



University of
Leicester

The Leicester
**HATE
CRIME**
Project

Briefing Paper 1

**DISABLIST
HATE CRIME**

**This briefing paper is part of a series of publications produced as part of
The Leicester Hate Crime Project:**

Findings and Conclusions: Full Report

Findings and Conclusions: Executive Summary Report

Victims' Manifesto

Briefing Paper 1: Disablist Hate Crime

Briefing Paper 2: Gendered Hostility

Briefing Paper 3: Homophobic Hate Crime

Briefing Paper 4: Racist Hate Crime

Briefing Paper 5: Religiously Motivated Hate Crime

All of these publications can be accessed at www.le.ac.uk/centreforhatestudies.

DISABLIST HATE CRIME

VICTIMS' PERSPECTIVES

Over a two-year period from 2012 to 2014 the Leicester Hate Crime Project team conducted groundbreaking research into acts of hate, prejudice and targeted hostility. Funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, this research – Britain's biggest ever study of hate crime victimisation – engaged with over 4,000 people from a diverse range of backgrounds and recorded the views of 1,421 victims of hate crime. The findings from this work have generated new and significant insights into the nature, forms and impacts of hate offences.

The Leicester Hate Crime Project had three main aims:

- to discover as much as possible about people's experiences of hate, prejudice and targeted hostility;
- to understand the physical and emotional harms suffered by victims and their families; and
- to identify ways of improving the quality of support offered to victims.

The project used a broad definition of hate crime in order to capture the experiences of anyone, from any background, who felt that they had been victimised specifically because of who they are. Among the research participants were those who had been targeted because of hostility towards their disabilities. This briefing paper, the first in a series of such papers from the project, outlines the standout findings from this aspect of the research. It focuses upon the nature and extent of disablist hate crime; the impact of being targeted; concerns about future victimisation; the profile of offenders; the reporting of hate crimes; and the value of support services supplied to victims.

This briefing paper refers to the views of victims who are disabled. It is important to acknowledge, however, that categorising victims like this does underplay the fact that many of our research participants had been targeted as a result of more than one aspect of their identity. Many issues are therefore shared between the three groups and these are noted in the text where appropriate.

A full set of the project's findings, including detailed analysis and commentary, can be found in the *Findings and Conclusions* report.

Profile of disablist hate crime victims

The survey was completed by 134 people who identified as disabled while an additional 137 disabled people took part in individual or group interviews, giving a total sample of those who had one or more disabilities of 271. Of this sample, 123 felt that they had been targeted because of their physical disabilities, 137 because of their learning disabilities and 92 because of their mental ill-health.

This subset of participants had a range of physical and/or learning disabilities and mental health conditions, including anxiety disorders, autism, cerebral palsy, depression, Down's syndrome, impaired speech, memory loss, multiple sclerosis, schizophrenia and a range of other learning, mobility and movement impairments. For some of our participants the physical and learning disabilities they had were from birth, but for others it was the result of disease, age or accidents.

Age

Age	Total sample ¹	Proportion of total sample (%) ^{2,3}
Under 18	17	6
18 to 24	31	11
25 to 34	25	9
35 to 44	63	23
45 to 54	69	25
55 to 64	30	11
65 to 74	32	12
75 to 84	1	0
85 or over	1	0
Not stated	2	1

¹This includes the 134 survey respondents and the 137 interview participants who felt that they had been targeted because of their learning disabilities, physical disabilities and/or mental ill-health.

² This is the percentage for the total sample of disablist hate crime victims.

³ Individual percentages have been rounded to the nearest integer in this and subsequent tables.

Gender

Gender	Total sample	Proportion of total sample (%)
Male	129	48
Female	137	51
Not stated	5	2

Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Total sample	Proportion of total sample (%)
White British	194	72
Eastern European	1	0
Western European	2	1
Black/Black British	11	4
Black Caribbean	2	1
Black African	2	1
Asian/Asian British	38	14
Indian	10	4
Pakistani	3	1
Any other Middle Eastern background	1	0
White and Black Caribbean	1	0
White and Asian	1	0
Any other mixed background	1	0
Not stated	4	1

Religion

Religion	Total sample ⁴	Proportion of total sample (%)
Christianity	31	44
Hinduism	26	37
Islam	6	9
Jainism	1	1
Sikhism	4	6
Other	1 ⁵	1
Prefer not to say	1	1
Not stated	0	0

⁴ This data set is based on those participants who stated that they actively practise a religion.

⁵ 'Other' responses included 'Shaman' (n=1).

Sexual Orientation

Sexual Orientation	Total sample	Proportion of total sample (%)
Heterosexual (straight)	235	87
Gay	13	5
Lesbian	3	1
Bisexual	5	2
Asexual	1	0
Pansexual	2	1
Undecided	3	1
Prefer not to say	5	2
Not stated	4	1

What is the nature and extent of disablist hate crime?

1.1 What forms of hate crime do people experience, and where do they occur?

- A significant proportion of participants within this subset had multiple disabilities and felt that they had been targeted not because of one specific form of disability but because of the interplay between these different aspects of their identity. The table below outlines the profile of participants and their range of disabilities.

Victim targeted because of:	Breakdown of total sample who identified as being disabled	
	Number	Per cent (%)
Mental ill-health	37	28
Physical disabilities	36	27
Learning disabilities	24	18
Learning disabilities and mental ill-health	14	10
Learning disabilities, physical disabilities and mental ill-health	10	7
Learning disabilities and physical disabilities	7	5
Learning disabilities and mental ill-health	6	5
Total	134	100

In cases involving people targeted because of hostility towards their disabilities:

- 90% of survey respondents had been a victim of verbal abuse, with 31% experiencing this regularly.
- 92% had experienced harassment (such as bullying or threatening behaviour), with six out of ten victims being targeted in this way frequently (63%).
- Half had been the victim of violent crime (50%).
- 22% had been a victim of sexual violence at least once, though this was noticeably higher for participants who had been targeted because of their mental ill-health (33%), compared to around one in five for those targeted due to their learning or physical disabilities (22% and 17% respectively).
- Over a third of hate crimes had occurred in a public street or park, the most common location for incidents (37%). Outside, near or in the home of a respondent accounted for 27%, whilst 16% were located in the victim's home.
- Over half had been victimised when they were on their own (55%).

And they kept knocking on the door and running off. And in the end someone came to my door, smashed my door, smashed my windows, it was just terrible ... I had stuff nicked out the garden, in the shed, you know like jewellery and everything ... And then I had two three-wheeler bikes. They got nicked as well. So I have lost a lot.

Male with physical and learning disabilities

They actually did things to me, like taking me outside the train station and drawing faces on me and things like that. So it's kind of like a mental attack as well I suppose really.

Male with physical disabilities and mental ill-health

1.2 What concerns do people have about future victimisation?

In cases involving people targeted because of hostility towards their disabilities:

- Nearly all survey respondents were concerned to some degree about being the victim of verbal abuse and harassment in the future (97% and 95%, respectively).
- 88% expressed concern about becoming a victim of a violent crime in the future.
- 28% were concerned that their dress and appearance could be contributing to their victimisation, followed by ethnicity (21%) and age (18%).
- Only 1% felt that the fear of hate crime had had no impact on their quality of life. For 75% the impact was significant.

We were racially abused as well, because we were near a mosque. And we were getting the car tyres slashed every night, windows smashed, excrement thrown at the windows, my wife was actually beaten in the street, all because we lived too close to the mosque.

White Scottish male with physical disabilities

I'd find I'd only be walking down the street and I'd have Black people verbally abuse me, because I'm half-caste. It's really weird ... White people, Black people they'd try and pick on you cos, you know, you're mixed race.

Male of mixed ethnic heritage with learning disabilities

1.3 Who commits hate crime?

In cases involving people targeted because of hostility towards their disabilities:

- 75% of the most recent incidents experienced by survey respondents had been perpetrated by more than one offender, with around one in ten cases involving over five offenders (10%).
- 13% of the most recent incidents had involved offenders known to the victim as neighbours, 9% as work colleagues, 8% as acquaintances and 6% as friends. 5% involved family members.
- 73% of the most recent incidents had involved single males or groups that included males.
- 34% of the most recent incidents had involved offenders aged 13-19, while 38% involved those aged 20-30.
- 64% of the most recent incidents had involved perpetrators of White ethnicity, 16% involved Asian/Asian British perpetrators and 5% Black/Black British.

And I think [my friends] know me, they know what I've suffered from, they should have a better understanding. Sometimes it frustrates me as it makes me think 'Are they truly my friends?' And sometimes I actually think, 'Have I really got any true friends?' I just don't think I'll ever get used to how horrible people can be.

Male with physical disabilities and mental ill-health

I think people under a certain age – teenagers or early 20s – they do it because they're with two or three people and I'm on my own. It doesn't happen if I've got somebody with me.

Male with a visual impairment

2 What is the impact of victimisation?

2.1 Verbal abuse and harassment

In cases involving people targeted because of hostility towards their disabilities:

- Every single survey respondent stated that their experiences of verbal abuse and harassment had had an impact on them.
- High percentages of respondents referred to feeling vulnerable (67%), anxious (59%) and fearful (47%) as a result of the incident(s).
- 45% described feeling angry towards others and 50% stated that their experience(s) had made them distrust others.
- 55% referred to feeling depressed as a result of hate crime, with 27% feeling suicidal. The percentage of respondents feeling suicidal is significantly higher for those targeted because of their mental ill-health (46%), compared to those with learning disabilities (28%) or physical disabilities (19%).

2.2 Violent victimisation

In cases involving people targeted because of hostility towards their disabilities:

- Almost every single survey respondent stated that being a victim of property crime, sexual abuse and/or violent crime had had an impact on them (99%).
- Significant numbers referred to feeling vulnerable (67%), anxious (63%), and fearful (62%).
- Experiences of violent victimisation had made 24% of respondents turn to alcohol and drugs, 53% feel angry towards others, and 23% want to retaliate.
- Half (51%) said that violent victimisation had made them feel depressed, with 26% reporting feeling suicidal as a result.

He gets it every day. If it's every single day it grinds you down. When you've got neighbours and people who you thought were friends saying silly remarks, it does get you eventually. I don't care how strong you are, it does grind you down.

Mother talking about her gay disabled son

To be honest I thought I was untouchable until two, three years ago. I don't know why. But it's just suddenly came home to me how vulnerable I really am.

Male with physical disabilities

When I've been walking home, I have heard people on the other side of the road say 'There's that bloke with the dog'. It makes me feel so vulnerable, because they know where I live. Where does this stop?

Male with a visual impairment

I took it to heart at the time, nearly two years ago. I stopped going out for three weeks. I stopped coming to work for three weeks ... well it hit me a bit bad because I've got physical disabilities from birth. I thought, 'What chance have I got if I had tried to defend myself?'

Male with learning disabilities

3 How are agencies responding to victimisation?

3.1 Did victims report their most recent hate incident or crime to anyone?

- Survey responses highlighted that only 40% of disablist hate crime victims had reported their experiences to the police.
- The reason most frequently given for reporting an incident to the police was that it was a serious crime (70%), followed by 46% who stated that they had been targeted before.
- Very low numbers of victims had reported to a disability organisation (7%), the local council (6%), Victim Support (5%), or a housing association (5%).
- Only 9% of disablist hate crime victims had shared their experiences with a social care worker, 7% with a doctor or nurse and 6% with a teacher.
- 43% had not reported their last incident of hate crime to anyone. This was the case for 51% of those targeted because of their mental ill-health, 31% of those targeted because of their learning disabilities and 32% targeted because of their physical disabilities.
- Of those who had not reported to the police, over a quarter had not done so because they felt that the police would not take it seriously (28%).

3.2 How satisfied were victims with the support they received?

- Only 67% of victims of disablist hate crime believed that the incidents they had reported to the police had been recorded.
- Under half (46%) said that the police had investigated the most recent hate incident they had reported.
- Just 17% of the cases reported by victims targeted for their learning disabilities, physical disabilities or mental ill-health had gone to, or were in the process of going to court.

I called the police and they said there's nothing we can do because you're not under threat. I reported again, to say I wasn't satisfied. They sent an officer out who said, "Can't you find a different way to walk to the club you go to". I said "No - I haven't done anything wrong".

Male with physical disabilities

I mean, what's the point in telling them? They won't listen. Someone like you can [directed at the researcher]. If we go to anyone and report it, they make assumptions about who you are. And they won't understand.

Male with a mild learning disability

- Overall within this subset, only 46% of victims would definitely encourage others to report hate crimes to the police.
- Of those who had reported to organisations or individuals other than the police, fewer than four in ten (37%) would definitely encourage others to report to these services.
- Only 54% of disablist hate crime victims said that they were satisfied with the response from the police.
- 25% felt that the police were doing a good or excellent job of tackling hate crime in Leicester.
- However, 37% felt that the police were doing a poor or very poor job of tackling hate crime in the city, and 31% didn't know.

Victim Support was fantastic. They arranged times for us when he [the perpetrator] was out. I was in quite a state by the time I got to them, but she [Victim Support worker] would phone me every other day to make sure I was coping.

Female with multiple physical disabilities and health issues

The majority of them [the police] are very ignorant with anything to do with mental health.

Male with physical disabilities and mental ill-health



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