



University of
Leicester

The Leicester
**HATE
CRIME**
Project

Briefing Paper 3

**HOMOPHOBIC
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.

HOMOPHOBIC 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 from lesbian, gay and bisexual communities who felt that they had been targeted because of their sexual orientation. This briefing paper, the third 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 homophobic and biphobic 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 from lesbian, gay and bisexual communities. 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 homophobic hate crime victims

The survey was completed by 130 people who had been targeted because of hostility towards their sexual orientation, while an additional 24 homophobic hate crime victims took part in individual interviews. What follows is a demographic breakdown of the profile of this subset of participants.

Age

Age	Total sample ¹	Proportion of total sample (%) ^{2,3}
Under 18	10	6
18 to 24	69	45
25 to 34	32	21
35 to 44	19	12
45 to 54	12	8
55 to 64	7	5
65 to 74	2	1
Not stated	3	2

¹ This includes all of the survey respondents and interview participants who felt that they had been victimised because of their sexual orientation.

² This is the percentage for the total sample of homophobic 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	78	51
Female	76	49
Not stated	0	0

Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Total sample	Proportion of total sample (%)
White British	113	73
White Irish	4	3
Eastern European	1	1
Western European	5	3
Any other White background	6	4
Black African	3	2
Asian/Asian British	6	4
Indian	6	4
Chinese	1	1
White and Asian	2	1
Any other mixed background	3	2
Prefer not to say	1	1

Religion

Religion	Total sample ⁴	Proportion of total sample (%)
Christianity	14	40
Hinduism	4	11
Islam	7	20
Other	2	6
Prefer not to say	3	9
Not stated	5	14

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

⁵ 'Other' responses included 'Catholic' (n=1) and 'Not stated' (n=1), which was due to a respondent selecting the 'Other' category but then not stating what their religion was.

Sexual Orientation

Sexual Orientation	Total sample	Proportion of total sample (%)
Heterosexual (straight)	10	6
Gay	67	44
Lesbian	41	27
Bisexual	24	16
Asexual	1	1
Pansexual	1	1
Undecided	3	2
Prefer not to say	5	3
Not stated	2	1

1 What is the nature and extent of homophobic hate crime?

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

Of those targeted because of hostility towards their sexual orientation:

- Almost all survey respondents had been a victim of verbal abuse (95%).
- 78% had been a victim of harassment (bullying, threatening behaviour).
- There was a noticeable disparity between the rates by which people experienced cyberbullying, with higher proportions of bisexual and gay male respondents targeted in this way (70% and 53% respectively) compared with gay women (20%).
- Just under half had been the victim of violent hate crime at least once (46%).
- A fifth of respondents had experienced sexual violence (25%). Around a quarter stated that their most recent incident had involved harassment (28%).
- The most common site of victimisation was a public street or park (32%), followed by a bar or nightclub (23%).
- Four in ten had been victimised when they were on their own (42%), whilst three in ten had been victimised in the company of friends (28%).

He hit my gay friend, straight round the face and said something like, "Oh fuck off you faggot!" or something like that. He did it because he was gay.

Gay woman

As he cleared the back of his throat, I looked up, and the spit literally went straight across that side of my face.

Gay man with mental ill-health

1.2 What concerns do people have about future victimisation?

Of those targeted because of hostility towards their sexual orientation:

- The vast majority of survey respondents were concerned about being both verbally abused and harassed on the basis of their sexual orientation again in the future (97% and 95% respectively).
- Nine out of ten were concerned about being the victim of violent homophobia in the future (95%).
- 85% were concerned about being a future victim of targeted hostility that involved sexual violence.
- 95% said that their quality of life had been affected by the fear of hate crime.

1.3 Who commits hate crime?

Of those targeted because of hostility towards their sexual orientation:

- Over a quarter of survey respondents had been targeted by a lone perpetrator (28%).
- Gay men were more likely to have been victimised by a group of three or more people (52%), compared to gay women (42%) and bisexual respondents (26%).
- 64% of the most recent incidents had involved a perpetrator who was a stranger to the victim.
- The majority of cases had involved at least one male perpetrator (86%).
- The majority of incidents had involved perpetrators who were young. At least one offender aged 13-19 was involved in 37% of the incidents while 56% of cases involved someone aged 20-30.
- 69% of incidents had involved perpetrators who were of White ethnicity.

Male, heterosexual obviously, anti-gay, anti-HIV, anti-everything, White.

Gay man

It can be single lads on their own, even girls, older people, younger people. You can't really put a sort of picture on that person.

Gay man

2 What is the impact of victimisation?

2.1 Verbal abuse and harassment

Of those targeted because of hostility towards their sexual orientation:

- Only 4% of survey respondents said that being a victim of verbal abuse and/or harassment had had no impact on them.
- A wide range of impacts were referred to which ranged from feeling upset to feeling angry, fearful and depressed as a result of their victimisation.
- 54% said that their experience(s) had made them feel anxious, while 45% described feeling vulnerable as a result of their victimisation.
- Nine in ten said that they had changed some aspect of their life in order to feel safer and reduce the risk of victimisation (92%).
- Nearly three quarters had avoided certain areas (72%), over two thirds had hidden their sexual orientation (68%) and nearly a quarter had changed the way they looked or dressed (23%) as a result of their victimisation.

It made me feel small, insignificant, like nothing mattered. I didn't matter, I was just a gay person, get used to it.

Gay man

It stops you going anywhere. It's everywhere you go and it isn't because you are being hypersensitive, but you just know something is gonna happen. I have to keep away from certain people.

Gay man

The stuff they're saying about you is stuff you fought for years. To be comfortable in your own skin. To come out and say "This is who I am and I'm happy with it". So when it does happen it's something you can't change but it's something you struggle to accept.

Gay youth

2.2 Violent victimisation

Of those targeted because of hostility towards their sexual orientation:

- 99% of survey respondents stated that being a victim of a violent or sexual hate crime had had some form of impact on them.
- Two thirds said that being targeted through a more extreme form of victimisation had made them feel vulnerable (61%). The same proportion referred to feeling fearful (61%) and a similar number had felt anxious since their victimisation (58%).
- 43% said that their experiences had made them feel depressed.
- A quarter stated that they had wanted to move house (26%) as a result of their victimisation. A similar percentage stated that their experience made them want to move to a different city altogether (22%).

There was quite a few of our volunteers that saw it and yeah, I got angry, really angry, to the point I nearly flew at him. I wanted to punch his head in.

Gay man

It was terrible, it was very dark point in my life. I felt like I just wanted to end it. It was just hatred every single day. To make it even worse the family weren't even that supportive. They were probably the worst.

Gay youth

I think it's sad for me to say I'm not going out any more cos we end up in too much trouble that we didn't start.

Gay woman

3 How are agencies responding to victimisation?

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

- Reporting rates were low amongst this subset of victims, with 69% stating that they had not reported their most recent experience of hate crime to any organisation.
- 16% of gay men had reported their most recent incident of hate crime to the police, which was a slightly higher rate than for gay women (11%) and bisexual respondents (9%).
- Of those victims who had not reported their most recent experiences to the police, the most frequent explanation was that the police would not take it seriously (30%).
- Only 7% had reported their most recent incident to an LGB organisation.

[Reporting depends upon] whether I could be bothered I suppose, as I say, I've developed more of a thickened skin to it all now ... I think a lot of it depends how many people are around and might have heard it and seen it. If it's in a quiet place where it's just one on one, maybe I wouldn't bother to report.

Gay woman

I feel it's like a no win situation if I report. If like there's two incidents in one night, my name keep cropping up, it looks like I'm some sort of trouble maker or I'm out with the wrong sort of crowd.

Gay woman

3.2 How satisfied were victims with the support they received?

- Two-thirds of LGB survey respondents would encourage others to report hate crimes to the police (67%).
- Of those who had reported to organisations or individuals other than the police, nearly two thirds (62%) would encourage others to report to these services.
- Four in ten of those victims who felt that they had been targeted because of their sexual orientation were satisfied with their response from the police (39%).
- Approximately a quarter of LGB respondents felt that the police were doing a good or excellent job of tackling hate crime in Leicester (28%).
- However, around a third of gay men and bisexual respondents (36% and 35% respectively) and just under a fifth of gay women (17%) felt the police were doing a poor or very poor job of tackling hate crime in the city.

They were really good actually, they came and followed up a couple of days later. I think they purposely sent out a gay copper to my house, to set an example. I was surprised how good they were, they were really good.

Gay man

When you like talk to the police up town, they ask you all these questions that have nothing to do with the incident. When they're talking to you they ask you if you've done drugs, alcohol. It's just like I might have drank a little bit, but to assume I do drugs is a whole lot of extreme. And when they do start asking questions and you start answering them, and re-wording it, they keep asking the same questions, keep re-wording it, like trying to catch you out.

Gay youth

I went to Victim Support. I'd gone to see him [Victim Support worker] like three or four times before he mentioned that this would make a brilliant story, and could he use it in his thesis. And I was like "Ok, whatever". He made me feel that he was just using me to pass an exam. I didn't get any help.

Gay man with mental ill-health



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