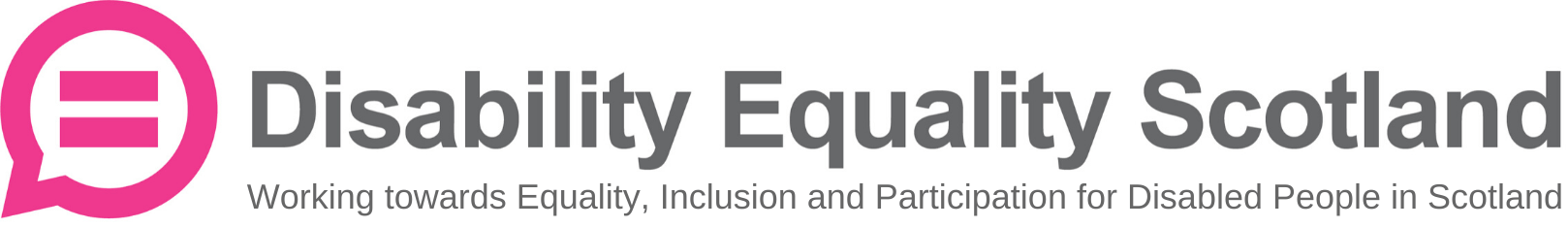
**[](https://disabilityequality.scot/)**

**Weekly Poll – Hate Crime on Public Transport**

Each week Disability Equality Scotland send out a poll question to our members on a topical issue. For the week beginning 21 November 2022 we asked a question about hate crime on public transport. Please note that this is a snapshot of the views of our membership and does not reflect a policy stance of Disability Equality Scotland. If you plan to reference the findings featured in this report, please [**contact us**](https://disabilityequality.scot/contact-us/) in advance so that we are aware of this.

**Results**

**Question 1.** Please select all forms of public transport you use regularly?

* Bus – 78% (38 respondents)
* Train 47% (23 respondents)
* Ferry – 14% (7 respondents)
* Community transport – 2% (1 respondent)
* Taxi – 39% (19 respondents)
* Any other form of transport – 33% (16 respondents)

**Question 2.** Have you been the victim of or witnessed a hate crime on public transport?

* Yes – 39% (19 respondents)
* No – 47% (23 respondents)
* Unsure – 14% (7 respondents)

**Hate Crime Charter**

Police Scotland define hate crime as any crime which is perceived by the victim or any other person as being motivated (wholly or partly) by malice or ill will towards a social group.

There are five groups or protected characteristics covered by the hate crime legislation:

* Disability
* Race
* Religion or belief
* Sexual Orientation
* Transgender Identity.

On Wednesday 26 October 2022, Disability Equality Scotland joined the relaunch of the National Hate Crime Charter, to encourage transport providers, members of the public and other services to support a zero-tolerance approach to hate crime on Scotland’s public transport network.

**Experiences of Hate Crime**

To assist with increasing awareness of the Charter, we wanted to find out about the experiences of hate crime on public transport. Respondents reflected on hate crime and incidents which they had experienced or witnessed.

“I have experienced direct hate crime on the bus but most frequently the train (as this is how I travel most). This is typically verbal abuse re place of origin, perceived religious beliefs, disability etc.”

“I was spat at and verbally abused during the pandemic for asking a young lady to vacate the wheelchair space on an Edinburgh Tram, whilst going to the Gyle Centre in Edinburgh to collect prescriptions.”

“Being hassled for sitting in my wheelchair in a wheelchair space because people can’t get on with luggage.”

“I once witnessed someone using arm crutches being shouted at for sitting in the wheelchair space by a woman who was getting off the bus. She told them that they should not be there as they were not in a wheelchair.”

“I remember a story from one young autistic man who was taunted at a bus stop about bus times and fictional cancellations because winding him up produced a reaction that the perpetrators found amusing.”

**Reporting**

All hate crimes and incidents should be reported. By reporting, you will help the police, local councils, and transport providers to see patterns of behaviour, and help to show areas that could be a problem within your community. There are lots of ways you can report a hate crime. You can report if you are the victim, or if you have seen this happen to someone else, or if someone asks you to report it for them. For information on how to recognise and report hate crime, visit the Accessible Travel Hub: [**www.accessibletravel.scot/hate-crime**](https://accessibletravel.scot/hate-crime/)

Respondents reflected on their experiences of reporting hate crime incidents on public transport. Some respondents did not report the incident due to a lack of awareness on how to do so, a perception that no action will be taken and a fear of consequence through retaliation.

“I was on the bus and was made fun of due to my race – the person used a forced Asian accent to make fun of me and then carried on laughing with his friends. I did not report it as I just wanted to get away and I never felt that person would be found to take any further action. Also – fear of being identified on the bus and drawing attention to myself would be hard.”

“A driver made a racial slur directed at my Personal Assistant. We were both dumbfounded at the time but next day I phoned the bus company and they came out and spoke with each of us and investigated. They apologised and said the driver had been disciplined. I suspect he was moved to a different route. If this happened today, should I phone police first?”

“I was on a bus (it was the bus driver!). It wasn’t reported, and I didn’t know how to.”

“I have experienced hate crime on bus, train and ferry. Yes, it was reported each occasion. Transport staff are not interested, don’t want to get involved. Reported to Police, statements given, and nothing happens. You state 97% of disabled hate crime goes unreported – quite simply because nothing happens, no one cares, no one wants to be bothered. Hate crime is far more common than people want to admit to, it runs much deeper than authorities and organisations want to admit to. Doing nothing is likely an indication that those claiming they are anti-hate crime is actually a pretence and a cover up of the reality, that these authorities and organisations are they themselves perpetrators of hate crime!”

“Issues happened on a bus. The crime was not reported. The reason being is that the police did not want to record it as a crime. It’s great saying hate crimes should be reported but unfortunately the police do not seem to either be bothered, do not realise it is a crime or otherwise will not take a report. Until the police and court system take hate crimes seriously then people are not going to report crimes.”

**Conclusion**

Hate crime as any crime which is perceived by the victim or any other person as being motivated (wholly or partly) by malice or ill will towards a social group. Respondents reflected on their experiences of hate crime, with 40% stating they had been the victim of or witnessed a hate crime on public transport. Some respondents did not feel confident in reporting hate crime due to a lack of awareness on how to do so, a perception that no action will be taken and a fear of consequence through retaliation.