



No Place for Hate

Hate crimes and incidents in further and higher education: disability



national union of students



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Foreword

Going to college or university offers disabled people a life changing experience. It offers the chance to get that all important qualification, allowing them to progress into further study or work. It also provides the opportunity to develop independent living skills, make new friends and enjoy campus or city life.

This positive experience can be destroyed when disabled students are targeted by antisocial behaviour or crime because of their impairment. Unfortunately, this report shows that these negative experiences are a reality for some students.

This NUS report contains some disturbing findings. It shows how many disabled students live in fear of being the victims of hate incidents. It also highlights the fact that some disabled students try to conceal their impairment or alter their behaviour or routines to avoid abuse and violence.

Colleges and universities have traditionally been thought of as bastions of free thought and liberal ideals and it is perhaps even more shocking that many of these incidents occur in and around college or university campuses, perpetrated by fellow students.

The impact of hate is far-reaching, with almost half of victims reporting mental distress as a result of a hate crime or incident. Respondents spoke of depression, fear and isolation brought on by these experiences, as well as a detrimental impact on their studies. Many, for example, described how they had considered dropping out of education after a hate incident and we might infer that a sizeable proportion of students do so every year.

Hate incidents also have broader implications. They affect the recipient, but also their family, friends and the wider community both on and off campus. These experiences encourage mistrust, alienation and suspicion in student bodies and wider society, often resulting in isolation.

While it is vital that further and higher education institutions prevent serious forms of hate crime such as physical assault, it is equally important to address low-level hate activity. This NUS research and the Equality and Human Rights Commission report “Hidden in plain sight” published in September 2011, found that these incidents, particularly if persistent, often have major repercussions on the recipient’s long-term mental health. And while these incidents may not necessarily constitute criminal offences, the acceptance of these types of behaviour – such as tolerating the use of degrading language – can create an environment in which conduct may escalate from ‘mere’ words to threats, vandalism and violence.

No student should be subjected to any form of hate incident or hate crime and it is therefore integral that real action is taken. This report offers clear and practical approaches for institutions, students’ unions and sector bodies to work together to prevent hate incidents and crime which are wrongfully destroying the aspirations of many disabled students.

In Unity

Rupy Kaur
NUS Disabled Students Officer

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Executive summary

This report is one of a series of four reports produced by NUS, which explore the extent and nature of hate incidents among students across the UK. While this report focuses on the experience of disabled students, the other reports focus on lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) students, black and minority ethnic students and students with a religion or belief. The reports are part of a larger project funded by the Home Office to reduce student victimisation.

Across the four reports we found that 16 per cent of all respondents had experienced at least one form of hate incident at their current institution. Moreover, compared to victims of non-bias incidents, those who experienced hate incidents were more likely to be repeatedly victimised and suffer more negative effects as a result. Despite this, few of these hate incidents were reported to authorities and consequently the affected students received little support from their institution or law enforcement agencies.

These reports can be downloaded in full at:
www.nus.org.uk

About the research and respondents

Our research gathered the views of 9,229 students from across both higher education (HE) and further education (FE) sectors. It is the first nationwide student-specific research into hate crime of this scale.

Respondents were asked to report victimisation under a range of categories, and were then asked to indicate whether or not they believed the incident to be motivated, or partly motivated, by the perpetrator's prejudice against their membership, or presumed membership, of the following protected characteristics: race/ethnicity, religion/belief, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity. This allowed us to compare bias and non-bias incidents.

The majority of those surveyed (89 per cent) were studying in England. Six per cent were studying in Wales, two per cent in Scotland and three per cent in Northern Ireland.

Sixty-eight per cent of our respondents were at university while 28 per cent were at a further education or sixth form college. Smaller percentages were studying at adult and community learning providers, work-based learning providers or specialist colleges.

The majority of respondents were studying at Level three or above. Twenty eight per cent were studying at Level three (A-Levels, Advanced apprenticeships), 58 per cent at Level four (Bachelors degree) and 11 per cent at level five (Masters, PhD).

Eleven per cent (1,001) of the total sample considered themselves to have a health condition, impairment, disability or learning difference. Throughout the report we have used the term 'disabled student' although we recognise that not all students with a health condition, impairment, disability or learning difference would necessarily identify with this term.

The following summarises the headline findings of our research into students who have been targeted, or are worried about being targeted, because of prejudice against their impairment.

Key findings

Fears of becoming a victim

Thirty-three per cent of respondents with a physical impairment and 27 per cent of those with a sensory impairment were 'fairly worried' about being subject to abuse. This was higher than any other groups of disabled respondents. This is likely to be because physical and sensory impairments are often more immediately visible or apparent than other types of disability.

"I will often attempt to walk about without my walking aids (crutches, walking stick) because of the stares and comments made ... I have in the past had people kick my walking aids out of the way as a 'joke.'"

Forty-three per cent of disabled students altered their behaviour, personal appearance or daily patterns in an attempt to avoid hate incidents. This often meant going out less, which in some cases led to respondents becoming socially withdrawn and isolated. Some tried to conceal their impairment, sometimes to the extent of causing themselves pain.

"I avoid doing almost all my normal activities due to discrimination and harassment I have faced as someone with schizophrenia. This includes seeking help from academic tutors and staff, as several have made very extreme statements about my schizophrenia in the past, including that I 'should be institutionalised', and that I am 'unfit to study at [university name removed]' due to my disability."

The extent and nature of hate incidents

Eight per cent of disabled respondents said that they had experienced at least one hate incident while studying at their current institution, which they believed was motivated by prejudice against their disability.

Respondents with physical and sensory impairments were significantly more likely to experience disability-related prejudice than respondents with other impairments. As discussed earlier, this is likely to be due to the visible nature of their impairment.

"My walking aids were kicked out from under me and stolen."

Twenty-four per cent of students with a physical impairment and 15 per cent with a sensory impairment stated they had experienced antisocial behaviour or crime motivated by a prejudice against their disability.

Twelve per cent of respondents with a mental health condition and the same proportion with a learning difference had experienced at least one disability-related incident during their studies.

Verbal abuse was the most common form of hate incident reported in the survey, although students also experienced: physical abuse; vandalism, property damage and theft; distribution or display of offensive material; and abusive, threatening or insulting written communication.

"I always used to stay quiet in class because [other students] used to make snarky comments when I talked about my sexuality and my mental condition so I just totally shut off from everyone in the lesson and I get scared when the teacher asks a question now."

We also found that students who experienced disability hate incidents were more likely to be repeatedly victimised than those who had experienced incidents that were not motivated by the fact the recipient was disabled. This correlates with findings in the Equality and Human Rights Commission's report "Hidden in plain sight", which found that many disabled people experience repeat harassment.

Location of incidents and perpetrator profiles

A large proportion of incidents occurred in or around the institution and/or learning environment. This is true particularly for verbal and physical abuse. On a more positive note, almost no hate incidents were reported to have taken place within students' unions. Vandalism, property damage or theft predominantly occurred at or near the victim's home.

The majority of incidents occurred in the afternoon and evening, with only 11 per cent occurring between 10pm and 6am.

Sixty-six per cent of incidents involved more than one perpetrator. Perpetrators were typically aged 16–24, were white and were strangers to the recipient.

In 56 per cent of incidents, the perpetrator/s was known to be a student or students. Of these, 85 per cent were fellow students at the same college or university.

“It is difficult going into uni and facing them each day – they seem very competitive and hostile at times. I never know how they will treat me. It makes study difficult.”

Reporting incidents to authorities

Reporting levels of disability hate crime and hate incidents were extremely low. Twenty-one per cent of disability hate incidents were reported to an official at the university or college. However, only 12 per cent of disability hate incidents were reported to the police.

Although reporting was low, a number of respondents took the opportunity to describe the positive response of their educational institution.

“The matter was dealt with promptly and the writing in the toilets [was] quickly removed and ... signs put up to say that this would not be tolerated and anyone caught doing this would be reported to the police and charged.”

While the survey did not seek views on whether the police had responded effectively or not to reports of hate incidents and hate crime, some students described negative experiences.

“The police were not the least bit interested, despite the fact that I had just fled from a crime ... they were not very sympathetic.”

The most common reason for not reporting the incident to the police was the belief that the police could not or would not do anything (45 per cent). The other major reason, accounting for 40 per cent of incidents, was that student did not consider the incident to be serious enough to warrant the attention of the police.

Respondents who experienced hate-related incidents were more likely to have personal concerns and fears about reporting them than students who experienced

similar, albeit unprejudiced, incidents. Victims of hate incidents were in particular more likely to cite feelings of shame and embarrassment, fear of reprisals and retribution and concern over having to disclose personal details as reasons for not reporting.

“How do you report a lone incident without the perpetrator knowing and spreading it around? I’d be even more alienated!”

The impact on victims

Victims of disability-related hate incidents were much more likely than victims of non-bias incidents to describe problems as a result of their experience, particularly in terms of mental distress, disruption to studies and interacting socially with peers.

“I had panic attacks at the thought of going to uni, thinking [hate-related behaviour] would happen again.”

Victims of disability hate incidents were more than four times more likely to report mental health issues as a result of the incident than students experiencing non-bias incidents. These included high levels of depression, anxiety, difficulty sleeping and other symptoms of post-traumatic stress.

Twenty-seven per cent of victims reported that hate incidents had had a negative impact on their studies. In addition, these experiences affected their participation in university or college social activities such as clubs, sports and societies.

Those who had experienced disability hate incidents also talked about how they considered leaving their course as a result.

“I am applying to other courses and want to leave this university.”

In one in four disability hate incidents the respondent stated this had affected their social acceptance of other groups.

“I have fast learned who I can trust ... I have lost friends and I have felt in fear of who I can trust.”

Recommendations

The following 10 recommendations are aimed at further education (FE) and higher education (HE) institutions and organisations working with them. However, they may be useful to law enforcement practitioners and agencies as well as students' unions. We hope that these recommendations will be considered by all colleges and universities and will help in the development of a cross-sector strategy to tackle hate and prejudice experienced by students across the UK. The recommendations are listed again at the end of the report in more detail.

1. Demonstrate a firm commitment to equality and diversity

FE and HE institutions should demonstrate a strong commitment towards equality and diversity and work to celebrate these values through clear and widely publicised codes of conduct, equality and diversity policies, and complaint and reporting procedures. Institutions should consider setting a specific objective on tackling hate crime as part of their public sector equality duty.

2. Develop preventative and educational activity on prejudice and hate

Colleges and universities should work to foster good relations among students and raise awareness of what constitutes a hate incident and the negative impact of this behaviour on the victim and others. This needs to include the impact that low-level incidents might have on individuals and their mental health. This could take the form of discussion and interactive work within the classroom, as well as through events that celebrate diversity and encourage integration.

3. Prevent or mitigate perpetrator behaviour

FE and HE institutions must make clear that hate-related behaviour is not acceptable, through the active enforcement of student codes of conduct and the institution of zero-tolerance policies.

4. Establish multi-agency, joined-up approaches to tackling hate

Colleges and universities should work to establish partnerships with local police authorities, voluntary sector organisations and authorities to develop a cross-sector strategy to reduce hate within, as well as outside, the institution.

5. Strengthen existing support services

FE and HE institutions should ensure that those working in their counseling and advice services are aware of the mental health impact of hate incidents and recognise that even low-level incidents can have serious implications for victims' self-esteem and self-confidence.

6. Establish strong support networks for disabled students

Disabled student clubs and societies often act as a support network for students who may be, or have been, victims of hate incidents and should therefore be provided with financial backing and support to ensure open access to their services. Colleges, universities and students' unions should also ensure that disabled student clubs and societies are well connected to wider support services within their institution.

7. Encourage reporting of, and maintain systematic records on, hate incidents

Many respondents did not report incidents because they believed them to be too trivial, or that reporting would not make a difference. Students need to know that hate incidents are taken seriously and that reporting them influences preventative work within institutions and in wider society, as well as potentially leading to disciplinary action against perpetrators.

8. Provide flexible options to report hate incidents

Colleges and universities should establish a variety of mechanisms for reporting hate incidents. This might include self-reporting online and on-campus reporting and advice centres, as well as publicising third party reporting through other agencies.

9. Promote greater confidence in reporting mechanisms

Better protocols for interviewing and debriefing people who have experienced hate incidents are needed, together with assurances of confidentiality for victims, who often fear reprisals. Victims should be assured that their reports will be taken seriously and consistently and thoroughly investigated and recorded.

10. Clear guidance on existing legislative framework

It is vital that guidance on what constitutes a hate crime, the rights of victims, and the criminal justice procedure itself, is developed and made available to students and their support networks.

Introduction

Research into hate crime in the UK has been a relatively recent field of study, largely emerging in the last decade alongside the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry. However, little attention has been paid to disability hate crime in particular, and less has focused on disabled students' experiences.

Disability hate crime has come to the fore through a number of cases that have involved the death of disabled people, which have been reported in the UK media. Most notable among these was the death of Fiona Pilkington and her daughter Francecca Hardwick who were found in the family's burned-out car close to their home in 2007. The inquest concluded that Fiona had killed herself and her daughter "due to the stress and anxiety regarding her daughter's future, and ongoing antisocial behaviour".

In September 2011 the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) published 'Hidden in plain sight', which outlined the findings from its inquiry into disability harassment, a term they used to encompass everything from name calling to physical violence. The report highlighted that harassment of disabled people is not confined to just a few extreme cases.

*"For many disabled people, harassment is an unwelcome part of everyday life. Many come to accept it as inevitable, and focus on living with it as best they can."*¹

The report touched on some of the experiences of college students and school pupils but was much broader in its remit. Our report attempts to plug the gap by focusing specifically on the experiences of disabled students in both further education (FE) and higher education (HE).

Definitions

In this report, we examine the data collected from students who have experienced incidents of crime, harassment or victimisation that have been motivated by a prejudice towards their disability. We use the terms 'disability hate incident' and 'disability hate crime' throughout this report. The definitions of which are below:

Disability hate incident

"Any incident, which is perceived to be based upon prejudice towards, or hatred of, the victim because of their disability – or so perceived by the victim or any other person".

This is a definition used by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) together with the Crown Prosecution Service. It is not a statutory definition.²

Disability hate crime

"A criminal offence motivated by hatred or prejudice towards a person because of their actual or perceived disability."

(section 146, Criminal Justice Act 2003).³

What is a disability hate crime?

Disability hate crime cannot be defined by a single form of conduct, as other crimes are, but encompasses various forms of conduct including:

- verbal abuse and harassment
- threats of violence or threatening behaviour
- physical abuse
- vandalism, property damage or theft
- the production and dissemination of hostile material (eg leaflets and graffiti)
- abusive, insulting or threatening written communication intended to harass or distress.

It is the perpetrator's motivation behind the conduct that is important. If the conduct is motivated by the fact the victim is disabled then it can be defined as a disability hate crime. It is important to note that the definition also encompasses incidents in which the offender perceives the victim as disabled.

The harm suffered by the individual may be physical as well as emotional, and may have long-term repercussions on their behaviour and well-being. The impact on students is potentially life-changing. Some may not receive the grades they aspire to, while others may drop out of college or university without achieving the qualifications they are capable of getting. The knock-on effect impacts on students' employability, and ultimately their quality of life.

Although some incidents of hate amount to criminal acts, research suggests that many incidents appear to be neither strictly criminal nor hateful⁴. Rather, existing literature suggests that perpetrators often use degrading language out of ignorance, eg on the basis of belief in stereotypes or to win respect from their peers. It is clear from our research that many incidents tend to be 'everyday' occurrences which are not, in isolation, perceived by the perpetrators to cause any real detriment. Indeed, it is evident that many incidents occur among a broad spectrum of society, including among students, and that they enjoy social acceptance.

Given that many who experience hate incidents fall into a minority group, it follows that the majority of perpetrators of hate crime belong to a dominant social group. As the Crown Prosecution Service reports, in 2008–09 some 78 per cent of defendants in disability hate crime prosecutions were white British⁵ and 79 per cent were males.⁶

Existing legislation

The Criminal Justice Act

In April 2005 the law was changed by section 146 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 (CJA). Section 146 did not create any new offences; instead it imposed a duty upon courts to increase the sentence for any offence aggravated by hostility based on the victim's disability (or presumed disability).

Therefore, when an offender has pleaded guilty or been found guilty and the court is deciding on the sentence to be imposed, it must treat evidence of hostility based on disability as something that makes the offence more serious.

Although section 146 is an important legal move forward for the prevention of disability hate crime, it did not create a specific primary offence of hate crime based on disability, as the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 sections 29–32 did for certain racially and religiously aggravated crimes.

Under the 1998 Act the question of whether the defendant displayed hostility is part of proving the wrongdoing itself.⁷ Under the 2003 Act, however, hostility is not relevant to the wrongdoing, but only to sentencing after the wrongdoing has been proved. This means that while the law recognises hostility as part of the offence in certain cases of racially or religiously aggravated hate crime, in cases of disability hate crime it does not.

The fact that sentences may be increased where hatred against an individual's impairment is the motivating factor signals the seriousness of the offence. However, for this to act as a deterrent the public needs to be aware of this legal provision. Furthermore, the

application of section 146 is described by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) as: “patchy, linked to widespread failings in the system to recognise a victim’s disability as motivation for crime.”⁸

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities

The UK ratified the convention in June 2009. Specifically article 16 in the convention set out how disabled people should have the right to freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse. In affect article 16, means that the UK Government is required to take a wide range of measures to prevent exploitation, violence and abuse of disabled people, and to investigate and prosecute those responsible.

The Equality Act 2010

The Act provides legal protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation for disabled people including students. In addition the Act includes a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) for public authorities, including further and higher education institutions. The PSED obliges institutions to have due regard to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Incitement

The legal frameworks for both England and Wales and in Scotland contain offences for incitement on the basis of racial or religious hatred. The same does not apply to disability.

The EHRC suggested in “Hidden from plain sight” that this should reviewed to establish if a similar incitement offence should be introduced. This would create parity with other identity-based crime and also respond to occurrences of cyber bullying.

Schedule 21

“Hidden from plain sight” also highlighted an inherent problem with the sentencing framework for disability-related murders in England and Wales.

Under Schedule 21, which sets out the basic starting points for sentencing for murder, the minimum starting point for racist or homophobic murders is 30 years. Murders motivated by hostility to disability are not included in Schedule 21, resulting in a much lower starting point of 15 years. This disparity sends out the message that disabled people are valued considerably less than other minority groups and many have urged the Government to amend the schedule.

At the time of printing (December 2011) the Government has announced that it will seek to amend the schedule, bringing minimum sentence for disability-motivated murders in line with other hate crime murders. It is expected that this will be done through the Government’s Legal Aid Bill.

Reporting and prosecutions

While the existing literature has pointed to the discrepancies in laws against disability hate crime as a key factor in limiting prosecutions, Roulstone et al, have furthermore argued that the unequal levels of attention paid to certain categories of hate crime inadvertently creates “hierarchies of credibility” and risks “ignoring or downplaying the significance of intersectionality in understanding disablism.”⁹

The police and the criminal justice system in general have struggled to respond to hate crime, due in part to underreporting.¹⁰ There are many reasons why hate incidents are not reported, as discussed in the ‘Reporting of hate incidents’ section of this report. Even when hate crimes and incidents are reported, prosecutions are often thwarted by the lack of an ‘essential legal element’,¹¹ reflecting holes in the law.

There were 1,402 recorded disability hate crimes across England, Wales and Northern Ireland during 2009, according to recent figures published by the Association of Chief Police Officers.¹² Yet only 393 people were prosecuted for disability hate crime in 2008–09, compared to 11,624 people for racial and religiously aggravated crimes.¹³

Methodology

Between October 2010 and February 2011, NUS conducted an online survey of 9,229 students across the UK. Eleven per cent (1,001) of the total sample considered themselves to have a health condition, impairment, disability or learning difference

The survey examined students' knowledge and understanding of hate crimes, their awareness of current initiatives on campus and their experiences of antisocial behaviour and crime, including verbal abuse or threats of violence; physical mistreatment; vandalism or property damage; burglary, robbery or theft; distribution or display of abusive, threatening or insulting material; and abusive, threatening or insulting written communication intended to distress or harass.

The survey was developed after extensive research into existing data on hate crime in the UK and best practice in conducting surveys of this nature, including the British Crime Survey and the National Crime Victimization Survey. The study was open to all students then studying in post-16 education in the UK.

Although information was collected on all incidents reported, respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they believed the incident to be motivated, or partly motivated, by the perpetrator's prejudice towards them based on their presumed or actual:

- race, ethnicity or national origin
- religion or belief
- disability
- sexual orientation
- gender identity
- association with persons with a certain race or ethnicity, religion or belief, disability, sexual orientation and/or gender identity
- or for another reason.

For every incident type reported, the respondent was asked a series of follow-up questions concerning the details of the incident and perpetrator/s, whether or not they reported it and to whom, and the impact they believed the experience had upon them. The follow-up questions for each incident type was identical, allowing us to compile data across all incident types and provide aggregate statistics on the incidents and their perpetrators, reporting and impact. This report largely provides statistics as a percentage of incidents reported, though when relevant it also includes discussion on individual types of incidents and the percentage of respondents who experienced these.

Understanding hate incidents and fears of victimisation

“Because I am able to ‘pass’ as my health condition is not immediately visible, I generally attempt to hide it, even to the detriment of my health eg avoiding use of mobility aids, avoiding asking for special treatment.”

This section looks at the extent to which disabled students are worried about becoming victims of hate incidents and how this worry affects their lives.

Key findings

- Thirty-three per cent of respondents with a physical impairment and 27 per cent with a sensory impairment were 'fairly worried' about being subject to abuse – more than any other groups of respondents. This is perhaps because physical and sensory impairments are more immediately visible or otherwise apparent than the other types of disability.
- Forty-three per cent of respondents who consider themselves to have a health condition, impairment or disability altered their behaviour, personal appearance or daily patterns to avoid hate incidents.
- Qualitative feedback shows that as victims changed their behaviour and daily patterns as a result of incidents, they often became socially withdrawn and isolated. In addition, some tried to conceal their disability, sometimes to the extent of causing themselves pain.
- Sixty-six per cent of disabled respondents did not know whether their university or college provided information about where victims of hate incidents could go for help or support. Seventy per cent reported that they did not know whether their students' union provided information about where victims could go to for help or support.

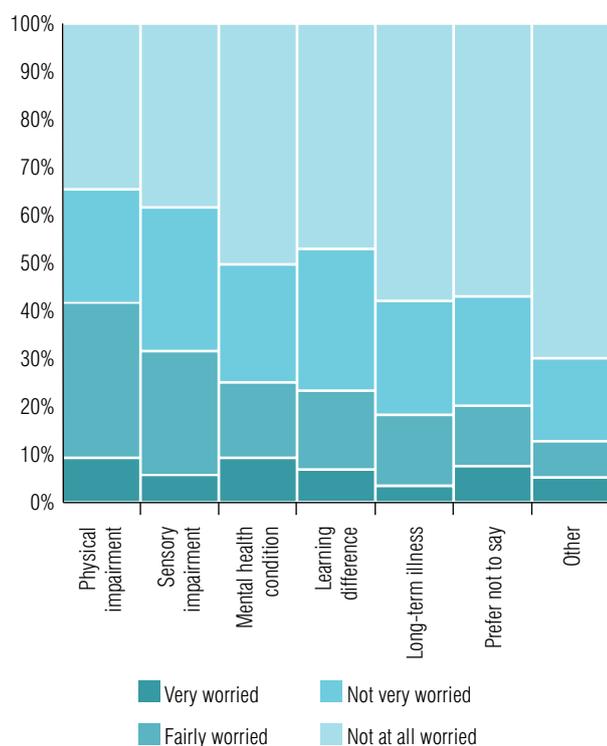
Worries of victimisation

We asked respondents how worried they are about being subjected to a variety of incidents because of their actual or perceived disability. Respondents specified broadly what kind of impairment they had – eg physical impairment, long term illness – and whether they were 'not at all worried', 'not very worried', 'fairly worried' or 'very worried'.

As Chart 1 illustrates, the degree of worry varied according to the kind of disability. Respondents with a physical or sensory impairment were most likely to report higher levels of concern, with 42 per cent and 32 per cent, respectively, stating they were very or fairly worried about being subjected to abuse because of their disability. This is perhaps because physical and sensory impairments are more immediately visible or otherwise apparent than the other kinds of disability.

One in four respondents with a mental health condition and 23 per cent with a learning difference also reported being very or fairly worried, as did 19 per cent of those with a long-term illness. One in five respondents who preferred not to say and 12 per cent of those with a disability other than the aforementioned categories also reported feeling very or fairly worried about becoming the target of hate incidents.

Chart 1. How worried are you about being subject to abuse because of your actual or perceived disability?



Not disclosing disability

The qualitative data suggests that many respondents feel uncomfortable and afraid in public because of how others might react to finding out about the disability. Consequently if on the street, in university or college or at work, some disabled respondents may conceal their disability for fear of abuse, discrimination, being denied opportunities or just being treated differently. It appears from the data that respondents prefer not to take the risk of disclosing their disability even if they think it unlikely that people will react in a negative way. In fact, it was not uncommon for respondents to report going to such lengths to hide their disability, for example by not using certain aids or equipment, that they risked harming themselves.

Behaviour change due to worries about abuse

These worries clearly affected disabled respondents' everyday lives. When asked whether worries about prejudiced abuse caused them to alter their behaviour, personal appearance or daily patterns, 43 per cent of disabled students surveyed responded that they did. This compares to 26 per cent of non-disabled students surveyed, suggesting that disabled respondents were more likely to be negatively affected by worries of prejudiced abuse, irrespective of characteristics such as race, gender or age.

In a follow-up question, we asked respondents to describe how they modify their behaviour, personal appearance or daily patterns as a result of these worries. From the qualitative data, we identified themes relating to behaviour change that are representative of a large proportion of the respondents.

The following quotes from survey respondents outline students' experiences of hiding their impairment.

"I try not to look as disabled as possible, eg walking without my crutches."

"I will often attempt to walk about without my walking aids (crutches, walking stick) because of the stares and comments made ... I have in the past had people kick my walking aids out of the way as a "joke".

"I have reasonably severe asthma. I feel I cannot use my inhaler in public for fear of being ridiculed."

"Because I am able to 'pass' as my health condition is not immediately visible, I generally attempt to hide it, even to the detriment of my health – eg avoiding use of mobility aids, avoiding asking for special treatment."

"... I am concerned [about] problems due to being thought a fake/fraud/attention seeker – or being subject to stereotypes/jokes I hear about people with my identities when I am around people who do not know that I have those characteristics myself."

"If I'm feeling down I might try and act happier when I'm around people so that they don't notice that something is wrong. I might make more of an effort with my appearance when I'm going somewhere specific because I don't want people to comment on the fact that I don't look good enough or something – I think this is something that affects a lot of people, both male and female. We all want to fit in."

"I pretend I am OK all the time. [I] keep up a happy positive appearance to people when sometimes I am struggling because of my disability or finding a situation challenging."

"I suffer from depression and panic attacks as well as having anxiety issues so I'm always covering up how I'm really feeling. I always say it's like being in a permanent play because when I go out I'm always 'playing a part' and trying to be happy and brave all the time."

"I suffer from clinical depression with psychotic episodes. Because of public 'labels', I try to disguise how I am feeling wherever I go in public. I make sure that I look 'normal' and try not to meet people's eyes in public just in case they look at me a bit strange and think that I'm mad."

'Blending in' and avoiding social situations

Respondents commonly reported wearing trendy clothes that help them to 'blend in' or 'look normal' to avoid being identified as disabled, or in some cases even being noticed at all. Respondents with mental health conditions such as depression and bipolar disorder often expressed how they feared being stereotyped, being labelled an 'attention seeker' or being subject to other effects of ignorance. The data suggests that, to avert these risks, some respondents felt they needed to disguise their disability with a facade of happiness and positivity.

Several respondents took the opportunity to highlight why they felt the need to change their behaviour, detailing how discrimination and prejudice often came from a lack of understanding of disabled people and the barriers they may face.

“People [are] not understanding [when they think] something sounds simple. Being dyslexic, you’re simply classed as a stupid person who does not deserve an opinion – when I’m not.”

“People have this bad habit of believing that if a person is deaf, they are dumb and do not know anything, whereas we can achieve as much [as], and much more than, a hearing person.”

“Due to my disability, people sometimes find it hard to understand that my personality is different to what they consider normal.”

These responses highlight how negative judgments about disabled people can affect students’ confidence within social settings, shedding light on the high number of respondents who were cautious about where and when they went out and who they interacted with, in order to minimise the risk of mistreatment. Indeed, a considerable number of disabled students surveyed stated that they avoided social situations altogether as a result of concerns that they would be subjected to prejudiced abuse.

“[I] do not go to some places at all, even when accompanied.”

“From a learning difficulty perspective (minor autism and dyslexia) I tend not to socialise with many people, if I am concerned that people will misinterpret my personal interest in something or probing questions as an area of awkwardness for them ... Quite often I don’t relate to people or feel I have to keep explaining myself, since autistic people can be known to have less common or unusual perspectives when discussing topics.”

“I avoid doing almost all my normal activities due to discrimination and harassment I have faced as someone with schizophrenia. This includes seeking help from academic tutors and staff, as several have made very extreme statements about my schizophrenia in the past, including that I ‘should be institutionalised’, and that I am ‘unfit to study at [university name removed]’ due to my disability.”

Awareness of initiatives

The survey also sought to find out whether, and to what extent, students were aware of initiatives in their university or college to tackle and deal with date crime. The results show that 66 per cent of disabled respondents did not know whether their university or college provided information about where those who had experienced hate incidents or hate crimes could go to for help or support. Even more respondents, 70 per cent, reported that they did not know whether their students’ union provided information about where students could go to for help or support. Moreover, 79 per cent of disabled respondents did not know whether their students’ union offered hate crime reporting services and 78 per cent were not aware of any education and awareness campaigns about hate crime at their current institution.

The extent and nature of hate incidents

“I always used to stay quiet in class because [other students] used to make snarky comments when I talked about my sexuality and my mental condition so I just totally shut off from everyone in the lesson and I get scared when the teacher asks a question now.”

Key findings

Overall, 8 per cent of respondents who considered themselves to have a health condition, illness or disability experienced at least one hate incident while studying at their current institution, which they believed was motivated by prejudice against their disability.

Verbal abuse was the most common form of hate incident reported in the survey, although students also experienced: physical abuse; vandalism, property damage and theft; distribution or display of offensive material; and abusive, threatening or insulting written communication.

We found that students who experienced disability hate incidents were more likely to be repeatedly victimised than those who experienced non-bias motivated incidents – in other words, while comparatively low numbers of respondents reported hate incidents, those same students were also likely to have been targeted more than several times.

One in four disabled students who were victims of physical abuse stated they had experienced this type of mistreatment many times, compared to only 2 per cent of victims of non-bias motivated physical abuse.

Respondents with 'visible' disabilities were significantly more likely to experience disability hate incidents than those with less visible impairments. Therefore:

- Nearly one in four students with a physical impairment (24 per cent) and 15 per cent of those with a sensory impairment stated they had experienced a disability hate incident.
- Twelve per cent of respondents with a mental health condition and the same proportion with a learning difference experienced at least one disability-related incident, as did just under one in 10 respondents with a long-term illness and 5 per cent of respondents with an 'other' disability.

We asked respondents whether they had experienced any of the following incident types while studying at their current institution:

- verbal abuse or threats of violence;
- physical mistreatment;
- vandalism or property damage;
- burglary, robbery or theft;
- distribution or display of abusive, threatening or insulting material;
- abusive, threatening or insulting written communication intended to distress or harass.

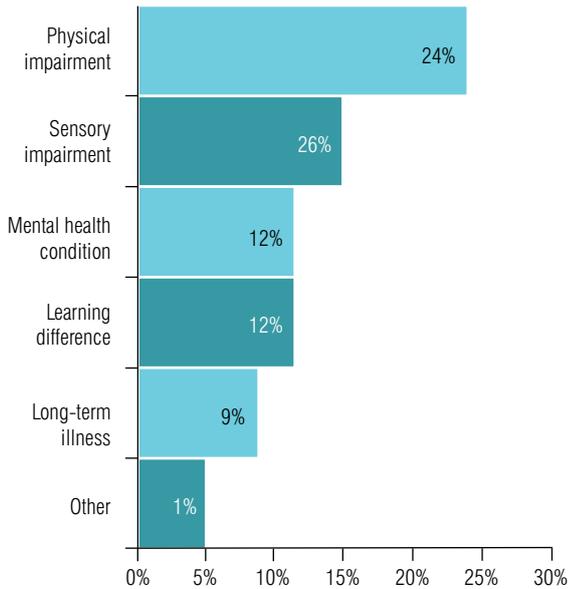
Respondents were then asked to answer a sequence of follow-up questions regarding the one incident or series of incidents, they had experienced that they considered to be the most serious in each category.

Eight per cent of respondents who considered themselves to have a health condition, illness or disability reported at least one incident which they believe was motivated by a prejudice against their disability. By comparison only 0.5 per cent of non-disabled respondents and 3 per cent of respondents who preferred not to say did the same.

As Chart 2 illustrates, visibly disabled respondents were most likely to experience hate incidents, with nearly one in four (24 per cent) with a physical impairment and 15 per cent with a sensory impairment stating they had experienced antisocial behaviour or crime motivated by a prejudice against their disability.

Twelve per cent of respondents with a mental health condition and the same proportion with a learning difference experienced at least one disability-related hate incident, as did fewer than one in 10 respondents with a long-term illness and 5 per cent of respondents with an ‘other’ disability.

Chart 2. Breakdown of victim’s impairments



(Please note that respondents were able to indicate whether or not they considered themselves to have multiple types of disability – for example, both physical and mental disabilities).

Repeat victimisation

While relatively low numbers of respondents reported experiencing a disability-related hate incident, we found that those same students were more likely to have experienced this multiple times, in comparison to respondents reporting non-bias incidents. This was certainly the case for victims of physical abuse, one in four of whom stated they had experienced this type of mistreatment many times.

Moreover, we found statistically significant differences among disabled and non-disabled respondents in terms of victimisation rates, whether they believed their experience to be prejudiced or not. For example, nearly one in four (24 per cent) of disabled respondents reported an incident of verbal abuse, threats of violence or threatening behaviour in our survey – compared to

17 per cent of non-disabled students. This suggests that disabled students are more likely to be targeted by antisocial behaviour or crime than non-disabled students, even if they do not perceive the incident to be motivated by prejudice against their disability.

The following provides a detailed breakdown of the incident types explored in the survey, and the extent to which our respondents experienced these.

Verbal abuse and threats of violence

Survey respondents were asked whether they had experienced either of the following while a student at their current place of study:

- threatening, abusive or insulting words – for example, verbal abuse such as name-calling, being shouted or sworn at, taunted or the use of offensive slurs or insults, etc.
- threatening behaviour or threats of violence.

Seventy-four respondents indicated they had experienced verbal abuse, threatening behaviour or threats of violence that they believed to be motivated by a prejudice against their actual or perceived disability. While these numbers are relatively low, 43 per cent of students who had experienced these problems had done so several times and 22 per cent stated they had these problems many times.

Respondents with a physical or sensory impairment were most likely to be the target of verbal abuse, threatening behaviour or threats of violence, with 16 per cent and 10 per cent, respectively, reporting this type of abuse. Eight per cent of respondents with a mental health condition, 9 per cent with a learning difference, 7 per cent with a long-term illness and 4 per cent with an ‘other’ disability also stated they had experienced verbal abuse, threatening behaviour or threats of violence motivated by prejudice against their disability.

In contrast, 2 per cent of respondents who preferred not to state whether they had a disability and 1 per cent of non-disabled respondents indicated they had experienced this type of abuse.

Physical abuse

We asked respondents whether they had experienced any of the following while a student at their current place of study:

Physical abuse of a sexual nature

- being subjected to unwanted sexual contact (this could include touching, grabbing, pinching, kissing, fondling or molesting through clothes).

Less serious physical abuse

- being followed or chased
- being spat upon
- being held down or physically blocked
- being hushed, slapped, shoved or having hair pulled.

Serious physical abuse

- having something thrown at you that could cause injury
- being kicked, bitten, hit with a fist or something else that could cause injury
- being choked, dragged, strangled or burned
- a weapon (such as a knife or gun) used to cause intimidation or harm
- another form of physical mistreatment or violence not described above.

Twenty-four respondents stated they had experienced physical abuse, which they believed to be motivated by a prejudice against their real or perceived disability.

Seven per cent of respondents with a physical impairment stated they had been a victim of physical abuse related to their impairment, as did 6 per cent with a sensory impairment, 3 per cent with a mental health condition, 4 per cent with a learning difference, 2 per cent with a long-term illness and 1 per cent with an 'other' disability.

These incidents ranged from less serious abuse involving being followed or chased (13 per cent), spat upon (8 per cent) held down or physically blocked (21 per cent) or pushed, slapped or shoved (38 per cent) to more serious mistreatment. One in three (33 per cent) incidents of physical abuse reported in the survey involved having something thrown at the victim and 17 per cent involved being kicked, bitten or hit with a fist or something else that could hurt them. Other forms of physical abuse reported in the survey included being forced out of the way or having physical aids forcibly taken away. In one case, the respondent reported having had their hair set on fire.

“My walking aids were kicked out from under me and stolen.”

“Someone took my glasses from my face and wouldn't give them back.”

Nine of the 24 respondents (38 per cent) reported being bruised, scratched or otherwise injured in the attack, three of whom sought medical treatments as a result of these injuries. In 58 per cent of these incidents, there was more than one perpetrator. Most of the time this was a group of 2–3, but some respondents reported large groups – in one case exceeding 10 perpetrators.

Vandalism, property damage and theft

We asked respondents whether they had experienced any of the following while studying at their current institution:

- vandalism – someone deliberately defacing or doing damage to their house, flat or halls of residence, or anything outside it
- property damage – someone deliberately damaging, tampering with or vandalising their property (eg personal belongings, motor vehicle, bicycle, wheelchair or other property)
- personal theft – personal belongings stolen out of their hands, bag, pockets or locker
- personal theft outside their home – eg from their doorstep, garden or garage
- robbery – someone taking or attempting to take something by force or threat of force
- burglary: someone illegally entering their residence to steal or attempting to steal your belongings, inflict bodily harm or cause criminal damage.

Twenty-seven respondents indicated they had experienced vandalism, property damage or theft (including instances of burglary or robbery) that they believed to be motivated by a prejudice against their perceived or real disability. Victims of vandalism, property damage or theft were far more likely to report repeat incidents, with 30 per cent stating they had experienced this several times and 11 per cent many times.

Respondents with a physical impairment were considerably more likely to experience this type of incident (8 per cent). Two per cent of respondents with a sensory impairment, four per cent with a mental health condition, three per cent with a learning difference, three per cent with a long-term illness and one per cent with an 'other' disability also reported at least one incident of vandalism, property damage or theft they believed to have been motivated against their disability.

Several respondents took the opportunity to describe their experiences.

“A pot of green paint was thrown over my new car, as well as the tyres being slashed and an attempt at breaking the windows.”

“My wheelchair has been tampered with in the past without asking.”

“Offensive things were drawn on my door.”

“Stones thrown at windows, doorbells tampered with, plants destroyed.”

“Two bikes stolen, phone stolen, house egged and back fence ripped down.”

“Burgled, motorbike stolen and burned and wheelie bin moved to the front door and set alight.”

Distribution and display of abusive, threatening or insulting material

Twenty-eight respondents stated they had witnessed the distribution or display of writing, signs or visible representation that they found threatening, abusive or insulting and that they believed to be prejudiced against disabled people. The vast majority reported that this was in the form of graffiti, though some also described posters, displays and articles that they believed targeted disabled people.

The following quotes from survey respondents give some insight into the kind of offensive material students come across.

“Graffiti in the disabled toilets which were offensive.”

“Inappropriate cartoons and doodles of vulnerable people being displayed like ‘retards’, as the wall says.”

“It was graffiti referencing cripples and other derogatory terms for disabled people. And articles attacking so called ‘scroungers’ on disability benefits.”

“Posters and displays which are both discriminatory and offensive to disabled people, containing a large amount of ‘hate’ language.”

“Stickers with ‘spastic’ and ‘queer’ on them – ie labelling.”

Abusive or insulting communication

Respondents were asked whether they had received any of the following while studying at their institution:

- an abusive, threatening or insulting telephone call or text message intended to harass, alarm or distress
- abusive, threatening or insulting post or mail intended to harass, alarm or distress
- abusive, threatening or insulting email or messages transmitted through the Internet (for example, via Facebook, twitter or a blog) intended to harass, alarm or distress.

Twenty-two respondents indicated that they had received abusive, threatening or insulting written communication that they believed was motivated by a prejudice against their real or perceived disability. While the number of respondents reporting this type of incident was very low, we found that these students were more likely to have been targeted more than once, in comparison to respondents reporting non-bias incidents. More than a quarter (27 per cent) of recipients of abusive written communication had experienced this several times and 23 per cent had experienced it many times.

Broken down by disability type, 6 per cent with a physical impairment and 2 per cent with a sensory impairment reported at least one experience of abusive written communication taking place while they were studying at their current institution. Three per cent of respondents with a mental health condition, 3 per cent with a learning difference, 3 per cent of respondents with a long-term illness and 1 per cent with an ‘other’ disability also reported this type of victimisation.

This took place in a variety of forms: 14 respondents (64 per cent) described receiving telephone calls or text messages and 12 (55 per cent) had emails or messages transmitted through the Internet. Three (14 per cent) reported abusive, threatening or insulting written communication through the post or email that were also prejudiced.

Profiles of incidents and perpetrators

“It is difficult going into uni and facing them each day – they seem very competitive and hostile at times. I never know they will treat me. It make study difficult. Also other students who have been witness to it tend to not include me in things in case I bring bad attention to their group.”

This section provides findings on how incidents are identified as hate incidents by the victims and the environments in which hate incidents take place. It also provides demographic findings on perpetrators and recipients, and on the relationships between them.

Key findings

- While students reported a range of locations in which they were targeted, a large proportion of incidents occurred at the victim’s place of study – the exception being in cases of vandalism, property damage or theft, which predominantly occurred at or near the victim’s home.
- The majority of incidents occurred in the afternoon and evening, with only 11 per cent occurring at night.
- Two in three disability hate incidents involved more than one perpetrator. Perpetrators were typically aged 16–24, white, male and strangers to the victim.
- In 56 per cent of incidents motivated by a prejudice against the victim’s real or perceived disability, the perpetrator/s was known to be a student. Of these, 85 per cent were reported to be students at the victim’s college or university.

Identifying experiences as hate incidents

We asked respondents why they believed the incidents they experienced were motivated by prejudice, in whole or in part. While this information does not allow us to directly gauge the perpetrators’ intent, it is valuable in understanding what victims view as a prejudiced incident and also in discerning whether this evidence would be enough to prove the presence of an ‘aggravating factor’ in a court of law.

In the majority of incidents involving direct contact with the perpetrator/s (for example, in cases of verbal abuse, threatening behaviour or threats of violence, physical abuse or written communication), the recipient cited the perpetrator’s overt prejudice in identifying the incident as a hate incident. This was typically in the form of prejudiced statements or gestures made before, during or after the incident, though they also often involved hate words or symbols.

Table 1

Why do you believe the incident was motivated by prejudice, in whole or in part?	per cent
The perpetrator/s made statements and/or gestures before, during or after the incident which displayed prejudice against a disability	61%
Hate words or symbols were present	39%
The incident occurred at or near a location, place or building commonly associated with a specific group	10%
I was engaged in activities promoting a social group or event (eg handing out leaflets, picketing, etc)	9%
The incident coincided with a holiday or event of significant date	5%
I believe the perpetrator was a member of a group known to have committed similar acts	18%
Investigation confirmed that the incident was motivated by a dislike of a particular group	9%
Someone else suggested that the incident was prejudiced	13%
My feeling, instinct or perception without specific evidence	42%
I don’t know	6%
Other reasons	8%

* NB Respondents were able to select multiple options

Respondents also used other sources of information to judge that the incident in question was motivated by a prejudice against their disability – either because they believed the perpetrator to be a member of a group known to commit such acts, because someone else suggested that the incident was prejudiced or because of their own feeling, instinct or perception of the experience.

When and where

In incidents believed to be motivated by a prejudice against the recipient's real or perceived disability, 26 per cent were reported to have occurred in and around areas of their college or university (other than the learning environment or students' union) and nearly one in four (24 per cent) took place in a learning environment, such as a classroom or lecture theatre.

Twenty-one per cent took place at or around the recipient's home.

Table 2 provides a breakdown of locations by incident type (location was not asked in the case of written communication intended to harass, distress or alarm due to the remote nature of the attack). Respondents most commonly experienced abuse motivated by prejudice against their impairment in and around areas of their institution. The exception to this was acts of vandalism, property damage and theft, which predominantly occurred at or near the victim's home.

It is heartening to see the extremely low number of incidents that were reported to have taken place in students' unions.

Table 2. Location of incident

	Verbal abuse, threatening behaviour or threats of violence	Physical abuse or mistreatment	Vandalism, property damage and theft	Distribution or display of material
In a learning environment	29%	25%	19%	18%
In a students' union or students' union event	6%	0%	0%	0%
In and around other areas of the institution	25%	29%	7%	46%
At or near home	16%	8%	56%	11%
At or near a friend's home	1%	0%	0%	0%
At or outside a bar or pub	6%	0%	0%	0%
At or outside a nightclub	1%	8%	0%	0%
At or outside their workplace	1%	0%	4%	4%
At or outside a takeaway, off-licence, newsagent or corner store	1%	0%	0%	4%
At or outside a place of leisure or entertainment	0%	4%	0%	0%
At or outside public transport	1%	4%	0%	0%
On a street, road or alley	3%	8%	7%	7%
Other	10%	13%	7%	7%

Shaded boxes denote significant numbers.

The majority of incidents reported in the survey took place in broad daylight. Of those who were aware of the time of day when the incident occurred, 15 per cent of respondents stated that incidents took place between in the morning (6am to noon) and 50 per cent in the afternoon (noon to 6pm). Almost a quarter (24 per cent) of incidents occurred during the evening (6pm to 10pm) and 11 per cent at night (10pm to 6am). These circumstances highlight the commonplace and socially acceptable nature of such incidents.

When applicable, respondents were asked about the number of recipients involved in hate incidents. Nearly half (48 per cent) of these incidents took place when victims were on their own.¹⁴ Of those reporting that they were in the company of others, 31 per cent stated their companions were also targeted in the incident.

Perpetrators

Number of perpetrators

Two out of every three incidents (66 per cent) involved more than one perpetrator.¹⁵ Of these, 49 per cent of cases involved small groups of two to three perpetrators and 33 per cent involved groups of four to six. Nearly one in six incidents involved large groups of perpetrators: nine per cent involved six to eight, two per cent involved eight to ten and six per cent involved more than 10 perpetrators. This is particularly disturbing in cases of physical assault, where multiple perpetrators were involved in 58 per cent of incidents.

Relationship to victim

There is a strong assumption within hate crime literature that the perpetrators of such crimes are largely unknown to the victims. This is supported by the findings within this report. In one in three incidents involving multiple perpetrators and one in four incidents involving a single perpetrator, the perpetrator/s were strangers to the victims.

However, as Table 3 demonstrates, in 18 per cent of incidents involving multiple perpetrators and 19 per cent involving a single perpetrator, the perpetrators were acquaintances of the victim.

Notably, 12 per cent of in multiple perpetrator incidents involved 'friends' of the recipient – a considerably higher number than in incidents involving single perpetrators (3 per cent). This finding suggests that the dynamic of a group is more likely to give rise to hate incidents, in spite of the perpetrator's(s') friendship with the victim.

Table 3: relationship of perpetrator to victim/s

Relationship to victim/s	Multiple perpetrators	Single perpetrator
Stranger	33%	25%
Acquaintance	18%	19%
Friend	12%	3%
Neighbour	10%	7%
Someone on their course placement	9%	7%
Academic staff	2%	5%
Family	3%	0%
Carers, personal assistants, enablers or support workers	2%	0%
Someone at their workplace	0%	2%
Other	9%	15%
Unsure	1%	17%

Please note: Respondents were able to select multiple categories in incidents involving more than one perpetrator; figures may therefore add up to more than 100 per cent.

Respondents who categorised their relationship to the perpetrator as 'other' were given the opportunity to specify this relationship. These relationships included medical doctors, housemates, security guards and students' union representatives.

In 56 per cent of incidents motivated by a prejudice against the victim's real or perceived disability, the perpetrator/s were known to be students (or included at least one student). Of these, 85 per cent were reported to be students at the victim's college or university.

This finding is concerning, not only because some students are committing such acts, but also because the closeness of inter-group relations in the environments of many colleges and universities makes it difficult for victims to avoid their abusers in the aftermath of the incident/s. This is likely to affect the recipient’s inclination to report the incident, as well as the overall impact of the experience on their studies and mental well-being.

Perpetrator demographics

Perpetrators were typically aged 16–24 and white, which corroborates existing research on hate crime. While they were commonly male (46 per cent of single perpetrator incidents and one in three involving multiple perpetrators were exclusively male groups), we observed that a considerable proportion of perpetrators were female. In 29 per cent of incidents involving a single perpetrator, the offender was reported to be female and in 13 per cent of incidents involving multiple perpetrators, the offenders were exclusively female.

This differs conspicuously from other types of hate crime, such as those motivated against the recipient’s real or perceived sexual orientation, which are largely perpetrated by males.

Table 4. Gender of perpetrator/s

	Multiple perpetrators	Single perpetrators
Male	34%	46%
Female	13%	29%
Mixed group	51%	N/A
Unsure	2%	25%

Table 5. Age of perpetrator/s

	Multiple perpetrators	Single perpetrators
Under 10	5%	1%
Aged 10–15	20%	8%
Aged 16–24	76%	47%
Aged 25–39	22%	9%
Aged 40+	19%	15%
Unsure	8%	20%

Table 6. Ethnicity of perpetrator/s

	Multiple perpetrators	Single perpetrators
White	79%	73%
Black	12%	2%
Asian	29%	6%
Chinese	0%	0%
Don't know	17%	18%
Other	2%	1%

Reporting of hate incidents

The difference between the number of hate crimes reported and the number not reported is difficult to measure. However, while the police recorded 46,300 reported hate crimes in 2008 according to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OCSE), the British Crime Survey, which seeks to pick up unreported hate crimes through interviews with a wide sample of people, estimates that 260,000 hate crime offences occurred in 2008. Underreporting is thus one of the main obstacles to understanding and confronting hate crime. Research for policy purposes is also likely to be undermined by the fact that such data do not reflect the full extent of hate crime.

What becomes evident throughout this chapter is that many of the reasons for underreporting relate to the nature of the criminal justice system and victims' perception of it. Notably, victims commonly felt that what they suffered was not sufficiently serious to report to the police, or that the police couldn't or wouldn't help. This highlights the need to strengthen the responsiveness of the police to hate crime, and to promote victims' trust in the police's ability to deal with hate crime sensitively and effectively.

Key findings

- While victims of disability hate incidents were more likely to report the incident to an official at their university or college than victims of non-bias motivated incidents, they were less likely to report the incident to the police. Only 12 per cent of disability hate incidents were reported to the police.
- Reasons for not reporting fell into three broad themes: a lack of faith in the criminal justice system, personal fears or concerns and feeling that incidents were not 'worth' reporting.
- Of all the reasons why victims did not report to the police the most commonly cited one was a belief that the police could not or would not do anything. The other major reason, accounting for 40 per cent of disability hate incidents, was that recipients did not consider the incident 'serious enough' to warrant the attention of the police.
- Respondents who experienced hate incidents were more likely to have personal concerns and fears with reporting than those who experienced similar, albeit unprejudiced, incidents. Victims of hate incidents were in particular more likely to cite feelings of shame and embarrassment, fear of reprisals and retribution, and concern over having to disclose personal details as reasons for not reporting.
- In many cases, the victim would have been more likely to report the incident had they been able to do so away from the police station, to someone other than a police officer who would pass on the details to the police or take further action as the victim preferred, either anonymously or not.

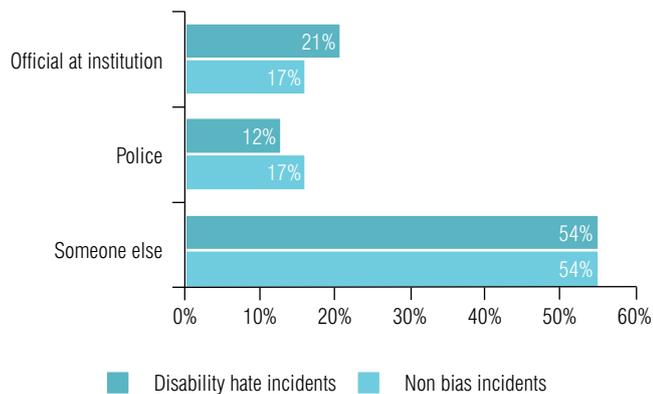
The students surveyed were asked whether they had reported the incident/s they experienced to any official staff or representatives at their college, university or students' union, to the police or to anyone else.

In 21 per cent of cases where the recipient reported a disability hate incident, they did so to an official within their institution. This is slightly higher than the reporting incidence of non-bias motivated incidents, which was 17 per cent.

In the vast majority of cases (82 per cent), the student reported the incident to a member of academic staff. In 13 per cent of incidents reported to an official, the victim reported to a non-teaching member of staff; 16 per cent were reported to an advice worker in the institution and 11 per cent to a student officer or representative. A small minority also stated they reported to their institution's hate crime reporting service or to an advice worker in their students' union.

However, victims of disability hate incidents were less likely to report the incident to the police – only 12 per cent compared to 17 per cent of non-bias motivated incidents.

Chart 3: Proportion of incidents reported



Reasons for not reporting

Reasons for not reporting fell into three broad themes: the recipient's belief that the incident was not 'worth' reporting, personal fears or concerns and lack of faith in the criminal justice system.

Not worth reporting

The following quotes give some respondents' reasons for considering a hate incident not worth reporting to authorities.

"If it was more serious and caused me greater mental or physical harm I would have reported it."

"It was too minor to count as a crime."

"The incident did not necessarily warrant police action, it was more of a social/cultural problem."

"It wasn't a police matter."

The most common reason for not reporting in disability hate incidents (45 per cent) was the victim's belief that the police could not or would not do anything. The other major reason, accounting for 40 per cent, was that recipients considered the incident not serious enough to warrant the attention of the police. This is understandable given that many incidents did not alone constitute criminal offences (though repeat incidents could constitute harassment).

However, this finding underscores the fact that students may not be aware that reporting also enables the police and other authorities to identify patterns of hate crime, which informs preventative action and other policies. Indeed, many councils and police forces have a commitment to record such information irrespective of whether the conduct amounts to a crime. Of the students who stated they had experienced at least one incident motivated against their real or perceived disability, 20 per cent believed that only hate incidents which constituted a criminal offence should be reported to the police, and 34 per cent believed direct contact with the police to be the only mode of reporting.

Personal concerns or fears

Here are some examples of students' concerns about the impact of reporting hate incidents.

"How do you report a lone incident without the perpetrator knowing and spreading it around? I'd be even more alienated!"

"[I would have reported] if I knew it would not start a neighbourhood feud."

"It would make it worse."

"It was my fault for allowing them into my home."

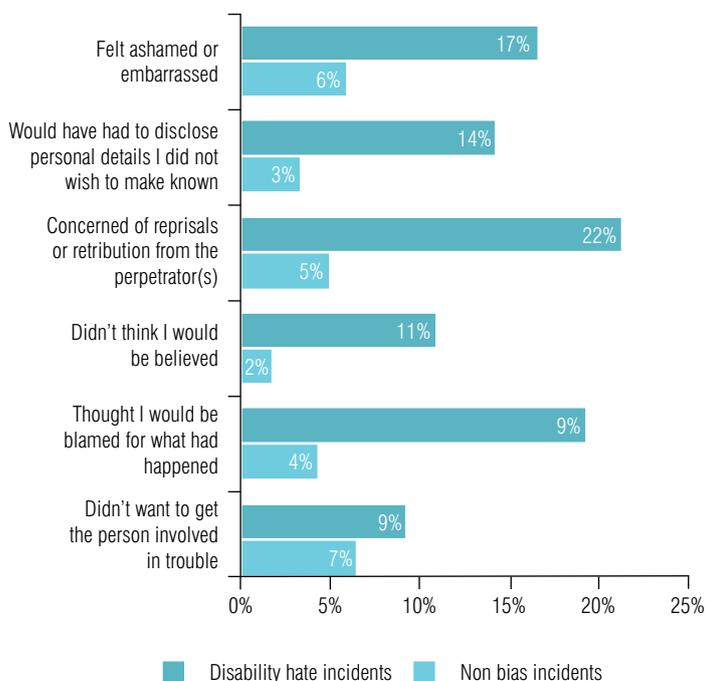
"There is no way I could have remained anonymous. On my own? Again, social outcast [status] would occur."

While many of these reasons for not reporting are typical of any crime, motivated by prejudice or not, respondents who experienced disability hate incidents were more likely to have personal concerns and fears with reporting than those who experienced similar,

albeit non-biased, incidents. Victims who experienced prejudice against their disability were in particular more likely to cite feelings of shame and embarrassment, fear of reprisals and retribution, and concern that they would be blamed for what had happened.

Victims of incidents involving prejudice were also more likely to worry they would not be believed when reporting or that they would have to disclose personal details they did not wish to make known. Chart 4 provides a breakdown of reasons for not reporting by students who experienced a disability hate incident compared with students who experienced a non-bias incident.

Chart 4: Reasons for not reporting: personal concerns or fears



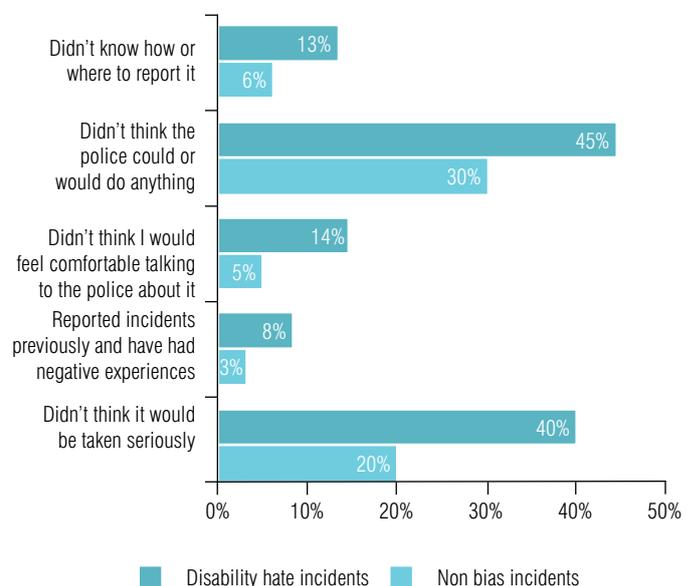
In 22 per cent of disability hate incidents reported in our survey, the recipient indicated they did not report their experience at least partly because they feared reprisals or retribution from perpetrators. By comparison, fear of reprisals was cited as a reason for not reporting in only five per cent of non-bias motivated incidents. This is consistent with our finding that the likelihood of repeat victimisation is higher in incidents involving prejudice than in incidents involving no prejudice.

These findings suggest that the enclosed environments of many post-16 educational institutions and, correspondingly, the close inter-group relations that exist within these environments, may contribute to victims finding it difficult to avoid interacting with the perpetrator(s) subsequent to reporting. This may also help to explain why in nine per cent of disability hate incidents, the recipient did not report the event because they did not want to get the perpetrator in trouble.

Lack of faith in the criminal justice system

As Chart 5 shows victims of disability hate incidents were far more likely than those of non-bias motivated incidents to express concerns about a lack of faith in the criminal justice system as a reason for not reporting incidents. In particular, these students were more likely to feel their report would not be taken seriously by the police, that the police couldn't or wouldn't do anything, or that they would feel uncomfortable speaking to the police about it.

Chart 5: Reasons for not reporting: the criminal justice system



These differences suggest that much more needs to be done to secure the confidence of disabled people by supporting them, both to report initially but also throughout the reporting process.

Encouraging reporting

A number of respondents outlined factors that would have encouraged them to officially report the hate incidents they experienced.

“If disability hate crime was easier to prosecute.”

“Knowing the police could give help, having more information on how to report these events or even just knowing it was something they would deal with.”

“[Not having the] uncertainty as to how the matter would be dealt with.”

Respondents who indicated they had experienced a hate incident but had not reported it were provided with a series of options and asked whether any of these would encourage them to report. Significantly, many respondents indicated they would have reported the incident if they were: able to remain anonymous; given the ability to report through indirect or non face-to-face contact with the police; or able to speak to a police officer who was a member of their social group (eg a disabled police officer).

In 34 per cent of disability hate incidents, the recipient would have been encouraged to report had they been able to do so away from the police station, to someone other than a police officer who would pass on the details to the police on behalf of the victim with the option of anonymity, or proceed as they preferred.

Victims would have been encouraged to report in 32 per cent of disability hate incidents had they had been given the option to complete a self-reporting form that they could send directly to the police (thereby avoiding speaking to someone in person).

In 27 per cent of disability hate incidents the recipient would have reported had they been able to remain totally anonymous, recognising that although the crime could not have been solved without a ‘victim’, it would make the police more aware of problems in the community. Finally, recipients would have reported in 25 per cent of disability hate incidents had they been able to do so to a police officer who was a member of their social group.

Experiences of reporting

Respondents were asked to comment on how the person at their university or college and/or the police responded to their report and what, if anything, could have been done to improve their experience.

Respondents’ comments on this issue were either very positive or very negative. The fact that people are sometimes less inclined to comment on ordinary experiences might explain this polarity and lack of commentary on more unremarkable experiences. Nevertheless, this information is useful for determining what is good and bad practice within reporting services. Key features of a positive response included:

- acting quickly and professionally
- keeping the victim up-to-date with any developments in their case
- taking the incident seriously
- believing the victim and being sympathetic
- providing a thorough investigation of the incident when appropriate – and if not, explaining why it is not possible (rather than simply dismissing the incident and the victim).

Notably, we found that positive comments largely related to the reception respondents had at their college or university, while the more negative or mixed responses referred to the police.

Positive experiences of reporting to an official at their institution

“The matter was dealt with promptly and the writing in the toilets [was] quickly removed and ... signs put up to say that this would not be tolerated and anyone caught doing this would be reported to the police and charged.”

“My university tutor was very sympathetic to what I was going through and felt that I should not have been let down like that.”

“My counsellor was very good about it.”

It was at the time of my exams, so I was given special consideration for that.”

Reporting to the police

While the survey did not seek views on whether the police had responded effectively to reports of hate incidents and hate crime, a number of respondents described negative experiences.

“Evidence and statements were taken and they did a investigation. However, they were not able to access private CCTV so I did that myself. In addition to this, they didn’t properly analyse the scene. I am going on to study psychology and criminology and noticed things that they missed.”

“They took an age to respond to the burglary – I rang back a second time, let slip my brother was a police inspector and a dog handler turned up within 5 minutes. Very good treatment from then on.”

“The police were not the least bit interested, despite the fact that I had just fled from a crime ... they were not very sympathetic.”

“I was denied the right to make a statement in the local police station so I reported this to the ... headquarters, but had no support.”

“The police did not take me seriously because I have a history of mental health problems.”

“Although they gave me some advice, they don’t really help.”

Discussing incidents with someone else

In 54 per cent of disability hate incidents, the recipient reported or discussed the incident with someone else (other than someone in an official role at their institution or to the police). Most of these respondents (77 per cent) indicated that they had spoken to a friend about the incident, though it was also common to discuss it with family members (51 per cent) or a partner or spouse (32 per cent). Some 18 per cent reported speaking to their doctor about their experience, 14 per cent to a workmate and 12 per cent to a neighbour. Several also stated they had talked to a religious leader or chaplain about the incident or to a telephone hotline.

The high rate of speaking to a friend about hate incidents emphasises the importance of support networks and people who victims can trust. This suggests that using peer-to-peer advice and support services may encourage victims not to stay silent.

The impact on victims

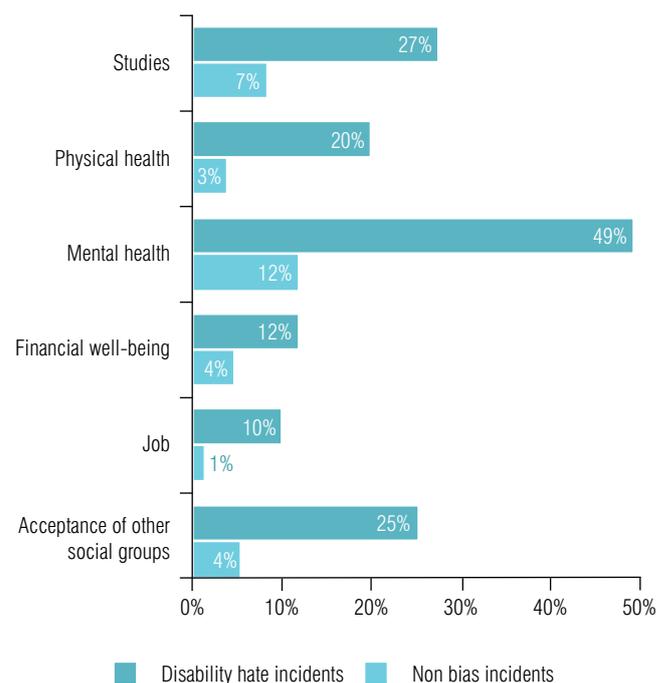
"I had panic attacks at the thought of going to uni, thinking it would happen again."

Key findings

- Recipients of disability-related incidents were much more likely than recipients of non-bias incidents to report problems as a result of their experience, particularly related to their mental health, studies and their acceptance of other social groups.
- In 49 per cent of incidents involving prejudice against their actual or perceived disability, the victim reported resultant mental health issues – more than four times the proportion of non-bias incidents (12 per cent). While emotions such as annoyance, anger and shock were common among both hate and non-bias motivated incidents, hate incidents produced comparatively high levels of depression, anxiety, difficulty sleeping and other symptoms of post-traumatic stress.
- In 27 per cent of disability hate incidents, the recipient reported that the incident had an effect on their studies, compared to only seven per cent of non-bias incidents. The data suggests that incidents involving an element of prejudice against the victim’s disability were significantly more likely to impact on their grades and their participation in university or college social activities such as clubs, sports and societies. Recipients of hate incidents reported a higher frequency of being ignored or picked on by their fellow students as a result of speaking about their experience. Victims also reported having thoughts of leaving their course as a result of their experience.
- In 25 per cent of incidents believed to be motivated by the recipient’s disability, the recipient stated this had affected their social acceptance of other groups, nearly six times the proportion of non-bias motivated incidents (4 per cent).
- Further, in 12 per cent of disability hate incidents the victim reported an affect on their financial well-being. This was found, by comparison, in four per cent of non-bias motivated incidents.

For every incident, we asked respondents whether they still have problems, or have had problems, that they believe are attributable to their experience. Notably, victims of hate incidents were much more likely than victims of non-bias motivated incidents to report resultant problems, particularly when related to their mental health, studies and their acceptance of other social groups.

Chart 6 Aspects of life affected by hate-related incidents



This is consistent with a growing body of research on hate crimes, which suggests that hate crimes and hate incidents cause significantly more negative outcomes than non-bias motivated crimes. It is clear from our data that the prejudice that motivates a hate incident substantially increases its severity, and even the most apparently banal experiences can have a long-term effect on the recipient. It is therefore vital that the element of prejudice in hate incidents is given more explicit attention, both in supporting victims and in educating and disciplining offenders.

Effect on mental health

In 49 per cent of incidents involving bias against the recipient’s real or perceived disability, the recipient reported mental health problems as a result – more than four times the proportion of non-bias incidents (12 per cent). Some of these respondents took the opportunity to write about their experience/s and how this affected their mental health.

“A combination of persistent abuse of all kinds is bound to have an effect. I have tried to do the right thing and report this accordingly but to find no support is appalling. I have very [few] friends now and they are all appalled too about the way I have been treated, especially when I don’t go around pubs, clubs, cannot drink or am restricted about clubs because of strobe lighting. When I do go out I am treated badly for it, as though I am the one who is antisocial because I don’t drink, smoke, take illegal drugs and [am] careful who I mix with. I am on medication, so I don’t need any more. I just want ... a quiet and peaceful and uninjured lifestyle.”

“I nearly had a breakdown and I am currently under a doctor’s note for stress.”

“I feel so demoralised. It has been a real battle for me to carry on but I am too ashamed to confide in old friends so I have become isolated.”

“[I] felt suicidal. I feel like there is no way to get justice.”

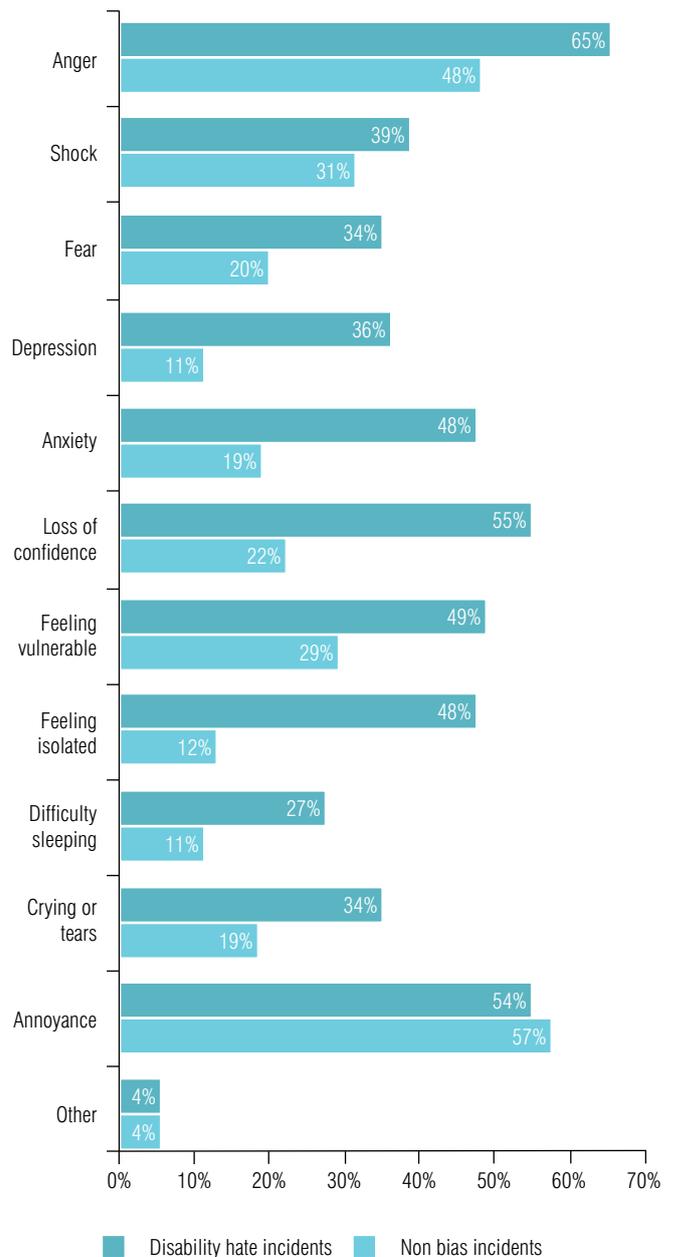
“I tried to take my life/commit suicide.”

Emotional reactions

“[I am] bitterly disgusted at the lack of support from people and [the] lack of understanding.”

As Chart 7 shows, emotions such as annoyance, anger and shock were common among all incidents, irrespective of whether they were believed to be motivated by bias or not.

Chart 7: Emotional reactions to disability-related hate incidents



However, victims of disability hate incidents reported higher levels of depression, anxiety, difficulty sleeping and other symptoms of post-traumatic stress than did victims of non-bias motivated incidents. The qualitative data suggested that while emotions common to both hate and non-prejudiced incidents (such as anger and annoyance) were likely to subside soon after the incident, feelings of vulnerability, isolation and low self-esteem were more likely to be internalised and have long-term effects.

Short term impact

We asked students what emotional reactions, if any, they experienced as a result of the incident/s. Respondents were asked to report on a variety of emotional reactions, including those typical of post-traumatic stress such as depression, anxiety, difficulty sleeping, crying or tears.

It was evident from our data that incidents perceived to be motivated by prejudice against the recipient's disability had a worse impact on recipients than non-bias incidents. Nearly half (48 per cent) of disability hate incidents resulted in the victim feeling anxious with 36 per cent saying that it led to depression.

Difficulty sleeping was reported in 27 per cent of disability hate incidents, compared to 11 per cent of non-bias motivated incidents, and crying or tears was experienced in 34 per cent of disability hate incidents, compared to 19 per cent of non-bias motivated incidents.

Long term impact

Further, those who experienced hate incidents were far more likely to feel emotions related to their self-esteem and sense of inclusion. In 55 per cent of disability hate incidents reported in our survey, the student stated they lost confidence as a result; in 49 per cent they felt vulnerable and in 48 per cent isolated. As can be seen in Chart 7, markedly lower levels of these emotional reactions were reported in non-bias motivated incidents.

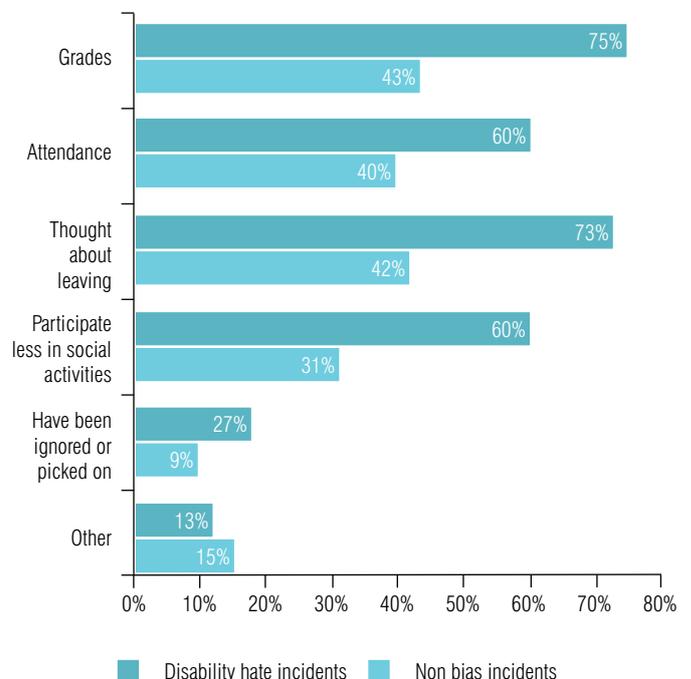
Several students discussed how these feelings, a loss of confidence and increasing vulnerability and isolation, had a long-term impact on their self-esteem and participation in the classroom.

Impact on studies

Our findings show that a higher percentage of victims of disability hate incidents (27 per cent) reported that the incident had an effect on their studies than that of victims of non-bias motivated incidents (7 per cent).

Seventy-five per cent of incidents reported to have had an impact on the victim's studies were said to have affected their grades; in 73 per cent the victim had thought about leaving their course. Attendance and participation in social activities were also commonly reported to have been adversely affected. Some respondents also stated that they were ignored or picked on by their peers as a result of speaking out about their experience.

Chart 8. How has it affected your studies?



Please note: Only respondents who indicated their studies had been affected were asked this follow-up question.

Respondents were offered the opportunity to discuss how their studies were affected. Some talked about feeling self-conscious in class; others expressed that they felt they could not go to certain areas of their institution for fear of another incident occurring. Several had to suspend their studies or even leave their courses.

“I was attacked both physically and verbally in my campus ... by 6–7 teenagers who were not students at my university ... Now I avoid going to that area and if I [have] an exam taking place there it makes me extremely nervous. I try to go to that area 4–5 hours before the exam to make sure that those teenagers are probably in school. Also, because the school main library is in that area, I cannot use the library.”

“I am having to leave my university and my course and try to get on another course at another university.”

“It has affected my confidence and at every time I am assessed by individuals of the same group I feel vulnerable and self-conscious about my ability and make mistakes I would not normally do.”

“I have had to put on hold my honours degree studies until further notice.”

“I am applying to other courses and want to leave this university.”

“I have had to put on hold my academic studies until I can get medical treatment.”

Impact on social acceptance of other groups

In 25 per cent of incidents believed to be motivated by the victim's impairment, the respondent stated this had affected their social acceptance of other groups, nearly six times the proportion of non-bias motivated incidents (4 per cent). The qualitative data suggested that disability hate incidents have a particularly damaging effect on recipients' ability to trust other people.

“I have fast learned who I can trust. People are shocked and those who have never experienced this don't believe it can happen. They learn and are disgusted at the way people can behave with such callous[ness] and coldness towards it even when there are supposed to be laws out there to be protecting us from such fear of safety. I have lost friends and I have felt in fear of who I can trust.”

“I feel that it has altered how I trust people now, including the authorities [in whom] I would otherwise have enormous respect”

Several respondents discussed how the incident had affected them socially. In some cases respondents spoke about how the perpetrator was someone who they had initially believed to be their friend, or someone who was a member of their own social group. Some also stated that their friends' failure to intercede on their behalf seemed to condone the perpetrator's behaviour.

The following quotes from respondents give some insight into trust difficulties as a result of hate incidents.

“The people who were with me [at the time of the incident] I no longer speak to [because of their] lack of support ... the man was buying them drinks so they decided it was OK to allow him to mark me as a target.”

“The perpetrators and myself had a lot of mutual friends so they all ended up stuck in the middle.”

In other cases, the recipient reported being fearful of suffering further incidents by participating in certain social situations. Respondents frequently discussed how they altered their behaviour as a result of incident/s, for instance where they went and when or even where they lived. This was particularly difficult for respondents whose harassers were fellow students at their institution.

“We avoid the neighbours involved. We all worry they will tell the [Benefits Agency] (wrongly) that ‘there's nothing wrong with me’ – which they believe!”

“I no longer choose to go for drinks in town to socialise. I now choose to socialise at home or on occasion in London where differences are more accepted.”

“We can no longer stand in the open, front or rear [garden] or talk freely in the street, so we now have mixed emotions all the time, stay in bed most of the day and only leave the house at night whenever possible.”

Impact on physical health

We asked respondents whether the incident/s affected their physical health. Our findings show that respondents' physical health was affected by 20 per cent of disability hate incidents. Considering this in conjunction with our qualitative data suggests that, in addition to the immediate physical impact of incidents involving physical abuse, some respondents attempted to hide their disability for fear of further victimisation. In some cases this was to the detriment of their own physical health, as the following quotes demonstrate.

“[My experience has led to] a worsening of my mobility disability.”

“I try to use my walking aids as little as possible even when it causes me great pain. I feel vulnerable when walking on my own with my aids.”

Impact on financial well-being

In 12 per cent of disability hate incidents the recipient reported an effect on their financial well-being. This was found, by comparison, in 4 per cent of non-bias motivated incidents. One in 10 disability hate incidents were also reported to have affected the victim's job, compared to 1 per cent of non-bias motivated incidents.

Though there was little qualitative data to suggest how victims' jobs were affected, a few respondents spoke about the ways in which their lives had changed as a result of the incident and indicated how their financial well-being was affected.

“[I] left halls of residence and [am] commuting from home because of the way the halls of residences handled it.”

“My family had to help me financially and it caused lots of upset.”

Impact on others

It is important to recognise that such incidents not only affect the individual targeted, but the wider community. Given that hate incidents are defined by a prejudice against an aspect of one's identity that is often shared by a whole social group, it not only harms the victim but also send a message of threat and contempt to others within that group. Moreover, family and friends are often indirectly affected by the incident through victim's emotional distress and the way/s in which it disrupts their life.

Some respondents also spoke about how the incident/s affected not just themselves, but their friends and family.

“It has affected everyone I know, especially my family, but most of all it has affected my ability to lead a functional life ever again.”

“By association, my family and wife are also subjected to this too.”

Multiple biases and intersectionality

While this report focuses on disability-related hate incidents, it is important to recognise that recipients may have been targeted for reasons in addition to their actual or perceived disability, for instance their sexuality and race.

The theory of intersectionality attempts to explore the complexity in identities, systems of power and social relations. In the context of hate crime and hate incidents, intersectionality theory is important in understanding that people may not always neatly fit into fixed and discrete categories. This theory posits that “one system of oppression cannot be understood as more fundamental than another because systems are inextricably linked and ... [therefore] relations of domination should be understood as an interlocking web of mutually reinforcing power structures, each of which depends on the others ...”¹⁶ In other words, although people might understand themselves as disabled, they may simultaneously understand themselves in terms of many other overlapping identities.

To an extent, our findings capture intersectionality. Respondents who reported incidents they believed were motivated by prejudice against their real or perceived disability often also stated that they believed the same incident to have additional bias motivations. Table 7 demonstrates the additional prejudice that respondents believed motivated their perpetrator/s.

Table 7

Prejudice type	%
Against real or perceived disability	100%
Against real or perceived race	22%
Against real or perceived religion	21%
Against real or perceived sexual orientation	29%
Against real or perceived gender identity	11%
Against real or perceived association	17%
Another reason	12%

This reinforces the theory of intersectionality to the extent that incidents of hate crime cannot be characterised by reference to only a single element of the victim's identity and a single corresponding prejudice in the perpetrator. This has important implications for hate crime prevention and intervention strategies.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are designed to address hate incidents and hate crime experienced by students in the UK, as well as the prejudice that motivates this behaviour. It is evident from the qualitative and quantitative research findings from which these recommendations were drawn that improvements are needed in:

- the prevention of perpetrator behaviour
- support and services available to victims
- awareness, reporting and recording of hate crime and incidents.

These recommendations are chiefly aimed at further and higher education institutions and sector organisations, although some will be pertinent to law enforcement practitioners and other agencies. We hope that all institutions will consider these recommendations and that they will help in the development of a cross-sector strategy to tackle hate and prejudice experienced by students across the UK.

Prevention

1. Demonstrate a firm commitment to equality and diversity

The student population is composed of a diverse range of people, from all manners and backgrounds, holding different ideas, viewpoints and opinions. It is important that these differences are respected, but equally that each and every individual feels they are able to study in an environment in which their rights, dignity and worth are upheld.

It is therefore vital that institutions demonstrate a strong commitment towards equality and diversity and work to actively celebrate these values through clear and widely publicised codes of conduct, equality and diversity policies and complaint and reporting procedures. All students should be made aware of their institution's commitment to challenging and tackling prejudice on campus. Through student inductions, institution-wide and/or departmental handbooks, advice centres

and students' unions, students should be informed of conduct required of them and the support services available to those who have been victimised.

Specifically institutions should consider setting a specific objective on tackling hate crime as part of their public sector equality duty (PSED). The PSED requires all further and higher education institutions to set specific equality objectives by 6th April 2012. The findings from this report suggest that institutions should give strong consideration to this area and include tackling hate crime and hate incidents as an objective.

2. Develop preventative and educational activity on prejudice and hate

Hate incidents are an expression of negative stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination and inter-group tensions. Our research suggests that this type of behaviour causes a cycle of suspicion and exclusion.

While it is important to tackle the more immediate and tangible goals of assisting and supporting victims as well as taking effective action against perpetrators, it is also important that long-term efforts are made to foster an inclusive ethos, in which each and every student has the right to express themselves without fear. Ensuring there is constructive dialogue, mutual respect and trust are paramount. By working to foster good relations among students and awareness of what constitutes a hate incident and the negative impact of this behaviour on the victim, institutions can reduce the prevalence of this behaviour on campus.

To promote social cohesion within and outside the classroom, universities and colleges need to consider how to better integrate their student bodies. This could be achieved by increasing discussion and interactive work within the classroom, as well as by organising events for students of all backgrounds that celebrate diversity and encourage integration.

3. Prevent or mitigate perpetrator behaviour

It is evident from our research that victims and perpetrators alike often perceived behaviour constituting a hate incident to be socially acceptable. The consequences of this perception are two-fold: the

perpetrator is encouraged to engage in these activities and the victim, similarly, is discouraged from reporting the incident or seeking support services. Institutions must therefore make clear that this behaviour is not to be tolerated, through the active enforcement of student codes of conduct and the institution of zero-tolerance policies. Student perpetrators should be disciplined quickly and decisively.

4. Establish multi-agency, joined-up approaches to tackling hate

Hate incidents require a multi-agency, joined-up approach to ensure the victim is adequately supported and the perpetrator appropriately disciplined. As such, colleges and universities should work to establish partnerships with local police enforcement, community-based advocacy groups, schools and local authorities to develop a cross-sector strategy to reduce hate within, as well as outside, further and higher education institutions.

Support

5. Strengthen existing disability support services

Our research found that hate incident victims were more likely to report mental health difficulties as a result of their experience than victims of unprejudiced incidents of the same severity. Practitioners working in counselling and advice services within student services need to be appropriately trained and vigilant to these concerns, recognising that even low level incidents can have serious implications upon the victim's self-esteem and self-confidence.

6. Establish strong disability support networks

Existing studies suggest that the level of identification a victim has with their group affects their response to experiencing hate incidents: those who lack strong identification are more at risk of psychological damage. In contrast, those who are more strongly identified show a more assertive and positive response, seeking help and redress and fortifying their identity.¹⁷ Clubs and societies within colleges and universities often act as that support network and should therefore be provided

with financial backing and support to avoid compulsory membership fees.

Institutions and students' unions should also ensure that disabled students who have or wish to set up a disabled club or society are well connected to wider support services within their institution and have the constitutional backing of the union. Disabled groups should be seen as a key player in the students' union and accordingly offered good channels of advertisement and communication to students about the group's existence. In addition, institutions and students' unions should actively support activities which promote an understanding of disability issues and celebrate the history and achievements of the disabled community.

Reporting

7. Encourage reporting and maintain systematic documentation and data collection of hate incidents

Our research found that many respondents did not report the incident because they believed it to be either too trivial to report or that nothing could or would be done by the police or other authorities.

Data collection on hate incidents is vital to understanding and appropriately addressing these problems. Therefore, students need to be made aware of when and where to report hate incidents. They also need to understand that their experience will be taken seriously, offers valuable insight into the nature and location of hate incidents and will help to inform preventative work. While many law enforcement agencies and local councils are committed to recording and monitoring hate incidents, these agencies and institutions need to co-ordinate and share information to ensure this data is accurately captured while maintaining victim confidentiality.

8. Provide flexible options for reporting

The students surveyed in our research indicated they would have been more likely to report their experiences had they been able to do so without directly contacting

the police. Colleges and universities should therefore establish a variety of reporting mechanisms – for example, by creating an online self-reporting form or on-campus reporting and advice centres – as well as publicising others available, such as third party reporting agencies and telephone hotlines.

Victims of hate incidents should also be made aware that they can choose how to report their experience. For example, they should have the option to remain anonymous, on the understanding that while it may not be possible to take further action, their report will be recorded and used to inform hate crime prevention measures.

9. Promote greater confidence in reporting mechanisms

Whether real or perceived, it was evident that many respondents feared insensitive treatment either at the hands of the authorities or, upon public disclosure of their experience, by their peers. It is clear that practitioners need better training to respond sensitively to disabled victims. It also suggests that in order to ensure accurate reporting of hate incidents, better protocols for interviewing and debriefing crime victims and privacy assurances for victims are required. Victims should be assured that their report will be taken seriously and consistently and thoroughly investigated and recorded.

10. Clear guidance on existing legislative framework

Existing legislation related to hate crime is fragmentary and piecemeal, which may make it difficult for victims who wish to bring their case through the criminal justice system. It is therefore vital that guidance on what constitutes a hate crime, the rights of individual victims and the criminal justice procedure, is developed and made available to students.

Appendix 1 Student respondent profile

The survey clearly stated that it was open to all students currently studying on a course in a further education college, university or other adult learning environment. Only those who affirmed that they fell into this category were included in the final sample of the survey. In total, we received 9,229 complete and valid responses.

Health condition, impairment or disability

Some 11 per cent (1,001) of our sample considered themselves to have a health condition, impairment or disability.

Of these,

- thirteen per cent stated they had a physical impairment (126)
- nine per cent said they had a sensory impairment (82)
- twenty-nine per cent reported they had a mental health condition (279)
- twenty-six per cent stated they had a learning difference or cognitive impairment (254)
- twenty-seven per cent said they had a long-term illness or health condition (263)
- five per cent preferred not to say and
- eighteen per cent described their health condition, impairment or disability as 'other.'

Eighty-seven per cent (7,991) indicated they did not have a health condition, impairment or disability and three per cent (233) preferred not to say.

Type of institution, mode and level of study

Most students surveyed (89 per cent; 8,221) attend their post-16 educational institution in England. Six per cent go to an institution in Wales (548), two per cent (202) attend a college or university in Scotland and three per cent (237) attend one in Northern Ireland.

The majority (68 per cent; 6,101) of our respondents attend university. Another 28 per cent (2,520) go to further education or sixth form college. Three per cent (224) attend an 'other higher education institution' and two per cent go to adult and community learning providers, work-based learning providers or specialist colleges (186).

The bulk of respondents (87 per cent; 7,967) were UK-domiciled students, though eight per cent were EU students (720) and five per cent were international or overseas students (475).

Level of study	Year of study
0.8% Level 1 eg Basic Skills or ESOL (72)	54% Year 1 (4,965)
2% Level 2 eg GCSEs, NVQ2, Apprenticeships (173)	30% Year 2 (2,746)
28% Level 3 eg A-Levels, Advanced apprenticeships (2,595)	13% Year 3 (1,160)
58% Level 4 eg Bachelors degree, HND (5,308)	3% Year 4 (235)
11% Level 5 eg Masters, PhD (1,046)	1% Year 5+ (105)

Eighty-eight per cent of the people surveyed were full-time students (8,100); 12 per cent (1,108) studied part-time.

Gender and gender identity

Seventy per cent of respondents were female, 29 per cent were male (2,697) and 0.6 per cent preferred not to select (51).

The vast majority (99 per cent) stated that their gender identity was the same as assigned at birth (9,146). Only 0.4 per cent (40) stated that their gender identity was not the same as assigned at birth and 0.5 per cent (42) preferred not to say what their gender identity was.

Sexual orientation

Eighty-seven per cent of the students surveyed were heterosexual (7,974). The remaining 13 per cent can be broken down as follows:

- lesbian two per cent (157)
- bisexual five per cent (479)
- gay four per cent (363)
- preferred not to say two per cent (168)
- 'other' 0.8 per cent (78).

Ethnic origin

Eighty-three per cent of respondents identified as being from a white background. Broken down:

- white British 73 per cent (6,715)
- white Irish two per cent (190)
- other white background eight per cent (706).

Seven per cent identified as being from an Asian or Asian British background:

- Indian three per cent (257)
- Bangladeshi 0.5 per cent (43)
- Pakistani two per cent (147)
- other Asian background one per cent (119).

Two per cent of our respondents identified as being from a black or black British background:

- black Caribbean one per cent (90)
- black African one per cent (127)
- other black background 0.1 per cent (9).

Three per cent of students surveyed said they were from a mixed race background:

- white and black Caribbean one per cent (82)
- white and black African 0.3 per cent (31)
- white and Asian one per cent (110)
- other mixed background one per cent (110).

Two per cent of our sample was Chinese (189) and another two per cent indicated they were from an 'other' ethnicity not listed (199). One per cent (102) preferred not to say what their ethnic origin was.

Religion, faith or belief

Thirty-eight per cent of respondents stated they had no religion (3,530) and another 34 per cent indicated they were Christian (3,167). Twelve per cent of students surveyed were atheist (1,089). We received low response rates from students of other religions:

- Bahai 0.1 per cent (4)
- Buddhist one per cent (89)
- Hindu one per cent (125)
- Jain 0.1 per cent (5)
- Jewish 0.8 per cent (70)
- Muslim four per cent (326)
- Sikh 0.7 per cent (63)
- preferred not to say three per cent (288)
- other five per cent (466).

Appendix 2 Survey questions

The following is a list of headline questions we asked in our survey.

Worries of victimisation

1. How worried are you about being subject to verbal abuse, physical attack, vandalism, property damage or theft because of your actual or perceived race/ethnicity, religion/belief, disability, sexual orientation and/or gender identity?
2. Because of worries about prejudiced incidents, some people change their everyday life – for example, where they go or what they do. Other people do not change their lives at all. Do worries about prejudiced abuse ever cause you to alter your behaviour, personal appearance or daily patterns?

Experiences of incident types

1. While you have been a student at your current place of study, have you ever experienced any of the following (please tick all that apply):
 - threatening, abusive or insulting words (eg verbal abuse such as name-calling, being shouted/sworn at, taunted, told offensive slurs, insults, etc)
 - threatening behaviour or threats of violence.
2. While you have been a student at your current place of study, have you ever experienced any of the following (please tick all that apply):
 - you were followed or chased
 - you were spat upon
 - you were held down or physically blocked
 - you were pushed, slapped, shoved or had your hair pulled
 - you had something thrown at you that could hurt you

- you were kicked, bitten, hit with a fist or something else that could hurt you
 - you experienced unwanted sexual contact (this could include touching, grabbing, pinching, kissing, fondling, or molesting you through your clothes)
 - you were choked, dragged, strangled or burned
 - a weapon (such as a knife or gun) was used against you
 - you have experienced another form of physical mistreatment or violence not described above.
3. Have you experienced any of the following while you have been a student at your current place of study? (please tick all that apply):
 - vandalism – someone deliberately defacing or doing damage to your house, flat or halls of residence – or to anything outside it
 - property damage – someone deliberately damaging, tampering with or vandalising your property. For example, your personal belongings (purse, computer, etc), motor vehicle, bicycle, wheelchair or other property.
 - personal theft – personal belongings stolen out of your hands, bag, pockets or locker
 - property theft from outside your home – for example, from the doorstep, the garden or the garage
 - robbery – someone taking or attempting to take something from you by force or threat of force
 - burglary – someone illegally entering your residence to steal or attempt to steal your belongings, inflict bodily harm or cause criminal damage.

4. While you have been a student at your current place of study, has anyone distributed or displayed any writing, signs or visible representation, which you found threatening, abusive or insulting? For example, offensive graffiti or leaflets:

- yes
- no.

5. While you have been a student at your current place of study, have you ever experienced any of the following (please tick all that apply):

- received an abusive, threatening or insulting telephone call or text message intended to harass, alarm or distress you
- received abusive, threatening or insulting post or mail intended to harass, alarm or distress you
- received abusive, threatening or insulting email or messages transmitted through the Internet (eg via Facebook, twitter, a blog etc) intended to harass, alarm or distress you.

Establishing bias motivation

6. Do you believe the incident may have been motivated or partly motivated, by the perpetrator's prejudice towards you based on your membership (or presumed membership) of any of the following? Please tick all that apply:

- yes – a prejudice against my race or ethnicity (or presumed race or ethnicity)
- yes – a prejudice against my religion or belief (or presumed religion or belief)
- yes – a prejudice against my disability (or presumed disability)
- yes – a prejudice against my sexual orientation (or presumed sexual orientation)
- yes – a prejudice against my gender identity (or presumed gender identity). For the purposes of this survey, gender identity is defined as a person's self-identification as male, female, neither or both, which may not be the gender assigned at birth.
- yes – because of my association with persons of a certain race/ethnicity, religion/belief, disability, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity
- yes – for another reason (please specify)
- no – I do not believe the perpetrator was motivated by prejudice against any of the above groups.

-
7. For what reasons do you believe the incident was motivated by prejudice, in whole or in part? Please tick all that apply:
- the perpetrator(s) made statements and/or gestures before, during or after the incident which displayed prejudice against a race/ethnicity, religion/belief, disability, sexual orientation and/or gender identity
 - hate words or symbols were present (eg offensive names, a swastika or other graffiti)
 - the incident occurred at or near a location, place or building commonly associated with a specific group (eg a centre for people with disabilities, club or bar with a predominately gay clientele, synagogue)
 - I was engaged in activities promoting a social group or event (eg handing out leaflets, picketing)
 - the incident coincided with a holiday or event of significant date (eg the Pride parade, Ramadan)
 - I believe the perpetrator was a member of a group known to have committed similar acts
 - investigation by the police confirmed that the incident was motivated by dislike of a particular group
 - someone else suggested that the incident was prejudiced
 - my feeling, instinct or perception, without specific evidence
 - I don't know.
-

Endnotes

- ¹ Equality and Human Rights Commission. (September 2011) *Hidden in plain sight*.
- ² Crown Prosecution Service. (2007) *Policy for prosecuting cases of disability hate crime*.
- ³ Section 146, Criminal Justice Act 2003.
www.legislation.gov.uk
- ⁴ The highest level of incidents has been recorded as 'psychological', eg bullying and harassment: Shamash, M. (2007) *Disability Hate Crime Report*.
- ⁵ Crown Prosecution Service. (2009) *Hate crime report 2008-09*. Bolton, Blackburns.
- ⁶ *ibid.* p47.
- ⁷ R v McDermott (Lee) [2008] EWCA Crim 2345.
- ⁸ Equality and Human Rights Commission. (September 2011) *Hidden in plain sight*.
- ⁹ Roulstone, A., Thomas, P. and Balderston, S. (May 2011) 'Between hate and vulnerability: unpacking the British criminal justice system's construction of disablist hate crime', *Disability and Society, Vol 26 (3)*: pp 351–364.
- ¹⁰ Shamash, M. (2007) *Disability hate crime report*: p8.
- ¹¹ *Ibid*: p23.
- ¹² ACPO 'Total of recorded hate crime from regional forces in England, Wales and Northern Ireland during the calendar year 2009', accessed at www.acpo.police.uk/asp/policies/Data/084a_Recorded_Hate_Crime_-_January_to_December_2009.pdf accessed on 29/08/11
- ¹³ *Op cit.* Crown Prosecution Service (2009) *Hate crime report 2008-09*. Bolton, Blackburns: pp 51 and 53.
- ¹⁴ Calculation excludes 'not applicable' responses.
- ¹⁵ Calculation excludes incidents in which the victim was unsure of the number of perpetrators.
- ¹⁶ Meyer, D. (2010) 'Evaluating the severity of hate-motivated violence: intersectional differences among LGBT hate crime victims', *Sociology*, 44:980: p982.
- ¹⁷ Boeckmann, R. and Turpin-Petrosino, C. (2002) 'Understanding the harm of hate crime', *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol 58 (2): pp 222.





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