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ZERO TOLERANCE FOR HOMOPHOBIC CRIME

Homophobic crime is based on prejudice, discrimination and hate and has no place in an open and democratic society, the Crown Prosecution Service says today.

The CPS is launching its public policy statement on homophobic crime, which spells out the way in which it will deal with these offences. The statement is published today after extensive consultation.

The Attorney General, Lord Goldsmith, QC, said: "Homophobic crimes strike at people's right to feel safe and secure, and to abuse or attack someone because of their sexual orientation and gender identity is a hate crime which cannot be tolerated.

"The CPS today sends a clear message to those who commit such crimes that they will be dealt with firmly under criminal law. The CPS has a vital role to play, not only in terms of its own responsibility to prosecute such cases effectively, but also to advise the police, courts and those in the voluntary sector so that those who commit homophobic crime can be dealt with robustly."

Director of Public Prosecutions Sir David Calvert-Smith, QC, said: "Hitherto, too many of the victims of homophobic crimes have been reluctant to report them. In addition, too few of those who have had the courage to do so have seen the offenders prosecuted and brought to justice.

"The result has been that their confidence in the criminal justice system is low. I hope that today's launch will mark an important step towards winning that confidence.

"I wish to make it clear to victims of homophobic crimes that the CPS is determined to do its best, with the help of the police, to support them through the process from reporting through to trial.

"It should be equally clear to perpetrators that the CPS regards such crimes - aggravated by prejudice, discrimination or hate - as particularly serious and will do its utmost within the law to bring them before the courts."

Stephen Warwick, of the Gay Police Association (GPA) said: "From the outset the GPA has been involved in, and actively supports, the CPS policy statement and guidance. This initiative represents a huge step forward for gay men, women and bisexuals. The CPS is now obliged to tackle head-on incidents of homophobic crime, wherever they occur.

"I applaud this public declaration in what is a genuine and detailed document. If you are subjected to any hate crime, report it locally to the Police and expect action."

At the same event the CPS also launched the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Network for its own staff. The network will be involved in drawing up CPS policies and will provide advice and support to LGBT staff within the Service. It

was launched by Will Hollins, LGBT Network chair, and Rohan Collier, Head of the CPS Equality and Diversity Unit.

The CPS definition of a homophobic or a transphobic incident is:

"Any incident which is perceived to be homophobic or transphobic by the victim or by any other person."

This definition is based on the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry definition of a racial incident. The CPS is the first criminal justice agency that has adopted a uniform definition of a homophobic or transphobic crime.

NOTE TO EDITORS

1. Media enquiries to: CPS: HQ Press Office, 020 7796 8103
2. A copy of the [Public Policy Statement](#) is available from this website as well as a [leaflet](#) and [booklet](#) explaining the CPS Policy Statement. All three documents are in  PDF fileAdobe Acrobat PDF format.