



Immigration leads to incidents between the Welsh and the English

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The incidents of crimes between Welsh and English people in north Wales is on the increase says deputy chief constable of the area. According to Deputy Chief Constable Clive Wolfendale, an Englishman who has learnt Welsh, this is partly due to immigration into Wales. He added that a quarter of race-hate crime was caused by animosity between the groups.

"About 15 per cent in north Wales overall and in the western area [which is about 80% Welsh-speaking], about 25% of race-hate crime is Welsh-English activity. It is about 50/50 in terms of Welsh people having a go at English people and English people having a go at the Welsh," says Mr Wolfendale. "It is a phenomenon that applies throughout Wales, but particularly in the north. It is people attacking or abusing somebody because of their Welshness or Englishness."

Mr Wolfendale added that "north Wales has an ethnic minority immigrant population which is very low, between one and two per cent, but there are some Welsh people who would say, actually, that the immigration population is 50% because there are all these English people that have come here who are undermining our communities and pinching our housing and so on. So this is a more complex situation in north Wales than it is elsewhere in Britain."

According to the police, race-hate crimes - of all kinds - have risen in north Wales from 80 in 2000 to 337 in 2004.

Cymuned, the pressure group that campaigns for the Welsh-speaking heartlands, welcomed Mr Wolfendale's comments.

"We welcome the fact that the DCC realises that moving so many people from England to Wales does have an impact and that it should be considered by the [British] Home Secretary Charles Clarke as part of the government's immigration policy," says Aran Jones, chief executive of Cymuned. "The Welsh Assembly needs to act to ensure that people living in Wales learn Welsh or at least have the courtesy to try and understand that we have our language and culture."

Mr Wolfendale says that much of the increase is due to the fact that the police are actively encouraging people to come forward and report hate crime of all types, not just race crime. (Eurolang © 2005)

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