

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS
BY DEPUTY T.M. PITMAN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 19th FEBRUARY 2013**

Question

Does the Minister propose to introduce measures to bring Jersey into parity with the UK on issues that may be described as 'hate crimes'; and if not, why not?

Answer

Hate crime is defined by the UK Home Office as any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a personal characteristic.

In the UK in 2007, the police, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), Prison Service (now the National Offender Management Service) and other agencies that make up the criminal justice system agreed a common definition of monitored hate crime to cover five 'strands,' in particular – disability, gender-identity, race, religion/faith and sexual orientation. Primarily, this was to ensure a consistent working definition to allow accurate recording and monitoring.

In March 2012, the UK government launched a plan to tackle hate crime called 'Challenge it, report it, stop it.' The plan centred on three main areas; preventing hate crime, increasing reporting and access to support, and improving the response to hate crime.

Considering the above, it is clear that the UK has made great progress on the issue of hate crime, which is further supported by specific legislation, enhanced sentencing powers and a multi-agency approach ensuring that tackling hate crime is everybody's responsibility.

Any effort to bring Jersey into parity with the UK on the issue of hate crime must follow the UK's example of ensuring that it is a joined up approach, which includes areas such as education, the health service and the whole of the criminal justice system.

Presently, Jersey does not have any legislation in the area of discrimination. The States of Jersey Police has recognised that more could be done locally to tackle hate crime. Currently the States of Jersey Police is producing a strategy that will focus on creating single point of contacts (SPOCs) known as 'community engagement officers' for a number of diverse population groups. The intention is for these officers to have increased engagement with the most vulnerable and potentially isolated sections of the community, with a view to increasing public confidence in the police. It is anticipated that any increase in public confidence will lead to an increase in the reporting of incidents such as hate crimes.