were shared with the Safer Bristol report author to guide individual interviews and inform the compiling of this Report.

Senior officers across all involved agencies took the lead to ensure that key learning was identified and change to practice and procedure were put in place.

An Action Plan was produced (reviewed quarterly by the Safer Bristol Partnership and has been shared with the family) in response to a 'stop the clock' exercise that looked at all of the interventions from all of the agencies in their history of working with Mr Ebrahimi, with an examination of what could have been done differently at points in time.

This challenge and reflection on the part of all agencies informed the improvement action, has led to the introduction of an escalation policy and has set the tone for changing the operational culture across the Partnership.

As part of the multi-agency response, an improvement action was produced covering three key areas:

- Safeguarding
(Outcome: To improve the identification and support of vulnerable individuals who of victims of Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) and Hate Crime).

- BCC Landlord Services:
(Outcome: To improve the identification and support provided to vulnerable tenants)

- Cross-Cutting (City-wide):
(Outcome: To improve the partnership response to tackling ASB and Hate Crime, To improve the level of community confidence in support services, To increase the level of reporting of ASB and Hate Crime.

Recognising the need for a greater focus on effective case conferencing which would help create an environment of agency challenge and co-operation, the city's Hate Crime Case Review Panel was reviewed and refreshed in 2014 (new criteria, process / pathways). The meeting now meets monthly core attendees are:

- Police Neighbourhood Manager
- Lead Case officer at Bristol Hate Crime Services, (BHCS, commissioned hate crime support service for the city) from SARI, individual case workers from the collaboration partners,
- Bristol City Council Estate Management Housing Supervisor.

- Invitations are extended to housing managers from other Bristol housing providers when a high case has been raised and the victim their tenant.
- Bristol City Council, Crime Reduction Team

Hate Crime has remained a key priority for the Safer Bristol Partnership and this is reflected in the current joint community safety plan with Avon and Somerset's Police and Crime Commissioner. In addition, Bristol City Council remains committed to providing hate crime support services, having launched a new city wide hate crime and discrimination service in November 2017. No other city in England and Wales is delivering this model or investing the level of funding into hate crime support (£1.5 million over four years). This new collaborative service offers support for victims of any type of hate crime including racist, faith-based, disablist, homophobic, transphobic, age-based or gender based. It also will deliver discrimination legal advocacy, restorative approaches, mediation and conflict resolution services for dealing with hate and discrimination.

Under the new provisions of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, the Community Trigger was introduced in October 2014. The Community Trigger anti-social behaviour case review mechanism gives victims and communities the right to require relevant agencies to review their actions taken in their respective case.

The Act stipulates relevant agencies (the Police, the Council and Clinical Commissioning Group) have a duty to participate in the Community Trigger.

A common threshold for the Community Trigger case review has been adopted by all the local authorities across the Avon & Somerset Police area and is set at:

- Three incidents of ASB or hate crime in a six month period reported by one person
- Five reported incidents of ASB or hate crime in a six month period involving a linked location reported by more than one person

The Safer Bristol Partnership monitors the Community Trigger process quarterly. Since the Community Trigger was introduced in October 2014, 106 triggers have been received. This number is very high when compared to our neighbouring and core city local authorities. In response to this Safer Bristol Partnership has commissioned ASB Help (national charity supporting victims of anti-social behaviour) and Sheffield Hallam University to conduct an independent evaluation. This will be produced in February 2018.

6. The Safer Bristol Executive Board should develop, implement and publicise a simple escalation process that all member organisations can use to progressively escalate case management disputes swiftly, decisively and effectively.

Safer Bristol Partnership Response

There are case conferencing arrangements in Bristol for both anti-social behaviour and hate crime.

With regard to hate crime, a new case multi-agency case conferencing arrangement has been introduced. If there are any case disputes then these are escalated to the Bristol City Council service lead for crime reduction to consider and resolve with respective agencies.

With regard to anti-social behaviour, there are ten local multi-agency anti-social behaviour panels that reviews localised issues and actively problem solve each case. If anti-social persists then the case can be escalated and referred into the citywide anti-social behaviour case conference. If there are case disputes these are escalated to the Council's Head of Services' for Anti-social Behaviour and Estate Management who will convene a review with all relevant agencies. There are case examples where this new escalation policy has been implemented effectively.

The Community Trigger also allows for the community to escalate their concerns relating to hate crime and anti-social behaviour. The Safer Bristol Partnership reviews all 'triggers' quarterly as well serious and adverse incidents relating to community safety.

7. Bristol City Council should take necessary steps to ensure that any decision to undertake steps that are likely to have a punitive effect such as the application for an anti-social behaviour injunction is only taken after: (a) comprehensive investigation informing accurate assessment of the situation and (b) consideration of the stigmatising effect on the defendant of such proceedings and the publicising of the injunction, and (c) ensuring mitigating action is taken to minimise the harm, risk and vulnerability of victims, witnesses and defendants in taking such action.

Safer Bristol Partnership Response

There is an appropriate decision pathway via the weekly Anti-social Behaviour Case Conference and through the Hate Crime Case Conferencing arrangement. This conference is chaired by multi-agency partners. Each case is rigorously reviewed and evidence presented by the lead agency is considered to ensure that the actions being considered are proportionate and take into account the full history and chronology of the case.

With regard to ex. parte injunctions, there is a requirement (introduced since this review) for a BCC Head of Service officer (Third Tier Officer) to authorise these injunctions or where a power of arrest exists on the injunction. Where the Head of Service considers that there are particular issues of vulnerability in respect of the alleged perpetrator this decision (in relation to all injunctions) is escalated to the Service Director (2nd tier). This change in policy and practice provides considerable additional safeguards in terms of consideration of the robustness of the evidence, although any final decision is of course taken by the court itself.

Within BCC there are a number of enforcement teams trained and professionally qualified to undertake investigations which will be presented through the case conference process. The findings of the investigations are robustly challenged at case conference.

8. In applying for an anti-social behaviour injunction, Bristol City Council should ensure that all evidence being submitted to the court is accurate and represents a balanced picture of the known facts. An application for such an order should only be made ex parte if there are urgent and compelling grounds for doing so.

Safer Bristol Partnership Response

Where there is an agreement to apply for an injunction the evidence to be put to the Court is considered at the case conference with lawyers present. Lawyers are under a duty to ensure that all relevant evidence is placed before the Court.

The Council applies for ex. parte injunctions (injunctions served without notice) either because it is necessary to get the matter into court urgently without the usual notice period because of the seriousness of the threat or because there is reason to believe

that the Defendant will threaten witnesses if he/she is given notice of the application. The reason for the need for applying for an injunction without notice has to be explained to the court in the witness statement and the court has to note whether it considers it was just to deal with the matter on an ex parte basis. This injunction lasts a few days until an 'on notice' hearing is arranged. Therefore, the Council now ensures that there is senior management (Head of Service) oversight on all injunctions without notice. This ensures that the respective case is assessed and all relevant factors are considered before a decision to proceed is agreed.

9. Bristol City Council should undertake an immediate review of its existing case load of tenants with multiple, complex needs in order to ensure these tenant's needs are being met and to also inform future identification and assessment practices.

Safer Bristol Partnership Response

Following the multi-agency review being completed in May 2014 and presented to the Safer Bristol Partnership, a review of caseloads was conducted and a case segmentation exercise completed, ensuring vulnerable tenants were identified and support provided.

This exercise informed the new hate crime risk assessment conference and the aforementioned hate crime and anti-social behaviour risk meeting in the south of the city. In addition, the introduction of Lighthouse (ref. 10.4) triaging cases on a threat, risk and harm matrix has ensured vulnerability if a primary focus.

As part of the Council's continuous service improvement we are developing our operating framework to tackle ASB and hate crime. This framework will focus on vulnerability and high impact / high risk individuals / victims. In addition, the role of Housing Officers and ASB Officers will be re-defined to ensure that cases are better managed.

10. Bristol City Council's Vulnerable Tenants Policy should be amended so that the qualifying threshold criteria definition of a vulnerable tenant does not exclude those who are able to 'live independently'. In addition, Bristol City Council Landlord Services should formulate, publicise and proactively ensure

compliance with a comprehensive process for accurately assessing existing and new tenants for vulnerability and applying the Vulnerable Tenants Policy when applicable.

Safer Bristol Partnership Response

Introduced a 'pre-tenancy assessment' for new tenants designed to proactively ensure we accurately assess and support the needs of our new tenants. The Housing Officer dedicated to the 'patch' conducts the pre-tenancy appointment with the applicant(s) before the start of the tenancy. Using a scoring matrix, targeted support is identified and offered and a risk based approach undertaken to build a tailored approach to the individual(s) to ensure the sustainment of tenancies over time e.g. agreed schedule of home visits. The 1-1 assessment begins a meaningful tenant-officer relationship that promotes a strong start to our tenancies.

The Council's Estate Management Services' comprehensive 'Supportive Tenancy Management Process' enables new and existing tenants to be supported both actively e.g. in crisis to deliver SMART outcomes as well as over a longer term through agreed points of contact to monitor and provide regular referrals for support (when required) with our tenants. Procedure is well established with 'Vulnerability Case Conferences' convened with our internal and external partners when necessary to provide a clear joined up approach for meeting the needs of individual cases.

Our existing Housing Management System; Northgate, is used to record information on these cases but this will soon be replaced by Civica Cx

Civica Cx is a new Housing Management System (HMS) which has been procured and designed to improve our tenant experience and hence Estate Management's approach to vulnerability has been well considered in the creation of the system design. The introduction of this new HMS will provide better visibility of tenant history and therefore enable housing officers to more readily understand the needs of our tenants at a glance; with the 360 contact summary.

Cases will be integrated i.e. 'enforcement and support' rather than separate which will be more holistic and customer requirements for 'care and provision' are clearly designed to manage information that will assist in real time operationally e.g. adding associated people with the tenant which will improve our efficiency and ease at identifying those people involved with the tenant throughout the life of the tenancy

(e.g. customer contact) or for a particular case (e.g. case contact). There are opportunities with this system in the future that could be considered to maximise proactive estate services work e.g. filtering by categories e.g. no repairs, age, etc. to further enhance our community tenancy sustainment activity.

Continuous refresher training is undertaken in the Estate Management Service with Housing Support Register Training delivered to Estate Management most recently in November/ December 2016 to ensure all officers were able to utilise the internal support system to maximise benefit for service users.

The Council's Vulnerability Tenancy Policy is currently under review with revisions to wording to reflect the complex nature of vulnerability and this understanding will form part of the future training

In addition, there is a redesign underway for the STOP team (Support Team for Older People) which will continue to ensure BCC is reviewing and meeting the needs of some of our most vulnerable current and future tenants

11. Avon and Somerset Constabulary and Bristol City Council should review the training and awareness raising activities that their staff are required to undergo in relation to issues of racism awareness and valuing cultural diversity. They should then take necessary action to ensure that all staff have high levels of awareness sufficient to discharge their duties without inadvertent discrimination and to recognise and challenge when they encounter discrimination elsewhere.

Safer Bristol Partnership Response

Avon and Somerset Police have committed to the delivery of a training package since May 2016 that relates to unconscious bias and Hate Crime. The aim is to promote a better understanding of the impact of hate crime on victims and assist officers in empathising with the victim and their perspective. Integral to this is a film made with a victim of hate crime and his family. This film and associated facilitators package is based on the very difficult experience of a hate crime victim and his family.

The victim, his partner, and SARI were actively involved in the commissioning and have continued to be involved throughout the final editing process. Additional filming is planned with Mr Ebrahimi's sisters and with four victims of hate crime.

This programme will be central to challenging behaviour and tackling issues of de-sensitisation and unconscious bias in the way we work with vulnerable victims. Training will be done in small groups and will be based on the evidence of established academics such as Dr Corinne Funnell and Malcolm Hibberd to focus on the role of empathy to the service provided to victims. Training will be delivered to all Local Policing staff. This will be evaluated and then incorporated into wider training.

Hate crime and anti-social behaviour training are core elements of Bristol City Council ASB and Housing Officer inductions. In summary:

- All Housing Officers have received specialist ASB training – updated training was rolled out in 2015/16.
- All new Housing Officers receive a tailored 1 day ASB induction package. [all housing staff, supervisors and managers have received at least 1 full day ASB training since 2015]
- Services to Older People (former sheltered service) have also received ASB training.
- Cllrs received ASB training in 2014/15 and in 2017 on ASB - covering basics – 'what is ASB' through to tools and powers and the role of housing specifically.
- In addition, third Sector victim support providers (AVoice – advocacy for vulnerable victims) have received ASB training – focusing on services available in Bristol and the role of BCC.

This training covers general awareness of how to respond to complaints, what advice and support to offer, what tools and powers are available to tackle ASB from informal through to formal processes.

The Council also commissions the Bristol Hate Crime and Discrimination Support Service. The collaboration of agencies is led by SARI (Stand Against Racism & Inequality) with local providers: Brandon Trust; Bristol Mind; LGBT Bristol; Avon & Bristol Law Centre and Bristol Mediation, deliver work (including training) that supports and promotes better outcomes for communities in Bristol who have been

disproportionately targeted by hate crime, discrimination and conflict due to the group they belong to. Training includes:

- Conflict resolution training for Council Housing Officers.
- Delivery of cultural tours for statutory agency
- Safeguarding training for partner agencies.

12. Appropriate steps should be taken by Safer Bristol Anti-Social Behaviour Delivery Group to ensure that all Safer Bristol partner organisations are enabled and actively encouraged to refer cases involving anti-social behaviour for inclusion for consideration at local anti-social behaviour panels.

Safer Bristol Partnership Response

As part of the new ASB Tools and Powers that were introduced in 2014, the Council's and Police's ASB Team held many training and awareness sessions for peers, partners and elected members. Specific task and finish groups were set up to ensure the correct processes and procedures were established for each 'power'. The Safer Bristol Crime Reduction Team deliver an annual rolling training plan for Council Housing Officer and partner agencies on the referral pathway and tools and powers.

As previously highlighted, the introduction of Lighthouse and the new case conferencing arrangements for ASB and hate crime provided an infrastructure to brief all key staff and personnel.

There is very good attendance across agencies at both the ASB local forums and through the case conferencing arrangements for ASB and hate crime.

The ASB Delivery Group ceased in May 2014. ASB partnership delivery is co-ordinated through the Safer Bristol Partnership and the Council's Crime Reduction Service. Hate Crime continues to be reviewed through the city's Strategic Partnership Against Hate Crime

13. Safer Bristol Executive Board should commission an examination of the Terms of Reference and referral process for the newly re-established Bristol Hate Crime Case Review Panel to ensure that cases such as this come to the attention of the panel and that it provides the necessary searching assessment of whether agency responses to them have been appropriate, proportionate, co-ordinated and effective.

Safer Bristol Partnership Response

This examination was completed in 2014 following the review of the Panel in May 2014. A new hate crime case conferencing arrangement was put in place and continues to be effectively delivered.

As part of the Council's continuous service improvement we are developing our operating framework to tackle ASB and hate crime. This framework will focus on vulnerability and high impact / high risk individuals / victims. In addition, the role of Housing Officers and ASB Officers will be re-defined to ensure that cases are better managed.

14. SARI should review its data storage policy so that case files are retained until a significant period has passed from the last involvement with an individual.

Safer Bristol Partnership Response

SARI has extended its data storage time from three years to five years. Paper files still exist, however they cannot be stored beyond this timeframe due to storage space. Electronic files are retained for longer. SARI also store paper files for serious cases / cases of high profile indefinitely.