Unity 101 – Hate Crime Interview Transcription

Introduction

The following programme contains calls and comments from members of the public and our selected invited guests, and it is important to remember at all times that any views or opinions expressed are individual opinions from these people and not those of Unity 101.

Educational, Discussions, Informative, Entertaining - The Community Hour. This is Unity 101.

Interview

Programme Host:Good afternoon and welcome to Unity 101 Community Radio. This is the Community Hour hosted by me, Ram Kalyan “Kelly”. Today’s topic is Hate Crime, and joining me on-line are members of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Youth Commission. They are Elizabeth Bridges, Sarah Arnold and Maddie Davis. Also online is Unity 101 FC Manager Nazakat “Naz” Azram and players Shah Kamal and Saqib Aslam. Good afternoon all.

All:Hi

Youth Commission

Host:Let’s begin with you Maddie. Tell me a little bit about you and what your role is within the members.

Maddie**:** Hi. The Hampshire Youth Commission are all volunteers from the ages of 14 to 25, and we aim to get young people’s voices heard in and around the themes of policing and crime. Each year we chose three priorities, and after that we focus on raising awareness, signposting, usually events – obviously this year has been a bit different - and through our social media, working with the thoughts and views of young people across our region to find a youth-focused solution. This year our priorities are Serious Violence, Exploitation and Hate Crime.

Host**:** Thank you very much Maddie, and then we have Sarah.

Sarah**:** Throughout the year, to get young people’s views we run ‘The Big Conversation’. It’s is a regional survey throughout Hampshire and we ask for the views and experience of young people on our chosen priorities and, as Maddie just said, this survey is essential to getting young people’s voices heard, but it’s anonymous. We particularly reach out to groups such as Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic members of our community and also members of other groups which groups which we don’t typically reach, such as young carers and young offenders.

Host**:** Elizabeth carry on.

**Elizabeth:** 36% of responses to the Big Conversation have indicated that Hate Crime is their top priority. In the thoughts and experiences section, many people have described personal incidents of hate crime, with race and sexual identity-related incidents being the most common. However, there appears to be a lack of understanding around what constitutes a “hate crime”, or a “hate incident”.

Host**:** Over to you Maddie.

Maddie**:** The main difference between a hate crime and a hate incident is that a hate crime accompanies a criminal offence which is motivated by prejudice against a certain characteristic. Whilst a hate incident does not. Not all hate incidents amount to criminal offences, but it is equally important that these are all reported.

Unity 101 FC Players

Host**:** All right. Let’s ask some question to the players who are waiting online for us. Elizabeth over to you.

Elizabeth**:** Firstly, do any of you have any experiences personally with hate crime?

Sha**:** Yes. I’ve had really, really mixed experiences of incidences of this nature. Growing up I moved around a lot, so I’ve experienced things in all different parts of the world. When I lived in Paris we’d be in a shop, clearly we would be speaking English and the people behind the counter would be speaking English to the customers, but when we came up suddenly they can’t speak English anymore. Thankfully I was enrolled in a completely French school so I ended up speaking to them in French.

There’s been little things like that really. I mean, when I was in Wales growing up there, I think at that time it was probably a small village outside of Swansea, I doubt they had seen anyone that didn’t look like them. So yes there is definitely some level of obtaining acceptance that I probably struggled with at the time. Although it was just one of those things you feel young at the time. I was probably just 6 or 7 at the time, but I’m surprised I still remember it.

More recently I guess, a lot of it I don’t get as much of it as people would think by the look of me. A lot of it at the moment is coming across in sport, bits and pieces in sports that’s been experienced. A lot of it, sounds really strange to say it, but a lot of the hate crime that perhaps might be targeted at people that look me it tends to be targeted at woman for the most part. I don’t know if that is right or wrong to say, but from my experience and what I’ve seen the people who look like me it’s actually not targeted at the blokes like me – although I look like the potential targets – it’s actually the ladies, girls and ladies.

Host**:** Okay, so let the viewers know you’re of the Muslim faith. Yes?

Sha**:** Yes

Dealing with hate crime

Host**:** Okay. So over to you Sarah for the next question.

Sarah**:** So we were just wondering would you report a hate crime? For example, if one happened to you, your family or friends, or if you saw one happening in the street to a stranger?

Naz**:** I’m Naz, Manager of Unity 101 Football Club. I’ve experienced hate crime before it was labelled hate crime. One incident, when I was growing up on my street there was my family and one other family that was from an Asian background. The rest of the street and area was predominately white British. As I was growing up more and more people segregated themselves to me purely because of the colour of my skin. And how did that prove that it was the case? When we were getting fireworks through our letterbox, graffiti on our wall and on my dad’s car saying ‘Leave. Go back home etc’.

In those days and those times that wouldn’t be reported out of fear because even though we knew who had done it and who was responsible, but had we reported it at that time we would have got more bricks through our windows. So it was a very difficult one growing up. But to answer your question, yes I now would report that, because it is now much more accepted as a crime I would 100% report it.

As touched on earlier, sadly it is still relevant in sport today. Unity 101 FC is the most ethically diverse football team in the whole Sunday league. We can easily say that we we’ve got players from all around the world from that come and play for our Team. We provide a safe environment from all ethnicities, religions, colour, creed, sexual orientation, and we provide a safe place for people to come and play football.

When we play football on Sundays against teams that are predominately all white we have had incidences as recently as last year, last season where opposition players have said to our players to speak English when we are already speaking English. We’ve actually had a manager from an opposition team give racial slurs and say racial things to our players during the match. It’s very difficult to accept it’s still happening now.

Would I report it now? I would report it 100% now! If I saw it on the street I would either intervene or report it. But I think a few years ago there was a stigma attached to it, whereas if you did report it that it wouldn’t be recognised as a crime.

Host**:** Just a quick question from me if I may add to it. You’re now a father and have 3 lovely children, and there all British born children. Do you find when they come home they might say that so and so says so and so, and how do you constitute that as bullying as opposed to hate crime?

Naz**:** The thing is children are not born racist. Children are not orn with hate in their bones so if their environment is multicultural as they are growing up they don’t see the difference between skin colour. They don’t see the difference between everybody in terms of how it’s stigmatized and catergorised, they see people as friends - I like her, I like him or I don’t like her, I don’t like him. Very, very simple for children of a young age.

My children are 6, 4 and 2. My six year old is in school, and he would be the one to face that if he did, however not once has he ever has come back to me and said that someone has said something to me because I’m brown.It’s a process that is developed in children as they are growing up and they become a product of their environment, and if you are a product of a multiculturalism, of people mixing with each other and getting on then it will install into the children.

Whereas when your raising your children in a segregated environment and your taught to keep yourself separate because of someone’s ethnicity, religion or whatever, it might be that then becomes something that is the basis for some children to make their opinion as they grow up.

Reporting hate crime

Elizabeth**:** Do you think reporting a hate crime is useful?

Naz**:** Shah, over to you mate.

Shah**:** Yes, absolutely. I think the more we report it the more data we have from it and the more actions we can take from it. Like Naz says, historically it’s been something that had a stigma attached to it so people didn’t report it, but now because it’s becoming more and more open and more and more free to air your views, and forums like these again helps airing your views. So it’s becoming much more open to reporting it, and it becomes much more useful. I think we need more awareness of how to report and where we report to really, based on what we went through. I think that’s the key to increasing reporting.

Sarah: In Southampton in the Big Conversation responses, hate crime was chosen as the most important issue to tackle, followed by serious violence. Firstly, do you agree with the order of the rankings in your area? And what can the police in your area do to support victims of hate crime and stop hate crime from happening?

Naz**:** I think that in order that hate crime above serious violence is very difficult, as from my experience it goes hand in hand. Hate crime is generally a violent act against somebody to touch on Zac’s point. Most of the time with certain levels of Islamic phobia over the last few years have found that woman have been attacked for wearing burkas for example, and that has been violent attacks. So it’s a hate crime as well as a serious attack. So whether you can rank them in a certain order, which I appreciate the survey has done, they go hand in hand. I think hate crime is a terrible, terrible thing that needs to be tackled.

Police support

Host**:** What could the police do in your area to support victims of hate crime and prevent hate crime from happening?

Naz**:** Like Sha said education, helping people understand more about other cultures and having more awareness. Also giving people the platform to make it easier for them to contact. What could they do more? Punishment would need to be something that people can see, that’s visible. So that once someone is reported to have done a hate crime and for them to be punished rather than being given a warning for example. I suppose these are things that would make people want to report more, if they see something is being done about it.

Sha**:** Can I just add I totally agree with Naz here. It’s about how serious the police actually take hate crimes. It’s not like petty theft or a bit below the pyramid of crime. It needs to e addressed at a much hihger level and much more importance, and I think that will demonstrate the seriousness of it. At the moment, I don’t think it’s treated as a priority.

Host**:** Ok. Over to you Elizabeth for your question.

Elizabeth**:** I liked to ask this one of Zac. Are you aware of any charities, organisations or youth groups in your area which support young people, and also generally websites wise with hate crime?

Zac**:** I feel like I should be more familiar than I certainly am. I am familiar with the Hampshire Youth Organisation, we actually follow each other on twitter. We see each other’s tweets and stuff like that. Me myself, I’m not overly familiar with organisations that if someone was subject to hate crime that I would know straightaway that this where you should go and who you should speak to. Unfortunately, it’s not something I’m overly familiar with myself.

Elizabeth**:** So if any listeners out there want to find our more if you go to the Youth Commission website we’ve got links to further support, for example ‘Tell Mum’ that’s for Muslim Support and Victim Support is for any type of hate crime.

Witnessing hate crime

Host**:** Sarah you’ve got a question now.

Sarah**:** This is for any one of you who has a message or something that you would like to say to young people who witness or experience a hate crime or discrimination?

Naz**:** This is a great question, and the only way that people can have something done about it is instead of having your phone out and videoing it and putting it on Instagram and social media, which is great in terms of raising awareness, report it. Help someone that needs help. If you witness something don’t be silent. Now is not the time to be silent, now is the time to for the youth of today to have the strength and the ability to know...

Zac**:** Hi Naz. Yes just to add to that. All this videoing and stuff is helpful when it comes to holding people to account, but what you often notice in the videos is that there is perhaps people on the side that aren’t challenging the behaviour or showing some form of reluctance to challenge the behaviour. And what that ends up doing it makes the behaviour almost acceptable. The perpetrators go unchallenged, the public see that as something that goes unchallenged and really really unfortunately it becomes almost acceptable to the victim if things like that will occur and go unchallenged.

Tackling hate crime

Host**:** Ok. Elizabeth your question.

Elizabeth**:** Our Big Conversation responses indicate that young people think education is the best strategy to tackle hate crime. What do you think is the top way to tackle a hate crime?

Sha**:** As I’ve said, I think that education is the best way to tackle hate crime. Awareness and education go hand in hand, and I think that is one way of tacking it. Others, as I said previously, we need to take hate crime more seriously and once they see this is a serious crime it works as a deterrent as well. That kind of moves on to more reporting and everything. Like Zac was saying we don’t want this to seem like an accepted practice, definitely education and awareness but also seriousness being taken by the police force.

Host**:** I guess all the things you’ve just mentioned there Sha, it’s a combination of all the things that need to done together to and one shouldn’t be any more priority than another?

Sha**:** Absolutely

Host**:** Maddie do you want to tell us the way people can get more detail on social media and the website?

Maddie**:** You can follow us on Instagram - @hantsyc, Twitter - @hantsyc and Facebook - hantsyouthcommission.

Interview ends