District Dispatch



Making sure that people feel safe is one of the most important responsibilities we share as a council and as a community. As this month marks National Hate Crime Awareness Week, a national campaign that aims to raise awareness of hate crime, I wanted to take the opportunity to highlight the work being done locally to keep our communities safe and encourage everyone to play their part by reporting crime and supporting those affected by it.

I'm proud to live in a district that is welcoming, friendly and inclusive. Our communities are strengthened by the kindness, respect and support that people show one another every day. However, we know that all areas experience issues of crime and disorder to some extent and that's why it’s so important that we continue working together to keep the Chichester District a safe place to live, work and visit.

A key part of this work is the Community Safety Partnership, which brings together organisations such as Sussex Police, West Sussex County Council, West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service, Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner, Western Sussex Primary Care Trust, West Sussex Drug and Alcohol Action Team, and Sussex and Surrey Probation Service. By working closely together, we can identify concerns, respond quickly to emerging issues and provide support where it is needed most. Collectively, we share intelligence, address localised issues and deliver projects that aim to deter crime and make a positive difference within our communities.

An important part of keeping our communities safe is encouraging people to report incidents when they occur. Crime can only be effectively tackled if agencies

understand what is happening in our communities, and this is particularly important when it comes to hate crime and hate incidents, which can often go unreported.

A hate crime is any criminal offence that is perceived by the victim, or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on characteristics such as race, religion, disability, sexual orientation or transgender identity. Even when an incident does not amount to a criminal offence, it can still be reported as a hate incident.
If you experience or witness hate crime, it is important to report it. In an emergency, always call 999. Non-emergency incidents can be reported to Sussex Police by calling 101 or online through the Sussex Police website. Reports can also be made anonymously through Crimestoppers.

Help is available for anyone affected by hate crime. Reports made through the online hate crime reporting service are referred to the Hate Incident Support Service (HISS), delivered by Victim Support Sussex. The service provides tailored support for victims and witnesses, including emotional and practical support, advice on rights and next steps, support with safety planning, and help connecting with other organisations where needed. Support is available whether or not an incident has been reported to the police and regardless of when it occurred.

Nobody should feel that they have to deal with hate crime alone. If you or someone you know needs help, Victim Support — **www.victimsupport.org.uk/resources/sussex/** — provides free and confidential support. Their local victim care team can be contacted by calling 0808 168 9274, 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday, and the Supportline is available outside of these hours: 08 08 16 89 111

By looking out for one another, speaking up when something isn't right and reporting incidents when they happen, we can all play a part in maintaining the welcoming, inclusive and safe communities that make the Chichester District such a special place. By standing together and treating one another with respect, we can help ensure our district remains a place where everyone feels welcome.

Best wishes

Cllr Rhys Chant

Cabinet Member for Communities and Wellbeing at Chichester District Council