

## **PRESS RELEASE: Merton CIL urges local community to get involved and help tackle disability hate crime in Merton**



Photo: Hate Crime Casework and Tell Mama at Hate Crime Pop Up Stall in Civic Centre.

As part of Hate Crime Awareness Week, Merton Centre for Independent Living launches its new disability hate crime report 'Starting to Stop It'. This report reviews recommendations and what has been done in the borough over the past 4 years since we published 'Make it Stop', a report with Stay Safe East that conducted extensive research into hate crime in 2016.

Michael Turner, Policy and Strategy Manager of Merton CIL said, "There's been significant progress in the borough and our new report takes stock of this and where we need to go from here.'

The original report found that 500 Disabled people a year experience hate crime in Merton alone, with only about 10 people, 2%, making a report to the police. It also found that it was difficult for victims and survivors to report hate crime because they felt they wouldn't be believed, they felt nothing would be done, or they didn't recognise it as a hate crime themselves. In addition, there were some practical barriers to reporting, like a lack of information online and problems accessing police stations.

The original report made a range of recommendations for Merton CIL and our partners in the Council, the Metropolitan Police Service and in the social housing sector. The new report shows there is now a far bigger range of support for Deaf

and Disabled people experiencing disability hate crime and other hate crime in Merton and there is now a concerted effort to raise awareness of the issue.

Michael Turner concludes: 'These are good signs of progress, but we've only really scratched the surface of a huge issue and we still have a long way to go. We need to keep up the momentum we've built up in the last 4 years and with the commitment of partners in the Council, the voluntary sector, the police and social housing we will be able to say we are starting to stop it.'

### **Notes for the Editor:**

Merton Centre for Independent Living is a user-led Deaf and Disabled people's organisation run by and for Deaf and Disabled people, across the full spectrum of disability. We deliver a range of services to Deaf and Disabled people in London Borough of Merton.

A comprehensive piece of research on hate crime against disabled people in Merton was carried out in 2016 by Stay Safe East on behalf of Merton Centre for Independent Living. The report made a series of recommendations for the police, Merton Council, housing providers, the voluntary sector and Merton centre for Independent Living. The 2016 report can be found here - <http://www.mertoncil.org.uk/services/hate-crime/>

You can read the full version of our new disability hate crime progress report, published 12<sup>th</sup> Oct 2020 here –

### **For more information contact:**

Michael Turner, Policy and Strategy Manager

Email: [michael@mertoncil.org](mailto:michael@mertoncil.org)

Telephone: 0203 397 3119

[www.mertoncil.org.uk](http://www.mertoncil.org.uk)