1. Executive Summary:

SARI is (we believe) the largest hate crime charity in the UK. Below we have outlined why we have submitted our evidence, who we are and what we do.

We call upon the government to revisit and reissue the guidance from a raft of reports and inquiries relevant to hate crime whose pertinence in today’s climate has not dwindled despite some of them having been completed several years ago.

The legal and policy framework for hate crime, whilst much improved and better than many other countries – remains patchy and inaccessible for many as without advocacy and clear pathways – it may as well not exist for some.

Barriers to reporting and measures that could improve it are well known and documented and yet remain unsolved because we have not acted upon or gone back on the guidance and recommendations that are out there – e.g. hate crime and unconscious bias training; community based support services and dedicated hate crime specialist officers as well as accessible information for victims.

Hate speak and threat on social media is spiralling out of control with so many people now facing or being exposed to this form of abuse and yet the best known and used platforms are doing the absolute minimum to combat it. Police and public bodies are also not equipped, skilled or at times committed to dealing with it. Schools that should be experts at tackling social media abuse have very inconsistent approaches.

Grassroots, community led and hate crime specialist services, law centres and dedicated roles in public services are crucial elements of effective support for victims. As are neighbourhood champions and projects that tackle the root causes and yet provision is predominantly poor or non-existent.

Whilst hate crime has burgeoned in nearly every area – fuelled by the impact of events such as 9/11, 7/7 and radical so-called Islamist activity and most recently BREXIT – local and public service specific monitoring and analysis of the patterns and trends remains inadequate or in the case of mental health services, social services and some schools non-existent. The national CSEW is fantastic and most police forces are now recording well. However we need a local equivalent of the CSEW and police forces do not publish, disseminate or analyse their data sufficiently. Housing providers are patchy.

We have summarised our recommendations for responding to hate crime from all angles – we believe in a holistic, multi-faceted approach. We believe that our model for supporting victims is the best – we wish (indeed our service users wish) we existed in every area of the UK.

2. Our reason for submitting evidence

As the largest Hate Crime Charity in the UK, we are submitting this evidence as we feel it is crucial to this inquiry. This is only a snap shot of our 25 years of experience in responding to hate crime and dealing with its’ heinous consequences and we hope to be called to outline our understanding and recommendations in more detail. SARI is
focussed on the Avon and Somerset area of the UK – this is a huge area geographically which covers diverse urban centres such as Bristol and Bath; seaside towns such as Weston Super Mare and Watchet, market towns such as Yeovil and Thornbury and isolated rural areas across Somerset, B&NES and South Gloucestershire. Hate Crime manifests in these areas in many different ways – City Centre attacks in the night time economy; unprovoked attacks and abuse at bus stops; bomb threats and pigs heads erected on Mosques; mindless murders following long running neighbourhood campaigns; attacks and a murder where the victim and perpetrator have complex mental health needs and past personal histories; organised Far Right campaigns with multiple victims; attacks on cars, buses, towards taxi drivers, in parks, schools and at people’s work place.

We see a myriad of effects on the victim and communities ranging from depression to suicide, loss of homes, jobs and childhoods, extreme anger and retaliation, segregation, isolation and community conflict.

We now cover all types of hate crime and have seen the commonalities and differences between Disabilist/ Mate Crime; Homophobic; Transphobic; Racist and Faith based incidents.

Over the years we have explored all manner of solutions that fall within the legal and policy frameworks we have to hand as well as inventing a few of our own and we have helped victims mitigate when they have tried to tackle hate via retaliation and in so doing have broken the law themselves. Below we have outlined details about our Charity and what we do. You will see that we offer a holistic suite of options that are designed to eradicate the consequences of hate crime from all angles – recognising that hate crime services need reactive, crisis, longer term and preventative remedies on offer.

3. **Who is SARI (Stand Against Racism & Inequality)?**

SARI is a specialist Charity that is dedicated to tackling hate crime. We are a Bristol-based user-led charity that operates across Avon and Somerset. We work at the heart of the communities that we support, and we empower the victims of hate crime to get justice and overcome the impact of such abuse. SARI remains a unique organisation, as there is no other comparable service in the region.

Since the very first project steering group was set up in 1988 to develop a small voluntary group, the Charity’s former Founder Director Batook Pandya MBE (who sadly passed away in February 2014) and the current Directors (Alex Raikes MBE is the Strategic Director and Agnes Yeomans is the Finance Director) together with a very committed, service user led Board of trustees have led the organization over the past 25 years to become a nationally recognized leader in the field.

The organization now consists of 25 skilled professionals that turn over c. £0.7 million of public sector and a range of other income streams to support victims of hate crime, offer preventative interventions and influence local and national policy.

SARI has opened nearly 7,000 cases since 1991. In our first year we opened 50 cases. In 2015–2016 we opened 553 new cases (a 10% increase on the previous year). 78.5% were race based; 11.5% were disablist; 7% were homophobic or transphobic. 3% were for other reasons. This year, referrals have increased by 10% particularly fuelled by BREXIT.
3.1. Our Vision

Our vision is a world in which people can live free from the threat of attack and prejudice because they are different.

3.2. Our Strategic Objectives

- To promote for the public benefit the relief and treatment of any physical, mental or emotional distress suffered by any person as a result of that person or a member of her or his family having suffered inequalities on the grounds of one or more protected characteristics.
- To work towards the elimination of racism and inequalities for people with protected characteristics as defined in law.
- To advance the education of the public in the causes and effects of racism and inequalities towards those with protected characteristics.
- To promote equality of opportunity for those with protected characteristics and to foster good relations between those with protected characteristics and the general population.

3.3. Our Activities

3.3.1. Supporting and empowering those targeted by hate crime by providing a casework service including one-to-one mentoring

Our casework service for victims of any hate crime or hate incident is our primary activity. It includes providing practical and emotional support, signposting and community safety interventions. Hate crime or incidents can take many forms ranging from verbal abuse, rude gestures, abusive letters, texts or social media comments; from property damage to physical attacks and in the worst scenario murder. We recently began to deliver advocacy services for vulnerable adult victims of crime or ASB who need additional support with the criminal justice system because of their culture, identity or protected characteristic.

We empower victims of hate crime and incidents (or those who are more vulnerable to hate crime e.g. BME residents new to hotspot areas) to ensure they are better equipped and more resilient for the future via group work and mentoring.

We deliver restorative approaches where victims want perpetrators to understand and make amends for the hate crime they are responsible for. We also tackle community conflicts which occur due to hostility between different equalities communities.

SARI also leads an exciting and innovative partnership in Bristol – Bristol Hate Crime Services (BHCS) which comprises LGBT Bristol, Bristol MIND, The Diversity Trust (a specialist equalities and LGBT consultancy) and Brandon Trust (a Charity dedicated to supporting people with Learning Difficulties). This collaboration won a National Compact Award in 2014.

We have recently won a 5 Year Big Lottery Grant to deliver Hate Crime Services to Bath & North East Somerset, North Somerset and Somerset – this includes partners – Taunton Citizens’ Advice; The Diversity Trust and Compass Disability.

3.3.2. Running service user groups and resident focus groups e.g. Bristol’s Service User Strategic Group; South Gloucestershire Race Equality
Network; Bristol Mental Health’s Service User and Care Board and several housing association focus groups.

We work with these groups to raise their voices and to influence service delivery and social change e.g. meeting with the lead for education in South Gloucestershire to challenge how they are meeting the needs of BME communities and to agree an action plan.

We also work to overcome language, cultural and system barriers and to increase and improve access to a range of services for equalities communities including mental health and drugs, alcohol and substance abuse services so that people reach services earlier in their journey of need, thereby preventing crisis.

3.3.3. Delivering one-to-one sessions with perpetrators/ offenders of hate crime and offering restorative justice for victims with their perpetrators

3.3.4. Enhancing community safety either through supplying and fitting devices such as mail safes, security lights, window locks, spy-holes, CCTV and fire safety equipment or by using partners such as Avon Fire and Rescue

3.3.5. Ensuring that hate incidents receive a co-ordinated response from voluntary and statutory agencies.

3.3.6. Delivering education sessions (including classroom and assemblies) and training for schools, private, public and third sector organisations which illustrate the nature and extent of hate crime, promote equality and cohesion and provide guidance on tackling hate crime.

3.3.7. Our training, education and consultancy service for a range of sectors (local authorities, police, housing associations for example) aims to promote equality of outcomes and opportunities and cultural competency in services as well as to promoting cohesive communities in schools, fostering awareness, respect and understanding for staff, children, young people and their parents. We work with young offenders to tackle hate motivated and prejudiced behaviour and to promote positive self-esteem and pride in heritage and identity for offenders who have Protected Characteristics.

3.3.8. Collecting, analysing and disseminating data about our work and mapping and responding effectively to patterns and trends around hate crime and tensions.

3.3.9. Using data, information and knowledge we have collected from our support and preventative services we influence and shape local and national strategic policies, procedures and frameworks with regards to the equalities and justice aspects of the world of crime, ASB, hate crime, mental health and wellbeing, community cohesion and community development.
3.3.10. Collaborating with agencies in designing and implementing initiatives to help promote cohesive, safe communities. Recent examples include developing a hate crime risk assessment matrix similar to the domestic abuse CAADA–DASH form and working with police, housing and ASB agencies to start an ‘impact style’ perpetrators of hate crime.

4. Include any recommendations for action by the Government or others which you would like the committee to consider.

4.1. There have been many reports and inquiries that need to be revisited and not condemned to gather dust on shelves. In particular the following:

- Stephen Lawrence Inquiry – there needs to be a republishing and disseminating of the recommendations.
- Getting Away With Murder [http://www.stamp-it-out.co.uk/docs/_permdocs/gettingawaywithmurder.pdf](http://www.stamp-it-out.co.uk/docs/_permdocs/gettingawaywithmurder.pdf)
- Autism Guide for Criminal Justice Professionals
- Fiona Pilkington Investigation recommendations
- Living in a Different World
- The Rocky Bennett Inquiry
- Out and Included (Housing Study)

4.2. We would like to see more regular surveys such as the Stonewall Gay Crime Survey and a re-emergence of the Count Me In Census that followed the Rocky Bennett Inquiry and was part of the DRE programme

4.3. The loss of the CRE was a blow to race equality work and race relations. We need a ‘space for race’ with regards to policy and strategy at a national level and funding programmes for race hate charities and service.

4.4. The EHRC should also offer funding for projects and charities that tackle hate crime.

4.5. We have a Law Centre in Bristol which is critical to many hate crime solutions in employment, Goods and Services and Housing in particular. There should be free, community legal advice in every area in the country – there should not be a postcode lottery for services available to tackle hate crime.

4.6. There is a need for specific research with recommendations for responding to Transphobic Hate.

4.7. We need to explore hate crime towards Street Homeless and Street Sex Workers as these are groups facing true hatred and prejudice on a constant basis and for whom the consequences can be severe harm and murder if left unchecked.

5. The effectiveness of current legislation and law enforcement policies for preventing and prosecuting hate crime and its associated violence
5.1. Criminal Law has improved significantly but there are real gaps whereby certain hate crime categories do not get equivalent recognition or enhancement.

5.2. Disability Hate Crime has particularly poor results – especially Mate Crime – it is insufficiently recognised, recorded, prosecuted and then convicted. More needs to be done to tackle this at all stages of the Criminal Justice System. (See Living in a Different World and CPS figures).

5.3. Plea bargaining out the hate motivation happens all too often.

5.4. Civil, Housing, Employment Law and the Equality Act overall are massively under-used because there is little or no places to go to get support to achieve this. To achieve success in these arenas is complex and costly – both financially and emotionally. There needs to be free support, guidance and advocacy to make these remedies meaningful and effective.

5.5. With the cut back of local authority services and staffing and funds for housing providers – ASB officers and services; community development and cohesion and environmental health are far less able to tackle hate crime. They are crucial partners for successfully tackling hate but currently are so limited in resources they are barely effective despite there being a whole raft of solutions on offer within their arenas.

6. The barriers that prevent individuals from reporting hate crime, and measures to improve reporting rates.

6.1. Avon and Somerset area has very high reporting and has been cited as one of the worst areas for hate crime. Actually it is one of the best in our opinion and we are a big part of this. Having a dedicated, well-resourced hate crime service that is locally based really drives up community confidence and thus reporting.

6.2. For many victims language barrier, being disabled or fearing worse repercussions from reporting deter or close the door for reporting. They must be able to navigate complex systems; have the time to report; be able to articulately explain that it is hate motivated and what has happened (when many victims are upset, distressed, angry, frustrated and have language barriers, disabilities or complex needs).

6.3. Many don’t even know they have suffered hate crime – so how can they explain it.

6.4. Many public services are not trained to recognise and have empathy with regards to hate crime. Some officers have unchecked conscious and unconscious bias that adds yet another barrier.
6.5. If you are the sole complainant with multiple people targeting you (e.g. the Bijan Ebrahimi case that we have been leading on in Bristol or the Fiona Pilkington Case) it is extremely hard to report and if you do report to be believed. Evidence is always against you. If you try and record what is happening – you can be then at greater risk e.g. accused of being a paedophile.

6.6. Measures to improve reporting rates:
- Independent, community led hate crime services
- Training for all public service officers
- Talks and information for victims that are accessible
- Guidance for victims re: how to record hate crime safely
- CCTV and security provision for victims
- Publicity campaigns
- More work in schools on what hate crime is and what you can do about it
- Policy and legal frameworks that insist on schools, support services for Disabled People and public services offering training and education for their staff and clientele as well as their having to record, monitor and report on hate crime occurring in their premises combined with their response. Schools should have to report to LEAs again and their should be stringent guidance for schools on how they should respond to hate crime.

7. The role of social media companies and other online platforms in helping to identify online sources of hate crime and to prevent online hate incidents from escalating.

7.1. This appears to be non-existent for the leading platforms e.g. Facebook, Twitter – we are getting more and more complaints involving them and invariably when people try and report – nothing is done.

7.2. There is a need for them to really advertise what they will do and then to act upon what they promise.

7.3. The police and schools need to become more savvy at dealing with online abuse.

8. The role of the voluntary sector, community representatives, and other frontline organisations in challenging attitudes that underpin hate crime.

8.1. In our case we play a huge role in doing this via our training and education interventions and restorative justice project. But there is no easy funding to access for this work. Schools do not like paying out (although we do deliver traded services). We get good local authority funding to do some of this work from Bristol and South Gloucestershire and then Big Lottery. Other authorities simply say they do not have the money. Restorative Justice for dealing with hate motivated offending can be very effective if delivered by specialist practitioners that understand the specific effects and consequences of hate but funding for this is very poor or non-existent.
8.2. When VCS and community representatives challenge attitudes it can be extremely effective. In areas where we have had high levels of hate crime, we have brought in churches, neighbourhood projects and partnerships and IAG reps to work jointly with ourselves (as the Hate Crime Charity), the Police, Council, housing providers and health providers.

8.3. Having people from all parts of the community and from all key agencies publicising the same message of zero tolerance to hate crime as well as offering all possible support to any victims is extremely effective and can turn a whole area around. We have examples of these projects. We tend to start with a multi-agency/ multi-sector community meeting and/or victim/witness focus groups; followed by surveys, multi-agency walkabout and a number of community designed projects that tackle the root causes and the ultimate effects of the hate crime. Projects have included using the Impact approach to hate crime offenders; youth-led champions training and schemes; business charters; blanket letters; publicity campaigns and neighbourhood celebratory festivals; fun activities; undercover operations; covert and overt CCTV etc.

9. Statistical trends in hate crime and how the recording, measurement and analysis of hate crime can be improved.

9.1. Please visit our website at [www.sariweb.org](http://www.sariweb.org) to download our annual reports, statistics reports and service user evaluation reports. SARI was up until about 3 years ago responding to approximately 500 referrals and opening about 350 cases a year. We are now responding to about 800 referrals a year and opening about 500 new cases. This is partly because we have widened our charitable objectives to respond to all forms of hate crime but is also due to a noticeable rise in referrals and incidents. We have seen rise in attacks on Muslim communities since 9/11 – now about 35% of our caseload are Muslim. Others are attacked because they are perceived to be Muslim. Since BREXIT we have seen a steep incline in attacks on Eastern Europeans and the levels of violence against them has risen. Disability Hate Crime reporting to our service is rising (partly due to a public perception that Disabled People are benefits scroungers and as support services for vulnerable people have reduced) so that the percentage of this type of hate crime for us is much higher than our local police or the CSEW ratios. We have lower percentage reporting from our LGBT communities than our local police force who have LGBT Liaison officers and have been particularly effective at getting people to come forward. However, we still have significant numbers of LGBT victims coming forward and are seeing more and more Trans people turning to us including many who are children and young people.

9.2. We love having the CSEW to turn to and think this is fantastic – please keep it up!!! But would like to see much more accessible and usable local data – there should be local data on offer in every area. Schools must be made to identify, record, monitor and evaluate hate crime. Housing
Associations should also have excellent recording and monitoring processes but often don’t.

9.3. Mental health and social services should routinely collect, monitor and evaluation hate crime reports. Currently they don’t recognise hate crime and the impact it has on their service users at all despite some of the most serious hate motivated murders occurring in their services or to their clients.

10. The type, extent and effectiveness of the support that is available to victims and their families and how it might be improved.

10.1. We offer an excellent example of what good looks like in terms of support for victims and their families which includes home and office visits; phone; online and 24/7 response. We believe a service like ours should be available in every area. The effectiveness of our service can be seen in our service user evaluation reports and in external evaluations of our service.

10.2. In most areas there are very limited if any services. Some areas have one part time worker attached to the police or a local authority. A few areas have Racial Equality Councils that are offering a very limited, often volunteer run service.

10.3. We know that Victim Support offer a service in some areas but as this is not specialist and not community led – it isn’t as effective. Victims prefer to go to services run by people with ‘lived’ experience and expert understanding.

10.4. Stop Hate UK is a great initiative but is phone and online only and will only deliver to areas that buy their package. It is also run by volunteers and we believe that paid staff offer more consistency when delivering support to hate crime victims – volunteers can be a brilliant addition so long as paid caseworkers also are on offer.

10.5. Police forces used to have dedicated hate crime officers and this is recognised as best practice but most have done away with these roles due to recent cuts.

10.6. Councils used to support or at least sign post victims via their equality officers roles – but these have also been cut.

10.7. Schools are notoriously poor at supporting victim children and their families. Children find it very hard to report and tell us they are not listened to, not believed and often labelled as the problem.

10.8. Witness support services for those having to go through court are a great idea – but again these have mostly been shut down and handed to Victim Support volunteers who often don’t understand the specific needs of hate crime victims.
10.9. We would recommend the following services for victims:

- Hate Crime Officers in all police force districts
- Locally funded, community led hate crime services provided by collaborations of Disability, LGBT, Race and Faith organisations
- Dedicated roles in schools
- Equality Officers in Councils
- Dedicated roles in Housing Associations
- Court/ witness support services
- Online toolkits and guidance booklets
- Law Centres or legal/ employment support
- Community Safety partnerships offering CCTV and security equipment loans/ grants
- Bobby Van schemes to repair and target harden people’s homes and businesses at risks – they can offer advice and charge businesses
- Safe house for those victims needing to be got somewhere safe fast or to offer them respite/ safety when action is being taken
- Neighbourhood projects/ schemes to build support, resilience and sustainability for equalities communities in patches where hate crimes are particularly high

Submission by SARI (Stand Against Racism & Inequality) and we also lead Bristol Hate Crime Services (BHCS)