

## Everyone knows what a crime is? Don't they?



When we turn on the TV, lift the newspaper, or have a quick browse on the web, it isn't too long before we come across a story of crime of some description. Theft, assault, harassment, to name a few, are regularly broadcast into our living rooms, with the victims story often heart breaking.

We generally all recognise these incidents as crimes, and we all identify these incidents as wrong - often stating such crimes should be reported to the police as soon as possible. The common goal in such action is to investigate the perpetrator, and perhaps more importantly - to prevent or reduce the opportunity of such a crime occurring again. This is the procedure many of us will follow if we consider ourselves a victim of crime.

Sadly not all victims of crime come forward for a number of reasons. They can include previous poor experience of reporting crime, not having the courage or physical ability to report crime, or simply not realising they are a victim as the incidents have become a part of their everyday life. Such victims suffer in silence; and sadly many victims of disability hate crime fall into this category.

The PSNI recognises Disability related hate crime as – any incident perceived to be on the grounds of a person's physical or mental impairment by the victim or any other person.

As a Disability Hate Crime Advocate I aim to reduce the number of disabled people suffering from hate crime in silence by providing an advocacy service. The main aim of the role is to support disabled people and their carers with reporting hate crime either through direct reporting or facilitating third party reporting. Furthermore the role aims to support the victim through the investigation process and actively work with the PSNI and other agencies to obtain a satisfactory outcome for the victim.

If you believe a crime has been committed against you because of your disability it is important to report this to the police, and please don't hesitate to contact myself to assist you at any stage of the process.

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