

## SUMMARY

-  A hate crime is a criminal offence motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a personal characteristic
-  Hate crimes can come in a variety of forms including verbal and physical abuse
-  Hate crimes are widespread and 1 in 6 LGBT people will experience an incident
-  Hate crime can often go unreported; however there are a number of different ways reports can be made
-  Support is available for victims of hate crime
-  Hate crime can leave the victim isolated and can be detrimental to the victim's mental health

## INTRODUCTION

A hate crime can be defined as “any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice towards someone based on a personal characteristic.”<sup>1</sup> These personal characteristics can be related to age, disability, gender identity, race, religion or sexual orientation. While police reports of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic hate crime have gone down in recent years, it is clear that such crimes persist in the UK, and may be increasing as a proportion of all hate crime.<sup>2</sup> One recent study suggests that between 2011 and 2013, 1 in 6 LGBT people experienced a homophobic hate crime.<sup>3</sup> These crimes can take a variety of forms, and include being physically assaulted, receiving unwanted sexual contact, having property or belongings vandalised, or being harassed, verbally abused or intimidated.

Hate crimes often go unreported, with 7 in 10 victims not reporting the incident to anyone, and only a quarter of victims reporting the incident to the police. These low reporting rates are likely to be due to a number of factors, including fear of unhelpful or hostile police reaction, or concern about coming out. Others may not think that the hate crime is serious enough to warrant reporting it, or may not realise that a crime has been committed. But the law dictates that judges must consider homophobic motivation in the perpetration of a crime as an aggravating factor, which can impact the length of sentencing. It is therefore important that hate crimes are reported. There are a number of routes to do so, including through LGBT liaison officers at local police forces, and anonymous reporting options.

### DOES THIS APPLY TO ME?

If you feel that any of the behaviours listed below were motivated by prejudice or hostility based on your sexual orientation or gender identity, then they may constitute a hate crime.

#### **Verbal Abuse**

This can be name calling, insults or threats. In addition to this it includes any form of written abuse including emails, texts, graffiti and hate mail .

#### **Domestic Abuse**

When abuse happens within the home, between current or former intimate partners, or family. It includes forced marriage.

#### **Physical Abuse**

Including all forms of violence even minor bruising and scratches. Threats of physical abuse are also a hate crime.

#### **Harassment**

When any form of abuse becomes repeated then it can be considered harassment.

## WHAT CAN I DO?

### Short-term

**Call 999-** if you are at risk of harm or in an emergency. If you have been physically abused seek treatment, even if the injury seems to be minor.

**Report it** – approaching an organisation that specialises in hate crime will ensure that you are safe. Reporting a hate crime to the police will mean that the perpetrator can be stopped and potentially be charged. Even if you are not sure that it is a crime, the police can only deal with something that is brought to their attention. If you do not want to report it to the police you can anonymously report it at [www.report-it.org.uk](http://www.report-it.org.uk). Organisations such as Galop provide specialist LGBT reporting and support.

**Get it recorded-** when you report the incident to the police ask for it to be recorded as a homophobic or transphobic crime. Make sure that you get a crime number. You can also ask for a copy of the report.

**Get support-** from trusted friends and family and talk to them. Victims of hate crime experience isolation and loneliness and talking to friends and family can help to reassure you.

### Long-term

If you are experiencing regular abuse or harassment, keep a diary sheet. Advice on how to do this can be found on the Galop website.

If after reporting an incident you require support through the investigation and possible court process you can approach Galop or ask for a police referral to Victim Support

You may wish to apply for Criminal Injuries Compensation. Galop or Victim Support will be able to help with this. You will need to keep copies of any medical and police reports.

If you are feeling vulnerable as a result of your experience, it may be worth exploring these feelings with a professional counsellor or therapist. There are a number of organisations, including PACE which offer LGBT-specific counselling.

## REFERENCES

1 An Overview of Hate Crime in England and Wales, Home Office, Office for National Statistics, and Ministry of Justice, December 2013.

2 [http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/documents/research/research38\\_so\\_hatecrime.pdf](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/documents/research/research38_so_hatecrime.pdf)The Hate Crime Report: Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia in London

3 Stonewall Hate Crime | The Gay British Crime Survey 2013

4 Homophobic Hate Crimes and Hate Incidents, Equality and Human Rights Commission Research Summary 38

## RESOURCES

### Galop

020 7704 2040  
[www.galop.org.uk](http://www.galop.org.uk)  
LGBT anti-violence and abuse charity. Offers advice and support to victims of homophobic, transphobic and biphobic hate crime

### TCrime

[www.tcrime.net](http://www.tcrime.net)  
Gender Identity Research and Education Society (Gires) transphobic crime reporting service.

### Lesbian and Gay Foundation

(LGF) 0845 330 30 30  
[www.lgf.org.uk](http://www.lgf.org.uk)  
Manchester based organisation providing advice and support to LGBT victims of hate crime

### True Vision

[report-it.org.uk/](http://report-it.org.uk/)  
Web portal for anonymously reporting any type of hate crime to the police.