

2020

# Safer Merton Third Party Reporting Protocol

**Safer Merton**

*Working Together To Keep Merton Safe & Sound*

# Safer Merton Third Party Reporting Protocol

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## **Introduction:**

Safer Merton's Third Party Reporting Protocol brings together key agencies to work in partnership to make Merton a safer place by providing a coordinated response to hate crime. This includes ensuring victims and witnesses have access to support and protection and that offenders are brought to justice, contributing to creating a safer, more cohesive community.

The purpose of this protocol:

- To facilitate consistent, effective reporting of hate crime incidents to agencies other than the police.
- To foster safe and effective information sharing between partner agencies.
- To facilitate lawful exchange of information between partner agencies for the purposes of identifying and managing individuals in order to protect the public and reduce crime and disorder.
- To clarify the understanding between signatories of each partner agency's roles and responsibilities towards each other and victims and witnesses who report incidents via Third Party Reporting Sites.

## **Effective dates:**

The protocol is effective from March 2020 and will be reviewed every year.

## **Linked guidelines and protocols:**

This protocol should be read with reference to the following policies and protocols:

- Safer Merton Information Sharing Protocol
- Hate Crime Reporting Form - Guidance on completing the Form (Appendix 4)
- Hate Crime Strategic Work Plan 2017-21 (available at <https://www.merton.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/crime-prevention-and-community-safety/hate-crime>)

## **Acknowledgements:**

This Third Party Reporting Protocol has been adapted from the protocol written by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. We thank them for their assistance.

## 1 Key Principles

- 1.1 Hate crimes are unacceptable and should not be tolerated in our community.
- 1.2 There is no hierarchy of hate crimes – all forms of hate whatever the motivation and/ or perceived or actual identity of the victim(s), should be taken seriously.
- 1.3 Victims can face multiple forms of discrimination and experience a range of barriers to reporting incidents and accessing services. Agencies will work to ensure that services are accessible to all.
- 1.4 Preventing and responding to hate crime is a shared responsibility across all public services. No agency has either the means or the sole responsibility for tackling hate crime alone. A coordinated approach is needed, in which different agencies work together as partners, combining their resources to achieve a shared vision.

## 2 Aims of Third Party Reporting:

- 2.1 To support and encourage increased reporting of hate crime incidents so we can build a better understanding of the needs of different communities and target resources effectively.
- 2.2 To enable victims and witnesses of hate crime incidents to make reports at independent community locations, where they feel safe and comfortable.
- 2.3 To improve information sharing between partner agencies and foster joint working to increase community safety.
- 2.4 To send a clear message across all communities that hate crime is unacceptable, that victims will be supported and protected and perpetrators will be held to account. Merton is no place for hate.

## 3 Definitions:

- 3.1 **Hate crime** is any criminal offence where anyone believes the victim has been targeted because of their race/ ethnicity, religion/ belief, gender/ gender identity, disability, age, sexual orientation or any other actual or perceived difference.

*For example: A gay male being assaulted on public transport due to his sexuality.*

- 3.2 **Hate incidents** are incidents that do not constitute a criminal offence but cause alarm, distress or harassment where anyone believes the victim has been targeted because of their race/ ethnicity, religion/ belief, gender/ gender identity, disability, age, sexual orientation or any other actual or perceived difference.

*For example: A disabled person perceiving that others parking in a disabled parking bay are doing so to annoy them.*

3.3 The term “partners” used throughout this protocol refers to:

Safer Merton (Merton Council’s Community Safety Partnership)  
Third Party Reporting Centres

## **Roles and Responsibilities of Partners**

### **4 Safer Merton**

Safer Merton is responsible for coordinating partnership action to make Merton safer.

#### **Safer Merton:**

- 4.1 Co-ordinate the Third Party Reporting project, acting as a central contact and monitoring point for all Third Party reports.
- 4.2 To log all Hate Crime Reporting Forms sent by Third Party Reporting Centres via the ASB (Anti-Social Behaviour) team for statistical purposes.
- 4.3 Maintain up to date information about Third Party Reporting Centres including access and contact information and names of trained staff.
- 4.4 Organise and deliver ongoing training on hate crime and third party reporting training for staff in Third Party Reporting Centres.
- 4.5 Support and advise partners on Hate Crime issues and third party reporting, and on specific cases as necessary.
- 4.6 Via the Hate Crime Strategy Group to provide all partners with an opportunity to share information and best practice and assess progress of the Third Party Reporting project.
- 4.7 Produce regular updates on the progress, outcomes and take up of Third Party Reporting for the Hate Crime Strategy Group.
- 4.8 Ensure that publicity materials about the project are up to date and distributed to Third Party Reporting Centres and across the borough.

### **5 Third Party Reporting Centres will:**

- 5.1 Publicise the availability of Third Party Reporting at the centre to staff and service users, ensuring that leaflets and posters are prominently displayed in public areas.
- 5.2 Identify a lead officer for Third Party Reporting. The lead officer will act as the main point of contact for Third Party Reporting at the centre, maintaining a secure file of reports received at the centre.
- 5.3 Ensure that staff are trained to take reports and at least one trained Third Party Reporting officer is available to take reports during service hours. The role of trained Third Party Reporting officers is detailed in Appendix 2.

- 5.4 If possible provide a drop in service that can be accessed by victims and witnesses of hate incidents, ensuring that no individual is turned away unless there is a health and safety risk.
- 5.5 Provide a confidential area to interview victims and take reports.
- 5.6 Ensure that all information is stored securely, in accordance with Data Protection requirements.
- 5.7 The trained Third Party Reporting officer will be responsible for explaining to the victim/ witness that their personal information will be shared for the purpose of investigating and resolving the hate crime/ incident they are reporting. If they wish to make an anonymous report they do not need to disclose any personal information. Anonymous information may be shared with partner agencies for monitoring and evaluation purposes. An anonymous report can be made by omitting the completion of Part 3 – Victim or Witness Details.
- 5.8 Reports will be made to the Police online reporting site and the Hate Crime Reporting Form will be sent securely by email directly to the ASB team. The Third Party Reporting officer is responsible for ensuring that reports are made to the Police online reporting site and the ASB team.
- 5.9 Police online reporting site: [met.police.uk](https://met.police.uk) and click 'report it' on the front page.
- 6.0 ASB team: [ASBU@merton.gov.uk](mailto:ASBU@merton.gov.uk) Tel: 020 8274 4901
- 6.1 Information will be shared for the purpose of investigating and resolving the hate crime/ incident that is being reported. Data will not be shared for other purposes without consent unless there is a clear legal reason for doing so.

## 7 Signatories

7.1 The Chief Officers signing this protocol on behalf of their agencies do so agreeing:-

- to subscribe to the aims and principles contained in this protocol;
- to work to the procedures identified within the protocol;
- to implement the protocol fully within their own agency, ensuring staff support and time for attendance at meetings and training as needed;
- to share information within the bounds of this agreement;
- to work in partnership to ensure a coordinated response to hate crime and to promote joint working, co-operation and mutual support.

**Signed:**

Name	Organisation

# Appendix 1

## Key Contacts

### Inner Strength Network

Vestry Hall, 336 London Road, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 3UD

**Contact:** Maureen Bailey

**Tel:** 020 8274 5200

**Info:** [maureen@innerstrengthnetwork.com](mailto:maureen@innerstrengthnetwork.com)

### MVSC (Merton Voluntary Service Council)

Vestry Hall, 336 London Road, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 3UD

**Contact:** Beau Fadahunsi

**Tel:** 020 8685 1771

**Info:** [info@mvsc.co.uk](mailto:info@mvsc.co.uk)

### Polish Family Association

66-72 Colliers Wood High Street, Colliers Wood SW19 2BY

**Contact:** Slawek Szczepanski

**Tel:** 07398 104 461

**Info:** [info@polishfamily.org.uk](mailto:info@polishfamily.org.uk)

### Safer Merton

Merton Civic Centre, London Road, Morden, Surrey SM4 5DX

**Contact:** Katy Saunders

**Tel:** 020 8545 4146

**Info:** [safer.merton@merton.gov.uk](mailto:safer.merton@merton.gov.uk)

### South London Tamil Welfare Group

36 High Street, Colliers Wood SW19 2AB

**Contact:** Shivaranjith Sivapragasm

**Tel:** 020 8542 3285

**Info:** [admin@sltwg.org.uk](mailto:admin@sltwg.org.uk)

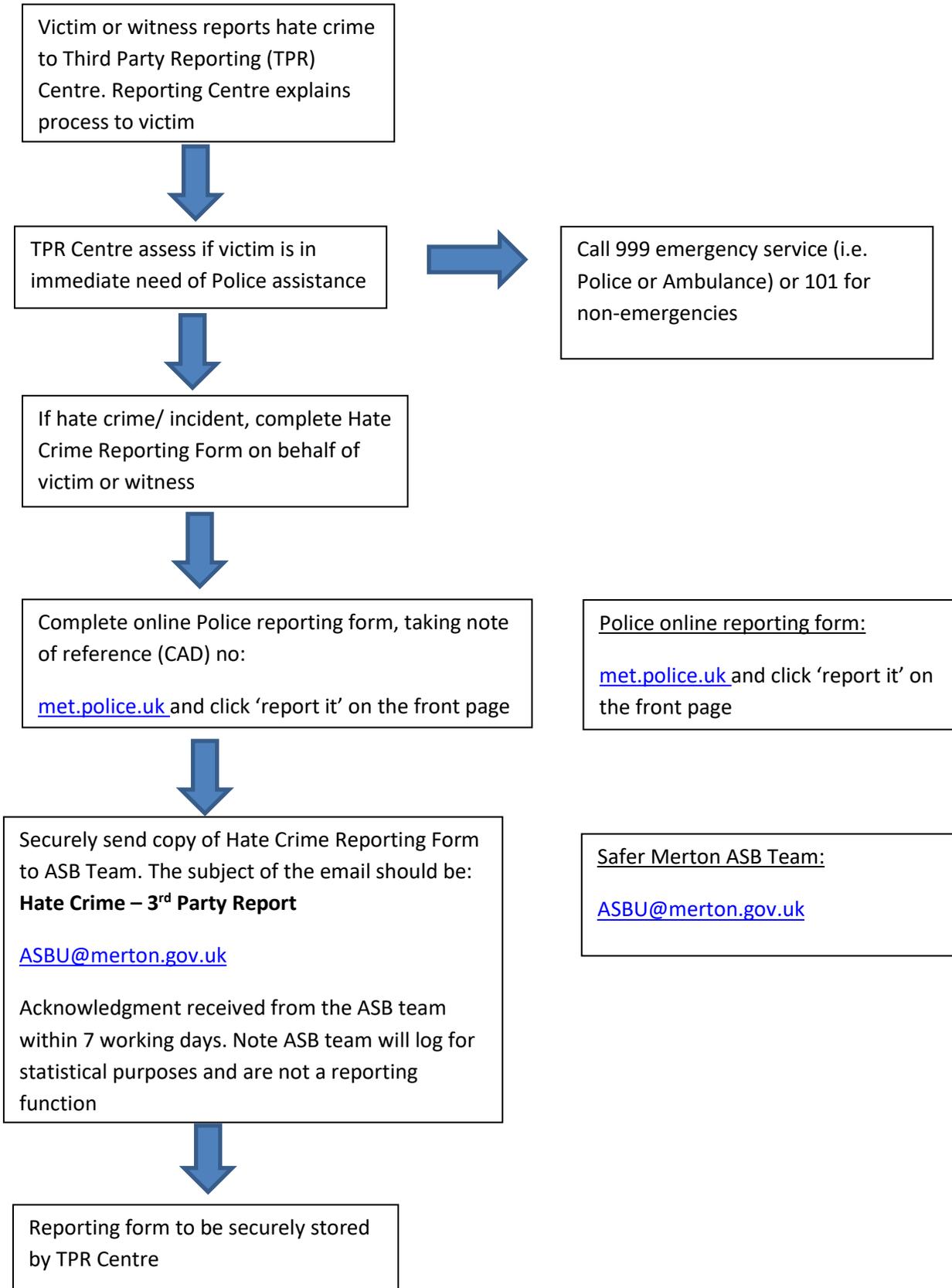
## Appendix 2

### Role of a Trained Third Party Reporting Officer

- The safety and wellbeing of the victim or witness must always be the first priority.
- Always establish whether the victim or witness is in need of emergency services.
- Be aware of emergencies, who to contact and how to access emergency services.
- Build a rapport with the client - introduce self, explain role and the Third Party Reporting service and process.
- Assure the client of confidentiality.
- Allow the client to express themselves.
- Listen to the client.
- Believe what the client is saying.
- Be non-judgmental.
- Do not question the client's motives.
- Empower the client by making them feel in control. Make it clear that they have choices and their decisions will be respected.
- Fully complete the Hate Crime Reporting Form using the guidance notes provided.
- If the victim or witness wishes to make an anonymous report this should be indicated on the form and the completion of Part 2 Victim or Witness Details should be omitted.
- Make a report to Police via the Police online reporting page [met.police.uk](https://met.police.uk) and click 'report it' on the front page. Note the reference number (CAD) this generates which confirms the report has been made.
- Email the completed Hate Crime Reporting Form immediately to the ASB team [ASBU@merton.gov.uk](mailto:ASBU@merton.gov.uk). Note the ASB team will log the form for statistical purposes on behalf of Safer Merton and are not a reporting function.
- If you do not receive an acknowledgement email within 7 working days from the ASB team it will be the responsibility of the Third Party Reporting Officer to chase this up.
- Store the form securely at your centre.
- Discuss which agencies can support the victim/ witness the most and agree with the victim/ witness the course of action required.

# Appendix 3

## Third Party Reporting Process Flow Chart



## Appendix 4

### Hate Crime Reporting Form Guidance Notes

The following is a guidance for the completion of the Hate Crime Reporting Form.

#### Anonymous reporting

- The victim/ witness may make an anonymous report should they not wish to pass on their personal details to the police or partner agencies. However this may limit the action that can be taken against the perpetrator.
- The Police operate a Positive Action Policy where a perpetrator will be arrested if there is evidence that they have committed an arrestable offence.

#### Recording factual information

- Ensure your handwriting is clear and legible when recording information on the form.
- Ensure that the information recorded is what the victim/ witness has stated and that the victim/ witness is happy with it.
- If the victim/ witness declines to give some information or doesn't know the answer, indicate this clearly on the form, do not leave boxes empty.

#### Communication needs

- It is vital that you ask if they have any language support needs or accessibility needs so that these can be taken into account in the investigation and support services.

#### Risks and safety issues

- It is important to record any concerns the victim has for their safety, and that of others in their household.
- Is the victim concerned for their safety? If so, please ask them why. If the victim/witness is in immediate danger, dial 999 immediately.

#### Completing the form:

##### Part 1A: Communication Support or Interpreter

- It is vital that you ask if they have any language support needs or accessibility needs so that these can be taken into account in any investigation or by support services.
- It is useful to identify this early in case they need assistance in completing the rest of the form.

##### Part 1B: Making a Report

- Explain to the victim/ witness that personal information will be shared for the purpose of investigating and resolving the hate crime/ incident that is being

reported. Data will not be used for other purposes without the consent of the victim/ witness unless there is a clear legal reason for doing so.

- If they wish to make an anonymous report, victims/ witnesses should tick the relevant box and go straight to Part 2 to complete the incident details. They should leave Part 3 (contact details) blank.
- If they do not wish to share personal information or make an anonymous report the Hate Crime Reporting Form should not be completed.
- Have the Police already been informed? If so, try to obtain the Crime Reference Number which will help in ascertaining what action, if any the Police are taking.

### **Part 2: Details of Incident**

- It is important to record the date and time of the incident. If the exact time is unknown, enter an approximate time (e.g. “about 10am”)
- Ask the victim or witness to be specific on details of the location of incident, e.g. street name, was it outside a particular shop, house, bus stop?
- Ask them the number of people involved in the incident.
- Obtain a brief description of the incident and what activity happened. This needs to be accurate and legible. Continue on a separate sheet if necessary.
- How did it make the victim/ witness feel?
- It is essential to ask “Why do you think you were targeted?” The key definitions of hate crimes are based on the victim (or any other person’s) belief that they were targeted on the grounds of their race, faith/ beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability. If the victim perceives it as hate crime, you must record it as such.
- Were there any injuries? Did they need medical attention? If so which hospital did they go to?
- Was there any CCTV of the incident, and if so where? E.g. at a tube station, outside a shop or building.
- Is there any evidence of the incident taking place? Emails, text messages, phone records, graffiti, stained clothes (if spat at or stained with blood), visible marks or tears on skin, can all be used as evidence. These need to be preserved for use in the investigation.
- Ask the victim/ witness if they have any concerns for their safety or that of their family. If they feel there is an immediate danger, always call the Police.

### **Part 3: Details of the Victim or Witnesses**

- Are they the victim or the witness? Tick the relevant box. If they are a witness do they know the victim? If so ask them to outline how, e.g. family member, friend, neighbour.
- Ask them to complete their name, address, date of birth, contact number and email, and the best time and method to contact them. This is important as it may be that it is unsafe to call them at a particular time.
- Obtain the housing status of the victim. This determines if a housing provider needs to be notified or could assist with enquiries.
- Equalities monitoring and access information: Ask how they define their faith/ beliefs, sexual orientation, disability and ethnic identity. This section is optional; however do inform them that this will be valuable for purposes of equalities monitoring.

### **3A Alleged Perpetrator Details**

- This section should be completed with details and description of the perpetrator if known. Tell the victim/ witness that as many details as possible at this stage would be beneficial as this would help the police with their enquiries.
- The more information the victim/ witness is able to provide about the perpetrator the better. Enforcement action is only possible if the perpetrator can be identified.
- If they know the perpetrator, obtain as many details as possible, including how they know them, their name (or nickname), address, age and car details.
- If they don't know, ask for a description of the perpetrator including height, race, gender, clothing, hair colour, age and anything else which could help identify the perpetrator such as tattoos, unusual clothing or hairstyles.

### **Repeat incidents**

- It is important to get details of any previous incidents that the victim/ witness may have suffered/seen.
- Ask the victim if this is the first time that such an incident has occurred?
- Have they reported similar incidents before? If so, who to?
- If there has been more incidents, ask the reporter to provide as many details about these as possible, and how many occurrences have taken place.
- Also ask if the incidents involved the same perpetrator.

### **3B Details of any witnesses**

- Were there any witnesses? If so, accurately record witness details including name, address and contact details where known.
- The victim may have details of the witness, such as contact details or a description, or if a witness is reporting the crime, they may have details of other witnesses to the incident.
- Ask if any other agencies have been informed. If so, obtain their details as stated on the form to ensure a partnership approach to the case takes place.
- If the victim is a Registered Social Landlord tenant, ask them if they would like their Landlord to take action. If there is not enough evidence for a criminal prosecution, the Registered Social Landlord can take civil action and proceedings.

### **Part 4: Details of Reporting Site**

- Provide details of your name and the agency you work for in case there is a need to contact you for further information.

### **Part 5: Submitting a Report**

- Make a report to Police via the online reporting page, [met.police.uk](https://met.police.uk) and click 'report it' on the front page, taking note of the reference number (CAD) generated.
- Remember to send the reporting form by email directly to the ASB team at [ASBU@merton.gov.uk](mailto:ASBU@merton.gov.uk)