

# A guide to diary sheets



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Contains information about:

 **Hate Crime**

# A guide to diary sheets

This information sheet answers some questions about keeping diary sheets to record hate crime, abuse or anti social behaviour happening where you live. If you're a lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans person and you want to discuss your situation further, call Galop in confidence on 020 7704 2040.

## What are diary sheets?

A diary sheet is a form you can use to record details about an ongoing problem where you live. The idea is to fill it in each time something happens. There is a diary sheet at the end of this document which you can print out and use.

Your housing officer may ask you to fill in a diary sheet to gather information about harassment or anti-social behaviour, such as noise nuisance. Although diary sheets are not proof in themselves they can help build up a picture of what's going on.

## What's the point?

Hopefully the problem won't last long, but if it does, it's easy to forget things that happened months before. If you speak to a Galop caseworker or housing officer, a detailed list of incidents will give them the tools to help you. Well completed diary sheets also give you a better chance of action being taken against a neighbour or getting moved.

Sometimes writing down incidents in a diary sheet can also help you; it's less stressful and upsetting than trying to keep hold of information in your head and having to recall events over and over again. Some general pointers

- Include everything. Writing about a "a young man" may help, but "a man in his early twenties, wearing glasses with long dark hair" is much more useful. You don't have to write reams but try to be specific as possible – e.g. the time of day the incident happened or exactly what someone said or did to you.
- Fill it in as soon afterwards as possible – on the same day if possible. That way it will be fresh in your mind. The details about what someone looked like or what they said can be difficult to remember, even half an hour later.

- Stick with it. Having a record of what's happening is important, even if you have trouble staying motivated. If there are periods where nothing happens, that's great. Alternatively, forgetting to record things that are going on makes it look like nothing happened, so it's in your interest to keep on top of it.
- Try to write clearly. Don't worry if you have trouble with handwriting or spelling. Just try to make sure it can be understood. If you're worried about your writing, there are other options such as filling it out on a computer, writing in your first language or asking someone to write for you.

## What Should I Include?

Organisations often ask you to fill in their own diary sheets and you fill it in as they have requested.

However it might also be useful to include the following:

### What did they say?

Try to write the exact words used in any verbal abuse. The words might be upsetting, but an exact record is more effective than just saying they used homophobic, transphobic or abusive language.

### Where?

Without a brief description of where it happened, the person reading it doesn't know if it happened on the bus or in your living room. If it was outside, try to include street names.

### Witnesses?

If someone else was with you or heard an incident,

that can be very powerful evidence. Record their name and any other details you have for them. It would be ideal to get them to fill out a separate diary sheet themselves.

### **Who did it?**

If you don't know the name or address of someone abusing you, it's important to describe what they look like. Try to describe anything you remember including:

- Clothing
- Rough age and gender
- Rough height and build (slim, muscled etc.)
- Hair, skin and eye colour
- Accent
- Any glasses, jewellery or facial hair
- Tattoos, piercings or scars (including a description, which body part and right or left)

### **Writing About How It Affected You**

The Galop diary sheet includes a column to write about any impacts of the incident on you. This can be a factor in deciding what options you have with moving. Also a court might use it to decide what action to take against the perpetrator. The information you include could be about practical impacts, such as not being able to sleep or emotional impacts such as feeling depressed or stressed.

### **Reporting It**

The last column on the Galop diary sheet lets you record whether you reported it to anyone. If you report to the police, they should give you a reference number which is important to hang onto. If you phone or email your housing officer about the incident, it would be worth recording the date you did it here also. If you are asked to hand in your diary sheets it's advisable to make a photocopy and also get a receipt from the person you've handed it to. A Galop caseworker can give you advice about recording something that happened and may be able to help you report it on your behalf. For more information see our fact sheet, 'Why Report?'.

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

# Incident Diary Sheet



Sheet number:

Name:

Address:

| Date | Time<br>(Include duration) | What happened?<br>(What words were used? Where? Who? Any witnesses? Car registration?) | How did it affect you?<br>(Practical or emotional) | Did you report it?<br>(How and who to? Reference number?) |
|------|----------------------------|--|--|---|
|      |                            |  |  |   |

Signature:

Date: