

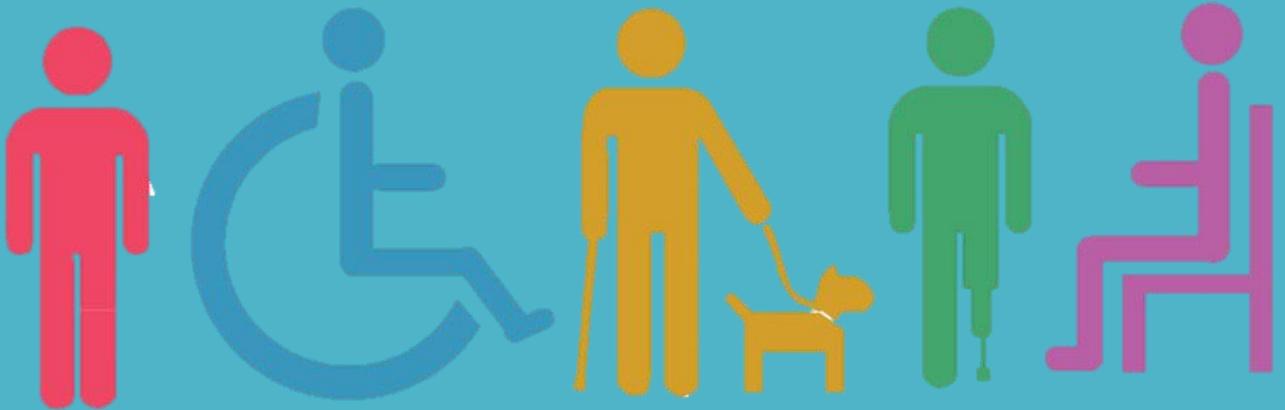


**VICTIM
SUPPORT**



Ariennir gan
Lywodraeth Cymru
Funded by
Welsh Government

Disability Hate Crime Factsheet



www.reporthate.victimsupport.org.uk

What is a Hate Crime?

Hate Crime is a term that describes an incident or crime against someone based on an aspect of who they are, or who they are perceived to be; their Identity. Identity is divided into five Protected Characteristics in relation to Hate Crime. These are categories of identity that might be the target of prejudice, hostility or hate. These characteristics are:

- Race or Ethnicity
- Disability
- Religion of Belief
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender Identity

*“ I don't want pity, I want you
to do something about it ”*

- Gem, Victim of Hate Crime, Scope, 2018

Disability related Hate Crime

Disability Hate Crime continues to rise year-on-year. In 2016-17 5,558 hate crimes were reported, in 2017-18 this rose to 7,221 and again to 8256 in 2018-19 across England and Wales.

In 2019, Ability Today worked with leading disability charity Leonard Cheshire to survey 250 disabled people and discovered that;

- 37% of their respondents had experienced hate crime.
- The majority of hate crime was experienced through social media.

In a survey commissioned by the charity Changing Faces in January 2020;

- Over a quarter (28%) of people with a visible difference have experienced a Hate Crime
- Almost half of those who had experienced negative behaviours said they had lost confidence, over a third say they now feel anxious when they go out.

“People I don't know take my photograph when I am out and about. They post it on social media for others to comment on. The comments are nasty, hurtful and leave me feeling frightened and angry. There is no escaping this online abuse if I want to use social media. It's horrible to know that my family might see this abuse online.”

- Janine Howard, Victim of Hate Crime, Ability Now Research

Mate Crime

Mate Crime happens when someone befriends a victim to take advantage of them. This can include physical resources such as food and money, or sexual abuse or assault. This can create a complex situation as someone might be afraid to lose the friendship or may be worried about being lonely.

Barriers to reporting Disability Hate Crime

Although we have a better understanding of the prevalence and impact of Disability Hate Crime, we recognise there are still barriers to reporting Hate Crime and accessing support.

“Worryingly, 36% didn’t report the disability hate crime they experienced to anyone”

- (Leonard Cheshire)

There can be a number of complex reasons why someone doesn’t report an identity based crime. Victims tell us that these include:

Perceptions

- If the hate incidences happen often, victims may ‘normalise’ it as an expected everyday experience.
- Worry about how to talk about the hate crime and how it will be perceived by others. Identity based crimes can create complex feelings and emotions.
- If a victim has experienced lots of negative attention towards their disability, they may not believe that changes can be made.
- Some people feel that whilst what has happened has had a big impact on them, that it will appear trivial to someone else.

Mistrust of Police and Criminal Justice Agencies

- Some people may have a distrust of police or other agencies, this can present complex relationships when that person needs support or needs to report a hate crime. Many people don’t realise that organisations like Victim Support are 3rd Party Reporting Centres and can help them to report to the Police, even anonymously.

Fear

- Victims with disabilities and who have supported / independent living arrangements may feel fearful that their independence may be affected if they report a hate crime. This is especially so if it happens online or in their local community due to fears of it appearing that they're unable to cope. We can advocate between the individual and other agencies such as the Police and Housing where needed.
- Fear of retribution from neighbours if the hate crime happens in their neighbourhood.



Lack of Information

- A lack of knowledge that supporting services such as Victim Support exist to support them to move beyond the crime, to overcome what has happened to them.
- People who have experienced disability hate crime may not realise that a disfigurement such as a burn injury or people with mental health issues would also be accounted for within the protected groups of hate crime legislation.

Access

- There may be communication or accessibility barriers that may make it more difficult for people to report hate crime and access support.
- Some people may find it difficult to identify what happening to them as a Hate Crime and therefore less likely to have the confidence to report or access support.

“This kind of abuse can destroy people’s worlds – the sound of the phone ringing can send panic through their hearts; they don’t leave the house. I identify with those emotions, the sadness and the hurt, because I’ve felt them.”

- Adam Pearson, Leading Face Equality Campaigner & Patron, Changing Faces Charity, 2020.

How to report a Hate Crime

If a Hate Crime has taken place, we advise that you contact the police by one of the following methods:

- If it is an emergency and the crime is still taking place, call **999**.
- If it is not an immediate emergency, call **101**.
- If you prefer, you can go to your **local police station** and report the crime there.
- Victim Support can report to the Police **on your behalf** and you can choose to remain **anonymous** if you wish
- Witnesses of Hate Crime can also contact **Victim Support** to report an incident

However, we understand some people might be concerned about involving the police for a variety of reasons. Victim Support will provide you with help and support whether you decide to involve the police or not. To talk to us, please contact us through any of the following options:

- To contact our Hate Crime Services at Victim Support contact us on **0300 30 31 982**
- Visit our website at <https://www.reporthate.victimsupport.org.uk/>
- **Twitter@VictimSupportHC**
- **Facebook: VictimSupportHC**
- **Instagram: vswaleshatecrime**
- If you wish to make a self-referral email: hate.crimewales@victimsupport.org.uk

Regardless of whether you report the crime to the police or contact us directly, we advise keeping a note of all incidents related to Hate Crime. Ideally this would include times, dates and details of what happened. This is valuable if you decide to change your mind reporting it at a later date, or if the abuse is consistent or ongoing.

The support we offer covers helping with simple tasks like filling out forms, offering personal and home security, but we can also assist with bigger problems. These include ongoing emotional support, housing and police advocacy or support with understanding the criminal justice system over the course of your trial. We'll give you the information you need to understand your options and next steps.