## Prejudice Free Dorset statement following the murder of trans woman Brianna Ghey

Statement issued: 20th February 2023

Prejudice Free Dorset, a group of organisations and community members across Dorset, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole stand together to mourn the loss of Brianna Ghey, a 16-year-old trans woman who was murdered last week in Cheshire. As a group, we work together to tackle prejudice and hate, and to raise awareness of the support available for the LGBT+ community. We extend our sincere condolences to Brianna’s family at this horrific time. Through a network of vigils being held to remember and celebrate Brianna’s life, we are reminded of the strength in community and denounce the perpetrators of violence that seek to diminish and divide us.

As we mark LGBT History Month, a time to learn from our past and celebrate our achievements, another young trans person Brianna, 16, has been stabbed to death in her local park on Saturday 11th February. Two children, aged 15 years old, have been charged with her murder and remanded in youth custody awaiting trial.

Brianna was a trans young woman, loved and supported by her family and who had helped countless other young trans folk to navigate the barriers around transition, such as accessing hormone therapy and setting up Crowdfunders.

Prejudice Free Dorset stands alongside all gender, sexual and relationship diverse people for whom the last few days have been a traumatic reminder of the fight against transphobia and of another life lost through it. As a collective of organisations working together to tackle prejudice and prevent its manifestation across Dorset, we recognise a large part of this is developing a positive culture where people and communities feel confident to report. We know the barriers the LGBT+ community face in daily experiences of prejudice and hate, in access to services and to reporting. By taking a collective approach and utilising the trust and experience of grassroots organisations, with the support of statutory agencies, we believe we can increase confidence in reporting and act on crime so that Dorset is welcoming, inclusive, and safe for all.

Superintendent Ricky Dhanda, Joint Lead of Prejudice Free Dorset and Force Hate Crime Lead for Dorset Police said: “There is no place for hate crime in our communities and Dorset Police takes all reports of hate crimes and incidents very seriously. In 6 months last year, as a Force we saw all other types of hate crimes decrease, whilst reports of transgender hate crimes increased significantly, and we know this figure is likely to be higher, as sadly hate crime is underreported. As Joint Lead for Prejudice Free Dorset, I am committed to supporting the trans community to feel safe reporting, so we can tackle the crimes perpetuated against them”.

Izzy Pochin, Joint Lead of Prejudice Free Dorset and founder of the LGBT+ Voices Dorset Forum said: “The value of both Prejudice Free Dorset and the LGBT+ Voices Dorset Forum is their umbrella structure. By coming together as a collective of organisations and individuals with lived experience from across diverse communities or one specific community, our intelligence grows, our connections grow and so too our ability to do bigger things which reach more people in more impactful ways. We use the phrase “stronger together” often and we really are. Love and hope will always triumph over hate. It’s a simple message but they are the ones that stand the test of time”.

As we stand together at vigils across the South West and beyond in memory of Brianna, a time to show respect, be with our communities, stand tall and express solidarity, we also send a message of a strong physical and metaphorical circle, impenetrable by prejudice and hate.

A list of vigils taking place can be found here: <https://twitter.com/WasARiot/status/1625689160425132033>

For support:

Space Youth Project https://www.spaceyouthproject.co.uk/

helpline@intercomtrust.org.uk Monday-Friday, 09:00-16:00

Switchboard LGBT+ Helpline call 0300 330 0630 - 10:00-22:00 every day

Gendered Intelligence 0300 35 9678 - 14:00-19:00 Mon-Tues & Thurs, 10:00-15:00 Wed and Fri

YoungMinds - www.youngminds.org.uk

Dorset Mind - [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk) including LGBT+ counselling and LGBT+ MindOut group

--ENDS—

Izzy Pochin and Ricky Dhanda, Joint Leads Prejudice Free Dorset

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Prejudicefreedorset.org

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**Prejudice Free Dorset - working in partnership to prevent hate from manifesting in the communities of Dorset**

Prejudice Free Dorset is a collective of over 40 cross-sector organisations and individuals working together to tackle prejudice and act on its manifestation across Dorset, taking a person-centred approach at all times and an intersectional lens to understanding the experiences and impacts of prejudice and hate. We want to raise awareness, educate and inform to reduce prejudice and hate and where necessary, act together to learn from, support and mitigate the impacts where it does occur.