

NASUWT

The Teachers' Union

Hate Crime

ENGLAND



Hate crime

A **hate crime** is *'any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person to be motivated by hostility or prejudice towards someone based on a personal characteristic'*.¹

Hate crimes are any crimes that are targeted against a person because of hostility or prejudice towards that person's:

- disability;
- race or ethnicity;
- religion or belief;
- sexual orientation;
- gender identity.

Hate crimes can be committed against a person or their property.

In 2015/16, there were 62,518 offences recorded by the police in England and Wales in which one or more hate-crime strands were deemed to be a motivating factor.²

Being a victim of hate crime can leave a person fearful, isolated and vulnerable and can severely undermine their sense of safety in their school/college and/or community. It impacts greatly on self-confidence and self-worth and can lead to depression, anxiety and, in extreme cases, suicide.

The NASUWT believes that all children and young people and staff in schools and colleges have a right to learn and work in a safe and secure environment that is free from intimidation, harassment, abuse and fear, and where they feel valued and respected.

Tackling hate crime

Schools and colleges can contribute to tackling hate crime by ensuring that:

- the school/college promotes a climate of respect;
- every student, staff member and parent/carer within the school/college community feels valued and secure;
- the curriculum reflects and represents accurately the diverse nature of the UK and the world and addresses issues of diversity in ways that counter prejudiced assumptions;
- false assumptions and stereotypes are challenged with sound factual information;
- they are vigilant for any signs of name-calling, abuse or bullying involving any member of the school/college community;
- all incidents of name-calling, abuse and bullying are reported, recorded and dealt with promptly and sensitively;
- all staff are given appropriate training and support to enable them to tackle discrimination, bullying and harassment and promote equality of opportunity.

Legislation addressing hate crime

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 provides protection against discrimination to those with a protected characteristic.³ It also places a duty on public authorities (which includes schools and academies) to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination and foster good relations between different groups.

The duty has three aims. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it;
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Action to eliminate discrimination and advance equality should be an integral part of the work undertaken to address all forms of hate crime.

Community cohesion

The duty placed on maintained schools to report on their work was repealed in 2011. However, as part of the 2006 Education and Inspections Act, maintained schools, academies and free schools are required to promote community cohesion as required by the funding agreements with the Department for Education (DfE).⁴

It is for the accountable body to decide how to fulfil the duty in light of their local circumstances.

Criminal law

Some types of harassing or threatening behaviour, or communications, could be a criminal offence – for example, under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003 and the Public Order Act 1986.

It may be appropriate to involve the police.

What do I do if I am a victim of hate crime?

- keep a log of all incidents, including copies of memos and letters and a diary of events;
- speak to someone about the incidents, such as a family member, a counsellor or a trusted work colleague;
- where the behaviour is having a detrimental effect on health, contact a GP.

¹ Common definition agreed by the police, Crown Prosecution Service, Prison Service and other agencies that make up the criminal justice system.

² Home Office, *Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2015 to 2016*.

³ Protected characteristics apply to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

⁴ DfE, *Governance Handbook*, November 2015.

Report and challenge hate crime

- Visit the NASUWT website at www.nasuwt.org.uk.
- Phone the Member Support helpline on 03330 145550 (England only).
- E-mail: advice@mail.nasuwt.org.uk.
- Victim Support. Tel: 0808 1689111.
- Call 101 to speak to the police in your area.
- Call 999 in an emergency.

Tel: 03330 145550
E-mail: advice@mail.nasuwt.org.uk
Website: www.nasuwt.org.uk

Act for
**RACIAL
JUSTICE**