

Question from Cllr Garbutt & Response from the OPCC

I have a question about racial tensions in the area. I'm sure Dr Billings is aware of several racially motivated attacks recently, not least the one on Division Street in Sheffield. Can he reassure us that the police are aware of increased tensions and have a strategy to deal with the situation beyond merely responding to 999 calls. Does the problem with cases backing up in the courts mean that perpetrators of such violence are released on bail, with barely enforceable restrictions on their movements? We all want to avoid a situation where retaliation and escalation of such violence erupts; can the Commissioner give details of how that will be achieved?

Response from the Police and Crime Commissioner

South Yorkshire Police take hate crime very seriously. They have a thematic lead Chief Superintendent, and have worked hard to encourage reporting.

From day-to-day decisions by response officers and problem-solving neighbourhood officers, to strategic decisions by the Command Team, South Yorkshire Police are constantly monitoring community cohesion and addressing any tensions with engagement activity (and with enforcement activity where appropriate).

It is true that delays in the justice system will mean that some offenders who would receive prison or community sentences, are at liberty to commit further offences, but this is one of the reasons the Commissioner is lobbying ministers on a weekly basis, and chairing fortnightly Local Criminal Justice Board meetings to discuss and address our local issues.

In terms of violence, there continues to be much police enforcement activity alongside, and complemented by, the hard work by partners (including the four local authorities) involved with our Violence Reduction Unit to reduce serious violence through a longer term public health approach to crime and the causes of crime.