

| Why report?



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This factsheet explains why it is important that you tell someone that you've experienced a hate crime, whether you chose to report to the police or tell another organisation such as Galop.

Many of us are so used to living with a background of homophobia and transphobia that we have put up with homophobic and transphobic abuse and insults, and if this violence escalates, we often do not report it for fear of not being taken seriously, for fear of being outed by police, for fear of further victimisation, or even because we may feel we don't need or deserve to be helped.

As LGBT people we often chose to change our behaviour to avoid putting ourselves at greater risk of being victimised. For example, we may change the way we present ourselves to avoid disclosing our sexuality or gender identity in public places. We may also avoid physical contact with our partner and friends, such as holding hands or kissing. In some cases we may even chose to avoid certain areas, or events or travelling by public transport because we perceive them as being unsafe. Whether or not you change your behaviour you should never be made to feel that you are to blame for a homophobic or transphobic attack - you have the same right to go about your life as anyone else!

Why tell others about homophobic or transphobic incidents?

Homophobic and transphobic abuse and violence are huge problems - most of us know someone who has experienced this at some point. But the information about homophobic and transphobic hate crime is very limited because many people do not report their experiences. Unless the police, local and national government understand the true extent of homophobic and transphobic violence and abuse, and the impact it has on the lives of individual lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender

(LGBT) people, services will not be developed and strategies will not be implemented to tackle this violence.

There are lots of reasons why people choose not to report to the police, but if you don't want to tell the police, you can still tell us:

- We are completely independent of the police - we are an LGBT community-based organisation.
- We never share confidential details with the police or anyone else, unless you want us to.
- We can help to monitor the type and extent of homophobic and transphobic violence in London and use this information to work for more and better services for LGBT people
- We can lobby the police, local and national government to develop strategies to tackle and prevent violence, such as education campaigns in schools
- We can work for changes in the law to protect LGBT people from victimisation and for greater penalties for perpetrators
- In order to address our communities' needs, we need to know where violence happens.
- We may be able to identify 'violence hotspots' and warn members of the community to be vigilant

However the only way we can do any of this is if you tell us what is going on.

Even if you report to police, it is worth telling Galop for our own monitoring purposes.

What do I do if I want to report a hate crime but don't want to talk to the police?

Galop can give you advice and support, and can also take a report from you if you wish - without you having to speak to the police. If you prefer to contact us via our website, you can fill in a report online and submit it to us, choosing whether to remain anonymous or to give your details. Alternatively, you can call our helpline to talk to an advisor. See our factsheet 'Assisted Reporting' for more details about how this works.

You can contact your local police station directly and arrange to make a crime report. Alternatively, you can contact Galop and we may be able to refer you to an LGBT-friendly police officer (often called LGBT Liaison Officers). However, please be aware that calling Galop is not an alternative to calling 999 in an emergency.

What response should I expect from the police after making a report to them?

Always remember that if the victim or any other person feels that an incident is homophobic or transphobic then the police should treat it as such without needing to be convinced of this.

You should expect the police to make a record of the incident and 'flag' it as homophobic or transphobic. The police should always provide you with a reference number.

The report should be forwarded to the appropriate police department in the borough where the incident happened. Usually it is the Community

Safety Unit who will investigate a hate crime, though sometimes a report will be forwarded to the local LGBT Police Liaison Officer.

If you have provided the police with your contact details they should always contact you and keep you updated on your case, including if they have decided not to take further action.

The officer dealing with the report will then decide how to proceed with the report. The police may ask you to make a formal statement about the incident. They may need to carry out an investigation or make further enquiries into the incident. Any subsequent action will depend on the nature of the incident and will include factors such as evidence, witnesses and so on. The police should keep you informed of any significant developments in the investigation, for example if they arrest the perpetrator.

If the police think that someone should be charged with an offence, they will pass the case to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). The CPS will decide if someone will be charged. Their decision is based on whether there is sufficient evidence to charge someone and if this is in the public interest.

If you need further advice or information about reporting or are concerned about the way the police have responded to your report, contact Galop on: 020 7704 2040.

Always dial 999 if it is an emergency and you think you are in immediate danger.