v1: 22 November 2023

Research Article

Understanding the Patterns of Hate Incidents and Reporting Attitudes at a UK University

Peer-approved: 22 November 2023

Qeios, Vol. 5 (2023)
ISSN: 2632-3834

Nadia Siddiqui[1], Graham Towl[1], Jennifer Matthewson[1], Mel Earnshaw[1]

1. University of Durham, United Kingdom

Widening participation, through diversity and inclusion, has become a major goal to achieve in UK Higher Education, with the potential of the most able, rather than simply the socially advantaged, attending university. Addressing challenges of racism and religiously motivated hate incidents in universities is important if we are to provide an educational environment in which all can feel safe to learn. The current study is a survey investigation and one of the very largest of its kind in the UK. The focus is on the extent of hate crime incidents and patterns of reporting the incidents by students and staff at a university in the North East of England. All staff and students were invited to take part in the anonymous survey, generating a sample of 2,265 respondents. Of those who responded, 27% indicated that they had experienced a hate incident, and only 20% of those who had experienced an incident also reported it. The survey results, counterintuitively, and for some no doubt controversially, showed relatively small differences in the patterns of experiencing hate incidents motivated by race or religion across different subgroups in the sample. Students and staff with disabilities were the group most likely to report experiencing hate crime, both within and outside the university. The findings have research and policy implications. There is a need for establishing clear institutional policies on reporting pathways and procedures, maintaining an effective system for information, help, support, and advice.

Correspondence: papers@team.qeios.com — Qeios will forward to the authors

Background

In England and Wales, there has been an upward trend in recent years, with the number of hate crimes recorded by the police having more than doubled since 2012/13 (from 42,255 to 94,098 offences in 2017). This increase is thought to be largely driven by improvements in police recording, although there have been spikes in hate crime following certain events such as the EU Referendum and the terrorist attacks in 2017 (Home Office, Statistical Bulletin, 2018). The period of the Covid-19 global pandemic has shown a record increase in racially aggravated hate crimes (ONS 2020). In the context of a global world, the phenomenon of hate crime is prevalent where populations are recently becoming diverse in race, languages, and religious beliefs, and groups are interacting on terms of equality (Iganski 2007). A recent report by the UK Equality and Human Rights Commission also reported the need to set up policy and procedures to tackle the problems of harassment and racism (EHRC 2019). Acts of violence, hate, and insults based on the race or religion of a victim have a legal definition, and there are consequences for the perpetrators.

As defined by the Association of Chief Police Officers, a 'hate incident' is any incident, which may or may not constitute a criminal offence, perceived by the victim or any other person as being motivated by prejudice or hate (Association of Chief Police Officers). Racially and religiously aggravated offences were introduced by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (CDA 1998). 'Hate crimes' are defined less broadly than 'hate incidents' and involve 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 disability or perceived disability; race or perceived race; or religion or perceived religion; or sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation; or transgender identity or perceived transgender identity. This is essentially what has become known as the Macpherson definition of racism after the appalling case of the murder of Stephen Lawrence. Studies have largely focused on hate crimes based on race, ethnicity, and religion. The recognition of protected characteristics has raised awareness as well as official data on hate crime committed based on disability and sexual orientation. The studies have reported that there are not only challenges in reporting but also a very low conviction rate (Roulstone et al., 2011). The impact of hate crime lasts longer on victims and communities when compared with general crimes of violence (Iganski and Lagou, 2014). This has implications for how the state defines laws for hate crime and implements policies for prevention.

There is currently a large amount of diversity in how hate crimes are reported, recorded, and processed (Perry, 2016). In the UK, the police document and investigate any crime which is viewed by the victim to be hate-related (Home Office, 2016). However, due in part to the substantial increase in reporting, police responses to hate crimes have received criticism for failing to sometimes appropriately prioritise such important work. Under half (42%) of hate crime victims have reported that the police formally followed up their experience (Clayton, Donovan, and Macdonald, 2016; Chakraborti, Garland, and Hardy, 2014). Additionally, cases which are investigated often fail to reach court, due to difficulties surrounding the interpretation of what constitutes a 'hate crime', restricted resources, and the necessity for a criminal (as opposed to, say, civil) level of evidential proof (Chakraborti, 2018). Although reports are increasing and improvements appear to have been made in recording procedures followed by police, the practical capacity of services to deal with this level of reporting has been called into question.

Issues also surround the lack of police response to incidents perceived as minor offences. Hate crimes, which are viewed as low in severity, are less likely to result in the arrest of the perpetrator due to a reduced propensity for witness cooperation and limited evidence available (Walfield, Socia, and Powers, 2017). Hate crimes discussed in this paper are acts of hate that do not meet the threshold of criminal prosecution. Crimes involving victim injury are more likely to result in perpetrator conviction. Processing all low-level crimes based on victim views may currently be an issue due to varying understandings of what constitutes a hate crime, and the stringent need for a criminal level of evidence to allow for a conviction (Balderson, 2013). The need for investigation into effective ways to deal with hate crimes is thus necessary.

The concerns about hate crime and hate incidents are worrying in the context of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), where there are often large numbers of international students, who are frequently from minority ethnic groups from a UK perspective. Students' experience of university life matters for their learning, mental health and wellbeing, and for the local and international reputation of UK higher education in attracting students from across the globe.

Survey studies have investigated the extent of hate incidents in universities, but it remains unclear if students from minority ethnic and religious groups are subject to hate incidents disproportionately higher than others. Reporting rates are notoriously low, and we need to be mindful of that when drawing conclusions from such survey-based studies as this. The surveys conducted in universities usually involve self-reports by volunteering respondents, so we need to exercise caution in interpreting the results and in drawing conclusions.

Two broad categories of hate crime perpetrators have been identified: young offenders committing hate crimes impulsively, and the other most prevalent category has been postulated, albeit somewhat perversely, as 'defensive' offenders, who committed a hate crime to 'protect' their 'turf' from perceived outsiders (McDevitt, Levin, and Bennett, 2002). The EHRC (2019) survey of racial harassment inquiry targeted all UK universities, and 89% participated in the survey. The sample included staff and students who self-reported their experience of hate incidents. However, it is not clear how many respondents took part in the survey and how representative the sample is for the entire population of UK universities. The report seems to raise important concerns regarding a lack of mechanisms and procedures to tackle such low reporting.

Research Design

This study is the largest of its kind. It consists of a cross-sectional survey of a university population. All staff and students were invited to take part in the online survey, which remained open for access and completion for around 45 days. The term-time was selected for the survey launch because staff and students are more likely to closely follow their emails and university notices then. The study design is based on comparisons of the sample sub-groups, and the 10% sample has the strength to establish meaningful correlations and reasonable effect sizes. The main comparison in the sample is between respondents who reported having experienced a hate incident and those who reported not having experienced any hate incident.

For comparison, a neighbouring university was invited to share the survey with all of their staff and student population. The survey and protocol of the administration were the same. However, the response rate was appreciably lower, and the number of survey participants in the sub-groups is not large enough to develop a meaningful cross-university comparison. The differences across the two universities have been explicated in the descriptive analysis.

This comparative study design has helped inform our understanding of the following research questions:

1. What is the extent of hate crime incidents at the selected university?
2. Are there relative differences between groups who reported having experienced a hate incident and those who reported not having experienced a hate incident?
3. Are there relative differences in the reporting patterns of those who experienced a hate incident?

The focus of this study is to understand the extent and nature of hate crime incidents and patterns of reporting. The sampling design targeted a wide population, which included both those who had and had not experienced hate incidents.

The study design included question items and open response options for those who reported having experienced hate incidents in order to analyse barriers and challenges in the reporting of hate incidents. This aspect of the study has implications for the development of effective reporting mechanisms and addressing concerns at various levels.

The Survey

The development of the survey instrument was guided by the comparative nature of our research design. An extensive search of survey instruments was conducted before the development of this survey. Most studies included items of feedback from those who experienced hate incidents only, with no comparison group. Distinctively, we included such a comparison group. A new survey was developed in which the items concerning those who experienced hate incidents were mainly adapted from existing surveys that have been validated in large-scale studies conducted by the ONS (2019) and the Crime and Victims' Commissioner (2018).

The online survey was designed in such a way that relevant questions were asked of the two groups in the sample. Once a respondent anonymously declared that they had experienced a hate incident as defined in the survey, the survey track they followed asked a set of multiple-choice questions with open response space regarding the details of their experience. The counterfactual group was asked about their prospective response in the case of such an experience, their reporting choices, and preferred portals to submit complaints. Both groups were given common questions on their feedback regarding the existing university measures on the reporting of hate crime and their satisfaction with these measures. All respondents completed items on basic characteristics, e.g., affiliation with the University, age, and ethnicity.

The study also focused on the extent and patterns of hate incidents motivated by race or religion. Respondents who experienced hate incidents were specifically asked if they considered that their race and/or religious beliefs were the motivating factors in the incidents. In the case that the victims indicated none of the two reasons, the survey recorded a range of respondents' characteristics which assisted in understanding relative patterns of victimisation based on, for example, gender and disability.

The survey was widely distributed to receive a high response rate from all tiers of staff and students. All department leads (N=26) sent an email message of high importance to their relevant staff and students requesting their survey participation. The 'Message of the day' (Automatic notice board) invited all staff and students to take part in the survey. An email message from a senior member of the University Executive Committee was sent to all staff and students introducing the study with an invitation to participate in the survey. A paper version was also available for those who wanted to participate by this means.

The sample comprises only those who volunteered to complete the survey, and we were able to look at each of the sub-samples as a proportion of the overall numbers in each such sub-group, e.g., 'staff' or 'students'. For example, as a proportion of the total number of staff, the staff sample was larger than the student sample. But in absolute numbers, the student group was appreciably larger than the staff's total respondents. We cannot be sure that our sample was truly representative; however, we are aware of no systematic biases other than perhaps the willingness to respond to the survey. The total sample is large enough to show some meaningful patterns in the results, albeit with the important caveat that the study design is cross-sectional. Thus, our sample may or may not be representative of the student and staff university populations.

Methods of Analysis

This analysis is structured and consistent with the research design. A descriptive analysis presents the nature of the sample who responded to the survey in relation to the general characteristics of the individual university population. The findings of the descriptive analysis are followed by the overall differences in the extent of hate crime experience (or not), reported (or not), and its association with respondents' characteristics such as race, religion, gender, age, and disability are presented after cross-tabulation, and results are reported as 'effect' sizes. The sample is large but not clearly representative as it was a voluntary survey participation. We did not set a compulsory rule for the item response in order to encourage maximum participation. Any test of significance is not applicable here because the sample is not representative, and there was missing data in response to many survey items (Gorard 2016, Trafimow et al. 2018).

The cross-tabulation only presents correlations and does not claim to establish causal inference. Multiple logistic regression models are presented with two distinct outcomes, after controlling for the background characteristics. The first outcome is the likelihood of experiencing a hate incident, and the second outcome is the likelihood of reporting the incident. The data quality has the limitation of being potentially unrepresentative, with only volunteers undertaking the survey based on self-reported data – this aspect was in keeping with a number of other studies in this challenging area.

The article also presents a thematic analysis of data provided in the open response sections of the survey. The open response section was also voluntary information provided by the survey respondents. This space was used by 100 survey participants, where they gave details about their personal experiences and perceptions of hate crime experiences. In the thematic analysis, we coded these responses and developed broader and recurring themes. The descriptive results and logistic regression analysis are discussed in combination with the findings of the thematic analysis.

Descriptive Findings

In the survey, 2,265 members of the university participated. This sample represents 10% of the university population, which includes 4,000 staff and 18,031 students. The overall sample is large and has members from all tiers of staff and student groups. The table below shows participation from the four major categories in the university population.

	Survey participant %	Total No.
Undergraduate	8	13,668
Postgraduate (FT & PT)	9	4,345
Academic staff (Research and Teaching)	18	1,731
Professional staff	16	2,600
Total	10	22,344

Table 1. Percentage and numbers of survey participants

The respondents self-reported their basic characteristics. Question items for the basic characteristics included the categories of gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and disability.

doi.org/10.32388/D3PO6I

	Percentage
Sex	
Female	58
Male	39
Other sex	1
Not reported	3
Ethnicity	
White British	58
White European or Traveller	16
Chinese	12
Asian	8
Black African or Caribbean	2
Middle Eastern	1
Not reported	3
Religion	
No religion	34
Christianity	32
Islam	3
Other religion	3
Judaism	2
Hinduism	1
Sikh	1
Buddhism	1
Not reported	6
Sexual Orientation	
Heterosexual	77
Bisexual	8
Asexual	3
Gay	2
Lesbian	1
Not reported	10
Disability	
No	88
Yes	7
Prefer not to say	4

Table 2. Percentage of Sample Characteristics

In each category of the characteristics, there is missing data due to no response or some respondents choosing the option 'Prefer not to say'. Although the survey was anonymous, respondents had the choice to declare the information they wanted to share. The drawback of missing data due to no response is one of the limitations of this research. In this study, the analysis will take into account the missing data, considering that the evidence of missing information in the self-reported survey is not random and, generally, missing information may often be very likely to be associated with vulnerable groups (Siddiqui et al., 2019).

The Extent of Hate Incidents

In several survey studies on hate crime projects, a common observation is the absence of a comparison group to judge the extent of hate incidents. The current study includes two major sample groups who self-reported their experience of receiving or not receiving a hate incident. A comparison between the two groups can show if sub-groups are differentially experiencing hate incidents, and if the choice of reporting or lack of reporting hate incidents is associated with specific characteristics.

The overall patterns in the survey responses on experiencing hate incidents are shown in the table below:

doi.org/10.32388/D3PO6I

Experienced hate incident	Yes	No
Staff	32%	68%
Student	24%	76%
Male	26%	74%
Female	27%	73%
Other sex	*38%*	*62%*
White	25%	75%
BAME	30%	70%
In religion	29%	71%
No religion	25%	75%
Disabled	*45%*	*55%*
Not disabled	25%	75%
Total No.	604	1,650

Table 3. Percentage of hate incidents experienced

In the survey sample, 27% of respondents reported having experienced a hate incident from the total sample of 2,254 survey respondents. In a survey study, respondents self-report their experiences, and there could be a range of factors involved in their perception of hate incidents. There must be cautious interpretation of any findings based on respondents' self-reports.

Making a judgement on whether 27% is a high or low level of hate incidents in the context of the University, we developed a comparison with another university (University II) with similar regional characteristics. The response rate from the other university was not as high as that from the selected University I of interest. Only 399 people from the entire population of University II responded to the survey. However, the results showed that 13% of the survey respondents from the other northeast University II reported having experienced a hate incident. The University, which included a much larger return rate of completed surveys, has, relatively, a higher percentage of hate incidents. However, this difference in the percentage of hate incidents between the two universities in the same region could be due to differences in the characteristics of the populations. As the numbers are not balanced and the samples are not, on prima facie evidence, representative of the university populations, comparisons should be interpreted as exploratory rather than in any way making wider, bolder claims.

The differences among the sub-group categories of the sample from the University do not show statistically unusual differences. In each sub-group category, the proportion of those who have not experienced hate incidents is higher. Some noticeable percentage differences are in the categories of 'disabled' (45%) and 'other sex' (38%), where the percentage of experiencing hate incidents is higher when compared with other sub-group categories. In the 'BAME' (30%) and 'In religion' (29%) categories, the percentage differences are quite similar. However, in both categories, the majority of respondents have reported not experiencing any hate incidents.

Another important pattern of reporting hate incidents is described in Table 4. This includes only the subgroup of respondents who experienced any hate incident. According to the descriptive analysis, only 20% of those who experienced any hate incident reported it to others.

Reported hate incident	Yes	No
Staff	38	62
Student	*11*	*89*
Male	21	79
Female	17	83
Other sex	17	83
White	22	78
BAME	*13*	*87*
Religion	19	81
No religion	16	84
Disabled	24	76
Not disabled	17	83
Total No.	123	481

Table 4. Percentage of hate incidents reported

Students (11%) and BAME (13%) groups have the lowest percentage of reporting hate incidents. Unsurprisingly, the BAME respondents appear least likely to report an experienced hate incident. These results are in contrast to the (predominantly white) staff results, where over a third did report experiencing a hate incident. The survey asked respondents about the type of hate incident experienced according to nine broad categories of crimes. Reporting of hate incidents seems to be associated with the type and severity of the experience. Table 5 shows the reporting pattern for each type of hate incident experienced.

	Experienced	Reported
Harassment	*51*	*13*
Threats	12	5
Verbal abuse	*68*	*13*
Cyberbullying	5	1
Unwanted physical contact	25	3
Indirect discrimination	*46*	*6*
Physical assault	8	2
Damage to property	3	1
Sexual violence	6	1
Total No.	604	123

Table 5. Percentage of hate incident type and reporting

Harassment, verbal abuse, and indirect discrimination are the most common types of incidents experienced. However, the reporting levels in each of the categories are, perhaps surprisingly, low. The most noticeable gap between the experience of a hate incident and its reporting is in the category of indirect discrimination. According to the Citizens Advice Bureau (2017), indirect discrimination is not on the list of hate crimes or hate incidents. However, there is clear guidance on discrimination which states that any act of discrimination based on sex, race, sexual orientation, disability, and religion which has adverse effects on victims can be reported and recorded by relevant authorities in the category of a hate incident.

Respondents indicated the following reasons for not reporting the incident they experienced: did not think that anything could be done (52%), did not perceive it to be a big deal (23%), did not know it was a hate crime (5%), did not know how and who to report to (3%), did not want to get involved (3%), it was only once (3%), did not have any confidence in the university or college (2%), and were afraid to report (1%).

Nearly half of those who did not report their experience of hate incidents considered that nothing would have been done about it, and many thought that the incident was not serious enough for reporting. Reporting is considered a choice, and decisions to report are, it seems, to some degree guided by knowledge of the reporting consequences. Expectations that the report will not be fairly assessed or that it could have adverse consequences can prevent victims from reporting and reaching out for help and required support. A number of victims also did not report because, at the time of the incident, they were not aware if the incident was in the category of hate crime or a hate incident. A few respondents also indicated a lack of awareness about the process and stages of reporting. Reporting percentages were lower in the incidents that are deemed (legally, at least) less severe or have happened only once. However, reporting also appears to have been low for some severe incidents such as sexual violence (16%), physical assaults (2%), and damage to property (1%). The number of responses in these categories is very small, but the gap in the percentage of experience and reporting is consistently marked.

Barriers to Reporting to the Authorities

Respondents were asked specifically why they did not report to the university authorities and to the police to provide insight into the barriers to reporting to each organisation. While similarities exist between the cited reasons for not reporting to either organisation, interesting patterns emerge when the results are analysed for the different groups.

Staff and students identify thinking nothing would have been done if they reported to the University or their College as one of the top two reasons they did not report, with 62% of undergraduates, 60% of postgraduates, and 38% of staff citing this reason. Interestingly, 16% of undergraduates, 25% of postgraduates, and 14% of staff indicated they did not report due to a lack of confidence in the University, indicating that confidence in the institution is not necessarily related to a feeling that action will not be taken. Of concern are those undergraduates (11%), postgraduates (9%), and staff (9%) who indicated they did not report to the University because they were afraid to. Expectations that a report will not be acted upon, or worse still, that reporting could have negative consequences, can prevent victims from reaching out for the required support. Increasing transparency of the complaint/disciplinary process and the outcomes of reported incidents should manage expectations and increase the perception that action is taken on reports.

Around 66% of undergraduates indicated they did not report due to feeling that the incident was not a 'big deal', potentially showing a social and psychological normalisation of bad behaviour. Reporting of all incidents (whether considered big or small) aids intervention efforts by highlighting problems early, or before they become bigger or more widespread. Clarification to students, especially undergraduates, that the University wants to hear about all incidents is necessary and can, for example, be achieved to some degree through the introduction of anonymous reporting.

The University staff largely knew how and who to report to. This is generally not so for students, with 29% of postgraduates and 23% of undergraduates not knowing who to report to, and 27% of postgraduates and 22% of undergraduates stating they did not know how to report. The introduction of an online reporting and support tool can provide a clear mechanism to report, as well as detailed information on the reporting process and support resources. Students selected at a high rate that they did not report to the University or their College because they did not 'want to get involved' (31% of undergraduates and 27% of postgraduates). One hypothesis is that students do not want the potential stress of reporting in view of their limited time at the university, especially in view of what they may view as a lengthy and time-consuming process.

Undergraduates identified not thinking the incident was a 'big deal' (63%), their feeling that nothing would have been done (47%), and their not wanting to get involved (36%) as the top three reasons for not reporting to the police. Work could be done to emphasise to students that the Police would like to hear about all incidents, with explanations of the criminal justice process and what to expect.

International postgraduates, as a group, identified their lack of confidence in their own English language skills (41%) as the top reason for not reporting to the police, followed by not wanting to go to court (21%), which may be based on their lack of confidence in their language skills or, as hypothesized above with the undergraduate population, the length of time they are living and studying at the University. The postgraduates indicated that they did not know how to report (19%) to the police at a higher rate than our undergraduates (11%) and staff (2%). Fifteen percent of postgraduates selected that they did not report because they were afraid to. Similar to the undergraduates but at lower rates, the staff identified thinking nothing would be done and not thinking it was a big deal (both 21%) as the top two reasons for not reporting to the police.

Is Race or Religion a Factor in Victimisation?

From the group who identified experiencing one or more unwanted behaviours, 25% stated they believe they were targeted for their religion, 6% indicated they believe they were targeted for their race, 6% responded they were targeted for both race and religion, and 68% indicated that their experience was neither motivated by their race nor religion.

In general, there is a noticeably higher percentage of respondents in all four religious groups (Muslim, Hindu/Sikh, Christian, and Jewish) who have indicated that they have not experienced a religious-based hate incident. However, looking at the breakdown in religious groups, Islam and Sikh had the highest percentage of respondents who indicated that they have experienced a religious-based hate incident (both 39%). Table 6 shows the extent of hate incidents motivated by race and/or religion and how far these incidents have been reported.

Motivation	Experienced	Reported to the university
Race	6%	3%
Religion	25%	1%
Race and Religion	6%	1%
Not Race or Religion	68%	16%
Total No.	604	123

Table 6. Percentage of reported motivation for hate incidents and subsequent reporting to the university

When broken down by ethnic groups, there was a higher percentage of respondents in all ethnic groups (South Asian, East Asian, Any other Asian, Black, Middle Eastern, and Any other Ethnicity) who have indicated that they have not experienced a race-based hate incident. When comparing these ethnic groups, the group with the highest percentage of respondents who have experienced a race-based hate incident was Any other Asian (47%), followed by Black (43%).

With regard to those who have experienced and reported hate incidents, Table 7 shows that the difference in experiencing hate incidents between BAME and Not BAME groups (White majority) is not large (5%). However, the gap in reporting is noticeably wide for the BAME group (17%). The reporting percentage is low for both BAME and Not BAME groups, but it is marginally lower for the BAME group. Those who reported a hate incident are a subset of those who experienced a hate incident.

doi.org/10.32388/D3PO6I

	Experienced	Reported
BAME	30	13
Not BAME	25	9
Total No.	604	123

Table 7. Percentage reporting differences

When looking at the reporting pathways selected by individuals who have experienced religious or race-based incidents (broken down by staff, undergraduates, and postgraduates), the majority of the staff respondents reported hate incidents to their line manager (71%); whilst some reported to Human Resources (31%). Meanwhile, the rest of the reporting pathways seem to be underutilised by the staff respondents. A high proportion of undergraduates, on the other hand, reported to college support services (44%); whilst the majority of postgraduates opted to report to the Police (53%).

The preference for certain reporting pathways was relatively similar for respondents who have not experienced hate incidents. For instance, the breakdown in Figure 10 shows that a staggering amount of the staff respondents were also likely to report a religious or race-based incident to their line manager (70%); whilst most undergraduates would most likely report to their Student Support Services (63%). Interestingly, though, most of the postgraduates who have not experienced hate incidents would most likely report to University Support Services (53%) instead of the Police.

Logistic Regression Models: Likelihood of Experiencing a Hate Incident and of Reporting

Logistic regression models are presented with two separate outcomes. The first outcome is the likelihood of experiencing a hate incident, and the second outcome is the likelihood of reporting the incident. The predictors in the models are respondents' background characteristics and affiliation status with the University. The data quality has limitations due to an imbalance in the two groups of those who experienced (27%) and those who did not experience (73%) hate incidents. The sample includes only volunteers who self-reported their experience of receiving hate incidents. Considering these major limitations, the results of the regression models should be interpreted with great caution.

Likelihood of Experiencing a Hate Incident

A binary logistic regression model was created with the outcome of experiencing a hate incident after controlling for factors such as respondents' background characteristics. All cases (2,254) were included, and all known variables were added, explaining the likelihood of experiencing a hate incident once all the other known characteristics were controlled for in the model. At the first step, respondents' personal characteristics such as sex, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and disability were added to the model. The base model of 73 means that knowing respondents' background characteristics, the model is 73% correct in predicting those experiencing a hate incident. After controlling for the background characteristics, we added information on the student or staff status of the respondents and years of association with the University. Adding predictor variables regarding affiliation with the University increased the accuracy of the model by 0.4%. This difference is not significant (even to round the figure); therefore, it does not explain variation in the model or even add something new to our knowledge that we already know from simple descriptive analysis discussed in the earlier sections. Nevertheless, the coefficients in Table 3 can be seen as a tentative 'effect size' for each known characteristic. The coefficients are in odds, meaning that, all other things taken into account so far, a respondent in the category of Black is 2.75 times as likely to be indicated as experiencing a hate incident. Odds of 1 would mean as likely to experience the outcome as the reference category. For example, from our survey data, those in the Chinese group are about as likely as those who are in the White group to experience hate incidents. Respondents who have not mentioned their sexuality are only 79% as likely to have indicated experiencing a hate incident compared with those who indicated being LGBT.

The sequence of introducing predictors matters because at each step when a predictor variable is added, it is controlled for, adding any further variation for the following steps. For example, when disability was introduced into the model, the previous predictors (gender, ethnicity, sexuality, and religion) were controlled. This means that once controlling for all the known predictors, people not having any known disability are less likely to experience hate incidents than people who have declared disabilities.

	Coefficient values
Gender (Reference: Women)	
Men	0.94
Other	0.90
Ethnicity (Reference: White)	
Ethnicity not mentioned	1.07
Asian	2.32
Chinese	1.01
Black	2.75
Any other Asian	3.34
Middle Eastern	1.43
Any other ethnic group	1.50
Sexuality (Reference: LGBT)	
Heterosexual	1.13
Sexuality not mentioned	0.79
Religion (Reference: Have religion)	
No religious belief	1.05
Religious belief not mentioned	1.67
Disability (Reference: Have a disability)	
Not disabled	1.68
Disability not mentioned	0.70
Affiliation (University Staff)	
Student	1.55

Table 8. Regression coefficients - Experiencing hate incidents

The odds coefficients mentioned above show that men and other gender categories are less likely to experience hate incidents than women. Men appear to experience hate crimes at a lower rate than women. The coefficients for ethnic groups indicate that, with reference to the white ethnic group, all other minority ethnic groups are more likely to have reported experiencing a hate incident.

Those who have not mentioned their sexuality are less likely to have experienced a hate incident compared to LGBT groups. The widely held view in much of the literature is that this is a marker of more hate incidents, and these findings provide further support for that view.

Likelihood of Reporting a Hate Incident

In the second model, the primary outcome is the reporting of a hate incident. All cases (2,254) are included in this model. The base of the model is 55, which means the chances are near 55% of prediction without adding any information to the model. Background characteristics and variables regarding staff and student status increase the percentage correctness to 59.2. As in the previous model, the predictors are not explaining much of the variation in the model. However, the coefficients shown in Table 9 show some interesting patterns for further research.

doi.org/10.32388/D3PO6I

	Coefficient values
Gender (Reference: Women)	
Men	1.21
Other	1.04
Ethnicity (Reference: White)	
Ethnicity not mentioned	0.63
Asian	0.65
Chinese	0.35
Black	0.93
Any other Asian	2.40
Middle Eastern	0.98
Any other ethnic group	0.78
Sexuality (Reference: LGBT)	
Heterosexual	1.03
Sexuality not mentioned	0.83
Religion (Reference: Have religion)	
No religious belief	0.96
Religious belief not mentioned	1.16
Disability (Reference: Have a disability)	
Not disabled	0.67
Disability not mentioned	0.60
Affiliation (University Staff)	
Student	0.52

Table 9. Regression Coefficients - Reporting Hate Incidents

There is no significant difference in the reporting outcome for men or other genders in comparison with women. Respondents in all ethnic groups, except 'Any other Asian', are less likely to report than their counterparts with White ethnicity. 'Any other Asian' are twice as likely to report the incident as others in the group. Those who have not mentioned their sexuality are less likely to report a hate incident than their LGBT counterparts. Respondents with no religious belief are less likely to report than those who have a religion. Respondents with no disability or not mentioned disability are also less likely to report than those who have a disability. Students are only half as likely to report a hate incident in comparison to staff members.

Thematic Analysis (TA)

A Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) was conducted to understand the views of respondents on how the University can better improve their hate crime policies. Respondents were asked: 'What are we currently not getting right as a university community?' Participants were prompted to respond with suggestions on how the university can make changes to improve hate incident reporting levels.

A main theme identified in participant responses on how to improve reporting was the need for clear and easily accessible reporting pathways. Respondents who had gone through the experience of reporting a hate crime often felt that the process was unnecessarily complex and sometimes caused undue stress. Many advised the need for straightforward reporting avenues with practical and emotional support available throughout.

> *"The process is difficult and intimidating to report incidents"*

Respondents who had experienced a hate incident but who felt unable to make a report often indicated that, as well as being unsure who to report to, they were worried about the repercussions of making a complaint. A key concept consistently mentioned was the desire for confidentiality within reporting systems. Victims wanted to feel safe when making a report by knowing that they would not face further issues after disclosing problems. Additionally, reliable and non-judgemental staff teams to take reports are needed. Respondents felt that they would not feel comfortable disclosing sensitive events to certain members of staff. They wanted to feel assured that staff would be able to handle the situation sensitively and give support and advice on the next steps.

> *"Dedicated reporting places with no judgement, fully anonymous reporting."*

Education

When asked the same question, respondents who had not experienced a hate incident less often commented on the inadequacy of reporting pathways; however, they very often reported being unaware of those that are available. Respondents, therefore, emphasised the need for education on reporting pathways that are already present and how to access these. In support, those who had experienced a hate incident but did not make a report suggested that providing all students with educational material on specific reporting routes, what they involve, and the likely outcome, would be extremely useful.

> *"I only realised when prompted at Q.17 that I was not aware of any services which could tackle reports."*

It was also frequently mentioned how improving education could be used to prevent hate crimes in the first place. Regardless of the hate crime experienced, all groups frequently mentioned the possible utility of educational classes. Many felt that informing the population about the chronic effects hate incidents and hate crimes have on individuals would help potential perpetrators understand why they are so serious and need to be stopped. Many felt that they were unsure what constitutes a hate crime. By informing individuals what behaviours and language are generally used in incidents, it may deter them from engaging in this type of activity. It was felt that this could also improve reporting rates as the classes would ensure that individuals would know how to report incidents and access support when needed.

> *"Perhaps raise awareness on what is classed as bullying, harassment etc., through training and how to report it."*

> *"Consistent clear action taken in response to all reports."*

Respondents who had reported their hate crime often commented that they did not feel it had been dealt with sufficiently. In addition, many felt that no result had been achieved through their complaint due to reporting systems not taking them seriously. Individuals felt that it should become protocol that all hate crime complaints are taken seriously, adequately investigated, and clear consequences put in place for perpetrators. Staff should be employed who are fully trained in dealing with hate crimes and are therefore aware of the correct procedure to deal with incidents.

> *"In my case, the issue concerning harassment was completely swept under the carpet and pretty much dismissed, and I was made to feel like I was being overly dramatic."*

In support, many respondents indicated that they did not make a report about their hate crime as they felt that it would not have been taken seriously. Some mentioned that they had previously heard from friends how complaints had been completely dismissed. Additionally, they had very rarely heard of hate crimes that had resulted in any actual consequences. It was suggested that clear procedural information on how victims are supported and incidents dealt with is necessary. It is believed that knowing perpetrators will be faced with suitable disciplinary actions will give victims the confidence to make reports. This should involve being transparent with the whole community about how incidents are dealt with so that potential perpetrators are aware that all hate incidents are taken seriously. This will also allow victims to know they will be supported and taken seriously if they do wish to make a complaint.

> *"I think much clearer consequences for those who are involved in such incidents, combined with an approach to disclosure and reporting that focuses on both believing the person disclosing and affirming the seriousness of the incident."*

> *"Make clear the policy regarding race relations, including the sanctions or disciplinary procedures that follow hate crime incidents."*

Increase Victim Support

Alongside ensuring that a clear procedure is followed in response to a report, respondents felt that they should also be given more emotional support during this process. Respondents who had experienced a hate crime felt that a report was often written down, but they were offered no form of support to help deal with the stress and upset they had experienced. Respondents, therefore, frequently suggested that this form of support should be ingrained within reporting system procedures. Alternatively, some respondents felt that being taken seriously when making a report and assurance of it being dealt with was sufficient. However, the majority of respondents agreed that an increase in sensitivity is necessary and that support should always be offered in case it is needed.

> *"Provide more support to students/staff that experience hate incidents. Make clear and strong public statements of support."*

Respondents who had not made a report indicated that they would be more likely to do so if it meant they would also receive practical and emotional support. Respondents felt that even if systems were unable to adequately discipline the perpetrator, they would still make the report if they themselves would receive emotional support. Others felt that, although emotional support does need to be increased, they are even more likely to have made a report if they felt that practical steps would be taken. These include receiving information on relevant counselling services, academic allowances made if necessary, and actions taken to prevent incidents in the future.

> *"Giving adequate protection, support, listening, making allowances, offering leave, behaving sensitively and constructively, and with respect to victims of violence, racist abuse, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape."*

Even respondents who had never experienced a hate crime acknowledged the need for more active support of victims. Many commented that reporting systems linking up with welfare teams could be a possible avenue to increase the support given. It was suggested that key in dealing with reports should be helping with emotional effects as well as taking steps to reduce the likelihood that this will occur again in the future.

> *"I have no experience with this, but I do believe that a more pastoral role should be taken up by the colleges."*

Conclusions

While the substantial majority (73%) of survey participants had not experienced any such unwanted behaviour as hate incidents or crimes, more than a quarter (27%) had. Where staff report incidents occurring primarily within their departments, perpetrated by other members of staff, our undergraduates are experiencing incidents more commonly within their colleges or in local pubs, bars, and nightclubs. Postgraduate students identified being victimized in public spaces such as a public street or park or the city centre. Students are reported as victimising other students more commonly than any other group.

There is no clear indication that minority ethnic groups or religious groups are differentially experiencing hate incidents when compared with equivalent members in the overall sample. However, BAME victims of hate incidents are reporting formally to the university less than Not-BAME (White majority) victims. Respondents identified to be in the categories of 'disabled' and 'other sex' have a higher percentage of experiencing hate incidents when compared with other sub-group categories. In the regression models, 'disability' and 'other sex' remain meaningful in explaining the variation in outcomes. And this relationship is strongest for those identifying as 'disabled'. One shocking, although not entirely surprising, finding from this research is that of all groups of staff or students, disabled students are subjected to hate incidents and crimes the most.

The severity of incidents experienced could be the main determinant of a victim's decision to report. Physical assaults and damage to property are experienced less and reported more when compared with harassment, verbal abuse, indirect discrimination, and unwanted physical contact. BAME victims are reporting less than white students or staff but are experiencing more hate crimes and incidents. There was little evidence of confidence in the university to address these issues if reported. In short, the open-text responses have indicated that the victims do not perceive that such experiences are worth spending their time following the reporting procedures or even being indicated as a complainant in the official records. Clearly, as a sector, we still have much work to be done if we are to reduce hate incidents and crimes at our universities whilst simultaneously actively encouraging the reporting to the university of all such incidents, confident in the knowledge that all reporting will be met with professional support services to meet student and staff needs accordingly.

References

- Balderston, S. (2013). Victimized again? Intersectionality and injustice in disabled women's lives after hate crime and rape. In *Gendered perspectives on conflict and violence: Part A* (pp. 261-281). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- Chakraborti, N., Garland, J., & Hardy, S. (2014). *The Leicester Hate Crime Project: Findings and conclusions*. University of Leicester. Retrieved from http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/criminology/hate/documents/fc-full-report.4
- Chakraborti, N. (2018). Responding to hate crime: Escalating problems, continued failings. *Criminology & Criminal Justice, 18*(4), 387-404.
- Citizens Advice. (2017). What are hate incidents and hate crime? Retrieved from https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/law-and-courts/discrimination/hate-crime/what-are-hate-incidents-and-hate-crime/
- Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77-101. Retrieved from http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/contentdb=allcontent=a795127197-frm=titlelink
- Clayton, J., Donovan, C., & Macdonald, S. J. (2016). A critical portrait of hate crime/incident reporting in North East England: The value of statistical data and the politics of recording in an age of austerity. *Geoforum, 75*, 64-74.
- Corcoran, H., Lader, D., & Smith, K. (2016). Hate Crime, England and Wales. *Statistical Bulletin, 5*, 15.
- Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). (2019). Racial harassment inquiry: Survey of universities. Retrieved from https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/racial-harassment-inquiry-survey-of-universities.pdf
- Gorard, S. (2016). Damaging real lives through obstinacy: Re-emphasising why significance testing is wrong. *Sociological Research Online, 21*(1), 102-115.
- Hardy, S. J., & Chakraborti, N. (2016). Healing the harms—Identifying how best to support hate crime victims. Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/2381/37719
- Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS). (2018). Understanding the difference: The initial police response to hate crime. Retrieved from https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/wp-content/uploads/understanding-the-difference-the-initial-police-response-to-hate-crime.pdf
- Home Office. (2016). *Action against hate: The UK Government's plan for tackling hate crime*. London: Home Office.
- Home Office. (2018). Hate crime, England and Wales, 2017/18. Retrieved from https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachr
- Iganski, P. (2007). Too few Jews to count? Police monitoring of hate crime against Jews in the United Kingdom. *American Behavioral Scientist, 51*(2), 232-245.
- Iganski, P., & Lagou, S. (2014). The personal injuries of 'hate crime'. In *The Routledge International Handbook on Hate Crime* (pp. 34-46). Routledge.
- McDevitt, J., Levin, J., & Bennett, S. (2002). Hate crime offenders: An expanded typology. Journal of Social Issues, 58(2), 303–317. https://doi.org/10.1111/1540-4560.00262
- Office for National Statistics. (2019). Racist and religious hate incidents. Retrieved from https://www.ons.gov.uk/aboutus/transparencyandgovernance/freedomofinformatior
- Office for National Statistics. (2020). Hate crime in England and Wales (2019-2020). Retrieved from https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2019-to-2020/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2019-to-2020
- Perry, B. (2016). A shared global perspective on hate crime? *Criminal Justice Policy Review, 27*(6), 610–626.
- Quarterly Performance Report Office of the Durham Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner. (2018). Retrieved from https://www.durham-pcc.gov.uk/Document-Library/Performance/2018-19/2018-10-22-2018-19-Q1-Performance-Report.pdf
- Roulstone, A., Thomas, P., & Balderston, S. (2011). Between hate and vulnerability: Unpacking the British criminal justice system's construction of disablist hate crime. *Disability & Society, 26*(3), 351-364.
- Siddiqui, N., Boliver, V., & Gorard, S. (2019). Reliability of longitudinal social surveys of access to higher education: The case of Next Steps in England. *Social Inclusion, 7*(1), 80–89. https://www.dur.ac.uk/education/staff/profile/?mode=pdetail&id=12116&sid=12116&pdetail=118421
- Trafimow, D., Amrhein, V., Areshenkoff, C. N., Barrera-Causil, C. J., Beh, E. J., Bilgiç, Y. K.,... & Marmolejo-Ramos, F. (2018). Manipulating the alpha level cannot cure significance testing. *Frontiers in Psychology, 9*, 699. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.00699

- Walfield, S. M., Socia, K. M., & Powers, R. A. (2017). Religious motivated hate crimes: Reporting to law enforcement and case outcomes. *American Journal of Criminal Justice, 42*(1), 148–169. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12103-016-9361-1

Declarations

Funding: Office for Students funded this survey study
Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.