

**Gill Heath**  
**Cabinet Member for Communities and the Environment**

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To:- Mr Michael Metcalf, via email

My Ref: GH-12/CM

Your Ref:

Date: 11 April 2017

Dear Michael

I am writing in response to your recent email, which followed on from your letter to Mr Adams.

I would like to thank you for SACREs interest in Staffordshire County Council's approach to responding towards and tackling religiously motivated hate crimes and other religiously motivated incidents.

I have endeavoured to respond to each of the questions that you raised in your original letter:

**What current County initiatives are there to address anti-Muslim hatred?**

Staffordshire County Council contributes to the local partnership approach to tackling hate crime and we are involved with the two Staffordshire hate crime partnerships (CNS in the north of the county, and CACH across the rest of Staffordshire). Between them, they provide coverage across the county offering casework support, advice and guidance to victims of hate crime and incidents. In addition to providing support for individuals, the hate crime partnerships deliver training to professionals, run workshops within schools and other community settings, attend events to connect with marginalised communities, offer advice, support and guidance to partner organisations and co-ordinate partnership meetings to share best practice.

While the County Council remains committed to working with partners to tackle hate crime, due to financial challenges, we will unfortunately be unable to sustain funding for the partnerships at current levels and our budget for this work has reduced for 2017/18. This



reduction in funding makes the partnership approach even more vital, to ensure that we are utilising limited resources effectively.

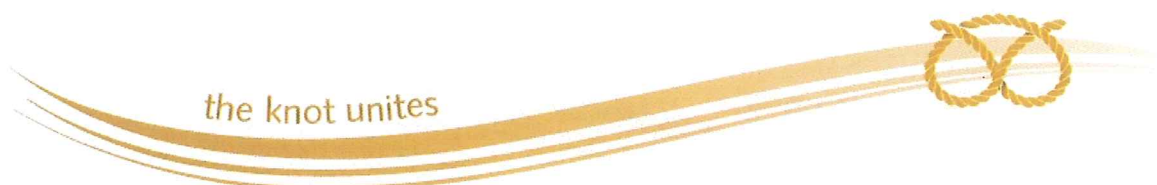
Moving forward, we are working closely with Staffordshire Police and other partners (including district and borough councils) to further improve the partnership working around this issue and ensure that all key agencies are effectively contributing to tackling hate crime in Staffordshire.

Specifically in relation to schools, Staffordshire County Council commission Entrust to provide support to schools. This support is provided from the Minority Ethnic Achievement Service (MEAS) and the Personal Development, Health and Wellbeing team. They assist schools to encourage tolerance and good relationships within settings related to different faiths, gender, race, SEND, sexuality, lifestyle and any other perceived difference in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. This is a high priority and is at the heart of much of Entrust's work. Some examples of their activity in relation to this agenda include:

- Development of a curriculum resource called 'Difference and Diversity'. A version of this has been developed for KS1-3 and Special Schools.
- Development of a Primary PSHE Scheme of work which encourages, amongst other related themes, schools to focus on positive relationships and anti-bullying, including a substantial Anti-Bullying Pledge Scheme.
- Direct work with students who may be newly arrived in the UK from other countries who need support around English language acquisition and cultural differences. Entrust support schools as pupils arrive and then take re-referrals for any pupils that schools feel concerned about from an academic or social point of view.
- A variety of interactive exhibitions, which includes an Islam exhibition. This involves members of Entrust staff working in a school with classes to break down stereotypes and increase awareness of the religion. This exhibition is extremely well received by schools and often delivered by members of the team who are Muslim and are able to answer questions and increase understanding. We also deliver a similar experience called 'The woman in black' which explores other stereotypes around Islam.
- Consultancy, support and training for refugees and asylum seeking children and work with Staffordshire's Virtual School for Looked After Children and Communities e.g. to ensure the educational support is in place for the Syrian refugee families who have been housed in Staffordshire.

**Are schools required to report incidents of racism/religious hate crime to the local authority and/or other agencies? If so what happens with the information submitted?**

Schools are no longer required to provide information about discriminatory incidents as they occur. Instead schools are now sent an annual survey to ask them for basic details which Entrust collate and analyse.





However, schools are encouraged to contact the MEAS team when a discriminatory incident has occurred, if they require support. The referral is followed up with an offer of support and signposting to other agencies such as the local hate crime partnerships, as appropriate.

In addition, the hate crime partnerships or other agencies contact Entrust to follow up any concerns they have identified with a school which may indicate a need for wider PSHE input.

### **What advice is given to schools on how to respond to such incidents?**

Schools are able to seek advice and guidance on a range of safeguarding issues via the Education Safeguarding Advice Service (ESAS). This dedicated telephone line acts as the single route for education safeguarding advice, which does not require a referral to First Response. This can include advice and guidance in relation to discriminatory incidents. Schools are also able to access advice via Entrust, and this will include guidance in relation to their duties under the Equality Act, as well as a discussion of the incident and any consequences for individuals and changes in organisation or curriculum which might prevent any further incidents.

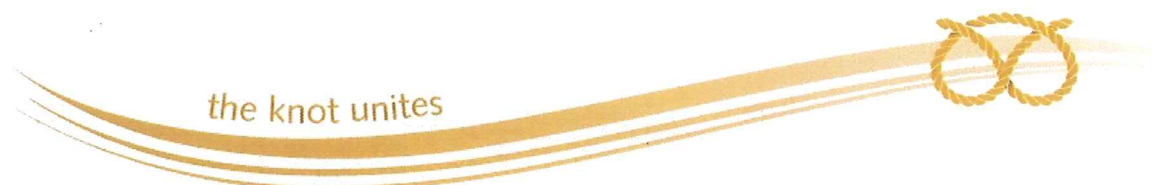
### **What are the local authority, and schools within the authority's remit, doing to ensure that Muslim pupils are kept safe?**

Staffordshire County Council and schools across the county are keen to ensure that all pupils are kept safe, including those from diverse religious backgrounds. We recognise the need for vigilance around any potential Islamophobia as well as other incidents motivated by hate and discrimination.

Our safeguarding policies and processes are intended to keep all youngsters safe and all schools are made aware of their responsibilities in adhering to these. Governing bodies must provide a safe environment and take action to identify and protect any children or young people who are at risk of significant harm. Schools are required to promote safe practice and challenge unsafe practice; to ensure that staff receive the necessary training for their roles; and to work in partnership with other agencies providing services for children and young people.

In relation to the wider safeguarding agenda, Staffordshire County Council and district and borough councils across Staffordshire have used Home Office Prevent funding to commission Entrust to develop a resource for schools. This resource includes a focus on British Values and the Prevent agenda, and provides an opportunity for schools to challenge unhelpful stereotypes around extremism and terrorism, while supporting young people in protecting themselves against the negative influences of radicalisation.

I hope that my response gives you assurance that Staffordshire County Council has taken a proactive approach to responding to religiously motivated hate crime and incidents, as well as to broader issues of inclusion, cohesion and safeguarding.



In terms of the County Council, co-ordination of activity in relation to hate crime sits within community safety and Michael Harrison, Commissioner for Families & Communities has overall lead for this area of work. Progress in relation to this work is reported to the Staffordshire Safer & Stronger Communities Strategy Group (the partnership board which holds statutory responsibility for community safety in the County).

If you have any suggestions about how SACRE can support this activity, you may wish to link in with Becky Murphy, a member of Michael Harrison's team. Becky can be contacted on [becky.murphy@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:becky.murphy@staffordshire.gov.uk) or telephone 01785 854428.

Yours sincerely



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