



East and Southeast Asian communities' experiences of hate crime in the UK

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Cover photo: London, UK. 10th July, 2021. A protester writes 'Hate is the virus' on a placard during a Stop Asian Hate protest at Parliament Square in London.

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Organisations behind this report

Protection Approaches: a UK-based charity that works to change how the world views identity-based violence – and by doing so, change the way we respond to and prevent it. PA's work includes community capacity building for the prevention of identity-based violence, such as through the delivery of active bystander workshops which have supported thousands of participants to explore their role in tackling identity-based prejudice and violence; identity-based violence victim support, such as coordinating the consortium delivering 'On Your Side', the UK-wide support and reporting service for East and Southeast Asian communities who experience racism and/or any forms of hate; and bringing evidence to policy, including conducting and commissioning research on domestic and international challenges relating to social division, marginalisation and identity-based violence. Protection Approaches was the lead organisation on this research and led on research design, and producing this report.

Centre for Hate Studies: a world leading research centre whose core mission is to transform responses to hate through ground-breaking research. They shape policy and practice by enabling professionals across different sectors to engage with diverse communities, to support victims and to tackle hate. Driven by a desire to effect lasting change within disadvantaged communities, the Centre for Hate Studies places co-creation with marginalised victims at the heart of its research design, analysis and recommendations, thereby making the 'hard-to-reach' much more reachable. The Centre for Hate Studies led on design of the research survey and supported the drafting of the report.

Reportable: a group of East Asian volunteers with a strong interest in tackling the rising volume of hate crime against the East and Southeast Asian community. They led the data analysis of survey data and supported the drafting of the report.

Voice ESEA: A data-driven non-profit rooted in anti-racism education and community development to achieve racial equality in the UK. In all their projects, they aim to educate about and uplift the East and South East Asian (ESEA) community in the UK, with an end goal of eliminating racial discrimination against ESEA people. Voice ESEA reviewed this report.

End Violence and Racism Against ESEA Communities (EVR): An intergenerational anti-racism organisation using intersectional approaches to educate on, redress and prevent structural racism and inequalities directed against East & Southeast Asian communities. This is in the context of rising racism and discrimination towards all minoritised groups, with whom we seek to build allyship and solidarity. EVR were formerly known as End the Virus of Racism and changed their name in October 2021 to address long standing issues of racism affecting ESEA communities before the pandemic. EVR reviewed this report.

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Introduction

Hate crime against East and Southeast Asian (ESEA) communities in the UK spiked during the COVID pandemic.¹ That period of increased reports and ESEA community activism² revealed both a lack of services supporting ESEA community members who face hate³ and the extent to which ESEA experiences of hate crime had been historically neglected in public consciousness.

Since the pandemic much has changed. Filling a vital gap, in August 2022, alongside a consortium of predominantly ESEA community-based organisations, Protection Approaches launched On Your Side, the first UK-wide hate crime support and reporting service for ESEA communities. Funded by the UK Government, the service provides a trusted 24/7 helpline and online reporting hub where ESEA community members can speak to culturally competent and multi-lingual helpline operators and support workers.

At the same time, much work has been done to understand the levels of hate crime faced by ESEA communities. Non-profit organisations Voice ESEA and End Violence against ESEA Communities completed two research projects on the level of hate crime reported to police.⁴ Through freedom of information requests to all UK police forces they have been able to build a detailed picture of police recorded hate crime targeting ESEA communities 2019 - 2021.

However, we know from our extensive work with ESEA communities, such as a consultation in February 2021 which included interviews with staff and volunteers at 35 ESEA community groups, that a significant number of hate crimes experienced by ESEA communities go unreported. There are formidable barriers which lead to underreporting including lack of trust in police or authorities, language barriers, and not understanding what is possible to report.

As a result, there is very little knowledge or reliable data on the true extent of hate crime faced by ESEA communities in the UK. For a long time, groups supporting ESEA community members have known that the real picture is much worse than has been recorded to date, but had no quantitative data to prove to policy makers and funders just how serious the problem is.

This research, funded by JPMorgan Chase, was developed to, for the first time, provide that data and evidence. In undertaking this research, our aims were fourfold:

1. Develop robust data that demonstrates the true level and nature of hate crime faced by ESEA communities in the UK
2. Understand the “reporting gap”, which is the difference between the number of hate crimes reported to police vs. the true number of hate crimes targeting ESEA communities
3. Understand more about the reasons ESEA victims of hate crimes do not report and the barriers faced by these communities
4. Understand what stakeholders in policy, funding, judiciary, and civil society can do to better support ESEA victims of hate crimes to report or seek support

Methodology

The Survey

This study consisted of an online survey of 70 questions compiled by Protection Approaches in partnership with the Centre for Hate Studies based at the University of Leicester. The survey was designed to help us and others understand the level of hate crime experienced by East and Southeast Asian communities in the UK, and their experiences of reporting.

The participants were sourced through a third-party research data provider, Prolific, a platform that helps researchers, predominantly from academic institutions to recruit participants for their online research.⁵ Between October – November 2023 Prolific sourced 753 participants to take part in the survey, of which a total of 601 participants qualified for the study identifying as having ESEA heritage and being resident in the UK. As far as we are aware, this is the largest sample ever sourced to better understand hate crime facing ESEA communities.

Defining East and Southeast Asian

We do not seek in this study to define who is or is not a part of the East and Southeast Asian community in the UK. To qualify for the study participants were required to self-identify as having heritage from one of the below places:

- East Asia: China; Hong Kong; Macau; Mongolia; Japan; North Korea; South Korea and Taiwan.
- Southeast Asia: Brunei; Cambodia; Indonesia; Laos; Malaysia; Myanmar (Burma); the Philippines; Singapore; Thailand; Timor-Leste and Vietnam.

We recognise this list may not capture all the ways in which people with East or Southeast Asian heritage identify.

Defining hate crime:

The definition of hate crime used in this study was developed by the Centre for Hate Studies, alongside Protection Approaches:

“A harmful act that you feel was targeted directly towards you because of who you are. For example, because of your race/ethnicity, your immigration status, your sexual orientation, your religion, because you are disabled, or because you are transgender. This would include a wide range of acts such as being called an abusive name, being spat at, being harassed, having your belongings damaged or stolen, or being physically attacked, to name a few examples”.

This definition differs from the various definitions used by authorities across the UK. England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland use different definitions but they are similar in that they define hate crime as a ‘crime’ or ‘criminal offence’, targeted at a person or persons with one or more protected characteristics.⁶ At the time of

writing, in England and Wales, and in Scotland, those protected characteristics are disability, race, religion, sexual orientation, transgender identity.⁷ In Northern Ireland political opinion is included in the protected characteristics.

Where our definition differs substantively from the other definitions is that we have focussed on “harmful acts” rather than “crime” or “criminal offences”. We know from our extensive work with communities who experience hate crime, including a wide-ranging consultation with 35 ESEA community groups conducted by Protection Approaches and EVR in 2022, that many community members do not understand what acts constitute a criminal offence. Many people we work with assume that for an incident to reach the threshold of a criminal offence it must be a violent in nature or include some form of criminal damage. This is not the case. For example, in England and Wales the Public Order Act 1986 includes various offences (such as stirring up racial hatred) which can be committed by a person using threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour.⁸

Our definition has been designed to ensure that we capture the experiences of participants whether that is a verbal attack or other form of crime.

It is therefore likely that the definition we have used will have captured some “harmful acts” that would not reach a crime threshold and would instead be considered non-crime hate incidents rather than hate crimes if investigated. It is worth noting that while some harmful acts may not cross the threshold into a criminal offence, nevertheless the negative impacts on victims are often just as serious and the police and other authorities encourage victims to report non-crime hate incidents.⁹

Our sample

ESEA population in the UK

To compare sampling representativeness, we constructed a dataset of East and Southeast Asian demographics using a combination of:

- England and Wales: Office for National Statistics 2021 Census data¹⁰
- Northern Ireland: Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency 2021 Census data¹¹
- Scotland: Scotland’s Census 2011 Census data (full data from 2022 Census not available at time of analysis)¹²

There are limitations to using census data. For example, On 31 January 2021, the UK Government introduced a new immigration route for British National (Overseas) status holders from Hong Kong. In the first two years to the end of December 2022, a total of 160,700 applications were made.¹³ The majority of those who have subsequently arrived in the UK through this route would not have been counted in the censuses. Given such limitations, we may underestimate the extent of the East and Southeast Asian diaspora where not recorded in the census data available.

In total, we estimate there are just over 958,000 people who identify as having an East or Southeast Asian heritage in the UK based on census data. The greatest constituent is those who identify ethnically as Chinese, around 53%, followed by around 19% Filipino.

Reported ethnicities in census data	Overall number in the UK	as a % of ESEA community in the UK
Chinese	511,582	53.4%
Filipino	180,062	18.79%
Other Asian / Asian unspecified	101,140	10.56%
Thai	42,036	4.39%
Vietnamese	37,567	3.92%
Japanese	32,167	3.36%
Korean	21,217	2.21%
Malaysian	13,018	1.36%
Myanmar or Burmese	7,529	0.79%
Total	958,032	100%

Around 33% are located in London. ~89% in England, with 6% Scotland, 3% Wales, 2% Northern Ireland.

Regions and nations in the UK	ESEA population	% of overall ESEA population
London	315,420	32.92%
South East	137,449	14.35%
North West	85,820	8.96%
East of England	81,353	8.49%
West Midlands	63,435	6.62%
South West	55,018	5.74%
Scotland	54,803	5.72%
Yorkshire and the Humber	51,240	5.35%
East Midlands	43,118	4.5%
Wales	27,287	2.85%
North East	24,677	2.58%
Northern Ireland	18,412	1.92%
Total	958,032	100%

In terms of age, in the UK 20% of ESEA population are under 20 years old, 38% are 20-39, 30% are 40-59, 12% are 60+. By comparison, the national average is 21%, 29%, 27%, 24% - indicating that the ESEA population is broadly younger than the national average.¹⁴

Sample ethnicity

In the study we asked people to self-identify their ethnicity through a free text response, allowing respondents to write in their answer. When we compared our sample to our census analysis, those who identified as having Chinese ethnicity were slightly overrepresented versus the national population (~57% versus ~53%) and a lower proportion of our participants identified as Filipino versus the national population (<5% versus 19%).

A much larger proportion of our participants chose not to specify their Asian ethnicity, choosing instead to enter answers such as East Asian, Southeast Asian, ESEA, or Asian (~30% versus ~11% in Censuses).

We cannot therefore be sure that our sample is fully representative in terms of ethnicity. However, it is a large sample and we have been able to estimate the extent to which the over-sampling of Chinese participants and under-sampling of Filipino participants has affected our overall results. When all sampling biases are taken into account we believe that the study slightly overestimates the number of incidents participants were subjected to in the past 12 months by around 2 percentage points and slightly underestimates the amount of police reporting by around 2 percentage points. This is detailed in the appropriate sections.

Sample sex/gender

The censuses require respondents to enter their sex as a binary male or female (the England and Wales census later asks 'is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth'). In our study however, we asked participants to self-identify their gender.

To understand whether our sample is representative of gender we have had to compare the birth sex of those identifying as ESEA in the census data with the answer to our participant's self-identified gender.

Our sample gender very closely matches the census data on sex. Our sample identified 57% female 42% male and 0.5% non-binary. The census data on birth sex is 58% female 42% male.

Sample location

Our sample was relatively representative in terms of location in the UK. The sample was slightly more London-centred than the overall ESEA population (40% of our

sample were living in London versus 33% in the census data). But we do have a similar distribution across the four nations (Scotland / Wales / NI 7%/2%/1% versus 6%/3%/2% in censuses).

Sample age

Overall, our study sample was skewed significantly towards young 21–30-year-old participants (50% of our sample versus ~20% in census) and 31-40 participants (~29% of our sample versus 19% in censuses).

It is not unusual for studies such as ours to oversample younger people which is likely a result of greater digital literacy and access to research platforms among younger participants. For example, the Leicester Hate Crime Project, which was Britain's biggest ever study of hate crime victimisation conducted between 2012-14 had similar bias in their sample which was heavily weighted towards 18-44 year olds.¹⁵

We do think this sampling bias is important in terms of understanding the results and it has been taken into account when analysing the study. As previously stated when all sampling biases are taken into account we believe that the study slightly overestimates the number of incidents participants were subjected to in the past 12 months by around 2 percentage points and slightly underestimates the amount of police reporting by around 2 percentage points.

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The results

The scale and nature of hate crime targeting ESEA communities

- Circa 45% (430,000) of ESEA community members in the UK were subjected to a hate crime in the previous 12 months
- We estimate that close to one million hate incidents targeting ESEA community members were committed in the previous 12 months
- 5% of incidents in the previous 12 months included violent crime such as physical assault or mugging

Overall, 48% of the survey respondents told us that they had been subjected to hate crime, as we described it, during the previous 12 months. Given its size, if our sample were representative of ESEA populations across the UK we would be able to say with 98% confidence that $48\% \pm 4$ percentage points of the ESEA population experienced a hate crime as we described it, during the previous year. This would be equal to 420,000-500,000 individuals.

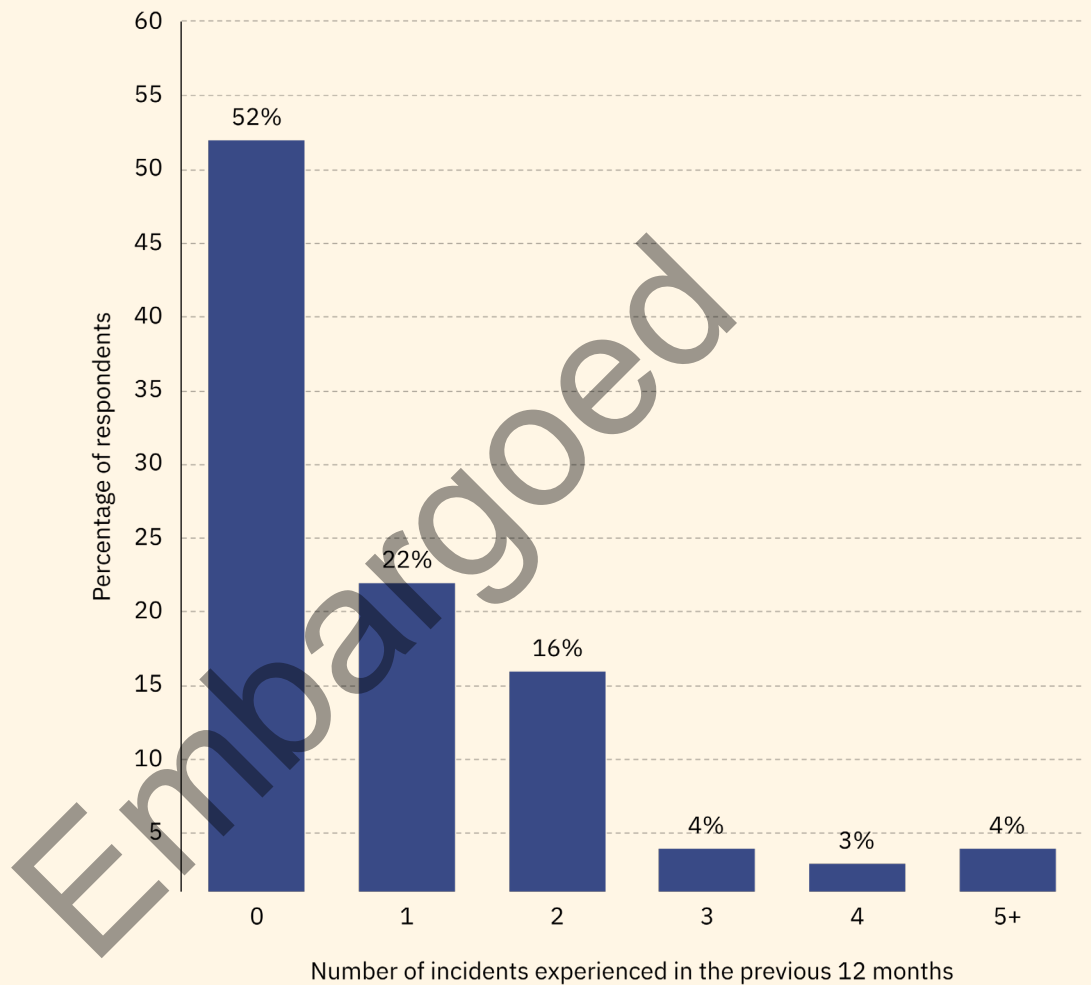
However, as set out in the sampling section, our sample was not entirely representative. Our sample overrepresents young participants and those who identify as having Chinese ethnicity and underrepresents those from Filipino backgrounds. We believe that when these biases are considered, we are overreporting experiences of hate crime in the past year by approximately 2 percentage points. Once adjusted the number is likely to be closer to 45% of the ESEA population, or roughly 430,000 individuals who were subjected to hate crime in the previous 12-month period.

Of those who were subjected to hate crime in the previous 12 months, 55% were subjected to more than one incident, which is 26% of all participants. Overall participants told us they had experienced a total of 609 incidents over the previous 12 months between them, equal to just over one incident per participant on average.

Again, as our sample is not entirely representative, it affects our ability to expand these findings to the wider ESEA population and determine a number of hate incidents faced by ESEA communities each year. For example, while young people were more likely to have been subjected to hate crime in the past 12 months, it was those from older groups who were more likely to have been targeted more than once. When the sample bias is taken into account, and we extrapolate to the whole ESEA population the study would suggest that there could be close to one million (1,070,000) hate incidents targeting ESEA community members each year. Although

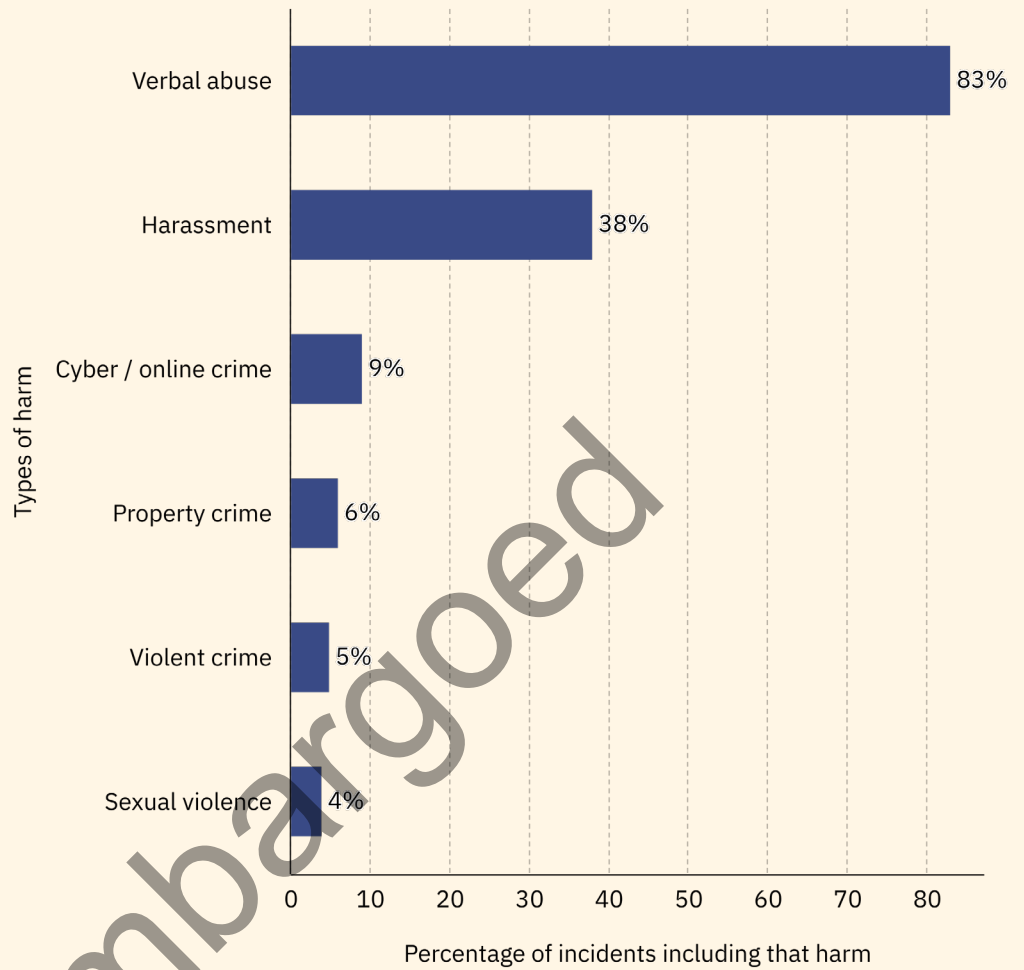
our sample size and biases suggest there would be a significant margin of error in this figure, it is clear that the number of incidents occurring annually is substantially higher than what most would infer from the previously available reporting data.¹⁶

Fig 1. The number of hate crimes each respondent reported being subjected to in the previous 12 months



We asked participants to tell us about the incidents they had faced in the past 12-months, and we received detailed information about 344 of the 609 incidents. Of those, the vast majority included verbal abuse (83%) and/or harassment (38%), it is possible that many of these incidents would not have crossed a legal threshold into crime and therefore may be considered non-crime hate incidents if they had been reported. However, many would have crossed the threshold, and a significant percentage (5%) of the incidents we were told about included violent crime such as physical assault or mugging. This would suggest a substantial number of violent hate crimes taking place each year targeting ESEA communities, likely in the tens of thousands of incidents.

Fig 2. The percentage of each type of harm experienced during incidents in the previous 12 months (some incidents include more than one type of harm)



Male respondents were more likely to have been subjected to hate crime in the past year than female (50% versus 46%).¹⁷ This is an interesting finding as it does not match reporting data that we have which shows women reporting at higher levels than men. For example, On Your Side publishes data on hate incidents targeting ESEA communities that are reported to their service. In the 12 months to end of October 2023, in 57% of reports to the service the victim identified as or was reported to be female whereas in only 23% of incidents the victim was male (in the remainder of reports the gender of the victim was unknown, not reported, or the victim identified as or was reported to be non-binary).¹⁸

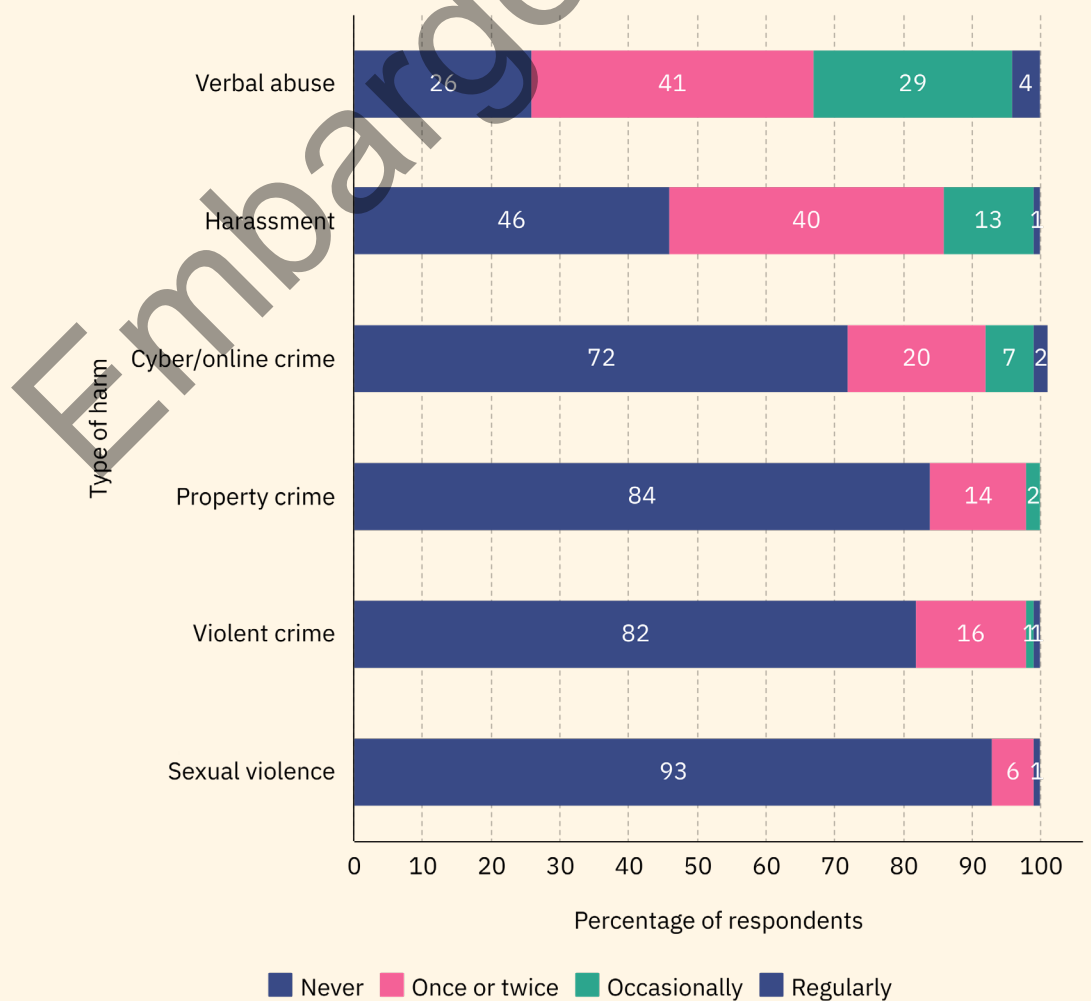
We also asked participants about their lifetime experiences of being subjected to hate crime. While some of these incidents may have taken place outside of the UK, there are useful insights. In total, 73% of respondents indicated they had been subjected to a hate crime as we described it at least once in their lifetime.

The majority felt they had been targeted because of their race or ethnicity. 76% of

participants who had been subjected to hate crime in their lifetime told us that they had been targeted at least once because of their race or ethnicity. However, ESEA community members are also being targeted for other aspects of their identity. For example, 17% told us they had at some point been targeted because of their gender, 16% felt that they had been targeted because of their immigration status, 9.5% because of their age, 7% because of their religion, and 4.5% because of their sexual orientation.

Of those who had been subjected to hate crime in their lifetime, 74% of participants indicated they had been subjected to some form of verbal abuse with 33% indicating that this was something they had experienced regularly or occasionally, rather than only once or twice in their life. 29% of participants told us they had been subjected to cyber-crime such as bullying via social media sites, direct messages, and/or text messages. 18% of participants had been subjected to a violent hate crime such as physical assault, being spat at, or mugging. 7% of participants had been subjected to sexual violence.

Fig 3. Percentage of respondents reporting how frequently they have experienced each type of harm in their lifetime



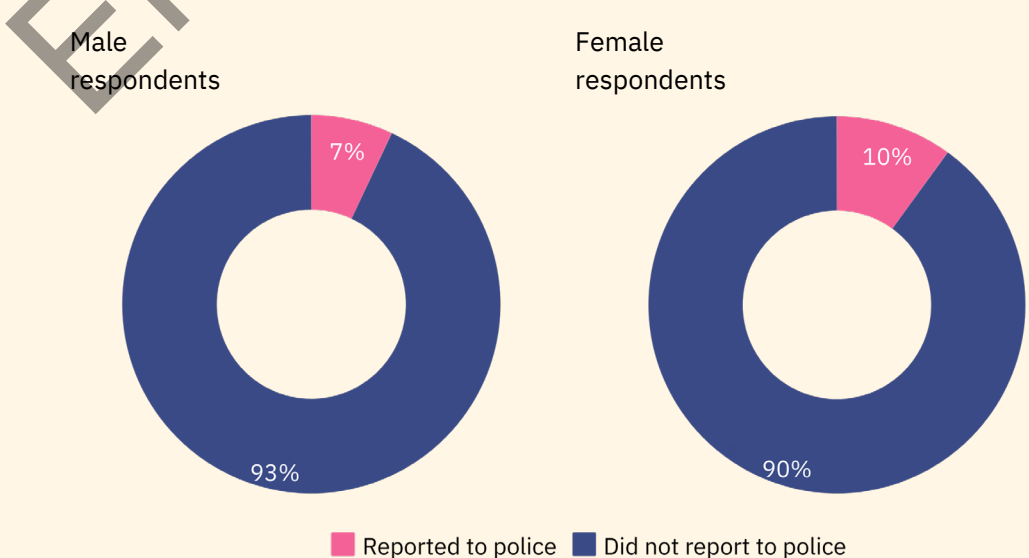
The level of hate crime reporting

- Just 1 in 10 of those who were subjected to hate crime in the past 12 months reported the incident to police
- Just 15% of those who were subjected to hate crime reported it to anybody outside of friends or family
- 63% of participants who did not report their experience of hate crime to police felt the police would not take it seriously

Of participants who had been subjected to at least one hate crime, in the previous 12 months, only 8% reported that crime to police. When we adjust this figure to account for the age and ethnicity biases in our sample, we estimate that 10% - just one in ten of ESEA community members who were subjected to hate crime in the previous 12 months - reported it to the police.

While men were more likely to have been subjected to hate crime, they were less likely to report it. Only 7% of men who had faced hate crime in the past 12 months told us that they had reported it to the police, whereas nearly 10% of women had done so.

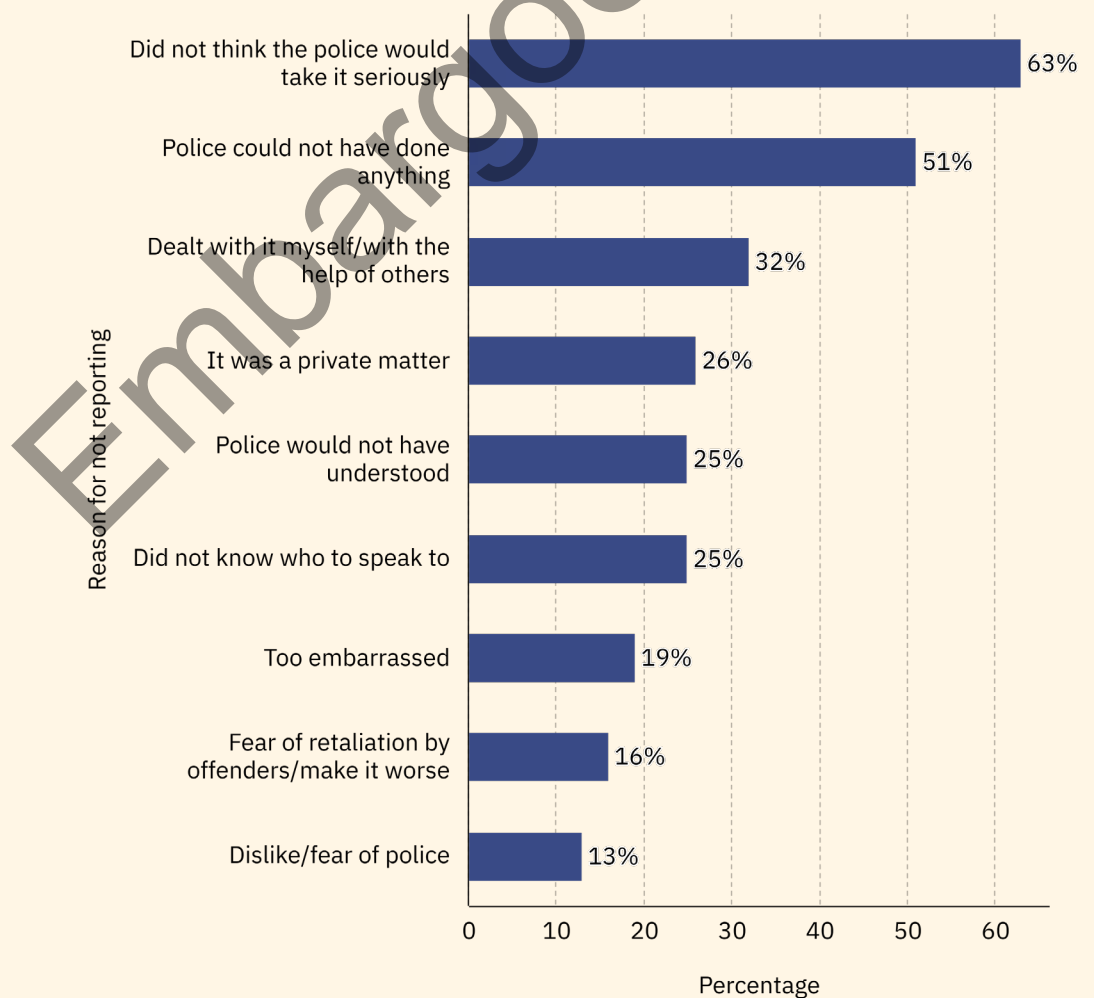
Fig 4. Percentage of respondents who reported to police by gender



Those who had been subjected to crimes that could be considered more serious tended to be more likely to report. For example 37% of those who experienced a violent crime in the previous 12 months told us that they had made a police report. However, this would indicate that close to two thirds or violent crimes may be going unreported.

We asked those who did not report to the police their experiences of hate crime in the past 12 months why they had chosen not to. The main reason given was that the participants felt the police would not take it seriously; 63% of participants felt this way. 51% felt that the police would not be able to do anything, and around 32% said they dealt with it themselves or with the help of others. 26% felt that it was a private matter and 25% said they did not know who to speak to. Nearly one in five, 19% told us that they felt too embarrassed to go to the police, 16% were afraid of retaliation, and 13% either dislike or are fearful of the police.

Fig 5. Percentage for each reason given that respondents did not report their experiences of hate crime in the past 12 months to the police



We also asked what would make those participants more likely to report, which required respondents to type a text answer. We have analysed the answers given and found five broad categories of response:

25% told us they would report if the crime were severe enough or was repeated

- 'If it ever gets physical then I would probably report to police then'
- 'If the experience was life threatening or affected my day-to-day life'
- 'Physically abused or damaged my belongings.'

23% told us they would report if the thought the report would be taken seriously and actioned by the police / authorities

- 'If the police actually does something'
- 'Easy to access the police / evidence that the police would do something'
- 'Reassurance and action from authoritative figures that something would be done, e.g. more police presence in the area/ offender brought to justice'

15% told us that they needed more awareness or understanding of what can be reported or how to report

- 'What kinds of hate crime should be reported'
- 'be informed about where I can go to'
- 'Public statement and announcement of hate crime is not tolerated and the consequences of the act through headlines'

12% felt that they would report if it were easier to do so

- 'To report anonymously via chat.'
- 'A clear process to get resolution on the issues raised'
- 'Easier way to report it online'

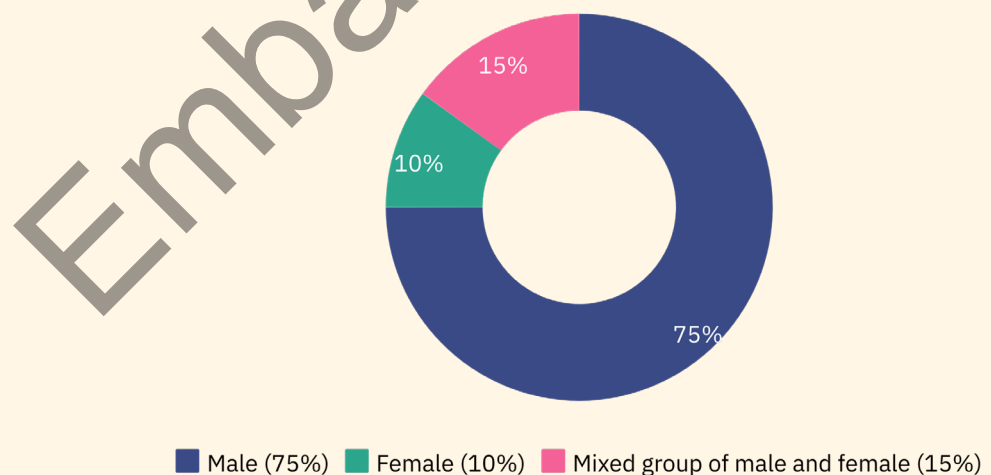
Reporting to the police is not the only option that ESEA community members have for reporting hate crime. It is possible to report to third party reporting services such as On Your Side,¹⁹ Stop Hate UK,²⁰ Galop,²¹ and some choose to report to other authority figures such as teachers. We asked participants about their experiences of reporting to services other than the police. When these reports are taken into account alongside police reporting, 15% of participants told us they had disclosed to somebody outside of their friends or family.

Who are the offenders and where are incidents taking place?

- In 75% of recent experiences of hate crime, the offender/s were men
- 73% of hate crimes targeting East and Southeast Asian women are perpetrated by men
- 42% of victims were targeted by groups of perpetrators

We asked participants to describe the gender of the offender/s during their most recent experience of being subjected to hate crime. When we removed those who did not know or could not remember, 75% of participants told us that the offender/s were male. This compares to only 10% female and 15% where the offenders were part of a mixed group of males and females.

Fig 6. Reported gender of offender/s in participants' most recent experience of being subjected to hate crime



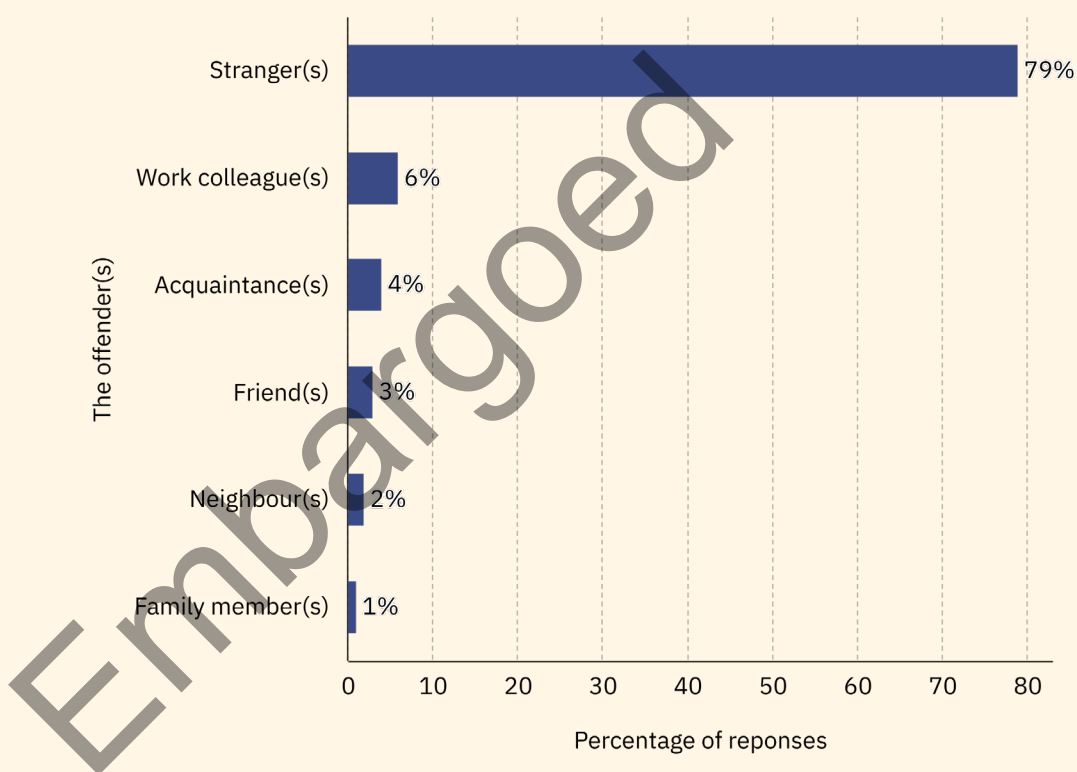
Women in our study were more likely than men to be targeted by other women. 13% of women described the offender/s as female, whereas only 5% of men described the offender/s as such. However, women were still overwhelmingly targeted by men. 73% of women told us that the offender/s in their most recent experience of being subjected to hate crime were male.

That hate crime offenders are largely male is not an unusual finding nor one confined

to the targeting of ESEA communities. For example in the The Leicester Hate Crime Project, Britain’s biggest ever study of hate crime victimisation which looked at hate crime targeting all groups, 68% respondents stated that their most recent experience of hate crime had involved a male offender.²²

At least 42% of participants told us that during their most recent experience of being subjected to hate crime there was more than one offender. In the majority of cases (~78%) the offender/s were strangers.

Fig 7. Relationship to offender/s in participants’ most recent experience of hate crime



We also asked about the age of the offender/s and found that 53% of participants believed the offender/s were under 30 years old. While we are cautious not to draw too many conclusions from this finding due to the overrepresentation of young people in our sample, it does show that hostility and prejudice towards ESEA communities in the UK is not an issue of the past, or confined exclusively to older generations.

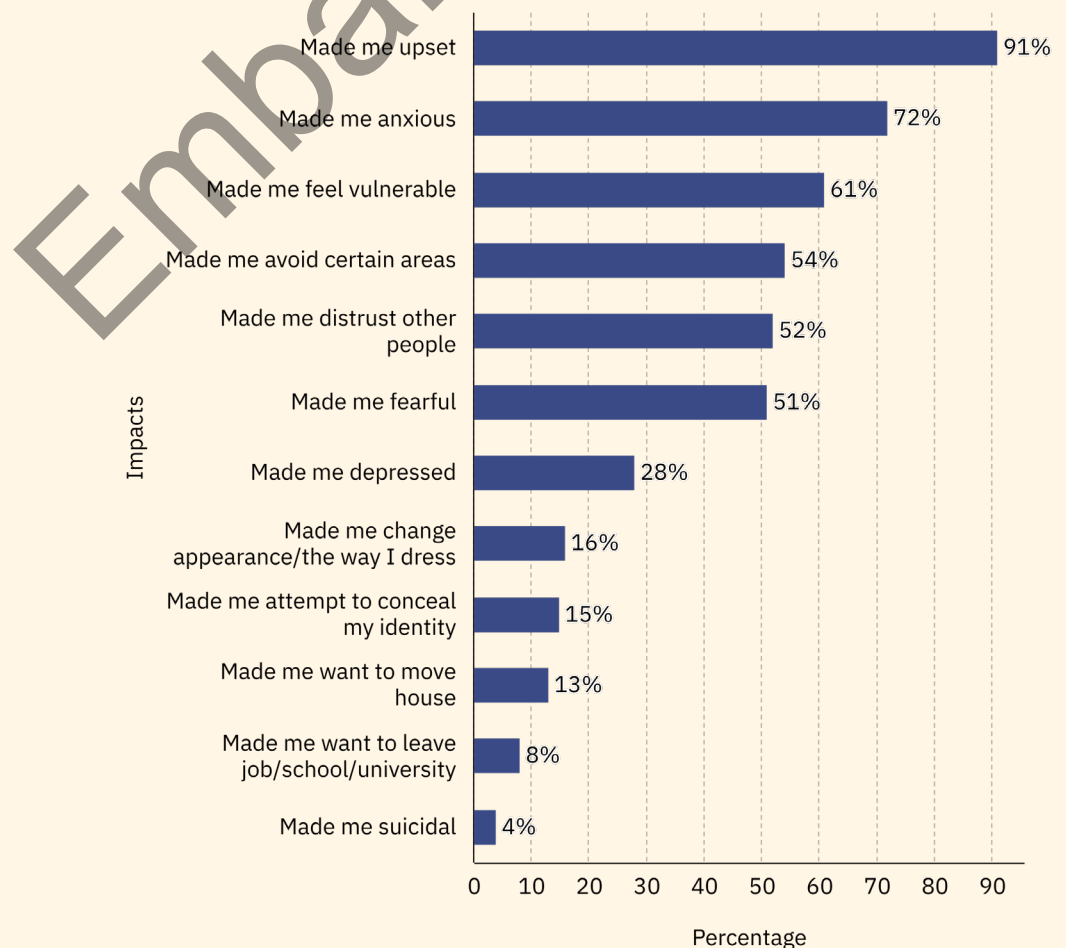
The majority of recent incidents (44%) took place in a public street or a park with many taking place near work, school, or university (15%), outside or near the participant’s home (14%) in a place of entertainment such as a bar, pub, or club (13%). Only 9% were reported as having taken place online including on the internet, through social media sites or through text message, suggesting the majority of experiences are still taking place in person.

What are the impacts on victims?

- 99% of those who have been subjected to hate crime suffered negative impacts to their wellbeing
- 4% of participants have felt suicidal due to being subjected to hate crime
- Only 5% of victims have ever accessed support following a hate crime

We know that those who are targeted by hate crimes tend to suffer more severe consequences compared to victims of crimes not motivated by hate.²³ In our study, 99% of participants reported facing negative impacts from being subjected to hate crime. 90% told us that their experiences had made them upset, 72% had been made to feel anxious, 61% vulnerable, 26% depressed and 4% suicidal.

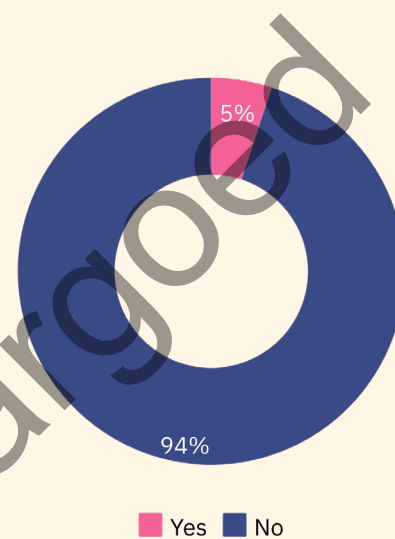
Fig 8. Percentage that each impact was reported by respondents following experiences of hate crime (respondents could report multiple impacts)



A significant number of participants changed some aspect of their behaviour such as 54% who avoided certain areas, and 16% who changed their appearance or the way they dressed. 13% wanted to move house and 8% wanted to change their jobs, school or university.

Despite such serious impacts, only 5% of those who had experienced hate crime had ever received emotional support from any agency or organisation. Of the 18 participants whose experiences of being subjected to hate crime had made them feel suicidal, only 4 had ever accessed support and just 7% of the 128 people who felt depressed had done so.

Fig 9. Percentage of respondents who have ever accessed support after being subjected to hate crime



We asked those who had never accessed support if anything would encourage them to get support in future. 24% told us there was nothing that would make them more likely to access support if they were to be subjected to a hate crime again, but many others felt there were things that could be done. In general, their responses fell into four categories (with some falling into more than one).

28% told us they would be more likely to get support in future if they thought there was an appropriate kind of support available for them. For many this meant being able to access community support, for others it was being able to contact a specialist support service, and for others it meant ease of access, for example:

- 'If support was offered by someone with similar experiences to mine, or if support was in a group format with others similar in age and experience to me'
- 'Knowing that an Asian community support groups in my local areas that I can visit when I feel alone after any kind of hate crime incidences.'
- 'Knowing that there is confidential and empathetic support available, possibly

through a helpline or community advocacy group, would make me more likely to seek help if I experienced a hate crime. Quick access to counselling and legal advice would also be a deciding factor'

- 'It would be useful if there is a hate crime hotline where you can report and get support from especially from the minority ethnicity in UK'
- 'If there were easy access from home like social media online chat or something similar'

22% told us they would be more likely to get support in future if they had a better understanding or awareness about where they could access support, or what they could get support for. For example:

- 'If there was an awareness of organisations that I could turn to for help would help and there needs to be more promotion of these organisations so people are aware of them'
- 'If I knew organisations that worked with people who experience hate crimes in my community'
- 'I am not so sure. Unless hate crime has really caused substantial consequences or they are witnessed, I am not sure whether I can get some support'

17% told us they would be more likely to get support in future if the incident were more serious, if it had ongoing impacts to their wellbeing, or if it were repeated. For example:

- 'I would seek support if the experience is very severe and it had affected me to the point of being suicidal'
- 'Probably only if I am traumatized to the point that it impacts my daily life'
- 'If it was on a regular basis and I felt scared for my physical safety'

12% told us they would be more likely to get support in future if they felt authorities would take them more seriously or treat hate crime and hate incidents more seriously. For example:

- 'To report anonymously via chat.'
- 'A clear process to get resolution on the issues raised'
- 'Easier way to report it online'

Conclusion and recommendations

This report has revealed the alarming extent of hate crimes targeting ESEA communities in the UK, a reality that has been largely overlooked by media, politicians and the wider UK public other than for a fleeting period during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our findings reveal a concerning trend of victims not feeling able to access support, or to report what has happened to them, widespread mistrust towards authorities and the belief that their experiences will not be taken seriously. At the same time, this research offers a clear path forward to better support for victims and better prevention of future crimes.

While our definition of hate crime was intentionally broad and accessible and therefore likely included some incidents that would be considered non-crime hate incidents, the results are as stark as they are concerning.

Nearly half of respondents had been subjected to hate crime within the previous 12 months, with a significant proportion of incidents including physical violence. A vast majority of these incidents went unreported, primarily due to a belief that the police would not take it seriously, that there was nothing the police could do, or because the victim did not know who or where to go to.

Whether or not the incidents reported would meet a crime threshold, we can see the impacts on victims' wellbeing are profound. Many reported feelings of fear, anxiety, and vulnerability, and in extreme cases, depression and suicidal thoughts. Yet, only a small percentage accessed support services, underscoring the urgent need for more accessible and community-tailored resources.

Most incidents occurred in public spaces, with male perpetrators being most common. The study also highlights that hate crime perpetrators appear just as likely to be young as old demonstrating that racism and hate targeting ESEA communities is not an issue soon to be consigned to the past.

This report not only highlights the urgent need to acknowledge and address the hate crimes faced by ESEA communities in the UK, but also provides a roadmap for change. Below are our recommendations to stakeholders in government, funding bodies, and in media of some immediate steps which can both ensure victims of hate are better supported, and that overall levels of hate crime facing ESEA communities are reduced.

Recommendations

- **Increase funding to third party support and reporting services:** Allocating more resources to national third party (non-police) reporting and reporting services like 'On Your Side' can strengthen their ability to provide immediate victim support as well as culturally appropriate awareness raising programmes necessary to ensure victims know what can be reported and where. This should include multi-year funding commitments to ensure stability and long-term planning.

- **Local community support:** Investing in local community initiatives that address the unique needs of hate crime victims. Often it is local ESEA community centres or community groups who are best placed to deliver the wellbeing support and advice that hate crime victims need. They are also leaders in tackling prejudice faced by ESEA communities by delivering cross community cohesion programming. Additional funding to those ESEA led groups is urgently needed to increase the size and scale of such wellbeing and cohesion programmes.
- **Awareness projects:** Supporting projects that raise awareness about hate crimes within ESEA communities is crucial. This could involve funding for educational campaigns, community workshops, and the creation of materials in various languages to ensure accessibility delivered by local community groups alongside nation services.
- **Hate crime strategy:** His Majesty's Government should prioritise publication of a new hate crime strategy, focussed on prevention and meaningful victim support, developed in partnership with community organisations as well as organisations supporting hate crime victims and delivering hate crime prevention programmes.
- **Public campaigns:** Public awareness campaigns can play a vital role in encouraging reporting and access to support for hate crime victims. Such campaigns across different media channels should be prioritised helping all hate crime victims inside and outside the ESEA community understand what can be reported, where it can be reported, and what support is available.
- **Research and policy:** Supporting in-depth research into hate crime experiences and their societal impacts to inform policymakers. More research is needed to understand ESEA experiences of hate and the experiences of other communities who experience hate crime, as well as research into what is working to prevent hate crimes. This research can help develop targeted policies and response strategies, ensuring they are grounded in the actual experiences and needs of affected communities.

Endnotes

1. See for example: Gray, C., & Hansen, K. (2021). Did Covid-19 Lead to an Increase in Hate Crimes Toward Chinese People in London? *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, 37(4), 569-588. (<https://doi.org/10.1177/10439862211027994>) and Sky News. (2020). Coronavirus: Hate crimes against Chinese people soar in UK during COVID-19 crisis (<https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-hate-crimes-against-chinese-people-soar-in-uk-during-covid-19-crisis-11979388>)
2. Diana Yeh (2021). East Asian communities are fighting COVID-related violence: Migrant and diaspora communities are coming together to respond to a rise in racist violence. (<https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/pandemic-border/how-east-and-south-east-asian-communities-are-fighting-covid-related-violence/>)
3. Protection Approaches (2021). Confronting COVID-related hate: Recommendations from the first national conference. <https://protectionapproaches.org/covid-related-hate-1>
4. See: <https://www.voiceesea.com/quant-research>
5. See: <https://www.prolific.com/about>
6. In England and Wales, the common definition agreed by the National Police Chiefs Council and the Crown Prosecution service (CPS) is: '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 a person who is transgender or perceived to be transgender.' (see: <https://www.cps.gov.uk/crime-info/hate-crime>). In Scotland, Police Scotland's definition is: 'Any crime which is understood by the victim or any other person as being motivated (wholly or partly) by malice or ill will towards a social group.' (see: <https://www.scotland.police.uk/advice-and-information/hate-crime/what-is-hate-crime/>). The Northern Ireland the definition is: 'Hate crime is a crime against a person because of their race, religious belief, sexual orientation, political opinion, gender identity or disability. Hate crime has many forms from bullying and name calling, damage to property, violent attacks and even hate mail or hate email.' (see: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/hate-crime>)
7. When the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act comes into force on 1st April 2024, 'age' and 'Variations in sex characteristics' will be included as protected characteristics
8. See: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1986/64/part/III>
9. See for example the True Vision website, a hate crime reporting site owned by the The National Police Chiefs' Council. They state "Hate Incidents can feel like crimes to those who suffer them and often escalate to crimes or tension in a community. For this reason the police are concerned about incidents and you can also use this site to report non-crime hate incidents." (https://www.report-it.org.uk/what_is_hate_crime)
10. See: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census>
11. See: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/census/2021-census>
12. See: <https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/search-the-census#/>
13. See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-year-ending-december-2022/how-many-people-come-to-the-uk-each-year-including-visitors#british-national-overseas-bno-route>
14. See: <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/uk-population-by-ethnicity/demographics/age-groups/latest/>
15. Centre for Hate Studies, University of Leicester (2014). Leicester Hate Crime Project Findings and conclusions. (<https://le.ac.uk/hate-studies/research/the-leicester-hate-crime-project>)
16. For example, VoiceESEA and End Violence and Racism Against ESEA Communities conducted research during 2020-2021 submitting freedom of information requests to all police forces in the UK. They found only 1,671 hate crimes recorded by police across the UK in 2020, and 1,519 in 2021. (See: <https://www.voiceesea.com/quant-research>)
17. Three of the survey participants identified as non-binary, a sample too small to make broader statements about the experiences of non-binary ESEA community members
18. See: <https://www.onyoursideuk.org/on-your-side-incident-reports-nov-2022-to-oct-2023/>
19. See: <https://www.onyoursideuk.org/>
20. See: <https://www.stophateuk.org/>
21. See: <https://galop.org.uk/types-of-abuse/hate-crime/>
22. Centre for Hate Studies, University of Leicester (2014). Leicester Hate Crime Project Findings and conclusions. (<https://le.ac.uk/hate-studies/research/the-leicester-hate-crime-project>)
23. See for example: Home Office, Hate Crime Report 2019/20, p28 (<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5f845912d3bf7f6ba3ec8c9c/hate-crime-1920-hosb2920.pdf>)

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