

# Understanding and reporting: hate crimes and hate incidents

## What is a hate crime or a hate incident?

A **hate crime** is any crime that the victim or anyone else thinks was motivated by prejudice or hatred against someone's:

- **Race:** a person's skin colour or the country that they come from
- **Religion:** the religion or belief of a person
- **Sexual orientation:** who a person loves - bisexual, gay, heterosexual and lesbian people
- **Disability:** a physical or mental condition that has negative effect on a person's ability to do undertake daily activities
- **Transgender identity:** when personal identity and gender do not correspond with a person's birth sex, for example someone who was born a man but identifies as a woman

A **crime** is something that breaks the law of the land such as a physical assault, criminal damage, vandalism, or theft.

In other words, **crime + hostility/prejudice = hate crime**

Sometimes we may be a witness to or victim of prejudice or hate when no crime has been committed or when we are not sure if a crime has been committed. For example racist or homophobic language in the street or online. This is called a **hate incident**. While hate incidents may not be crimes they can feel like crimes to those who suffer them and like hate crimes, they should be reported to the police.

- Anyone can be the victim of a hate crime or hate incident. For example, you could be targeted because someone thinks you are from a particular religion, even though you're not, or because you have a disabled child even if you are not

- The person who commits the crime or incident could be someone you know or a stranger



## How to report hate crimes and hate incidents

**Anyone** - a victim or witness - can report a hate crime. If you are the victim or witness to a hate crime or hate incident the police encourage you to report it. No hate incident should feel too small or unimportant to report, all hate crimes and hate incidents are important, they are wrong, and they are unacceptable. You can make a report:



### In person

- At a police station
- At a third-party reporting site - these are community-based centres where members of staff are available to support victims/witnesses to complete reporting forms. It is not always easy to find where your nearest third party reporting centre is.



### Over the phone

- To the police at 999 in an emergency or somebody is in danger
- To the police at 101 if it is not an emergency and there is no immediate danger
- To an alternative, such as Stop Hate UK (0800 138 1625) which offers independent and confidential hate crime reporting services



### Online

- To the police online via the True Vision website: [www.report-it.org.uk](http://www.report-it.org.uk) - this method allows you to report anonymously

## Deciding to report a hate crime or hate incident

Many hate crimes or hate incidents are not reported. Below are some reasons some victims or witnesses decide not to report to the police with some additional information to help you to make an informed decision if you are a victim or witness.

### **“There is no point, the police won’t do anything or take it seriously”**

The police see hate crime as an important priority, however often there is not enough evidence for the police to investigate or to find a perpetrator. Reporting also helps police understand the extent of hate crime in your local area so they can better respond to it and prevent it happening to other people.

### **“I don’t want to speak to the police, I don’t trust the police”**

The police want you to tell them if you are a victim or witness of hate crime and most police officers will treat you kindly and with respect. If for any reason you don’t want to engage with police you can report hate crime anonymously online (see above)

### **“reporting will take a long time”**

Most online hate crime forms can be completed in just a few minutes - if you have given your details the police will follow up with a phone call or visit, if you have reported anonymously the police will not contact you.

### **“hate crime is normal, it happens everyday it’s better to not say anything”**

Hate crime is not normal, it is not acceptable and reporting can help to stop it.