

Understanding Hate Crime in the UK

A practical guide for EU citizens and families

Recognise it



Understand what hate crime and hate incidents can look like

Report it



Learn how to report safely and where to turn for help

Get support



Find practical, emotional, and confidential support services



Hate crime and discrimination should never be accepted as “normal”.
You deserve to be treated with respect.

Everyone deserves to feel safe

Moving to a new country can bring opportunities, stability, and a sense of hope.

But for many people living in the UK, experiences of hostility, discrimination, abuse, or intimidation can become part of daily life.

Sometimes this happens because of:

- nationality or immigration background
- accent or language
- ethnicity or race
- religion or belief
- disability
- sexual orientation
- or gender identity

These experiences are often dismissed as “normal”, “not serious enough”, or simply “something to ignore”. Many people do not realise that what they experienced may be considered a hate incident or hate crime under UK law.

At New Europeans UK, we work with EU citizens and families from many different backgrounds. We know that people often:

- do not know their rights
- are unsure where to ask for help
- worry about speaking to authorities
- fear discrimination
- or think reporting will not make a difference

This guide explains:

- **What hate crime is:** understand what hate crime and hate incidents can look like, including abuse, harassment, discrimination, and online hate.
- **How to recognise it:** learn how to identify behaviour motivated by prejudice or hostility and why these experiences should never be accepted as normal.
- **What support exists:** find out where to access practical advice, emotional support, and confidential help from trusted organisations and community groups.
- **What steps you can take:** explore your options for staying safe, reporting incidents, collecting evidence, and seeking support.

What is a hate incident?



A hate incident is any act that is perceived to be motivated by hostility, prejudice, or discrimination towards a person because of who they are or who someone thinks they are.

This can relate to:

- race or ethnicity
- nationality
- religion
- disability
- sexual orientation
- or gender identity

A hate incident does not always involve physical violence. It can include words, behaviour, intimidation, threats, online abuse, or repeated harassment.

Many people experience hate incidents in everyday situations, including:

- on public transport
- at work
- in schools or universities
- in housing
- online or on social media
- or in their local neighbourhood

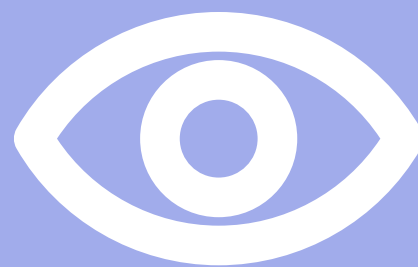
Examples may include:

- someone mocking your accent or telling you to “go back where you came from”
- racist comments or jokes
- anti-Roma discrimination
- hostility towards migrants or refugees
- harassment because of religion or clothing
- abuse directed at LGBTQI+ people
- threats or hateful messages online
- or repeated intimidation by neighbours or strangers

Even if something is not considered a criminal offence, it can still cause harm and should be taken seriously.

What is a hate crime?

A hate crime happens when a criminal offence is motivated by prejudice or hostility towards a protected characteristic.



In simple terms:

A crime + hostility or prejudice = **hate crime**

This could include:

- verbal abuse or threats
- assault or violence
- criminal damage
- harassment
- online intimidation
- stalking
- or abusive behaviour at work or in public

Under UK law, hate crime is recognised as particularly harmful because people are targeted for who they are, or who they are perceived to be.

Hate crime does not only affect one individual. It can create fear and insecurity across whole communities.

Why many people do not report:

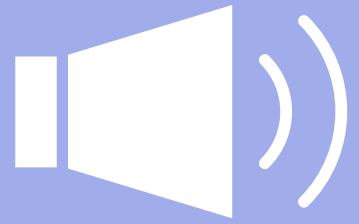
Many EU citizens come from countries where hate crime is not widely discussed, consistently recognised, or commonly reported, which can make it difficult to identify or respond to in a new context. Some people may feel that “nothing will happen,” that the incident is “not serious enough,” or that this is simply “how people behave,” while others may worry that reporting could create additional problems for them.

There are also common fears around not being believed, language barriers, discrimination, or unwanted attention from authorities, as well as concerns linked to immigration status, housing, or work.

These concerns are real and understandable. However, there are support organisations in the UK that can help people understand their rights, access emotional support, and report safely if they choose to do so.

What you can do

Hate crime can significantly affect mental health and wellbeing, as hostility directed at who you are can deeply impact your sense of safety.



Some people begin changing their daily routines to avoid abuse:

- avoiding certain streets or areas
- staying quiet in public
- avoiding speaking their own language
- hiding aspects of their identity
- or withdrawing from community life

Online hate speech can also have a serious impact. Harmful comments, racist abuse, threats, or coordinated harassment online can make people feel unsafe both online and offline. Even witnessing hate directed at others can affect communities and create fear.

You do not have to deal with it alone. If you experience or witness a hate incident or hate crime, you can:

- talk to someone you trust
- contact a community organisation
- report anonymously
- seek emotional support
- or report directly to police

You do not need to have perfect English to ask for help. You also do not need proof before speaking to a support organisation or making a report.

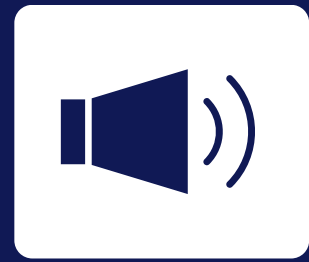
If possible, try to keep:

- screenshots
- messages
- photos
- dates and times
- or witness details

These can help if you later decide to report.

Reporting hate crime

In an emergency or if someone is in immediate danger:



Call 999

For non-emergencies:

Call 101

You can also report online through:

True Vision: The UK police hate crime reporting portal

www.report-it.org.uk

To report a hate crime or abuse on London's transport network, **text 61016** or call **0800 40 50 40** to reach the British Transport Police (BTP)

Some people may not feel comfortable speaking directly to police. There are also independent organisations that offer confidential advice and support.

Organisations that can help

Stop Hate UK: Independent reporting and support services for people affected by hate crime.

www.stophateuk.org

0800 138 1625

Galop: Support for LGBTQI+ people experiencing abuse, violence, or hate crime.

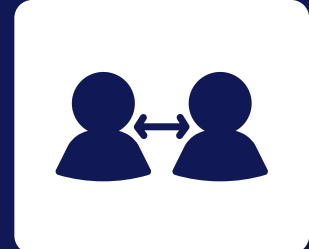
www.galop.org.uk

0207 704 2040

Tell MAMA: Support and reporting for anti-Muslim hate incidents.

www.tellmamauk.org

0800 456 1226



Community Security Trust (CST):

Support for victims of antisemitic hate incidents.

www.cst.org.uk

0800 032 3263

London Victim and Witness

Service: Emotional and practical support for victims in London.

www.londonvws.org.uk

0808 168 9291