



University of
Leicester

The Leicester
**HATE
CRIME**
Project

Findings and
Conclusions

Executive Summary

**This Executive Summary report is part of a series of publications produced as part of
The Leicester Hate Crime Project:**

Findings and Conclusions: Full Report

Findings and Conclusions: Executive Summary Report

Victims' Manifesto

Briefing Paper 1: Disablist Hate Crime

Briefing Paper 2: Gendered Hostility

Briefing Paper 3: Homophobic Hate Crime

Briefing Paper 4: Racist Hate Crime

Briefing Paper 5: Religiously Motivated Hate Crime

All of these publications can be accessed at www.le.ac.uk/centreforhatestudies.

1 Introduction

Over a two-year period from 2012 to 2014 the Leicester Hate Crime Project team conducted groundbreaking research into acts of hate, prejudice and targeted hostility. Funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, this research – Britain’s biggest ever study of hate crime victimisation – engaged with over 4,000 people from a diverse range of backgrounds and recorded the views of 1,421 victims of hate crime. The findings from this work have generated new and significant insights into the nature, forms and impacts of hate offences.

This *Executive Summary* presents these key findings in concise form. It has been structured to outline victims’ experiences and expectations collectively, although where significant variations between and within groups have emerged, these have been identified. The points presented within this *Summary* are necessarily brief, and offer only a partial and decontextualized account of the full range of findings when read in isolation from the full *Findings and Conclusions* report and other project publications, which include a series of themed briefing papers and a *Victims’ Manifesto* for organisations to pledge support to. Readers are encouraged to refer to these publications in order to gain a comprehensive overview of the project findings.

We sincerely hope that this body of work makes a real and sustained difference with respect to helping organisations and individuals challenge all forms of hate crime.

Neil Chakraborti

Jon Garland

Stevie-Jade Hardy

September 2014

2 Background to the Project

- The Leicester Hate Crime Project had three broad aims:
 1. to discover as much as possible about people's experiences of hate, prejudice and targeted hostility;
 2. to understand the physical and emotional harms suffered by victims and their families; and
 3. to identify ways of improving the quality of support offered to victims.

- The project adopted the following definition of hate crime:

A hate crime refers to acts of violence, hostility and intimidation directed towards people because of their identity or perceived 'difference'.

- This broad definition was used in order to capture acts of hate, prejudice and targeted hostility directed towards *anyone*, from *any background*, including victims whose experiences are often overlooked by academics, policy-makers and practitioners.
- In order to address the project's aims – and to improve policy responses for victims – the research team worked in close collaboration with a range of organisations, including Leicestershire Police, the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office, Victim Support, Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust and both the City and County Councils.
- Key policy leads from these organisations formed part of the project's steering group and were consulted at regular intervals throughout the research process.

3 Methodology

- To investigate victims' experiences of hate, prejudice and targeted hostility, the study used a mixed methods approach that included:
 1. an online and hard-copy survey, translated into eight different languages¹;
 2. in-depth, semi-structured face-to-face interviews; and
 3. personal and reflective researcher field diary observations.
- In order to locate and connect with as wide a range of diverse communities as possible, the research team adopted an engagement strategy which involved spending prolonged periods of time in public spaces and buildings across the city, including international supermarkets, cafes and restaurants, charity shops, community and neighbourhood centres, libraries, health centres, places of worship, pubs and clubs, taxi ranks, and shelters and drug and alcohol services that support 'hard to reach' groups. This approach enabled the team to engage with over 4,000 members of established and emerging communities in order to raise awareness of the project itself, and to promote wider recognition of the harms of hate and available pathways of support for victims.
- A total of 1,106 questionnaires were completed by people aged 16 and over who had experienced a hate crime in accordance with the definition employed by the research team. Interviews were carried out with 374 victims, and in combination with survey responses a total of 1,421 victims took part over the full duration of the study².
- The profile of research participants was extremely diverse in terms of age, gender identity, ethnicity, refugee and asylum status, religion, sexuality and disability (a detailed demographic breakdown is provided in the *Findings and Conclusions* report).

¹ The survey was translated into Arabic, Bengali, Gujarati, Mandarin, Polish, Punjabi, Somali and Urdu.

² 59 of the 1,106 survey respondents also took part in face-to-face interviews with the research team.

4 Research Findings

4.1 How do people experience hate crime?

- Victims had experienced a diverse variety of hate incidents, ranging from violent attacks through to the more 'everyday' incidents of name-calling, harassment and intimidatory behaviour that can be enormously damaging to physical and emotional well-being.
- We heard from hundreds of victims who referred to being routinely ignored, stared at, abused, threatened and spoken to in a belittling and derogatory manner on the basis of their identity or perceived 'difference'. For many, these experiences were a routine feature of their daily lives and had a profound emotional and psychological impact upon them.
- Participants' experiences of victimisation were wide-ranging extremely diverse, and included being sent hate mail or offensive text messages; having the windows of their car smashed repeatedly; being mimicked and mocked for a speech impediment or physical disability; having eggs thrown at their house or faeces pushed through their letter box; being befriended and then exploited, humiliated or robbed; and being intimidated and threatened at work, in the street, in pubs, clubs and restaurants and at home.
 - 87% had experienced verbal abuse, with nearly half of these victims (48%) being targeted repeatedly in this way.
 - 70% had experienced harassment, with a third (35%) of these victims being targeted repeatedly in this way.
 - 32% had experienced violent crime, 27% cyberbullying, and 10% a sexually violent hate crime such as rape or sexual assault.
- Men were more likely than women to have experienced both verbal abuse and violent hate crime.
- For the majority of those surveyed, being the victim of targeted hostility was a current and ongoing issue. For three in five respondents their most recent experience of hate crime had been within the past year (59%), and for a quarter within the last month (24%).
- When survey respondents were asked what form their most recent experience of hate crime had taken, over half referred to verbal abuse (55%), three in ten harassment (29%), 13% property crime, 9% violent crime, 6% cyberbullying and 4% sexual violence.

We're not just being targeted verbally and being given the cold shoulder, dirty looks and fingers. We're also getting something that has moved slightly further and is a bit more dangerous.

Veiled Muslim woman

I actually logged every hate crime and I'd got about 500 in one year. And that went on for two and a half years.

Transgender woman

- Respondents whose most recent experience of hate crime had involved harassment, property crime or violent crime were more likely than others to say it had affected them very significantly (17%, 15%, and 29% respectively compared with 10% overall).
- Respondents with physical disabilities were more likely than others to have been very significantly affected by their most recent experience of hate crime (21% compared with 10% of the total sample), as were those who knew their offender(s) (15% compared with 10% of the total sample).

4.2 Who are the victims?

- When asked to describe why they had been targeted, victims made reference to a wide range of identity characteristics, with race and ethnicity being the most frequently cited (33%).
- 21% felt that they had been targeted because of their dress and appearance. Additionally, 17% of respondents cited their religion; 14% their gender; 10% their age; 9% their learning disability; 8% their physical disability; and 7% their sexual orientation.
- A small but significant proportion (13%) of the survey sample ticked 'Other' when asked why they felt they had been victimised. Within this category many aspects of 'difference' were identified, including a distinctive or strong accent; a lack of religion; body shape or weight; education status; homelessness; immigration status; and social status.
- Black and Asian people were more likely than respondents overall to say that their race had been a reason for why they were targeted (85% of Black and 54% of Asian respondents said this, compared with 35% overall).
- Women were more likely than men to say that their dress and appearance had been prime factors in their victimisation (39% of women cite this compared with 27% of men). Younger respondents were also more likely to refer to the relevance of their dress and appearance (40% of 16 to 24 year olds did this compared with 34% overall).
- Muslim respondents were more likely than others to cite their religion as a reason (76% compared with 29% overall).
- The experiences of some of the more marginalised victim groups – such as asylum seekers and refugees, European Roma and the homeless – and of those targeted on the basis of visual identity markers such as age, gender, larger body shape or alternative subcultural status – bore all the hallmarks of more recognised hate crimes in terms of their nature, impact and selection of the victim.

When you're young, at first it upsets you ... You think, "What have I done? Why are you doing that to me, I haven't done anything wrong?" When you get older you understand more and you live with it, you toughen up against it.

Female English Gypsy

I've had verbal comments but I can deal with verbal; it's when it becomes physical. If you can spit at me what else can you do?

Male Big Issue seller

- The findings revealed that victims had often been targeted on the basis of more than one aspect of their identity or lifestyle, with 50% referring to more than one reason: for example, race *and* their religion; their mental ill-health *and* their physical or learning disability; or their subcultural status (e.g. goth, emo or punk) *and* their dress and appearance.
- Respondents who had been targeted for more than one reason were more likely than those targeted for one reason alone to say the incident had had a very significant impact on their quality of life. A similar pattern was apparent with regard to victims' concern about hate crime.
- Religious markers such as the veil and the turban, and support aids such as walking sticks and guide dogs, were seen to increase the likelihood of victims being targeted on the basis of their association with a particular community.
- Large numbers of victims mentioned that being perceived as being vulnerable by the perpetrator played a significant role in why they felt they had been targeted.

To be honest I thought I was untouchable until two, three years ago. I don't know why. But it's just suddenly came home to me how vulnerable I really am.

Male with physical disabilities

4.3 Where are people victimised?

- For their most recent experience of hate crime 32% of survey respondents had been victimised in a public street or park; 22% outside or near their home; 13% in the city centre; 10% in school, college or university; and 10% in their home.
- The location in which a hate crime takes place was shown to have a significant impact upon how the incident affects the victim, their family and in some contexts their wider community. This was particularly evident when incidents had occurred in or near the victim's home.
- Those who work within the nighttime economy had frequently experienced fraught and difficult situations when dealing with drunk and abusive customers, with many taxi drivers, restaurant workers and takeaway owners feeling especially prone to being harassed or abused while carrying out their jobs.
- Social settings such as schools, bars or nightclubs were environments in which particular groups such as transgender people and the lesbian, gay and bisexual communities felt especially vulnerable to acts of targeted hostility.

At nighttime when everybody's drinking, the easier it is to say comments they wouldn't normally say. I'd say definitely out, at night in clubs and stuff when people are drinking is the worst time for me.

Gay youth

- Many groups of victims referred to being targeted on public transport, particularly those with physical or learning disabilities and those victimised on the basis of their highly visible 'difference' including veiled women, trans men and women, asylum seekers and people of alternative subcultural appearance.

If a bus is full of kids, the kids start shouting and then, on transport, when they start shouting at you, when you've done nothing wrong and then they're shouting at you.

Male with physical disabilities

4.4 How does hate crime affect victims?

- Concern about hate crime was high across all groups of victim and all types of hate crime. Survey respondents were most likely to be worried about being a victim of harassment, with two-thirds saying they were *very* or *fairly* concerned about this (67%), and 64% *very* or *fairly* concerned about verbal abuse.
- When asked about how much the fear of hate crime had affected their quality of life, 91% of respondents stated that it had affected them to some degree.
- 95% of those who had experienced verbal abuse, harassment or cyberbullying felt that being a victim of hate crime had some form of impact on them. 71% referred to feeling upset, while the proportions of those feeling anxious, angry or vulnerable were 41%, 37% and 36% respectively.
- A higher proportion of transgender respondents described feeling upset (95%) compared to the sample as a whole (71%), as did survey respondents who felt that they had been targeted because of their gender (83%), sexual orientation (80%) or religion (79%).
- Respondents whose most recent experiences of hate crime had involved harassment, property crime or violent crime were more likely than others to say it had affected them significantly.
- The mental and physical health impact of targeted victimisation emerged as a significant issue across the sample. A quarter of survey respondents (24%) stated that their experiences had made them feel depressed.
 - 51% of those victimised because of their physical disabilities stated that being a victim of targeted hostility had made them feel depressed.
 - 46% of those victimised because of their mental ill-health stated that being a victim of targeted hostility had made them feel suicidal, and 41% had turned to alcohol.
- Those targeted because of their mental ill-health, transgender status and learning disabilities were more likely to feel suicidal as a result of their victimisation (46%, 38% and 26% respectively) than respondents overall (7%).

It makes you feel demoralised. It makes you feel hated. It makes you feel isolated, unwanted.

Muslim man

- There were differences in the survey data between groups when it came to feelings of vulnerability. Nearly three quarters of respondents targeted because of their mental ill-health or physical disabilities stated that their experience(s) had made them feel vulnerable (72% for both groups), a figure substantially higher than the 36% overall who referred to feeling vulnerable.
- The wider community impact of hate crime became apparent in the context of religiously motivated victimisation and within some of the smaller, more marginalised minority groups, including the trans, homeless and English Roma communities.
- To deal with the threat of future victimisation a sizeable proportion of victims employed coping strategies or defence mechanisms. These ranged from changes in dress and/or appearance, including Sikh men cutting off their hair, Muslim women removing the veil and Muslim men shaving off their beards, to more practical strategies such as crossing the road to avoid large groups of people, bypassing certain areas altogether, carrying safety devices and installing CCTV.
- Women were more likely to use a range of safety and security measures than men, such as avoiding walking in certain areas or going to certain places (67% of women compared with 54% of men) and stopping going out at night (43% compared with 27%).

You try to forget these things but somehow it becomes almost a part of you. You can't get rid of it. It's like a bad smell: you try and try and try and you just can't get rid of it.

Female with mental ill-health

I went to B&Q and bought CCTV cameras from my own pocket and put a CCTV camera on the front of the house, on the back of the house, and the side.

Male asylum seeker from Iraq

4.5 Who are the perpetrators?

- Over one in five respondents had experienced their most recent hate crime at the hands of a single offender while the same proportion had been victimised by two offenders (22% respectively). For nearly a third of respondents three people or more had been involved (28%).
- Close to seven in ten survey respondents stated that their most recent experience of hate crime had involved at least one male offender (68%) and for a quarter it had involved at least one female (26%).
- Over a third of survey respondents' most recent hate crimes had involved an offender aged between 20 and 30 (37%), and a further third had involved a teenage offender (33%).

Everybody. Everybody. Young, old, White, Asian, Black ... Each and everybody's got it in them somewhere, normally when they've had a few drinks and it comes out, simple as that.

**Asian man who works
as a taxi driver**

- Three-fifths of survey respondents stated that their last experience of hate crime had involved a white offender (61%), while one in six said it had involved someone Asian (16%) and 12% someone Black.
- Commonly, hate crime has been thought of as a form of crime in which the perpetrators are strangers to the victim. However, this was the case in fewer than half of the most recent incidents of hate crime (49%).
- There has been a prevailing assumption that hate crimes are acts committed by people from majority, established groups against those from minority backgrounds. However, the findings from this study illustrate a much more complex picture, with members of majority and minority groups – and established and new/emerging communities – having expressed prejudiced views and committed acts of targeted hostility.
- Only 4% of respondents' most recent experiences of hate crime had gone to court.
- Participants were overwhelmingly in favour of educational approaches to tackling hate crime offending, rather than punishing offenders more severely through the higher sentencing tariffs available under hate crime legislation.
- Many respondents spoke positively about the capacity of restorative interventions to encourage offenders to comprehend the consequences of their actions for victims and their families.

They look at you, just because we're different from them. Like, we've got the disability and things, they think they can wrong you and tell you what to do, and push us around.

Female with learning disabilities

4.6 What support do victims need?

- Of the thousands of people with whom the research team engaged over the course of the project, only a small proportion understood what the term 'hate crime' referred to.
- Only a quarter of survey respondents stated that they had reported their most recent experience of hate crime to the police (24%).
- Just 14% of those targeted because of their sexual orientation and 17% of those targeted for their alternative dress, appearance and lifestyle had reported their most recent experience to the police.

Their services were appalling. The police promised, I don't know how many times, to follow up and come round to my flat, and all sorts of things. I don't even have a crime reference number ... they just completely ignored me, which is really, really frustrating.

Transgender woman

- In comparison, significantly higher reporting rates were evident amongst respondents who had been targeted because of their physical disabilities (56%) and/or learning disabilities (44%).
- When asked why they had reported their most recent experience of hate crime to the police, almost two-thirds of respondents stated that they had done so because it was a serious crime (63%), 48% had done so in the hope that the offender(s) would be brought to justice, and 29% because it had happened before.
- 72% of respondents believed that the police had recorded their most recent experience of hate crime.
- 43% of respondents believed that the police had investigated their most recent experience of hate crime.
- Just over half of those who had reported their last experience of hate crime to the police cited that they had been satisfied with the police's response (55%).
- Over three-quarters of respondents had not reported their most recent experience of hate crime to the police (76%). When asked why, the most frequent explanations were that they did not feel the police would take it seriously (30%), that they dealt with it themselves or with the help of others (27%), or that the police could not have done anything (20%).
- One in five of those who had reported their most recent experience to the police would not encourage others to do so (20%).
- Respondents who had known the offender(s) involved in their most recent experience of hate crime were more likely than others to say that they had not reported it to the police because it was a private matter (29% compared with 16%), for fear of retaliation (18% compared with 9%), or because they were too embarrassed (16% compared with 9%).
- Just one-fifth of survey respondents had reported their most recent experience of hate crime to an individual or organisation(s) other than the police (18%).
- Aside from police officers, teachers were most likely to be the individuals with whom respondents had shared their experiences of hate crime (4%), followed by social care workers (2%), doctors or nurses (2%) or community leaders (1%).

When I've spoken to gay people and they've mentioned things have happened to them I'm like "Did you report it?" And in nearly all of the cases they haven't, they're either "What's the point?" or they don't realise it is something they can report.

Gay man

- Although relatively few people had come into contact with Victim Support, those who had were generally satisfied with the response received. However, many research participants – and particularly those from some of the more marginalised and isolated groups of hate crime victims – often had very little, if any, knowledge of Victim Support and how to engage with its services.
- The views of victims with respect to levels of support provided by their local council and housing associations were overwhelmingly negative. Participants who had engaged with such organisations to access their support services often found that the response they received had not helped but instead had simply reinforced their sense of victimisation, despair and isolation.

*I was offered counselling.
I kinda went, no, no, no, I'm
a closed person. But part of
me wishes I had of done that,
because I would have got it
all out then, rather than let it
fester. Because it was a long
time before I could talk
about it.*

**Female victim of
gendered hostility**

5 Recommendations

- On the basis of the project's findings the research team has produced ten key recommendations which embody the needs and expectations of those whose lives have been directly affected by hate crime. These recommendations are available to view within the *Victims' Manifesto* which accompanies this *Executive Summary*, and also within the *Findings and Conclusions* report).
- The relevance of these recommendations is not limited to any particular community, organisation or type of hate crime; rather, they represent a wish list of the most commonly-cited needs and expectations shared collectively by victims from all kinds of backgrounds. As such, they are an important, achievable and victim-centred set of recommendations whose implementation can help to deliver more effective services for victims locally and nationally.
- The research team has produced a number of outputs, including a comprehensive *Findings and Conclusions* report, a series of themed briefing papers covering specific strands of hate crime, a *Victims' Manifesto* which organisations have been invited to pledge support to, and this *Executive Summary* of key findings. Copies of these reports and briefing papers are available to download at www.le.ac.uk/centreforhatestudies



This research was funded by the
Economic and Social Research
Council (ESRC)



University of
Leicester

© University of Leicester, Leicester LE1 7RH UK
www.le.ac.uk/centreforhatestudies