

| What is a hate crime?



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A hate crime is a crime committed against a person or people because of a particular group they belong to – such as women, lesbians, gay men and bisexual people, trans people, Black and minority ethnic people, Jewish people, Muslim people and so on.

Of course, many of us belong to more than one of these groups. In hate crimes individuals or groups are attacked because the perpetrator is motivated by hatred for their group or community, or uses it against them, or exploits a perceived vulnerability. Homophobic and transphobic attacks send a message of violence to all members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) communities and aim to instil fear in us.

A homophobic or transphobic hate crime is an incident which constitutes a criminal offence, which is perceived by the victim, or any other person as being motivated by homophobia or transphobia. The Metropolitan police now record homophobic and transphobic hate crimes using a specific 'flag' for these offences. Between 2001 and 2006 the Metropolitan Police recorded an average of over 1400 homophobic and transphobic hate crimes per year. However, research by organisations such as Galop and Stonewall suggest that many more homophobic and transphobic crimes and incidents go unreported (not all incidents are crimes).

Hate crime can take many different forms. It can include physical violence and threats but also include incidents of verbal and written abuse which can also have serious effects on people. Below are some of the most common types.

Physical or verbal abuse

This is an attack or abuse directed at a person because they are, or are perceived to be, lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans. Homophobic or transphobic physical or verbal violence occurs in the home, at school and college, at work, and in public. It

ranges from threatening looks and name-calling, to physical violence that needs medical attention, or could even result in death. Often homophobic or transphobic insults or threats accompany the violence.

Even if you feel homophobic or transphobic insults are common, it is worth reporting them to Galop or the police. They will be logged as homophobic or transphobic incidents and help build up a picture of what LGBT people are dealing with. Repeated insults from the same person can be considered harassment, and could result in a warning, caution or charge for the perpetrator.

We encourage all LGBT people to tell us about serious assaults, even if anonymously. This allows us to issue an alert, for example on cruising grounds or near pubs or bars. It also means that we can spot if there is a serial offender, and ensure the police understand the level of crime experienced by our communities, and therefore commit enough resources.

Physical abuse can also include sexual abuse or rape. You can find out more about what to do following a sexually abusive incident and where to get help, by reading our 'Sexual Abuse' factsheet, or by speaking with our specialist sexual abuse caseworker.

Harassment

Harassment may be hate mail, phone calls, texts, emails, graffiti, repeated name calling, following, pestering or repeated theft or damage to property. Though physical violence often has devastating

effects on people, harassment can be very damaging to the victim too as they feel constantly unsafe. Always keep all evidence of harassment, such as recordings of phone calls, notes or letters (which could also contain fingerprint or saliva evidence) and keep a record of incidents and when they occurred. Harassment may take place in your home, your local neighbourhood, your place of work, school, or college. You can find out more about your options if you are experiencing harassment by reading our factsheet 'harassment'. You can also call our Shoutline to talk about your options.

Domestic Abuse

LGBT people can and do experience domestic abuse and hate crime within their own home. It can occur between current or former intimate partners, the family and anyone you share your home with including housemates or a landlord. It can take the form of any kind of threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse. This includes forced marriage, abuse relating to gender identity or sexuality and so-called honour based violence. For more information on Domestic Abuse see the separate Galop factsheet or see the information on the website about the Domestic Abuse Project (DAP).

Young people

Young LGBT people can often experience high levels of homophobic or transphobic hate crime at school or college, though it is often referred to homophobic or transphobic bullying. Young LGBT

people can be especially vulnerable because they may feel isolated and reluctant to get help because they fear being 'outed' or don't want to involve the police in incidents experienced at home or school. If you are a young person experiencing homophobic or transphobic hate crime you can get advice and support from Galop in confidence.

Witnessing an incident

If you witness a homophobic or transphobic incident or crime it is valuable if you make a report as you may have vital details that could help solve a case or arrest a perpetrator. If you do not want to do this in person you can do it anonymously via Galop either by calling our helpline or filling in an anonymous report form on our website. Your report could help prevent further violence.

If you have experienced or witnessed these or any other type of homophobic or transphobic hate crime it is important that you tell someone. If you live in Greater London, you can contact Galop for help and advice, including assistance reporting to the police (anonymously if you prefer). Alternatively Galop can put you in contact with your local LGBT police liaison officer or Community Safety Unit.

Contact Galop on: 020 7704 2040

Always dial 999 if it is an emergency and you think you are in immediate danger.