

UK STATEMENT – SESSION 14

The UK Government is grateful for the contribution of Mike Smith who has addressed you this morning. As the Lead Commissioner for the Inquiry of the Equality and Human Rights Commission into the harassment suffered by disabled people, he has led a piece of work that has allowed the voice of disabled people in the UK to be heard in a unique and valuable way.

Disability hate crime came to the attention of the Government and criminal justice agencies in 2007 when a string of violent deaths of disabled people brought public attention on a problem that was all too real to many disabled people.

In November 2007, disability was included in our shared definition of hate crime. This allowed changes to national surveys and data collection that has helped us to better understand the extent of the problem and the harm it causes to individuals and communities. What this data shows is that many crimes are never reported to anyone and those that get reported are often not recognised for what they are. Our Government has made a commitment to increase the reporting of such crimes and whilst early responses have included a 150% increase in reported crime since 2008, we know there is a long way to go to address this problem.

We are grateful for the delivery of 'Hidden in Plain Sight', the report of the Inquiry and our Government has published a formal response to the recommendations. We, like the EHRC are determined to deliver equality in the human rights of disabled people.

We have benefitted from the independent scrutiny of our response to disability hate crime and would encourage other Participating States to look for opportunities to allow similar scrutiny of the experiences of disabled people in their own countries.