

HATE CRIME

What it is and what to do about it



This is a short guide about hate crime; what it is, what you can do about it and who can help. Hate crime is taken very seriously because of the devastating impact it has on individuals and communities.

In the UK, we all have the right to go about our daily lives without fear or intimidation. No one should feel they are being picked on, singled out or mistreated because of who they are, or because they belong to a particular group.

WHAT IS A HATE CRIME?

Hate crime creates fear and humiliation. Most people and organisations use the term hate crime, but the legal definition uses the word hostility, not hate.

The law protects people against hostility when the hostility:

- is linked to a criminal offence; and
- is in some way about disability, ethnicity, gender identity, nationality, race, religion or sexual orientation.

Hostility can be described as:

SPITE AGGRESSION
ILL-WILL ANTAGONISM
PREJUDICE
CONFRONTATION

The court can increase the sentence for someone who is found guilty in such cases.

It's the things people do:



threats



physical harm



damaging property



harassment/bullying

& why they do it

Hostility based on: disability, sexuality, nationality, ethnicity, religion, gender identity, race

REPORTING A HATE CRIME

Think you've seen, heard or experienced a hate crime?

Report it to the police.

Phone 101, 999 or contact stophateuk.org



You can also report it through an alternative agency or the True Vision website, but if you feel in immediate danger you should always call the police.

Make sure you say you are reporting it as a hate incident and let them know if you think you were targeted for more than one reason. Remember, if the words or behaviour make you feel bad, upset, annoyed or insulted and target something personal such as disability, ethnicity, gender identity, nationality, race, religion or sexual orientation, then you can report it to the police.

Hate incident or hate crime?

The police will investigate the incident to decide whether a crime has been committed and to establish whether there is enough evidence to bring a prosecution.

If there is enough evidence to provide a realistic prospect of conviction then it is more than likely that a prosecution will be in the public interest.

However, it is not always possible to bring a hate crime prosecution. This is because:

- There might not be enough evidence to allow the case to be prosecuted
- Even where there is enough evidence to prosecute, there might not be enough evidence to show that it was linked to hostility and should be prosecuted as a hate crime.

It is always important to report a hate incident to the police so that it can be investigated and recorded. This helps to build up a picture of what is going on locally and what can be done to prevent it.

Evidence of hostility

Hostility can be face-to-face, online or through social media and can be damage done to property.



Face to face



In writing



Online or on social media

The most common evidence of a hate crime the police find is verbal abuse. Written abuse, such as graffiti, texts or online messages can also be evidence.

It is a good idea to write down or record everything you can remember about what happened – who did what, what was said, who said it, when did it happen and where, and so on. If there has been damage or graffiti, taking photos can help you keep an accurate record. It might also help to make an audio recording of what happened to you.

PROSECUTING HATE CRIME

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) prosecutes most crime in England and Wales. The police (and other investigators) investigate allegations of crime but it is the CPS that prosecutes cases through the criminal courts. The CPS [Code for Crown Prosecutors](#) sets out how the CPS makes the decision to prosecute.

The CPS reviews each hate crime case referred by the police. Where there is evidence, the CPS looks to prosecute as a hate crime and apply for an increased sentence. The CPS also provides information, assistance and support to victims and prosecution witnesses.

15,442
Prosecutions



In 2015/16
The highest number ever
for hate crime

GUILTY

Hate crime
conviction rate of

83.2%

For 2015/16

73.3%
Guilty pleas
in hate crime cases



Due to the strength of
the evidence and of the
prosecution case

Can I get help if I go to court?

In 2015/16, most hate crime prosecutions ended with the defendant pleading guilty (73.3%). This means that most victims and witnesses did not have to attend court.

If you do have to attend court there is support available, such as interpreters, and you will be asked what help you might need.

In some cases, special measures can be used for victims of hate crime. If the court agrees, it can allow evidence to be provided by video link, from behind screens or by pre-recording your evidence on tape to avoid you having to see the people responsible.

The support available will depend on your own circumstances, but it is very important to let the police and Witness Care Unit (WCU) know as soon as possible, so that the right arrangements can be made. WCUs are run jointly by the police and CPS and provide core services to all witnesses.

Additionally, Citizens Advice provides free, independent support for witnesses in criminal courts in England and Wales. Further information can be found at: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/citizens-advice-witness-service/>

STIRRING UP OF HATRED

This type of hate crime is committed when someone uses threatening words or behaviour or publications such as posters and leaflets, which are intended or likely to encourage hatred towards other people. Currently, the law covers the targeting of people in this way on the basis of ethnicity, nationality, race, religion or sexual orientation. These crimes are about more than just showing hostility to one person, but about stirring up hatred against a whole group of people. Hate is a stronger feeling than hostility and is defined in the dictionary as to loath, detest, or abhor someone or something.

WHO ELSE CAN HELP?

There are many national organisations that provide good general advice online. Some will have helplines and may be able to give advice over the phone. Discuss the incident with an agency such as Citizens Advice to learn more about your options. The list below is not comprehensive, but gives details of some of the national bodies with an interest in tackling hate crime and supporting its victims.

- [Citizens Advice](#)
- [Community Security Trust](#)
- [Disability Rights UK](#)
- [Galop](#)
- [Mencap](#)
- [MIND](#)
- [National Hate Crime Report and Support Centre Wales](#)
- [People First](#)
- [Scope](#)
- [Stonewall](#)
- [Stop Hate UK](#)
- [Tell Mama](#)
- [True Vision](#)
- [Victim Support](#)
- [TEXT 999](#) helps those who cannot speak for any reason, or are in a situation where it's dangerous to be obvious in calling for help
- British Transport Police text number 61016
- There are also useful hate crime reporting apps such as [Self Evident](#) and [True vision](#)

You can also contact any local specialist provider or community organisation. Third party reporting centres operate in some areas supporting victims of hate crime and liaising with local police. Community Safety Officers from your local council will be able to help.