| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 24-1059  Responded to: 27 May 2024 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

**A constituent of Mairi McAllan MSP has raised concerns regarding Police Scotland’s ‘Hate Monster’ campaign, with specific mention around white 18-30 year old males.**

**The constituent has asked what impact assessments were done when the campaign was being produced – the constituent asks this as his son is in this age bracket and, the constituent says his son suffers badly from intrusive thoughts and that when he sees the campaign he experiences stress and anxiety that he is one of the people the campaign may be targeting, as per the constituent.**

**The constituent believes this is one of the most aggressive and divisive campaigns he has seen in some time, and he believes it is targeted at a certain demographic such as young, white and socially disadvantaged males.**

**The constituent has asked what impact assessments were done in the production of this campaign.**

Tackling hate crime is a priority for Police Scotland. Hate crime negatively impacts on individuals, communities, and wider society. For victims, who are often already very vulnerable, it can have a deeply damaging impact.

There has been a significant amount of inaccurate reporting in the media and on social media about our last hate crime campaign, which featured the Hate Monster.

That campaign only ran for six weeks in Spring 2023. It was not related to the introduction of the new Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act.

Police Scotland has not produced any campaign material about the new Act, although we have shared content from the Scottish Government’s about it.

The hate crime campaign we ran in 2023 was developed using industry best-practice, including behaviour change communication techniques.

It was not the first anti-hate crime campaign Police Scotland has delivered. In the past our efforts have focused on encouraging the reporting of hate crime, either by victims or bystanders. This was the first campaign, however, where we aimed to engage directly with those most at risk of offending, with the biggest opportunity to change, and asked them to reflect on what factors could lead to them potentially committing a hate crime.

The campaign was informed by a rigorous research and insight process which considered in detail crime statistics, academic research into hate crime and its causes, and the views of partners and stakeholders with the most knowledge of this crime type. During the development of the hate crime campaign we engaged/consulted with colleagues in Police Scotland’s Partnerships, Preventions and Community Wellbeing (PPCW) Division and our diversity staff associations.

Our insight was also informed by a Scottish Government study Police recorded hate crime - characteristics: updated study - gov.scot (www.gov.scot), which identified key offender characteristics and provided information which helped identify our target audience.

We also engaged with a range of partners including NHS Scotland; Scottish Prison Service; Retailers Against Crime; Public Health Scotland; I AM ME Scotland; Disability Equality Scotland and LGBT Youth and Interfaith Scotland. The outcome of these consultations was that we had broad support for our approach with constructive feedback on execution which we took onboard. As per our process no Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment (EqHRIA) was carried out. This became part of our process following guidance from PPCW several years ago that the overarching topics we campaign on have specific EqHRIAs. However, as part of the campaign development process outlined above, we took many of the same steps that we would in carrying out and EqHRIA.

The list of sources consulted to inform the campaign are as follows:

* COPFS Hate Crime of Scotland 2021-22
* Psychosocial motivations of hate crimes, Franklin, University of Washington, American Psychological Association, 1998
* Hate Crime Perpetrators: the Psychopath and the Perseverator, Logan, Violence and Gender 2018
* Hate Crime, Levin and McDevitt, Encyclopaedia of Peace, Violence and Conflict, 2008
* Youth Hate Crimes: Identification, Prevention, and Intervention, Steinberg, American Psychiatry, 2003
* What is a hate crime? Schweppe, Cogent Social Sciences, 2021
* Hate Crime: Causes, Motivations and Effective Interventions for Criminal Justice Social Work, Rania Hamad, CYCJ/Edinburgh City Council/University of Edinburgh, 2017
* From Thrill to Defensive Hate Crimes: The Impact of September 11, 2001, Jack Levin, Northeastern University, Journal of Hate Studies, 2014-15
* Working with people who commit hate crime, Rania Hamad, Iriss Insights, 2019
* A Comparative Analysis of Hate Crime Legislation A Report to the Hate Crime Legislation Review James Chalmers and Fiona Leverick University of Glasgow, July 2017
* Hate crime: a global perspective, Iganski and Levin, 2015
* Understanding hate crimes, Nathan Hall, Routledge International Handbook on Hate Crime, 2015
* Hate crime against people with disabilities, Chih, Routledge International Handbook on Hate Crime, 2015
* Disability hostility, harassment and violence in the UK, Hamilton and Trickett, Routledge International Handbook on Hate Crime, 2015
* The Social Distance Between Us, Darren McGarvey, Penguin, 2022
* An updated study into the characteristics of police recorded hate crime in Scotland, Scottish Government, Jan 23

These sources of data identified key offender characteristics and provided information which helped identify our target audience. Notably I would draw attention to the following:

‘Hate violence is motivated by social and political factors and is bolstered by belief systems which (attempt to) legitimate such violence … It reveals that the personal is political; that such violence is not a series of isolated incidents but rather the consequence of a political culture which allocates rights, privileges and prestige according to biological or social characteristics. (Sheffield, Citation1995, p. 438)’

‘Gender There is a consensus in the literature that perpetrators tend to be young, white males (Walters et al 2016a ; Iganski and Smith 2011), with Iganski and Smith noting this is also the case for racist offences in Scotland (albeit using data from 2008/9). Research by Mason (2005), cited in Roberts et al (2013) indicates that hate crime perpetrators are twice as likely to be male than female, and that the more serious the type of offence, the more likely it is to have been committed by a male. Arguably, these characteristics are similar to the profile of general offenders. When looking at the gender balance in the published Scottish data on religiously aggravated offending for 2015-16, they report that 90% of the charges relate to male perpetrators (Davidson 2016).’ (Hate Crime: Causes, Motivations and Effective Interventions for Criminal Justice Social Work (careinspectorate.com)

‘offenders... have a sense of entitlement and alienation and a poor sense of their own identity, as well as a distorted idea about the victim and perceived difference.’ (Hate Crime: Causes, Motivations and Effective Interventions for Criminal Justice Social Work (careinspectorate.com)

This process of using insight and research to identify target audiences is the same process that led to the development of our hugely successful and widely praised Don’t Be That Guy campaign, which is based on positively tackling male sexual entitlement as a way to reduce sexual violence against women and girls down the line. This campaign was copied around the world and has won multiple awards. Don’t Be That Guy targeted males aged between 18 and 35 because our insight identified that group as our target audience. Our hate crime campaign was no different.

Behaviour change campaigns are always targeted at specific audiences, particularly where budgets are limited. This is a key principle of communications and marketing practice.

In reaching and influencing those at risk of offending, we understood that confrontation, rejection and shaming cannot affect behaviour change. While we can express condemnation of the crime, we knew we needed to communicate with authenticity, acknowledging individual lived experience. We needed to talk to the audience as equals, preferably through peers, and present positive models of behaviour.

This led to the development of the Hate Monster campaign in the form of a short, animated video. This was created by our in-house design team, keeping costs to a minimum. The animation was shared on both paid for and Police Scotland social media channels. We also produced printed materials and a toolkit that we shared with our partners who encounter victims of hate crime and those at risk of offending.

The Hate Monster animation was not the campaign in and of itself. Its purpose was to be something that was attention grabbing, could cut through the noise of social media and inspire the target to audience to click through to a longer form piece of video; podcast-style content that we created with individuals who work closely with those who have committed hate crimes.

The campaign did not seek to shame those at risk of offending, in fact it aimed to do the opposite, it aimed to acknowledge the factors that can lead to offending and offer solutions on how it could be avoided.

The campaign achieved its objective. During the period it was live, 142,000 people watched the animation, with 84 per cent watching to completion. More than 13,000 people watched at least 30 seconds of the longer form product. Those who clicked through to the longer form were predominantly from our target audience.

While campaign material remained on the Police Scotland website after the end of the campaign, the campaign ended after it had run for six weeks.

If you require any further assistance, please contact us quoting the reference above.

You can request a review of this response within the next 40 working days by [email](mailto:foi@scotland.police.uk) or by letter (Information Management - FOI, Police Scotland, Clyde Gateway, 2 French Street, Dalmarnock, G40 4EH). Requests must include the reason for your dissatisfaction.

If you remain dissatisfied following our review response, you can appeal to the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner (OSIC) within 6 months - [online](http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal), by [email](mailto:enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info) or by letter (OSIC, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, KY16 9DS).

Following an OSIC appeal, you can appeal to the Court of Session on a point of law only.

This response will be added to our [Disclosure Log](http://www.scotland.police.uk/access-to-information/freedom-of-information/disclosure-log) in seven days' time.

Every effort has been taken to ensure our response is as accessible as possible. If you require this response to be provided in an alternative format, please let us know.