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Dr Carolyn Wilkins
Chief Executive
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Dear Dr Wilkins

Oldham Council Resolution - Disability Hate Crime

Thank you for your letter of 9th January 2015 concerning the above debate which took place on 17th December 2014.

I am sorry for the delay in responding to you, the delay was due to an administrative error by the department. I have been asked to respond to you as I lead the Cross-Government Hate Crime Programme, which brings all Whitehall departments together with criminal justice agencies to coordinate the response to hate crime.

You will be aware that we are restricted as to what communications we can make during the pre-election period, however I wanted to respond to address the points you raised in your letter. I also wanted to congratulate you on your attention to this important and damaging problem. Disability hate crime presents a huge challenge in our society, particularly since data tells us that most offences are never reported to authorities and I hope your efforts will help make disabled people safer in Oldham.

I will respond in order to the three areas you urged the Minister to take action;

1. Redouble efforts to prosecute offenders.

In the pre-election period I cannot comment on post-election commitments. You may have already been informed by the Director of Public Prosecutions that the Crown Prosecution Service and National Police Chief's Council are working together to audit and improve the joint responses to disability hate crime.

2. Consideration of new legislation.

You will be aware that Section 146 of the Criminal Justice Act, 2003 instructs courts to enhance sentences and outline this in court, for all offences where the perpetrator is proven to have been motivated by or demonstrated hostility to disabled people.

In 2012, the Law Commission was asked to review the hate crime legislation, including whether certain hate crime laws should be extended to include disability as well as other victim groups. The Commission reported their findings in 2014. (http://lawcommission.justice.gov.uk/areas/hate_crime.htm) There will be opportunity for the new Government to consider the Law Commission's findings later this year.

3. Magistrates training.

I chair a group that includes courts and other criminal justice agencies and is working to improve the awareness of hate crime in the courts process. To do so we have had hate crime markers added to the Magistrate and Crown Court's IT systems. We are looking to identify opportunities to raise awareness and are also involved in the future IT developments to recognise the importance of applying enhanced sentencing provisions and being able to provide transparent data.

I hope this information is helpful but please feel free to contact me should you require more information or if our programme can assist you in your local delivery of hate crime measures.

Yours sincerely



Paul Giannasi
Head of the Cross-Government
Hate Crime Programme
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