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FREE SPEECH UNION

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Free Speech Union Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Free Speech Union welcomes today’s landmark judgement from the Court of Appeal that the recording of non-crime hate incidents is an unlawful interference with freedom of expression. As the Court says, the knowledge that such matters are being recorded and stored in a police database is likely to have had a serious “chilling effect” on public debate.

Not only does the recording of non-crime hate incidents violate Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights, as the Court said, but it is a huge waste of the police’s time.

Between 2014 and 2019, 34 police forces in England and Wales [recorded a total of 119,134 non-crime hate incidents](#), an average of 65 a day. What possible justification can there be for the investigation and recording of ‘non-crimes’ when so many actual crimes go unsolved? Between 2015 and 2021, [964,197 domestic burglary investigations ended without a suspect being identified](#).

Toby Young, the Free Speech Union’s General Secretary, said: “The Free Speech Union is proud to have played a part in winning this landmark victory, but the lion’s share of the credit must go to Harry Miller. Thanks to his courage and tenacity, we can all rest a little easier in our beds tonight, knowing the police are not about to knock on our doors because we’ve made an inappropriate joke on Twitter. They should be policing our streets, not our tweets.”

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