

**What is hate crime**

Hate crimes and hate incidents

In most crimes it is something the victim has in their possession or control that motivates the offender to commit the crime. With hate crime it is ‘who’ the victim is, or ‘what’ the victim appears to be that motivates the offender to commit the crime.

A hate crime is defined as 'Any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's race or perceived race; religion or perceived religion; sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation; disability or perceived disability and any crime motivated by hostility or prejudice against a person who is transgender or perceived to be transgender.'

A hate incident is any incident which the victim, or anyone else, thinks is based on someone’s prejudice towards them because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or because they are transgender.

Evidence of the hate element is not a requirement. You do not need to personally perceive the incident to be hate related. It would be enough if another person, a witness or even a police officer thought that the incident was hate related.

Types of hate crime

Hate crime can fall into one of three main types: physical assault, verbal abuse and incitement to hatred.

Physical assault

Physical assault of any kind is an offence. If you’ve been a victim of physical assault you should report it. Depending on the level of the violence used, a perpetrator may be charged with common assault, actual bodily harm or grievous bodily harm.

Verbal abuse

Verbal abuse, threats or name-calling can be a common and extremely unpleasant experience for minority groups.

Victims of verbal abuse are often unclear whether an offence has been committed or believe there is little they can do. However, there are laws in place to protect you from verbal abuse.

If you’ve been the victim of verbal abuse, talk to the police or one of our partner organisations about what has happened. You’ll find a list of them on our [How to report hate crime](https://www.met.police.uk/ro/report/hate-crime/information/v1/hate-crime/how-to-report-hate-crime/) page.

Even if you don’t know who verbally abused you, the information could still help us to improve how we police the area where the abuse took place.