**Disability Consultation Focus Group - Roe Valley Arts and Cultural Centre 9Th May 2022**

A focus group took was hosted by Causeway Coast and Glens PCSP and was organised in partnership with Disability Action who circulated invitation to its membership, employment support teams and Triangle housing teams and local community groups.

The focus group took place on Monday 9th May 2022 at from 11am-1.30pm. In attendance was 10 individuals. Gabrielle Fitzpatrick Hate Crime advocate from Leonard Cheshire was also in attendance.

* 2 male and 8 females
* All adults over 18 years
* 2 carers in attendance
* One PCSP member was in attendance

The focus group started with a short presentation from Gabrielle Fitzpatrick on what is hate crime with a focus on disability hate crime and hate incidents.

Gabrielle highlighted that the hate crime advocate service will help if they can by advocating for the victim. The service is there to support not talk for them but help them through the process. Most attendees were not aware of this service. Details of the service was shared.

There was a general discussion around hate crime.

Gabrielle highlighted the support that can be provided through the hate crime advocacy service and said when people stand up against hate crime it, is often does prove affective.

**When talking about feel safe and unsafe attendees engaged in a long conversation using examples of feeling safe and unsafe.**

Comments:

* One attendee talked about issues with a Neighbour. He felt that possibly getting CCTV installed with help from the PSNI/Housing would help. Can feel reluctant to report for fear of making the situation worse. Past experiences included: Shouting abuse, banging on the door, footage would help.
* Another attendee commented Nothing changed when the police came to the house about hate incidents. – when you see nothing happening it very frustrating. His friends worry about him. Can’t afford CCTV and is afraid their mobility car being damaged so doesn’t want to stick his nose in. Gabrielle said could maybe help (\* Details were exchanged)
* One bad apple in the estate who’s causes problems for everyone else
* Concerns were highlighted that in many cases they (housing associations) move the people who are experiencing the difficulties. They need to move the problem person and not move those people who are complaining. It was commented that there are cases where victim wishes to be moved and they don’t want to wait for the other person to be moved.
* The importance of Evidence was highlighted.
* Police don’t take disability hate crime seriously enough or do enough
* Residents afraid in case they are targeted or make the situation worse, so wont report. This came up a number of times throughout the focus group
* People with disabilities get verbal abuse or public abuse. School buses can be really bad.
* ASB is making people not want to go out even to the shops for food etc as afraid to go out.
* Slagging happens to all people but very hurtful comments
* Help people move and get out of a place and away from the ASB
* Victim shouldn’t have to move.
* If not reported then nothing can be done.
* There can be lots of abuse on public transport which means with people don’t do out increasing isolation or are using taxis which are expensive
* Wouldn’t want to approach the PCSP member.
* One attendee gives an example of issues with regards the car parking outside their house that they haven’t a disabled space and have to walk through dark alleyway area which is far from house itself. (Disability action personnel in attendance exchanged contact details to follow up on this specific case)
* Never heard of the neighbourhood watch – Maybe some more publicity around trying to recruit.
* Those who are bad sometimes know when the NHW are about and behave themselves.
* My community group not very active.
* Carer asked why not going to an elected rep but doesn’t want to give his name due to intimidation.
* The only thing our community does is fun day and bus trip – not very active and no inclusivity.
* People in the community have a fear of crime due to hearing others who have experienced issues.
* I use my door chain
* I feel safe at home but lock the door as parents are old.
* Living in a rural area feels safer but night-time can be scarer. Struggle at times but that can also be scary for those without disability.
* I would stay awake until my folks come home. Would do different things in the evening than in day – lights, locking doors etc.
* I keep myself busy in the evenings as it can be lonely – keeping busy helps.
* someone who been hit just worries about reporting it as she knows the person and feels that theres no point as girl now in prison anyway.
* I feel safe in an area I know but not in a place I don’t know.
* Drug dealers in the area. – I think they use the Alleyway to deal – blocking access. Fear of leaving the house
* One attendee had been a victim of a serious crime, which has been reported to police, they feel fearful and continue to experience trauma in relation to this with panic attacks and feeling intimidated.\*
* It was highlighted that Victim support can help with counselling for free.
* Issues with leaving out bins one attendee was challenged by a lady and her dog. Left her feeling intimidated

*\*Details of support services provided to all attendees\**

**Reporting crime**

Most attendees are aware of the contact numbers for Police 999 and 101 – again talked about fear of making situations worse.

Attendees felt that advocate services and other ways to report would be helpful to those with disabilities. It was clear that fear of not being understood or believe have an impact on reporting.

**Comments**

* The group felt it would help to have a person to support someone with a disability to report a crime
* There needs to be a better understanding of disabilities in the general public and police
* It would help if police give recorders
* Don’t think you would be believed (when asked what would stop you reporting)
* Depends on the PSNI officer who lands out. Never heard of disability hate crime but was aware hate crime.
* People to report on your behalf would be far better.
* I get tongue twisted.
* If police had a better understanding of disability it would help with reporting.
* Hearing that something was done in another case would that make you report? Yes as something is being done.
* I reported something before to Police and it was stopped
* I wouldn’t report online, I would lift the phone.
* I would use online – but have support from mum and dad, we don’t really hear of issues.

**When talking about what could help support people with disabilities to feel safer**

When talking about what helps to make people feel safer the group agreed that having appropriate safe equipment helps. If the general public and public servants understand disabilities and different communication needs it would also help as they wouldn’t feel so isolated.

Comments:

* Working with Schools and Translink to help tackle the issues to support that person. Can keep an eye out and act.
* Carer talked about a vulnerable victim who’s deaf and blind and PCSP provide new security item which vibrates and raises the alarm. This has helped her feel safer.
* Others in attendance agreed that equipment makes you feel safer/more confidence – One carer commented that she had to get alarms for under a mat to alert her to her vulnerable daughter getting up through the night opening the windows and doors and leaving them open which resulted in the carer feeling they couldn’t sleep for fear of her leaving the house through the night.
* Community activities like men’s shed where highlighted as helping people feel safer as they are inclusive
* More information out to community groups or events to help people have a better understanding – not sure those with disability. – Information events would be very helpfully in the local area.
* Would be helpful to know who your police in your area. They do send out a yearly letter in the Limavady but not in other areas.
* Local events that the members of the PCSP can highlight what the PCSP does or what other services that are available in the area. (More focused public meetings with the PSNI)
* Wrist band that alerts if you fall helps with feeling safe.
* Easy read works really well. I wouldn’t read the normal document.
* Easy read is so much better to understand and read easier….
* More information would help to know who is there to give support