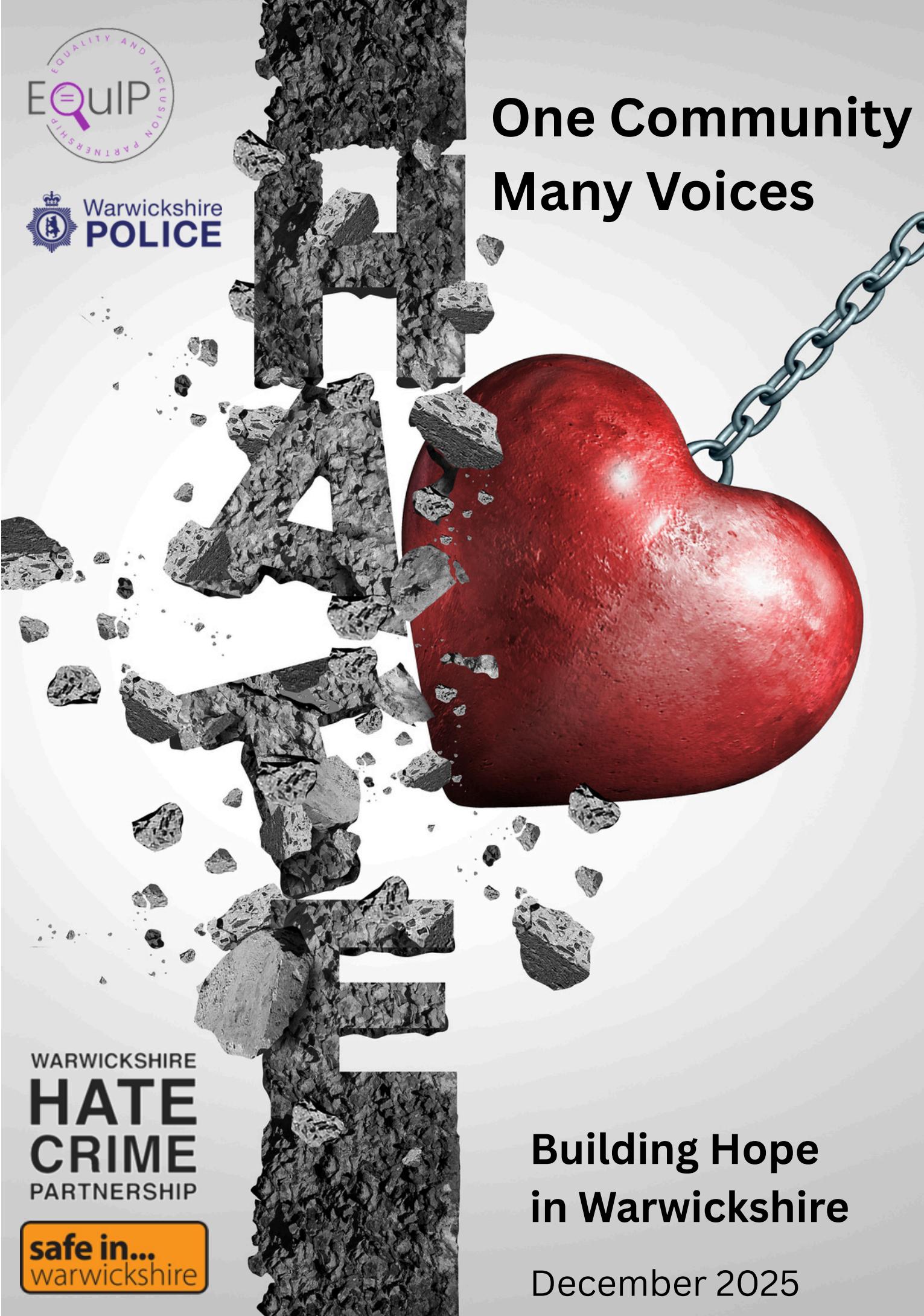




# One Community Many Voices



WARWICKSHIRE  
**HATE  
CRIME**  
PARTNERSHIP

**safe in...**  
warwickshire

**Building Hope  
in Warwickshire**

December 2025

## Table of Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1. About EQuIP</b> .....	2
<b>Disclaimer</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>2. Methodology</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>3. Findings</b> .....	<b>4</b>
3.1. Question 1: Biggest concerns about safety, inclusion, division or hate.....	4
3.2 Question 2: Changes in attitudes, behaviours or levels of tolerance .....	9
3.3 Question 3: Positive examples of cohesion .....	12
3.4 Question 4: What would help increase understanding, respect and tolerance .....	14
3.5 Question 5: Support needed to continue this work .....	16
3.6 Question 6: Best ways to engage communities and who else needs to be involved .....	17
<b>4. Analysis</b> .....	<b>19</b>
4.1 Normalisation of hate within a shifting social climate.....	19
4.2 The central role of misinformation and digital spaces.....	19
4.3 Disproportionate impact on vulnerable groups.....	20
4.4 Declining trust in institutions and the implications for reporting .....	21
4.5 Community Strengths provide a foundation for rebuilding trust .....	21
<b>5. Conclusion</b> .....	<b>23</b>
<b>6. Recommendations</b> .....	<b>24</b>
A - Improve communication and counter misinformation .....	24
B - Strengthen personal and community safety .....	25
C - Invest in education and early prevention .....	25
D - Support community-led cohesion initiatives.....	26
E - Strengthen inclusion and representation in decision-making .....	26
F - Build positive narratives and shared identity.....	27
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>28</b>

# One Community, Many Voices: A Comprehensive Report

## 1. Introduction

Over the summer of 2025, Warwickshire experienced a series of local protests which had a measurable impact on community cohesion, perceptions of safety and patterns of hate crime reporting. Alongside wider national tensions, two serious criminal incidents in Warwickshire acted as specific local triggers. In both cases, the alleged perpetrators were widely reported as being Asylum Seekers, a narrative which significantly shaped public discourse and local responses.

In Nuneaton, the first major protest drew approximately 800 people, followed by smaller weekly demonstrations of between 12 and 50 individuals, typically held outside the Town Hall on Saturdays. While there was a substantial local community presence at the initial protest, subsequent demonstrations were organised by the Homeland Party. In Rugby, a small protest took place in response to the incident and the proximity of an asylum hotel in neighbouring Northamptonshire and appeared to be community-led. A further small protest occurred in Warwick, also linked to a local asylum hotel and driven by local concerns.

During this period, data presented to the Warwickshire Hate Crime Partnership demonstrated a significant increase in reporting to EQuIP. Between 1 June and 31 August 2025, EQuIP received 55 hate crime reports, representing a 162% increase (+34 reports) compared to the same period in the previous year. In contrast, reports to Warwickshire Police reduced by 9% (-28 reports). Notably, the 55 reports to EQuIP encompassed 1,772 individual incidents, the majority of which related to online hate, indicating heightened hostility and increased reliance on third-party reporting mechanisms.

In response to this context, the Equality and Inclusion Partnership (EQuIP), working in collaboration with Warwickshire Police, delivered a series of structured discussions on hate crime and community cohesion in Nuneaton, Rugby, and Leamington Spa, covering the Warwickshire North, Rugby, and Warwickshire South areas. These sessions brought together community representatives and partner agencies to examine emerging risks, reporting pathways, perceptions of safety and the wider impacts of national and local events. The insights gathered provide an evidence-based understanding of community experiences and will inform future partnership approaches to engagement, prevention and reassurance across Warwickshire.

## 1.1. About EQuIP

EQuIP is the Equality and Inclusion Partnership, an independent Charitable Incorporated Organisation with a vision of a place where everyone embraces difference and diversity, ensures opportunity, eradicates inequality of treatment and operates in a fair environment for all. EQuIP was established in 2016 and builds on the work of its predecessor organisation, WREP, the Warwickshire Race Equality Partnership, over the previous decade. EQuIP works towards the elimination of discrimination across all protected groups, as defined by the Equality Act 2010. It has a long-standing relationship with Warwickshire County Council, as well as with borough and District Councils, and key public and voluntary organisations, working in partnership across the county while maintaining its independence. It has delivered on initiatives such as:

- the Equality Network of 24 equality and diversity-focused organisations across all sectors
- Discrimination and hate crime casework advice and support
- Training and awareness raising, including Cultural Awareness, Disability Awareness, Unconscious Bias and Equality Impact Assessments
- Toolkits including a cultural approach to End of Life, Mental Health, and Harmful Practices
- Factsheets on equality and diversity and direct and indirect discrimination
- Conducting equality audits on recruitment processes
- Engagement and consultation on new services or policy changes
- Chairs the Warwickshire Hate Crime Partnership

## Disclaimer

This report has been produced by the Equality and Inclusion Partnership (EQuIP) based on facilitated discussions held in Nuneaton, Rugby and Leamington Spa as part of the *One Community, Many Voices* events. The findings reflect the views, experiences and perceptions shared by community members and partner agencies who attended these sessions. They do not represent a statistically representative sample of the wider Warwickshire population.

The views expressed in this report are those of the participants. They are presented to provide insight into their lived experiences, community concerns, and local perceptions at a specific point in time. Inclusion of these views does not imply endorsement by EQuIP, Warwickshire Police or any partner organisation. References to particular incidents, groups, or narratives are included to provide contextual understanding and accurately reflect the discussions that took place.

While care has been taken to capture and summarise the contributions made during the sessions accurately, this report is not intended to serve as a formal investigation, legal assessment, or determination of responsibility in relation to any individual incident.

The information contained within this report is intended to inform partnership learning, strategic discussion and community engagement. It should be read in conjunction with other data sources, intelligence and professional assessments when informing policy development, operational decisions or resource allocation.

EQuIP accepts no liability for actions taken solely based on this report without appropriate consideration of wider evidence, safeguarding responsibilities and statutory duties.

## **2. Methodology**

The events took place on the following dates:

Warwickshire North – 16<sup>th</sup> October 2025, held at the Nuneaton Town Hall, Nuneaton.

Rugby – 6<sup>th</sup> November 2025, held at the Benn Hall, Rugby.

Warwickshire South – 13<sup>th</sup> November 2025, held at the Dormer Conference Centre, Leamington Spa.

The delivery of these workshop discussion exercises involved community representatives and partner agencies arranged in a cabaret-style format, discussing the following questions. Each table had a facilitator and a scribe, focusing on capturing the responses of community members and summarising key points from their discussions to share with everyone.

The 6 questions were as follows:

- What are the biggest concerns you, your family or your community group have right now about safety, inclusion, division or hate?
- Have you noticed any changes in attitudes, behaviours or levels of tolerance in your local area in recent months?
- What positive examples of community cohesion or solidarity have you seen locally that could be built upon?
- Looking ahead, what do you think would help bring greater understanding, respect and tolerance between different groups in our communities?
- What support and capacity do you need to be able to engage in this continued conversation and work?
- What is the best way to engage with you and your community? Who else needs to be involved?

A total of 82 responses were received from a mix of community representatives and partner agencies across Warwickshire with an interest in hate crime and community safety.

### 3. Findings

The findings are based on responses from community representatives and partner agencies who attended the One Community, Many Voices events held in Nuneaton, Rugby, and Leamington Spa. Although each event reflected its local context, many concerns and priorities were shared across communities. The findings below summarise the key themes that emerged from each of the six questions and an in-depth comparison of locality-specific concerns.

#### **3.1. Question 1: Biggest concerns about safety, inclusion, division or hate**

Across all three workshops, participants expressed deep and broad concerns about safety, belonging and cohesion. Many described feeling less secure than they had a few years ago and sensed that relations between communities had become more fragile and easily disrupted. Although specific experiences differed, several main themes consistently emerged.

##### ***Normalisation of discriminatory behaviour and hate***

Participants across Warwickshire spoke about a concerning shift in what is regarded as socially acceptable behaviour. They described discriminatory comments, racist jokes, misogynistic language, and hostile views being expressed more openly in public spaces, workplaces, schools and online. What might once have been kept hidden or whispered is now being said aloud, often in front of children and with little or no challenge.

In the Leamington Spa session, participants told of racist and sexual harassment faced by Sikh women. This included being shouted at in the street, being approached aggressively by men, and encountering hostile attitudes even near places of worship. Several participants explained that they now plan their movements carefully, avoid travelling alone, and feel unable to relax fully when using public transport or walking to community events. They emphasised that these are not isolated incidents, but part of a pattern that has gradually made them feel less welcome and less safe in their own town.

Several Muslim participants in the Leamington Spa session expressed concerns about rising Islamophobia and misinformation surrounding mosques and Muslim communities. They reported hearing comments about what supposedly happens inside mosques and described a sense that everyday religious life is viewed with suspicion. While some had not experienced recent abuse themselves, they believed that a mixture of hostile online narratives, divisive marches and public debates had fostered an environment where anti-Muslim views appeared more acceptable to voice.

In the Nuneaton session, participants reported an increase in derogatory comments shouted from passing cars and verbal abuse directed mainly towards BME women. Women shared experiences of being sworn at or mocked while walking to community centres or shops, even in areas where they have lived for many years. These incidents have led many to alter their daily routines, particularly in the evenings, by returning home earlier, avoiding certain streets and only going out in groups.

In the Rugby session, participants expressed their shock at the increasing public acceptance of racist and hate comments. They mentioned remarks about there being 'too many Black people' in advertising and media, noting that such comments sometimes echo statements made by public figures or politicians, which gives them a sense of legitimacy. Community members also reported

worrying narratives that blame migrants and 'people of colour' for economic and social problems, further reinforcing the idea that minority communities are being singled out as scapegoats.

Across Warwickshire, participants associated this increased prevalence of expressing racist, misogynistic and extremist views with a combination of factors, including:

- Political rhetoric that normalises exclusion and othering
- Online algorithms that amplify divisive or sensational content
- Increased activity and visibility of far-right groups
- A reduced willingness by bystanders to challenge hateful behaviour in public
- The constant visibility of national and international conflicts in daily online conversations

People emphasised that this shift in social norms is one of the most significant changes they have experienced because it affects how safe they feel and how they relate to those around them.

### ***Misinformation, online hostility and digital harm***

Misinformation proved to be one of the most widespread and harmful issues across all three locations. Participants consistently described how rumours, half-truths, and deliberately misleading material spread rapidly through social media, local WhatsApp groups, and community pages, often without any clear source or accountability.

Participants gave examples of:

- Rumours about who is living in refugee accommodation and how services are being used
- False or exaggerated claims about crime levels and who is responsible
- Inflammatory posts and comments shared anonymously or by accounts that cannot be traced
- Edited or out-of-context video clips designed to provoke a strong reaction
- Misleading posts about cultural or religious practices, particularly around mosques and refugee hotels

Communities reported that misinformation spreads faster than any official clarification. By the time councils, police or other agencies respond, people have already shared, believed and acted on false information. This causes confusion, entrenches stereotypes and permanently damages trust.

In the Leamington Spa session, misinformation about the refugee hotel in Warwick and the spread of far-right narratives online fostered fear and misunderstanding between long-standing residents and newcomers. Some community members felt they were being judged and blamed based on stories that do not accurately reflect reality. At the same time, local residents expressed feeling anxious because they were unsure what to believe.

In the Nuneaton session, participants reported that misinformation following local incidents often fuelled fear and anxiety, especially when national far-right pages picked up and reposted local content. Participants described a pattern in which relatively small incidents quickly became framed online as evidence of a larger threat, thereby increasing exposure, hostility and tension.

In the Rugby session, online hostility on Facebook and WhatsApp groups was identified as a significant source of community tension. Discussions about Diwali fireworks, local crime, and the sudden appearance of flags on lamp posts frequently attracted comments that were inflammatory or

prejudiced. Participants explained that these online exchanges can spill over into real life, reinforcing divisions and making some residents feel unwelcome at community events.

Across all three areas, the lack of a rapid, trusted and authoritative local response was seen as a key factor in allowing misinformation to become embedded. The effects include:

- Heightened anxiety and a constant sense of threat
- Stereotyping of particular communities, especially Asylum Seekers and Refugees and Muslims
- Erosion of trust in councils, police and other agencies/institutions
- Tensions between long-standing residents and newer arrivals
- Increased fear of public spaces, marches and community events

Participants emphasised that without a more visible and coordinated approach to challenging false narratives, misinformation will continue to undermine cohesion.

### ***Sex and gender related hate and safety***

Women across all three areas expressed distinct safety concerns that extend beyond general anxiety about crime or antisocial behaviour. Their experiences demonstrate how sex, race, religion and gender identity intersect to create particular risks.

In the Leamington Spa session, Sikh women reported the experience of sexualised harassment alongside racist abuse. Examples included men making intrusive comments about their appearance, following them during their journeys and loitering near places of worship in ways that felt threatening. Women noted that they often cannot tell whether they are targeted because they are Sikh, because they are women or both. Regardless, they feel that their freedom of movement is limited and that daily activities, such as walking to the Gurdwara or taking part in community events, now require much more planning and vigilance.

Muslim women in Leamington Spa expressed fear of going out after dark, attributing it to recent national tensions and local experiences of verbal abuse and stares. Some mosques have implemented additional security measures, such as locked doors and visible security personnel, to offer reassurance to women and families. Women described feeling watched or scrutinised because of visible markers of religious identity, like hijab or abaya, and mentioned that they sometimes change what they wear or where they go to avoid attracting attention.

In the Nuneaton session, Nepalese women shared experiences of verbal harassment from passersby, including name-calling and mocking their accents or traditional attire. Several participants mentioned they feel too intimidated to challenge or report these incidents, either because they fear retaliation or doubt they will be taken seriously. This has deepened their sense of powerlessness and made it more challenging for women to engage in community life fully.

In Rugby, women reported changing their daily behaviour due to perceptions of increased violence and hostility. Some avoid specific bus routes, parks, or underpasses, and many said they prefer not to be out alone in the evening. Parents also expressed concern about their daughters travelling to college or work, especially if they wear visible cultural or religious dress. Gender identity and access to single sex toilets were also raised.

Participants linked increased hostility towards women to several factors, including:

- The growth of online misogyny, especially from high-profile influencers whose content is widely consumed by boys and young men
- A general desensitisation to violent or sexualised language in media and online spaces
- Declining trust that police or other services will respond effectively to harassment or stalking
- Limited education on gender equality, respect and healthy relationships

Women emphasised that although some of these issues are longstanding, the current climate has worsened them and made harassment seem more frequent and more blatant.

#### ***Safety concerns related to extremist presence and symbolism***

Participants across all areas reported feeling uncomfortable and fearful when encountering certain flags or symbols they believed to be associated with far-right ideology. Even when the original purpose of the display was unclear, its impact on some communities was significant.

In Nuneaton, residents observed Union Jack flags being put on lamp posts during the summer months. While some initially thought the flags might be related to sporting events, such as the recent Women's Rugby World Cup, others associated them with past far-right marches and groups, like the English Defence League (EDL). For those individuals, walking through streets lined with flags felt intimidating and served as a visual reminder of being 'othered'.

In Rugby, similar concerns were raised. Participants explained that large flag displays evoke memories of periods when skinhead and far-right culture were more prominent locally. Some residents spoke about avoiding certain streets because they did not know whether the flags were meant to be welcoming or whether they signalled that people from minority backgrounds were not wanted there.

In Leamington Spa, participants linked flag displays and marches with a perceived increase in far-right sentiment and the growing confidence of extremist individuals to express hateful views publicly. For some, seeing flags appear without explanation, alongside reports of hate incidents elsewhere, fostered a sense that divisions were forming between 'insiders' and 'outsiders'.

Participants were clear that the symbolic nature of these displays often overshadowed any patriotic intentions. For individuals with lived memories of targeted hate, harassment, or organised far-right activity, flags and related symbols can act as triggers for anxiety and fear, regardless of what the organisers intended. This highlights the importance of context, effective communication and thoughtful consideration of how public space is utilised.

#### ***Emotional and psychological impact of hate and division***

Participants across Warwickshire described feelings of emotional exhaustion, fear, frustration and sadness due to worsening community relations. Many mentioned feeling 'worn down' by a constant flow of negative news, online hostility and tense conversations.

In Nuneaton, participants candidly discussed trauma caused by racism, connecting recurring experiences of abuse, exclusion and fear to long-term impacts on mental health and wellbeing. Some older residents recalled past violent demonstrations and racist assaults, saying that the current

climate brings those memories back to the surface. People described struggling to switch off, feeling constantly on edge for potential threats and finding it hard to trust that spaces are truly safe.

In Rugby, participants described a sense of 'regression', noting that progress in equality and inclusion made over previous decades appears to be reversing. Community members who have lived in the area for many years reported that they no longer feel as welcome as they once did. A small number said they had considered leaving the UK or retaining property abroad as a form of security in case they were ever forced to move.

In Leamington Spa, people reported feeling constantly 'on alert' influenced by a mix of online content, local incidents and the broader political climate. One participant explained how their son, who had not previously considered himself in racial terms, now questions how others perceive him and whether his skin colour affects his safety. For those who grew up in the area, this represents a significant change in how they see their identity and sense of belonging.

The emotional impact highlighted by participants emphasises that hate and division are not just about specific incidents. They influence how people perceive themselves, navigate their communities and feel hopeful about the future.

### ***Reduced trust in institutions and confusion about reporting***

Across the three events, participants described a range of barriers to reporting hate crime or harassment and to seeking support when things go wrong.

Common issues included:

- Lack of understanding of what constitutes a hate crime or hate incident
- Uncertainty about where and how to report
- Fear of retaliation from perpetrators or their networks
- Lack of feedback or visible follow-up after reporting
- Perceived inconsistency in responses between different services
- Not knowing about alternative reporting routes beyond the police

Rugby participants were notably vocal about their confusion surrounding the legal definitions and thresholds that differentiate hate crime from other offences. Several expressed uncertainties about whether verbal abuse or online harassment 'counted' as a hate crime, and this doubt discouraged them from reporting incidents. They also believed that the inconsistent classification of serious incidents at a national level has undermined community confidence in how hate is recognised and dealt with.

In Nuneaton, participants described feeling unheard or dismissed when reporting incidents, either because they received no further information or because they thought the response did not reflect the seriousness of what they had experienced. Some said that, over time, they had stopped reporting altogether because they believed nothing would change. This has contributed to patterns of under-reporting and to the normalisation of abuse in daily life.

Participants across Warwickshire emphasised that if institutions want communities to report hate crime and share concerns early, they must offer clear explanations of what can be reported, what

follows next, and how victims will be supported. When this is absent, the gap is filled with assumptions, misinformation, and a feeling that people are expected to simply 'put up with' discrimination.

### **3.2 Question 2: Changes in attitudes, behaviours or levels of tolerance**

Participants reported noticeable and tangible shifts in the social atmosphere of their local communities. Although the specifics and strength of these shifts differ, there was a widespread consensus that daily interactions now feel more tense, more conditional, and less forgiving than they used to be.

#### ***Increase in visible hostility and everyday microaggressions***

Across all three areas, community members noted that hostile attitudes are more apparent in everyday life. People described an increase in confrontational behaviour, snide remarks, and microaggressions that fall short of criminal thresholds but have a cumulative impact on how safe and welcome people feel.

In Leamington Spa, participants observed a rise in inflammatory graffiti, including hate symbols like swastikas painted on public bins. They reported finding antisemitic conspiracy leaflets and other materials that seem intended to provoke fear and mistrust. These incidents were viewed not as isolated acts of vandalism but as signs that extremist narratives are gaining confidence locally.

Residents also reported hearing more casual comments about who belongs in specific spaces, such as people speculating about what occurs in the mosque or making remarks about asylum hotels. Even when not directly confrontational, these comments were experienced as microaggressions, reminding minority communities that their presence is under scrutiny.

In Nuneaton, hostility towards minority ethnic groups was described as becoming more openly expressed. Participants spoke about being challenged in shops, on buses, and in their own streets, including comments that suggest they do not belong in the town. Some described neighbours who once acted neutrally now make exclusionary remarks or repeat negative stories about refugees, Muslims, or Black communities. Rumours about activities around mosques were also mentioned, contributing to a sense that suspicion has become more socially acceptable.

In Rugby, participants noted how online hostility reflects in everyday interactions. Community members have observed an increase in negative comments about Diwali and other cultural festivals, both on social media and during daily conversations. Several individuals mentioned that residents rarely complain about noise or disruption during Bonfire Night, yet similar activities during Diwali often face criticism, revealing deeper cultural tensions and biases.

Taken together, these examples suggest that discriminatory views are not only more commonly held but also more openly expressed, which directly affects how safe people feel when engaging in normal, everyday activities.

### ***Decline in social tolerance and empathy***

Participants across Warwickshire observed a general decline in social tolerance and empathy. They attributed this to various pressures that have influenced daily life in recent years.

These include:

- The long-term social and emotional impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has left some people more isolated and less patient
- Increasing economic pressures, which heighten stress and can fuel resentment towards those perceived as receiving support or services
- National political debates that frame difference as a problem rather than a strength
- Sensationalist media coverage that focuses on conflict and controversy
- Constant exposure to negative news through phones and social media feeds

In Leamington Spa, participants mentioned a noticeable shift in mood among residents who had previously felt entirely at home in the town. Locals who were born and grew up there described, sometimes for the first time, becoming aware of how their race or religion might affect how others perceive them. One participant explained that their child, who had not previously considered themselves different, now feels uncertain about their place in the community because of how race is discussed in the media.

This sense of changing social attitudes was reflected in Nuneaton and Rugby, where participants said that public life feels “edgier,” with less benefit of the doubt, less generosity, and a greater willingness to assume the worst of others.

### ***Withdrawal from community life and reduced public confidence***

The combination of visible hostility and reduced tolerance has caused many residents to modify their use of public space and their participation in community activities. The workshops showed numerous examples of people changing their behaviour due to fear, anxiety, and uncertainty.

Participants across the three areas reported:

- Avoiding town centres in the evening, particularly at weekends
- Avoiding parks, alleys or underpasses that are perceived as unsafe
- Reducing attendance at public events where there may be large crowds or heightened tension
- Not opening doors during Halloween or other community activities because they no longer feel confident about who might be outside
- Taking longer or alternative routes to school, work or shops to avoid areas where previous incidents have occurred

In both Nuneaton and Rugby, parents reported moving children to different schools or contemplating doing so after incidents of racist bullying, hostile comments, or a general feeling that their children were no longer safe or supported. This is a significant step that impacts not just the child but also family routines, finances and relationships with local services.

In Leamington Spa, women reported avoiding specific public spaces altogether, especially after dark. Some said they no longer attend evening events, even those meant to encourage community

cohesion, because they are worried about travelling to and from venues. This limits their ability to participate in local life and diminishes the diversity of voices at community meetings.

The cumulative effect is that individuals who already feel vulnerable are engaging less in public life at exactly the time when their presence and voices are most essential.

### ***Polarisation between generations***

All three events identified increasing tensions between generations, which are impacting both internal community dynamics and wider cohesion.

Participants said that younger people are:

- More exposed to online hate, conspiracy theories and extremist narratives
- Using language and catchphrases picked up from influencers, including misogynistic slogans and stereotypes
- Less engaged with cultural, religious or community activities than previous generations
- More influenced by content they see on social platforms than by traditional sources of authority

Older generations were described as:

- Feeling alienated by the speed and nature of social change
- Concerned that cultural identity, values and traditions are being diluted or lost
- Feeling less safe in public spaces and less confident to travel alone
- Unsure how best to challenge discriminatory behaviour in ways that do not escalate conflict

In Nuneaton and Rugby, older participants were particularly concerned that prejudiced attitudes are now becoming normalised among children and teenagers. They provided examples of young people using racist language at school, sharing extreme content on phones and repeating simplistic narratives about migrants without understanding the context.

Meanwhile, younger participants expressed feeling misunderstood by older generations, who they believe do not fully understand the pressures of navigating identity, online culture, and global events. This creates a generational divide that can make it more difficult for families and communities to unite against hate.

### ***Fear shaped by global events and media reporting***

Participants across Warwickshire explained how global conflicts and national political debates influence local attitudes and behaviour. They emphasised that what happens on national news or international social media does not remain abstract, but is instead brought into local conversations, school playgrounds, and community spaces.

The Israel-Gaza conflict was highlighted in a couple of areas as a cause of increased emotion, misinformation, and more intense online discussions. Participants mentioned hurtful comments, polarised views, and the spread of conspiracies, all of which added to local tensions even among those with no direct links to the region.

Participants also referred to:

- Selective reporting on crimes involving minority communities, where the race or religion of suspects is highlighted in some cases but not others
- Sensationalist coverage of migration, small boats and asylum hotels, which creates fear and resentment
- Political commentary that portrays diversity, equality work or anti racism efforts as divisive or unnecessary

People expressed concern that this wider environment encourages individuals to voice racist or exclusionary views locally because they believe that public discourse supports their stance. Communities feel they are dealing not only with individual prejudice but also with narratives that are continually reinforced by high-profile voices.

### **3.3 Question 3: Positive examples of cohesion**

Despite the serious concerns outlined above, communities also highlighted numerous examples of positive relationships, shared initiatives, and acts of solidarity. These examples are essential because they demonstrate what is already effective and where future investment could have the most significant impact.

#### ***Interfaith and intercultural events***

Participants from all three areas emphasised the importance of organised events that unite people around culture, faith and food. These occasions offer safe, low-pressure opportunities for residents to meet, ask questions, and challenge their own assumptions.

Examples mentioned included:

- Mosque open days where visitors can tour the building, observe prayers, ask questions and share refreshments
- Gurdwara hosted events such as Victory over Japan Day commemorations, which allowed people from diverse backgrounds to reflect together on history, service and sacrifice
- Food and Faith Festivals that showcase different cuisines and religious traditions in one shared space
- Faith Walks, where participants visit a series of local places of worship in a single event, learning from each community in turn
- Diwali celebrations, which have grown from small gatherings to large, publicly supported events that attract people from across the town

In Leamington Spa, participants praised how the Diwali celebration has grown into a widely attended and inclusive event supported by the council. What was once seen as a smaller, community-led activity is now on a similar scale to the Christmas lights switch-on, sending a strong message of recognition and equal value.

In Nuneaton, participants highlighted the unity displayed during the EDL march, when local communities came together to support each other, and clearly showed that hateful messages do not reflect the town. This mobilisation was regarded as a strong example of solidarity in the face of provocation.

In Rugby, the recent Peace Walk was recognised as a positive initiative that brought people together to promote calm and understanding during a period of heightened tension. Participants noted that attendance could have been stronger, particularly from statutory agencies, but they felt the concept was valuable and worth further development.

Overall, these events were described as effective tools for challenging stereotypes, developing relationships, and encouraging shared understanding when they are repeated, supported, and well-publicised.

### ***Community hubs and supportive institutions***

Community centres, churches, youth groups, and refugee support organisations were frequently highlighted as safe and welcoming spaces where cohesion is already taking place in practice.

Examples include:

- Particular community centres were described as being a peaceful, respectful hub where people from diverse backgrounds come together as equals. Participants mention a strong ethos of kindness and non-judgement, which helps both new arrivals and long-standing residents to connect.
- ESOL classes and informal English conversation groups, often organised by churches or voluntary groups, offer both language learning and social connection. These groups were described as 'very powerful and welcoming', helping refugees and migrants feel part of the local community while also providing local volunteers with an opportunity to learn about other cultures.
- Welcome Here Groups, which play a central role in supporting refugees and asylum seekers with practical needs and help with integration. Participants emphasised that its work not only benefits individuals but also strengthens community cohesion by encouraging positive interactions between newcomers and existing communities.
- Youth programmes in Nuneaton and Rugby offer safe spaces where young people can socialise, discuss issues and participate in constructive activities. When available, these programmes are regarded as vital counters to online influences and serve as areas to promote values of respect and inclusion.

These hubs were often described as the 'glue' that holds communities together, especially during difficult times. Participants strongly believed that such spaces must be protected and adequately resourced to strengthen cohesion.

### ***Positive neighbourhood behaviours***

Alongside formal events and organised projects, participants also highlighted the importance of quiet, everyday acts of solidarity that rarely make headlines but are vital for cohesion.

Examples mentioned include:

- Neighbours of different backgrounds checking on each other during periods of tension or after specific incidents
- Volunteers helping residents in asylum or refugee accommodation to access services, appointments and support

- People attending cultural or faith events outside their own tradition to show support and learn more
- Fundraising initiatives, such as a group of residents cycling to raise money for charity or local causes, which demonstrate community spirit and shared purpose

Participants emphasised that negative stories can overshadow these behaviours but remain central to local resilience. They also form the relationships that agencies can utilise when developing engagement, consultation, and joint initiatives.

### **3.4 Question 4: What would help increase understanding, respect and tolerance**

When asked what would improve cohesion most in the future, participants across Warwickshire suggested a set of clear, consistent, and practical ideas.

#### ***Early, sustained and meaningful education***

Participants emphasised that education is the most effective long-term means of fighting hate and fostering respect. This encompasses formal education in schools and colleges, as well as informal learning within families, youth groups, and community environments.

Suggestions included:

- Teaching the histories and contributions of the diverse communities living in Warwickshire so that young people grow up understanding how different groups have helped shape the local area
- Tackling hate crime, discrimination, and the influence of language through age-appropriate lessons that emphasise empathy, consequences, and rights
- Introducing simple education on world religions from an early age, emphasising values, beliefs, and everyday practices rather than stereotypes
- Promoting critical thinking so that children and young people learn to question misinformation, social media narratives, and biased reporting
- Involving individuals with lived experience of hate, migration or marginalisation in school sessions so that pupils hear directly from those affected
- Including local community histories in the curriculum so that young people understand how their own neighbourhoods have changed and why
- Using restorative approaches when incidents occur in schools, bringing together those harmed and those responsible to promote learning and accountability rather than mere punishment.

Rugby participants emphasised the importance of modern history teaching that incorporates global influences, including the histories of Mughal India and other civilisations whose legacies are relevant to communities in the UK today. They argued that a narrow focus on specific periods, such as the Roman Empire or British colonial conquests, leaves young people without the necessary context to understand migration, identity and diversity.

### ***Structured, ongoing opportunities for cross-community engagement***

Participants were clear that cohesion does not happen automatically. It needs planned and sustained opportunities for people who do not usually meet to come together in positive, purposeful ways.

Participants suggested:

- Holding Faith Walks at least twice a year, with clear publicity and invitations to schools, youth groups and partners
- Increasing the number and range of cultural festivals and ensuring they are held in shared, accessible spaces
- Rotating the venues of major events such as Food and Faith Festivals, Diwali celebrations or civic ceremonies so that different communities host in turn and feel equally visible
- Designing events that explicitly tackle myths and stereotypes, for example, through question-and-answer sessions, short presentations or creative activities
- Creating more opportunities for families from different communities to interact, such as joint sports tournaments, picnics or arts projects

Participants emphasised that these activities require consistency and ongoing follow-up. While one-off events can be beneficial, relationships grow stronger when people meet repeatedly over time.

### ***Clear communication and leadership from statutory agencies***

Across all three locations, communities believed that councils, police, schools, and other agencies should take on a more prominent and visible role in promoting cohesion and addressing hate.

Participants said institutions to:

- Provide consistent messaging about a zero-tolerance stance on racism, hate crime and discrimination, and make this visible on websites, in buildings and at events
- Communicate clearly and quickly when incidents occur, including what is known, what is being done and how people can access support
- Share accurate, accessible information that counters misinformation, especially around issues such as asylum, crime statistics and community tensions
- Make cultural awareness, anti-racism and equality training compulsory for staff, with content shaped by local communities
- Attend community events in person in a way that feels genuine and relational, not just ceremonial

Participants emphasised that meaningful cohesion cannot occur without clear, sustained leadership from councils, police and schools. Silence or slow responses were seen as allowing rumours to fill the gap and as signalling that hate is not being addressed seriously.

### ***Investment in young people***

Communities described young people as essential to any long-term strategy for cohesion. They viewed children and teenagers not only as vulnerable to harmful narratives but also as potential leaders and bridge builders.

Participants suggested:

- Creating youth councils or advisory boards linked to local partnerships, where young people can shape decisions about cohesion, safety and services
- Investing in youth clubs, sports activities and creative projects that bring young people from different backgrounds together in safe, structured settings
- Expanding volunteering opportunities for young people, including mentoring, community projects and event planning, to build pride, skills and a sense of shared responsibility
- Providing specific education on misogyny, online grooming, extremist narratives and peer pressure so that young people can recognise and resist harmful influences
- Supporting programmes that build online resilience and digital literacy, helping young people to understand algorithms, fact-checking and how to report abusive content

Participants stressed that engaging young people meaningfully requires more than one-off assemblies or tokenistic involvement. Young people should be involved in planning, delivering, and evaluating initiatives that affect them.

### **3.5 Question 5: Support needed to continue this work**

When asked about the support they would require to remain engaged in this conversation and to contribute to ongoing cohesion efforts, participants identified several immediate and practical needs.

#### ***Sustained, long-term funding***

Communities across Warwickshire emphasised that cohesion work cannot rely solely on volunteer goodwill and short-term grants. They argued that steady investment is crucial for sustaining and developing successful projects.

Funding needs identified include:

- Costs associated with cultural and interfaith events, such as venue hire, translation, publicity, security and catering
- Youth activities and clubs that require staff, equipment and ongoing maintenance
- Translation and interpretation services to ensure that information and events are accessible to those with limited English
- Community dialogue sessions, world cafe conversations and themed workshops that require trained facilitators
- Transport to events, especially for people who live further from town centres or who feel unsafe travelling alone
- Training for staff and volunteers in areas such as conflict resolution, trauma awareness and inclusive practice

Participants warned that without reliable funding, momentum will be lost. Projects that establish trust over several years can quickly disappear if funding ceases, which may also erode confidence in agencies that encourage community participation.

#### ***Capacity building for smaller or quieter groups***

Smaller faith and cultural groups stated they are unsure about accessing funding and support.

Participants requested:

- Support with basic organisational skills such as governance, funding applications, communication and partnership working
- Opportunities to link with larger organisations that can act as mentors or partners

Building the capacity of quieter groups was regarded as essential to ensure that cohesion efforts are genuinely inclusive and not dominated by a few more confident voices.

### ***Greater inclusion in decision-making***

Communities conveyed a strong wish to shift from occasional consultation to direct involvement in shaping strategies, programmes, and priorities.

They said they want:

- More diverse representation on advisory groups, Independent Advisory Groups and community safety partnerships
- Input into the planning of events and initiatives, including timing, location, content and who is invited
- Influence over how cohesion strategies are developed, implemented and monitored
- Clear accountability frameworks that show how community feedback has been used and what has changed as a result

Leamington participants noted that while some communities feel well-connected to decision-makers, others remain largely absent from essential spaces such as school governance structures, partnership boards, and planning groups. This raises the risk that decisions are taken without a comprehensive understanding of community experiences.

Participants across all three areas emphasised that meaningful involvement requires more than just inviting a token representative to a single meeting. It demands ongoing relationships, accessible processes, and a willingness to share power.

### **3.6 Question 6: Best ways to engage communities and who else needs to be involved**

Finally, participants were asked about the most effective ways to engage with them and their communities, as well as who else should be involved in these conversations.

#### ***Using trusted networks***

Residents emphasised that engagement is most effective when it uses existing, trusted networks and communication channels rather than relying solely on formal routes.

They highlighted the importance of:

- Faith institutions such as mosques, gurdwaras, churches and temples, which act as trusted intermediaries and can reach people who do not engage with statutory services
- Cultural associations and community groups that already have established relationships with their members
- Community centres and hubs that serve as informal meeting places and information points

- Schools and colleges, which can reach families through newsletters, apps and parent events
- Youth groups, sports clubs and informal youth networks that can connect with young people directly
- WhatsApp groups and other messaging platforms that many communities use for real-time communication

Participants advised that messages about cohesion, safety, and opportunities for involvement should be shared through multiple channels simultaneously, and that agencies should collaborate with community leaders to co-design engagement approaches.

***Engagement must be inclusive and proactive***

Communities were clear that engagement must be designed in ways that are genuinely inclusive and proactive.

They said engagement should:

- Include quieter or marginalised groups, not only those who are already visible or vocal
- Involve young people directly, not just through adults speaking on their behalf
- Ensure that women, elders and people from minority faith or ethnic groups have safe spaces to contribute
- Avoid relying on the same individuals repeatedly, as this can lead to burnout and narrow representation
- Be accessible in multiple languages and formats, for example, by providing interpreters, translated materials and flexible meeting times

Participants also emphasised that engagement should not only occur in response to crises. Regular, routine contact between agencies and communities fosters trust and enables effective responses when tensions arise.

***Broader partnership involvement***

Finally, participants emphasised that cohesion is a collective responsibility that cannot be assigned to a single agency or sector. They identified a broad group of stakeholders who must be actively involved, including:

- Local councils and elected members
- Warwickshire Police and other criminal justice partners
- Health services, including mental health and public health teams
- Schools, colleges and early years settings
- Faith institutions and interfaith networks
- Community and voluntary sector organisations
- Local businesses, especially those that employ large numbers of local residents or serve as informal gathering points

Participants believed that a united, visible partnership approach clearly signals that hate is unacceptable and demonstrates that all parts of the system are dedicated to creating a safer, fairer and more cohesive Warwickshire.

## 4. Analysis

The findings reveal a complex mix of rising hate, declining trust, and tensions in community relationships across Warwickshire. While the specific experiences differ between all parts of Warwickshire, communities are describing similar underlying shifts in how people relate to one another and to public institutions. Several deeper patterns underpin these shared experiences, helping to explain why relatively small incidents can have such a significant and lasting impact.

The analysis below synthesises what participants said into five broad themes. These themes are not separate issues; they interact and reinforce one another, influencing how safe people feel, their behaviour in public spaces, and their likelihood of seeking help.

### 4.1 Normalisation of hate within a shifting social climate

The events emphasised that community concerns go beyond individual incidents and isolated acts of hate. Participants describe a shift in the broader social climate. They are not only concerned about the number of incidents, but also about what those incidents reveal regarding what is now deemed acceptable.

Many participants discussed an expanded sense of what can be said openly without facing consequences. Racist, Islamophobic, and Antisemitic content, hostile comments about refugees, and openly misogynistic language are now being expressed in public settings, at work, in schools and online. Participants described this in various ways, including the idea that the 'window' of what is socially acceptable has shifted. Remarks that were once considered extreme are now part of everyday conversation. This change leaves minority communities feeling exposed and uncertain about who they can trust.

People directly linked this changing climate to political narratives and inflammatory media coverage that frame diversity, migration or equality work as problems. Participants also highlighted the role of far-right rhetoric and conspiracy content circulating through digital platforms. Even when individuals do not personally support extremist views, the repeated visibility of hostile messages contributes to a sense that attitudes towards minority communities have hardened.

When hateful views are expressed without challenge or consequence, individuals from minority communities experience a decline in psychological safety. They begin to expect hostility in everyday situations, such as walking through town, travelling on public transport, or attending community events. Over time, this expectation becomes a routine part of daily life. People change their routes, avoid certain spaces, and adapt how they present themselves. This normalisation of hate, therefore, has a direct impact on behaviour and participation, not just on how people feel.

### 4.2 The central role of misinformation and digital spaces

Misinformation has become a significant factor in causing division. The workshops highlighted that long-standing tensions are being exacerbated, and sometimes even created, by digital ecosystems designed to spread content intended to provoke strong emotional responses.

Participants explained how rumours about refugee hotels, misleading narratives about crime, and highly edited video clips can quickly influence public opinion before any verified information emerges. Community Facebook pages, WhatsApp groups, and other local forums were viewed as having a

double-edged nature. They help share information and support, but can also become sources of fear, speculation, and targeted hostility, particularly when there is no visible moderation or challenge to their content.

Online hate groups and influencers foster this environment by presenting narratives that seem simple and certain, often blaming specific communities for complex social issues. These narratives are compelling when they align with existing concerns about safety, the economy or cultural change. Once widely shared, they become hard to dislodge, even when factual corrections are issued.

The absence of clear, timely information from statutory agencies creates a vacuum that misinformation easily fills. When communities do not receive straightforward explanations about local incidents, policy changes, or the use of buildings like hotels, people seek answers elsewhere. If the first information they encounter is inaccurate or intentionally provocative, that information often becomes the reference point for future discussions.

Misinformation, therefore, operates on multiple levels. It directly misleads people about facts, erodes trust in institutions that are slow to respond, and provides a ready-made script for those who wish to promote division and discord. Any strategy to improve cohesion must prioritise accurate, accessible communication as a fundamental element, not an optional extra.

#### **4.3 Disproportionate impact on vulnerable groups**

The experiences of Sikh and Muslim women in Leamington highlight the intersection of racism and misogyny. They describe harassment that targets both their ethnicity or faith and their sex. This may include sexualised comments about their appearance or dress, alongside racist slurs or stereotypes. These women then face practical choices, such as whether to travel alone, wear visible religious symbols or attend evening events. Each decision involves balancing safety, identity and participation.

Children and young people are also greatly affected. Participants noted that children encounter racist language and stereotypes in school and online at younger ages than previously. They see, share and sometimes repeat harmful narratives from social media, often without fully understanding their meaning. When incidents happen in school and are not handled openly, parents and children may lose trust in the safety of the environment. For some families, this has led to changing schools, withdrawing from activities, or accepting that their children must endure a certain level of abuse as part of everyday life.

Refugees and asylum seekers face a unique set of challenges. They are often targets of misinformation, have a limited understanding of local systems, and may already be coping with past trauma. Negative comments about asylum hotels, ongoing rumours of preferential treatment, and hostile online campaigns can make it hard for them to form connections with local communities. This not only heightens their feelings of isolation but also weakens the wider community's ability to see them as neighbours rather than threats.

The analysis, therefore, suggests that responses to hate and division should be tailored. Generic messages about cohesion will not be enough. There is a need for child-centred safeguarding and trauma-aware support for those facing overlapping risks. Without this, the people who are already most affected will continue to bear the heaviest burden.

#### **4.4 Declining trust in institutions and the implications for reporting**

Participants often expressed uncertainty about reporting procedures, perceived inaction from agencies, and inconsistent messaging across different services. These experiences are contributing to a wider decline in trust in institutions that are meant to protect communities.

Several patterns emerge from the feedback. Many people are not clear about what constitutes a hate crime or a hate incident, especially when behaviour is persistent but not obviously criminal, such as repeated microaggressions or online harassment. Others are unsure whether they should contact the police, the council, schools or voluntary organisations, and what will happen once they do.

Those who have reported incidents previously often described receiving limited feedback. They were unsure whether their reports had been logged, what outcomes were considered, or if their experiences had contributed to a broader understanding of local tensions. In some cases, they felt their concerns were minimised or reinterpreted in purely individual terms, without recognising the broader context of racism or discrimination.

When people believe that reporting hate crimes does not lead to meaningful change, incidents tend to remain hidden. Underreporting becomes a rational choice for those aiming to avoid further stress or attention. Meanwhile, perpetrators may conclude that their behaviour involves little risk, which can encourage them to continue or escalate.

The implications for cohesion are considerable. A system that relies on reporting to detect patterns cannot function effectively if its confidence is low. Opportunities for early intervention are often missed because agencies fail to see the complete picture of what is happening on the ground. Communities then draw their own conclusions about who is protected, who is listened to, and whose safety is prioritised.

Rebuilding trust requires more than encouraging reporting. It demands consistent, visible responses; clear explanations of processes; transparent communication about outcomes; and an institution's willingness to acknowledge past failures.

#### **4.5 Community Strengths provide a foundation for rebuilding trust**

Despite the challenges outlined above, the events demonstrated a strong commitment from communities to rebuild relationships, organise cultural events, and take positive steps. The analysis must not focus solely on risk and deficits. The findings show that significant assets already exist in Warwickshire that can be utilised to promote a more cohesive future.

Community hubs, interfaith networks and neighbourhood support structures serve as vital protective factors. Places such as community centres, local churches, Mosques, Gurdwaras, and other places of worship already function as safe spaces where people from diverse backgrounds cross paths, share information and provide mutual support. Established initiatives, such as ESOL classes, youth clubs, and refugee support organisations, demonstrate that residents are willing to volunteer their time and energy when they feel their efforts are appreciated and make a meaningful impact.

Interfaith and intercultural events, such as Faith Walks and Food and Faith Festivals, serve as living examples of what positive, respectful relationships can be. These events demonstrate a desire to learn about others and celebrate diversity when the conditions are safe and well-organised.

Neighbourhood solidarity, although often quiet and informal, remains a fundamental strength. The stories of neighbours checking on each other, residents uniting to oppose far-right marches, and volunteers helping refugee families navigate local systems all show that many people want to stand alongside those who are targeted.

With proper resourcing and partnership working, these strengths can lay the groundwork for lasting cohesion and resilience. An asset-based approach would involve recognising, supporting, and connecting these existing initiatives rather than starting anew. It would also entail involving community leaders and volunteers as equal partners in planning, decision-making, and delivery, ensuring that responses to hate and division are grounded in the lived experiences of Warwickshire's communities.

In summary, although the analysis highlights a concerning rise in hate and a decline in trust, it also reveals a solid foundation of commitment, experience, and goodwill to build upon. The challenge for statutory agencies and partners is to recognise these assets, invest in them, and collaborate with communities to develop a sustained and coordinated response.

## 5. Conclusion

The One Community, Many Voices events took place after a period of heightened tension driven by national discourse, international incidents and the rapid spread of misinformation. These contextual pressures have significantly influenced local interactions and behaviours. Feedback indicates that across Warwickshire, many communities feel that the social climate has changed, with hate becoming more evident, public debate more confrontational, and trust in institutions more fragile. For many residents, especially those with visible cultural, ethnic, or religious identities, this change is not seen as an abstract trend but as part of daily life, affecting how they travel, socialise and engage in local activities.

At the same time, the events emphasise that these risks do not solely define Warwickshire. Communities across Nuneaton, Rugby, and Leamington Spa demonstrated a notable willingness to acknowledge difficult issues honestly, identify solutions, and draw on sources of strength. Participants showed a clear commitment to challenging misinformation, promoting respect, supporting vulnerable groups, and ensuring that cultural, faith, and community spaces remain inclusive. This combination of honesty about the challenges and determination to work positively is a strong indication that local communities want cohesion to succeed and are ready to play an active role in making it happen.

A strong theme throughout the events is that people want transparent, consistent and meaningful engagement from statutory agencies. They do not expect agencies to prevent every incident of hate or provide immediate certainty in complex situations. Instead, they seek reliable communication, fair treatment, and clear follow-up when incidents occur. Communities emphasised that engagement should occur not only during times of crisis or tension but also as part of ongoing partnership relationships. Regular visibility, accessible information and opportunities for dialogue were described as fundamental building blocks of trust.

The findings also emphasise that meaningful progress requires proactive, sustained investment. Safety cannot be improved solely through enforcement. Isolated events cannot bolster cohesion. Trust cannot be rebuilt without consistent communication. The feedback indicates a need for long-term support for community centres, youth groups, interfaith activity, educational programmes, and platforms that enable communities to unite across differences. These activities lay the foundations for connection, understanding, and resilience, and they require predictable resources to be effective.

Notably, the events demonstrate that Warwickshire's communities already possess the capacity, knowledge, and goodwill needed to rebuild cohesion. Community organisations, faith groups, volunteers, and local residents are deeply committed to their neighbours' wellbeing. They bring cultural expertise, lived experience, and local insight that statutory agencies cannot replicate. When these strengths are recognised and used effectively, they foster the conditions for sustainable cohesion work rooted in the realities of local life.

By recognising the challenges identified across all three events, addressing the root causes of division, and prioritising preventive approaches, agencies and partners can support a positive way forward. This involves improving reporting systems, increasing safety and visibility, supporting young people in navigating online harms, and ensuring that all communities feel seen, valued and protected. The workshops show that a strong desire for unity and understanding exists throughout Warwickshire.

## 6. Recommendations

The following recommendations are guided directly by the themes and priorities identified by communities across the three One Community, Many Voices events. They reflect the issues raised most often and with the greatest urgency by community members, as well as the strengths and opportunities identified through each event.

These recommendations aim to tackle both the immediate causes of community tensions, such as misinformation and low trust, and the long-term drivers of cohesion, including education, inclusion, youth involvement and cultural visibility.

### **A - Improve communication and counter misinformation**

Communities repeatedly highlighted the harmful effects of misinformation and delayed or unclear communication from institutions. Many people described feeling uncertain when left to interpret events without accurate information, which can foster fear, confusion and the spread of conspiracy theories.

Therefore, strengthening communication should be a central element of any cohesion strategy.

Actions required:

1. *Develop clear, timely communication from councils, police and partners in response to emerging tensions or misinformation.*

This should include short public updates that offer factual clarity and reassurance, even when investigations are ongoing. Communities stressed that silence allows harmful narratives to take hold.

2. *Use trusted community channels to circulate accurate information widely.*

Faith leaders, community organisations, school newsletters, WhatsApp groups, women's networks, and cultural associations were identified as trusted channels. Messages should be co-designed, translated when necessary, and delivered through multiple formats.

3. *Create a coordinated messaging strategy on hate crime awareness, inclusion and reporting processes.*

This should involve consistent language and shared branding across agencies, making it easier for residents to recognise official information. Clear explanations of what constitutes a hate incident and how reports are handled are essential.

4. *Provide digital literacy workshops to help communities understand and challenge online misinformation.*

Workshops may be held at community centres, libraries, youth groups and ESOL classes. Topics should cover identifying credible sources, recognising manipulated content, understanding algorithms and reporting harmful online behaviour.

## **B - Strengthen personal and community safety**

Many participants expressed fear in public spaces, particularly women, young people and visibly identifiable minority groups. Enhancing safety involves both visible measures and improved reporting and follow-up systems.

Actions required:

5. *Increase visibility of police and community safety partners in areas identified as unsafe by residents.*

This should include foot patrols, engagement vans and joint visits with neighbourhood teams. Visibility should be prioritised during times and in locations highlighted by communities, such as school routes, parks and transport hubs.

6. *Extend the already established Walk With Us scheme, delivered by Warwickshire Police. This scheme engages with local residents, with a focus on women's safety and vulnerable groups.*

The Walk with Us scheme, delivered by Warwickshire Police, involves community safety teams, police, ward councillors, and residents, with a focus on identifying design issues such as poor lighting, unsafe pathways, isolated areas, and locations where harassment frequently occurs.

7. *Improve feedback loops for people who report hate incidents, ensuring timely updates and clear communication.*

A simple, standardised follow-up process should be established so that residents know when Warwickshire Police have received reports, what action is being taken, and when they can expect further updates. This transparency is vital for building trust.

8. *Explore community-based reporting routes in trusted locations.*

Faith institutions, community centres, youth hubs and libraries could provide complementary reporting point mechanisms. These should be supported by staff and volunteer training, clear escalation procedures and translation support.

## **C - Invest in education and early prevention**

Participants described education as the most effective long-term tool for enhancing understanding, reducing hate, and preventing escalation of conflict. Education should occur in schools, youth settings and the broader community.

Actions required:

9. *Work with schools to embed education on culture, identity, shared histories and the consequences of hate within the curriculum.*

This should include local history, global influences relevant to Warwickshire's communities, and opportunities to learn about world religions. Schools should be supported with age-appropriate

resources. Speakers from diverse backgrounds can be invited, including Refugees, local faith leaders and individuals affected by hate, who can offer valuable insights and challenge stereotypes.

*10. Support the development of youth advisory panels or youth voice structures.*

Identify existing youth platforms and engage with them more effectively on issues related to hate and community cohesion.

**D - Support community-led cohesion initiatives**

Communities across Warwickshire already undertake important cohesion work, including cultural festivals, interfaith activities, open days, and neighbourhood events. These initiatives are trusted, accessible and rooted in local relationships, but many depend on short-term funding or volunteer support.

Actions required:

*11. Provide long-term funding streams for cultural events, interfaith activities and community-led programmes.*

Predictable funding enables groups to plan effectively, maintain their volunteer networks and increase participation over time. Multiyear funding should be prioritised where possible.

*12. Support community organisations with training, resources and infrastructure*

This includes safeguarding training, volunteer development, governance support, digital tools, translation assistance and help accessing grants. Building organisational capacity strengthens the entire ecosystem of cohesion.

*13. Rotate community events across multiple venues to promote inclusivity*

Hosting events across various neighbourhoods and cultural venues boosts visibility, diminishes transportation obstacles, and ensures that no single community bears the entire workload.

*14. Increase partnership attendance at community events*

Partners from the public and voluntary sectors should consistently participate in collaborative events and local community initiatives. Visible attendance shows commitment and builds trust over time.

**E - Strengthen inclusion and representation in decision-making**

Communities consistently voice a desire to be actively involved in decisions that impact them. This includes safety planning, fostering cohesion, funding priorities, and educational initiatives.

Enhancing inclusion involves increasing participation and making sure that quieter voices are heard.

Actions required:

*15. Proactively engage quieter or underrepresented communities.*

Dedicated outreach should be conducted with groups that have historically been underrepresented or overlooked. Engagement must be culturally sensitive, accessible in language and delivered through trusted channels and intermediaries.

*16. Ensure community voices influence design, planning and evaluation of cohesion initiatives.*

Communities should be collaborators, not mere spectators. Their input should influence objectives, risk assessments, event planning, messaging strategies and measures of success.

*17. Provide training for staff and partners on inclusive engagement and cultural competence.*

Training should include cultural awareness, inclusive communication, trauma-informed practices and guidance on working with communities affected by hate and discrimination.

**F - Build positive narratives and shared identity**

Communities emphasised that cohesion cannot be created solely by focusing on risk or tension. Positive stories, shared identities and narratives of collective belonging are vital for developing resilience and challenging stereotypes.

Actions required:

*18. Promote positive stories of community solidarity, cultural contributions and collaboration through local media channels.*

This includes highlighting examples from schools, neighbourhoods, youth groups and faith communities. Positive stories help rebalance public perception and counter divisive narratives.

*19. Expand and support Faith Walks, Food and Faith Festivals and shared cultural celebrations.*

These events provide low-pressure opportunities for residents to learn from one another. They help normalise cultural diversity and highlight the contributions of different groups to local life.

*20. Deliver public campaigns that reinforce shared values such as respect, fairness and empathy.*

Campaigns should be co-created with communities, emphasising strengths over problems. They should aim to develop a shared language around community identity and what it means to be part of Warwickshire.

## Acknowledgements

EQuIP would like to extend its sincere thanks to everyone who contributed their time, experiences, and insights to the One Community, Many Voices events held in Nuneaton, Rugby, and Leamington Spa.

First and foremost, we are grateful to the community members who attended these sessions and shared their perspectives openly and honestly. Many participants shared deeply personal experiences of hate, exclusion, and fear, while others recounted examples of solidarity, resilience, and hope. We recognise that contributing to these conversations requires courage, trust and emotional empathy, particularly during a period of heightened tension. The voices of those who attended sit at the heart of this report, and their willingness to engage constructively has been invaluable.

EQuIP would also like to thank Warwickshire Police for their collaboration and support in delivering these discussions, as well as for their ongoing commitment to partnership working on hate crime and community safety. We are grateful to all partner agencies, including Warwickshire County Council's Community Safety Team, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, statutory services, and voluntary sector organisations, who attended, listened and contributed thoughtfully to the dialogue.

We extend our appreciation to the facilitators and scribes who supported each event, ensuring that discussions were conducted in a safe, respectful and inclusive manner, and that the views shared were accurately captured. Their role was essential in creating an environment where participants felt comfortable speaking freely and being heard.

Finally, EQuIP acknowledges the continued efforts of community organisations, faith groups, volunteers, and local leaders across Warwickshire who work tirelessly to promote understanding, inclusion, and cohesion on a daily basis. Much of the positive practice highlighted in this report exists because of their long-standing commitment to their communities.

This report reflects a collective endeavour. It is only through continued collaboration, mutual respect and shared responsibility that the challenges identified can be addressed and the strengths within Warwickshire's communities can be built upon.

## Contact Us

Tel: 0330 135 6606

Email: [advice@equipequality.org.uk](mailto:advice@equipequality.org.uk)

Website: <https://www.equipequality.org.uk>

