Disability Hate Crime Network

NEWS – June 2011  Edited by Stephen Brookes

It has been a month of ‘win and lose’ for disability hate crime since the publication of the May newsletter. On the ‘win’ side we have seen several new initiatives which aim to challenge this heinous crime, and the publication of books by network colleagues which demonstrate the wide ranging impact of hate crime. We have also expanded the coordination posts for the network and now Simon Green, Beverley Smith and Louise Wallis are all part of the Facebook group. We will read more from Beverly about her involvement in this edition.

On the ‘lose’ side we have seen some ‘cash strapped’ police forces and community safety organisations cutting back on hate crime ‘specialist’ staff and officers along with the resources needed to ensure safe and confident reporting. To my way of thinking, any large cuts from central purse strings which will affect day to day safety in the community is not a saving at all; rather, the danger is of increased remedial costs in trying to put people’s lives back into some kind of order. We know that the costly conferences on police and hate crime work have been cancelled due to entirely to restrictions on such event attendance, so it is important that we do share information through the network.

For contributions of best or even bad practice, contact or feedback do email us at dhcnfeedback@btinternet.com

Bolton Be Safe Partnership launch Disability Hate Crime campaign, DHCN Coordinator Stephen Brookes is seen here signing up to the project.
A young woman with physical disabilities, who visited the town centre for a night out over Christmas, wrote a letter to Greater Manchester Police after experiencing a serious hate incident in a Bolton town centre bar (please see attached letter). Following receipt of this letter, the Neighbourhood Policing Team, Community Safety and Central Bolton Business Partnership have been working together to develop a campaign around disability hate crime, to encourage people with disabilities to visit and enjoy Bolton town centre’s pubs and clubs, without fear of being verbally or physically abused. This has involved developing an awareness raising training package for bar staff and door staff at Bolton town centre pubs and clubs, delivered to staff by Neighbourhood Sergeant Paul Ellis. The campaign, called ‘I’m not laughing’, will run throughout the summer. At the launch, licensees were awarded certificates for completing training on disability hate crime, and a number of high profile individuals, including Chief Superintendent Steve Hartley, Bolton’s newly elected Mayor, Noel Spencer, and borough Commander for Fire and Rescue Service, Ian Bailey, were in attendance. For information click onto http://www.gmp.police.uk/mainsite/pages/6506a0715fffd5974802578b700511b81.

**Court confrontation fear demonstrated in the reporting process.**

In the highly publicised comments after the ‘Milly Dowler’ case, questions have at last been raised about the adversarial nature of the trial system, which all too often distresses the victim. Although the case itself was not a disability hate crime, the effects are not unconnected, as so many disabled people have stated that they fear the court process, where they often feel they will not be taken seriously more than the crime itself. In the Dowler case relatives deplored the way the accused had been ‘allowed so obviously to manipulate his defence team into bringing added pain to another of his victim’s families’. The added ‘We would question the manner in which this particular case was handled. They branded the defence a "charade" that was "driven by that hatred" and called on the defence team to speak out and explain itself. While Jeremy Moore, managing partner and head of the serious and organised crime team at the solicitors’ firm Carter Moore, said it was the “cornerstone of our justice system that every defendant, however unpalatable, has the right to have his defence put, and to a fair trial”, nevertheless it is clear that the way some cases are defended are a clear barrier to people reporting. It is right and essential that the DPP, Keir Starmer does take this serious issue into account in his review, and that the outcome will recognise the fear some people, particularly those who are disabled have of the extreme adversarial nature of the court process.

**RADAR’s stop disability hate crime project update**

The Radar project to increase reporting of disability hate crime continues, and there is still time to fill in the survey. The survey has already confirmed some assumptions about disability hate crime. The Project has also been talking to a range of people about third party reporting sites which have been extremely useful. Those
discussions and information from the survey is being used as the base for drafting
the minimum standards guidance for setting up third party reporting sites.
If you feel that you have something to contribute to either the raising awareness or
minimum standards guidance please get in touch by e-mail to
StopDH@radar.org.uk or by post to Stop DHC, Radar, 12 City Forum, 250 City
Road, LONDON. EC1V 8AF.

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**Beverley Smith – Disability Hate Crime Network Joint Administrator**

Very recently, I eagerly accepted Stephen’s invitation to join him and the team to
help administer the network. I had admired the team’s work for some time. They
have a balanced, knowledgeable and professional approach, together with an
unswerving drive to get changes made.

This is a new area of work for me. Every day I go through various news sites for the
South of England looking for incidents of hatred, abuse or violence towards disabled
people. I also receive items from the e forum that I read, take on board and
sometimes comment on. The other day, I added violent case after case to the
Network, at the end feeling quite down and worn out. I emailed out to the team
(Stephen, Katharine, Simon and Louise), and I received supportive replies that gave
me strength.

When I feel down about cases now, I turn my ‘upset energy’ into ‘positive energy’ for
change.

I rather view the work we do as a team in the Disability Hate Crime Network as a
bed-rock, which will remain firm and solid, upon which other work will build over
time. There are already signs of positive changes to have Disability Hate Crime
recognised, and justice given to those who suffer at the hands of bullies and thugs
every day. It is important that we share good practice as well as listing criminal
activities. There are some sparkling examples of real enthusiasm, ideas that are
working to help people and ongoing campaigns right across the country.

As disabled people, it is now time to move on from accepting that which is wrong but
has become common place many of us. If I can use my skills to positively influence
our futures, by being a part of a team making this happen, fighting for people who
cannot fight for themselves, raising awareness, and trying to make a difference, then
that’s got to be OK.

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**A reminder of the event at Bradford University on July 25th**

There is still time to sign up to The University of Bradford and the Equity Partnership
one day conference interrogating hate crime. This conference will provide a forum
for ‘hate’ to be interrogated in both a policy and a theoretical context, in order to
identify links between key players in the theory and practice of embedding social
cohesion and community safety into a research agenda and academic thought. The
context has been developed through discussion between the Schools of Social and
International Studies, Health and Management at the University of Bradford and the
Bradford LGB Strategic Partnership. The working committee represents Stop Hate
UK, The Bradford Equity Partnership, the University Equality Unit and Disability
Service. Links are developed with Police, Probation and Community Safety Partnerships.
The day will focus on current understanding of hate crime in theory, policy and practice. It is intended to provide a forum where activists and academics can share the current state of play, explore practice and theory and develop new methods of interrogating and safeguarding against hate. The outcomes of the conference will contribute to future research and practice agendas.
Work of the Disability Hate Crime Network and the RADAR Hate Crime Project will be discussed.
Details are to be found at http://www.brad.ac.uk/rethink-hate-crime/

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**Katharine Quarmby’s new book** *Scapegoat* **launched on June 7th at an event co-hosted by RADAR and the NHS.**

Having read a preliminary copy, the defining feature which emerges is of violence and harassment in the oppression of disabled people and that it is systemic and widespread. Katharine captures this entirely, illustrated by some cases which have ended in the deaths of several disabled people (including Fiona Pilkington). Equally though, she demonstrates the large number of day to day incidents, often unreported, which destroy disabled peoples lives.

I will say that *Scapegoat* is not an ‘easy’ book to read, but it is an essential book to read. It is a brilliantly researched exploration of the phenomenon of Disability Hate Crime.

Importantly it gives a great insight into one of the darker parts of humanity and maybe if through reading Scapegoat we all understood ourselves a little better we could influence the way society currently treats disabled people to better and safer effect.

I advise that everyone involved in hate crime obtains a copy

www.portobellobooks.com

Telephone no. 020 7605 1373

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**Mencap – Stand by Me Campaign.**

Congratulations to Mencap on the high publicity achieved for the launch of the Stand by Me campaign. www.mencap.org.uk.

The added benefit was that it gave some of us involved in the issues the platform and ability to speak to various areas of the media about both the fact that as well as learning disabilities all the other areas of disability are affected by this heinous crime. I know that Katharine Quarmby did some interviews and I undertook 4 radio interviews in which each interviewer seemed 'surprised' that there was 'such a thing as disability hate crime'. That in its own way is a useful outcome. The project has been emulated in Scotland, and I attach a link to an item from 'Enable'.

http://www.enable.org.uk/campaigns/get-campaigning/learningdisabilityweek/Pages/Monday.aspx
While noting a Scottish reaction I would ask that all network members look at this survey being undertaken in Glasgow. Please do fill it in http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/G9WDRD6

EHRC Inquiry

The EHRC are proceeding at a rapid pace on the inquiry into hostility, but are still keen that evidence is submitted where they are still trying to fill some gaps. If you can help in anyway in the areas mentioned below please forward your replies to Rachel Nickless at EHRC. Rachel.Nickless@equalityhumanrights.com

- studies on prevalence that have used robust sampling methods representative of disabled people as a whole rather than studies relying on those who self-selected to respond.
- surveys on attitudes to disabled people, especially those conducted through robust representative sampling.
- age/other profile of perpetrators of harassment including (i) anti-social behaviour as a whole and ASB specifically against disabled people; (ii) offences against the person as a whole and offences specifically against disabled people; (iii) sexual offences as a whole and offences specifically against disabled people.
- link between housing tenure and levels of anti-social behaviour and crime.
- evidence of impact of segregation of disabled people
- evidence of impact of integration of disabled people.
- evidence of what is needed to make integration work.
- research on reactions to having a disabled child.
- research on attitudes to allowing late abortions if foetus is disabled. – proportion of children fostered/adopted who are disabled.
- evidence of higher rates of sexual violence against disabled people - both reported and un-reported.
- evidence of higher rates of harassment against BMER disabled people.
- evidence of higher rates of harassment against LGBT disabled people.
- local authority, housing and health good practice examples.

Longcare Survivors: The Biography of a Care Scandal, by John Pring.

John says of his new book - It was easily the most shocking story I have covered as a journalist.
A leaked council report detailed how former social worker Gordon Rowe had subjected the adults with learning difficulties who lived in the Longcare residential homes he ran to a regime of ‘humiliation, deprivation, torment and punishment’.
For years, many of them were beaten, starved, hosed down with freezing water, drugged, and raped.
If that wasn’t horrifying enough, it was also clear from the report that no-one in authority was about to take any serious action to defend these people’s rights: not the local authority, not the NHS, and not the police.
It was my first major story as a young journalist, but 17 years on I am still investigating the Longcare scandal.
Much of this work took place years before I had come to terms with my own identity as a disabled person, so why am I still writing about Longcare 17 years later?
Partly, it was the sense of horror at the ordeal the Longcare residents had gone through, the sense of revulsion and outrage at their treatment – and the authorities’ failure to protect them.

But there were also so many questions about what happened at Longcare – and particularly why – and they were not the kind that could be answered overnight. Mostly, though, I believe it was that sense of outrage that fuelled the thousands and thousands of hours of research. And when I watched last month’s Panorama expose of abuse at a private institution near Bristol, I knew I was right to have continued this work.

Panorama showed that, despite all of the white papers, the legislation, the inquiries, the guidance, the criminal investigations and the serious case reviews, people with learning difficulties in institutions are still being subjected to appalling breaches of their human rights.

We should know more later this year, when the interim findings of the serious case review into the events at Winterbourne View are published, but from what I have read and heard so far, we should expect to hear many of the same flaws that were exposed by the Longcare scandal all those years ago.

We can expect the review to describe an absence of independent advocacy, a failure to listen to people with learning difficulties, public attitudes of indifference and hostility towards disabled people, poor staff training and low wages and a greedy employer, the failure of agencies to share information, confusion about who was responsible for investigating allegations of abuse, and whistleblowers being ignored. Nearly 17 years on from my first Longcare story, it seems that so little has changed. That is why I believe my new book was worth writing.

Using previously unpublished documents and testimony from survivors of the regime, and other key witness accounts, I have pieced together a detailed account of the abuse that took place at the Longcare homes, and Rowe’s disturbing background, and I explain why the abuse was able to continue for more than a decade before it was finally exposed.

I also examine the roots of the scandal, uncovering the history of the institutionalisation of people with learning difficulties, including the rise of the eugenicists in the late nineteenth century, and of the huge long-stay hospitals that came to dominate the care environment for much of the twentieth century. Just as importantly, I track the appalling long-term impact of the abusive Longcare regime on its former residents, something I believe has never been done before in this way over such a long period.

And I investigate the ingrained discrimination in society – and in our care and justice systems – that today is still exposing people with learning difficulties to shocking levels of injustice, hostility and violent crime.

As Panorama and Scapegoat, Katharine Quarmby’s magnificent new book on disability hate crime, have shown, the lessons of Longcare have not yet been learned. Even after 17 years, it is not too late to put that right.


Disability Action Waltham Forest’s Stay Safe project –

Tackling hate crime, domestic, sexual and institutional violence against Deaf and disabled people - is looking for a temporary part-time Advocacy Worker (Maternity cover to 31st December 2011) 17.5 hours per week Salary: £12,590 per annum pro
rata for 6 months. The team particularly welcome applications from disabled people, as this is a peer support project. All disabled applicants who meet the essential criteria will be guaranteed an interview. For an application pack, please contact Ruth Bashall, Project Manager, Stay Safe on 0208 509 0910 Text 0758 7134 122 e-mail: r.bashall@disaction.org.uk  
**Closing date July 14th - Interviews on Tuesday 19th July**  
For more information about the project please see website  
[www.disabilityactionwf.org.uk](http://www.disabilityactionwf.org.uk)

Finally, we bring in a matter on which we are keeping a clear watch. It concerns a news update that **The Abuse Aimed At Disabled People Has Increased Since Benefit Reform Policy Started**  
A survey on attitudes highlights alarming levels of discrimination targeted at disabled people, along with evidence that this has escalated during the past year. According to a Scope press release:

- More than half of disabled people say they have experienced hostility, aggression or violence from a stranger because of their condition or impairment (56%).
- Half of disabled people say they experience discrimination on either a daily or weekly basis.
- More than a third (37%) said people’s attitudes towards them have got worse over the past year.
- 58% of people thought others did not believe that they were disabled and 50% of people said they felt others presumed they did not work.

For more examples, see:  
http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2011/may/15/disability-living-allowance-scope-cuts  
and:  
Recent media reports claimed that “free” BMW’s are available to thousands under the Motability scheme. An interesting response to this from fullfact.org can be found here:  
http://fullfact.org/factchecks/disability_allowance_mobility_BMW_Mail-2783

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To send news or for information contact Stephen Brookes MBE  
stbmbe1@btinternet.com or call 07890 622296

The Disability Hate Crime Network is not responsible for any changes to details or events which we are asked to display in this newsletter.