

Homophobic hate crime

The Gay British Crime Survey 2008

➤ In a free and democratic society, my son's murder was an outrage. It was an act of terrorism. Jody was not the first man to be killed, or terrorised, or beaten or humiliated for being homosexual – or for being perceived to be homosexual. Tragically, he will not be the last man to suffer the consequences of homophobia, which is endemic in this society. This is unacceptable. We cannot accept this. No intelligent, healthy or reasonable society could.

Homophobic hate crime

The Gay British Crime Survey 2008

by Sam Dick



Foreword

Britain has made great progress in recent years towards allowing every citizen to maximise their potential. But we must not be complacent. While prejudice and negative attitudes still exist there is still work to do. And nowhere is this more stark than where prejudice leads to hate crime.

The criminal justice system – police, prosecutors and the legal profession – have also changed. Lesbian and gay people can now expect better treatment than ever before. But while people are still anxious about being themselves in the areas they live we still face challenges.

In the 21st century no one in Britain should ever feel under threat of verbal or physical violence just because of their sexual orientation. That is why we supported Stonewall in this timely research into homophobic hate crime and the response of the criminal justice system.

I welcome these recommendations. We are determined that lesbian and gay people should have the confidence to report crimes to the police knowing that they will be taken seriously, the crime investigated and their privacy respected. Our key priorities are to increase reporting; increase offences brought to justice and to tackle repeat victimisation and hotspots. In the light of these findings, I will task the Ministerial Action Group on Violence to consider and take forward our work on tackling homophobic and other hate crime.



Rt Hon Jacqui Smith MP
Home Secretary



Introduction

Despite significant progress towards securing legislative equality, the daily lives of too many of Britain's 3.6 million lesbian and gay people are still overshadowed by the fear of homophobic hate crime. The risk of being attacked or abused on the street or in their homes remains an everyday reality.

Equally disturbing is that our criminal justice system still has no reliable picture of the actual number of homophobic hate crimes taking place every year. That's why this report, the first statistically significant national survey of its kind into the extent and nature of homophobic hate crime, is so important.

The lived experiences this survey has uncovered are shocking. Lesbian and gay people experience a whole range of offences motivated by homophobia, from harassment to serious sexual and physical assaults. One in five have fallen victim to a homophobic hate crime or incident in the last three years. Often these incidents occur repeatedly and around people's homes. And it is not just lesbian and gay people who become victims of homophobic crime, but their children, friends and family too.

There have been some distinct steps by the police and the criminal justice system to tackle hate crime in recent years, but it is clear that far more needs to be done. Three quarters of those who experience homophobic hate crimes and incidents still don't report them to the police, convinced that there is no point.

We warmly welcome the Home Secretary's positive response to the findings of this research. We hope the whole criminal justice system will now rise to the challenges it poses.



Ben Summerskill
Chief Executive
Stonewall

Contents

1	Summary and Key Findings	5
2	The nature of hate incidents	7
3	The extent of hate incidents	11
4	Who commits hate incidents?	14
5	The triggers of hate incidents	16
6	Reporting hate incidents	20
7	Experiences of the police and the CPS	25
8	The impact of hate incidents	29
9	Recommendations	33

➤ Insults and minor attacks are a part of our day-to-day lives and so often we do not realise we should report them or seek help. From an early age, we are bullied in the playground, attacked for who we are or beaten for who we date.

Lucy, 25, North East

1

Summary and Key Findings

SUMMARY

In March 2008, Stonewall commissioned YouGov to survey a sample of 1,721 lesbian, gay and bisexual people across Britain. The survey canvassed their experiences and fear of homophobic hate crime and incidents. The survey asked whether they had experienced crime, including homophobic incidents. The survey also asked who committed the hate incidents, what action victims took to report or respond to the incidents and the impact it had on their lives.

KEY FINDINGS

One in five lesbian and gay people in Britain have been a victim of one or more homophobic hate crimes or incidents in the last three years. Three in four of these did not report them to the police. These incidents ranged from regular insults on the street to serious physical and sexual assaults.

- **One in five** lesbian and gay people have experienced a homophobic hate crime or incident in the last three years. **One in eight** have been a victim in the last year.
- **Three in four** of those experiencing hate crimes or incidents did not report them to the police. Only **six per cent** reported them to third parties.
- **Seven in ten** did not report hate crimes or incidents to anyone.
- **One in six** experiencing homophobic hate incidents in the last three years experienced a physical assault.
- **Eight per cent** of all black and minority ethnic lesbian and gay people have experienced a physical assault as a homophobic hate incident, compared to **four per cent** of all lesbian and gay people.
- **One in six** lesbian and gay people have been insulted and harassed in the last three years because they are gay.
- **One in eight** lesbian and gay people experiencing homophobic hate incidents have experienced unwanted sexual contact as part of the incident.
- Overall, **three in five** lesbian and gay people have been a victim of any crime or incident in the last three years.

A majority of lesbian and gay people still strongly believe that the police cannot and will not take homophobic hate crimes seriously.

- **A third** of victims do not report incidents to the police because they do not think the police would or could do anything about it.
- **One in five** of those who do not report incidents do not think that what they have experienced is an offence.
- **Fourteen per cent** of victims of homophobic hate crimes or incidents did not report them to anyone because they happen too frequently to report.
- **Only one per cent** of all victims report that the homophobic hate crime or incident resulted in a conviction.

Lesbians are more likely than gay men to experience a hate crime committed by someone they know, either someone living locally or a work colleague. Furthermore, the families, friends and colleagues of lesbian and gay people can also experience or witness homophobic hate crimes as a consequence of being connected to them. Homophobic hate crimes can occur anywhere, including around the home and around 'identified' lesbian and gay locations.

- **Half** of lesbians experiencing hate crimes and incidents say they occurred when they were with their partner. **Six per cent** say they occurred when they were with a child.

- **Over a third** of victims of homophobic hate crimes and incidents say the perpetrator identified them as gay because of where they were, for example a gay venue, or who they were with, for example, their partner.
- **One in six** victims say that the hate crime or incident was carried out by people who live in the local area. **One in ten** say they were committed by a work colleague.

Lesbian and gay people are concerned about homophobic hate crime and concerned about how they will be treated if they report a crime. Lesbian and gay people modify their behaviour in order to avoid crime.

- **Two thirds** of those who reported incidents to the police were not offered or referred to advice or support services.
- **Almost half** of lesbian and gay people think they are at greater risk of being physically assaulted than a heterosexual.
- **A third** of lesbian and gay people alter their behaviour so as not to appear lesbian or gay to prevent being a victim of crime.
- **One in seven** did not seek support and advice after being the victim of a homophobic hate crime or incident because they did not know it was available.
- **One in ten** lesbian and gay people say that being a victim of crime is their biggest worry, more than being ill or having financial debts.

2

The nature of hate incidents

- **One in six** victims experiencing homophobic hate incidents experienced a physical assault and almost one in six experienced a threat of violence.
- **One in six** lesbian and gay people have been insulted or harassed because they are gay in the last three years.
- **Almost a third** of lesbians have been insulted or harassed because of their sexual orientation in the last three years compared to over one in five gay men.
- Gay men are **over two and a half times** more likely to be the victim of a hate incident involving a physical assault than lesbians.
- **One in eight** hate incidents experienced by gay men and one in twenty experienced by lesbians involved unwanted sexual contact.
- **Eight per cent** of black and minority ethnic lesbian and gay people have experienced a physical assault as a homophobic hate incident, compared to **four per cent** of all lesbian and gay people.

VIOLENT CRIMES

One in six victims experiencing homophobic hate incidents experienced physical assault. Gay men are over **two and a half times** more likely to be the victim of a physical assault than lesbians. **Four per cent** of all lesbian and gay people have been physically assaulted because of their sexual orientation in the last three years. Just over **eight per cent** of black and minority ethnic lesbian and gay people have been the victim of a physical assault as part of a homophobic hate incident in the last three years.

Threats of violence or use of force are also common. Almost **one in six** victims of hate incidents experienced a threat of

violence. Gay men are over **one and half times** more likely to be threatened with violence because they are gay than lesbians.

Many homophobic hate incidents involve sexual assault or other forms of unwanted sexual contact. **One in eight** of the hate incidents experienced by gay men and **one in twenty** experienced by lesbians involved unwanted sexual contact. Victims aged between 18 and 24 are over twice as likely as those over 35 to be subjected to a sexual assault as part of a homophobic hate incident. Overall, **two per cent** of all lesbian and gay people have experienced unwanted sexual contact as part of a hate incident in the last three years.

➤ My friend was beaten and left unconscious in the road but the police did not record it as a homophobic crime because she was drunk and out walking alone at night. They gave the impression that she deserved what she got and no suspects were ever sought or caught. She needed hospital treatment and now is a nervous wreck.

Micha, 44, South West

➤ My personal experience has made me aware that most people are homophobic. I was sexually assaulted by two straight males, in town. I have now moved to a very small village and live an anonymous, closeted life. And will have to forever. *Kevin, 45, Wales*

➤ Of more concern to me is the perception amongst some men that sexual suggestion is appropriate, that I should be more promiscuous and more willing to take sexual favours for money and that they have more licence to touch me.

Beatrice, 24, South East

➤ I am aware of an incident, an old friend, who was raped by a gang of youths because of her being a lesbian. *Anne-Marie, 26, East Midlands*

HARASSMENT

Significant numbers of lesbian and gay people are the victims of incidents that involve homophobic abuse, vandalism and other acts designed to intimidate and scare them.

One in six lesbian and gay people have been insulted or harassed because they are gay in the last three years.

88 per cent of victims of homophobic hate incidents say the incident involved insults and harassment. Almost **a third** of lesbians have been insulted and harassed because of their sexual orientation in the last three years compared to over **one in five** gay men.

➤ I have experienced homophobic behaviour and it makes you feel like you are the one who is doing wrong. I have been called a pervert, a paedophile, dyke. It was reported to the police and the council but nothing was done for 15 months. My life was made a living hell. *Gillian, 36, North East*

➤ It is probably difficult for heterosexual people to realise just how often one is insulted simply for being or looking gay. Whilst straight-looking myself, when my partner and I are together, we are obviously a gay couple. We receive completely unwarranted abuse quite often and have just got used to ignoring it. As we got off our local bus a few months ago, a young woman with whom we had had no contact or conversation whatsoever, called out: 'Fucking poofs!' What can one do? *Peter, 59, London*

Young people are more likely to be a victim of homophobic abuse. **Three quarters** of 18 to 24 year olds who experienced

a hate incident were subjected to homophobic abuse during the incident compared to **three in five** victims aged 45 to 54.

➤ The most frequent incidents I have experienced have been verbal harassment, principally when I was in my late teens and early twenties. *Aaron, 33, Scotland*

Lesbian and gay people also say that their property has been vandalised. **Seven per cent** of victims of hate incidents had

damage caused to their home or property outside their home. **Five per cent** had a vehicle damaged.

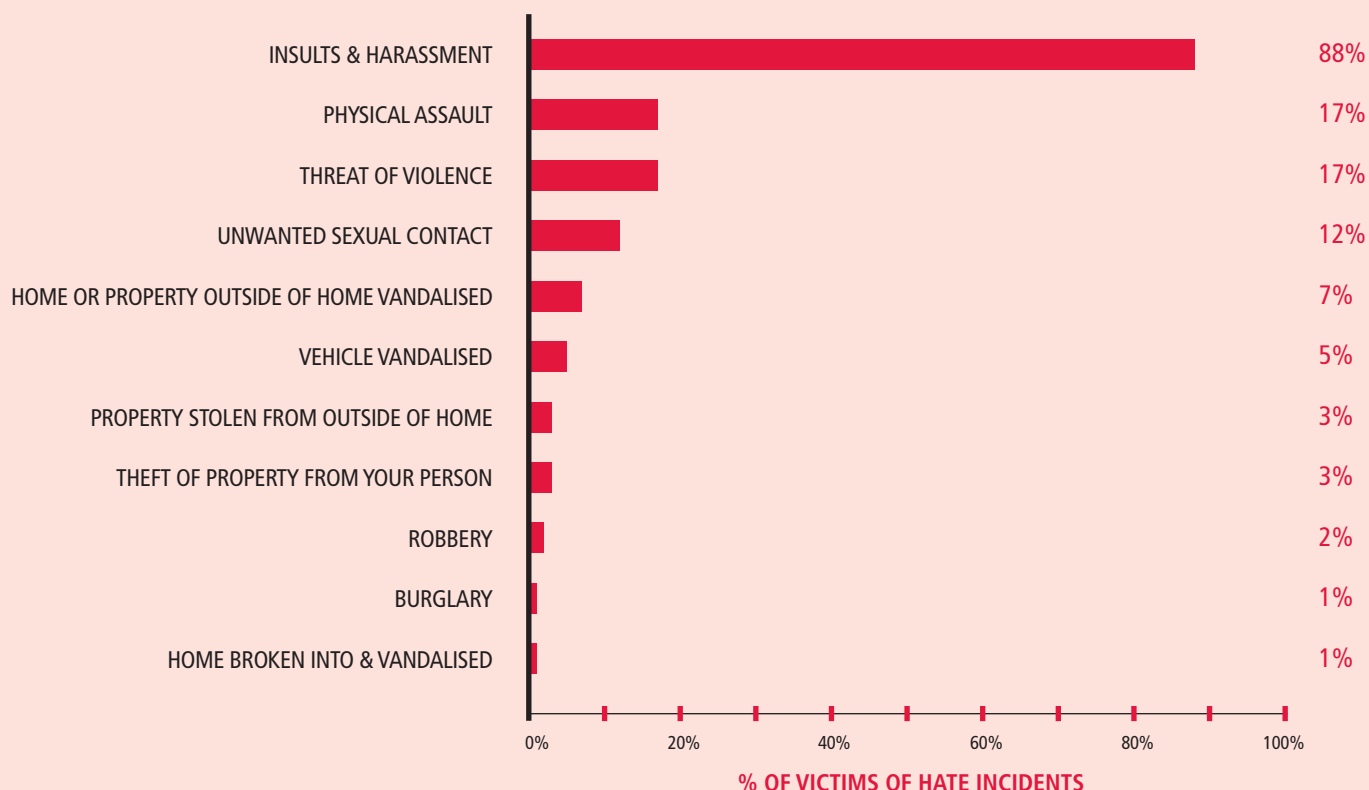
➤ We were subject to a lot of petty vandalism when we moved. We do not know, but suspect some of it may have been because we are a gay couple. The police have been utterly useless on every occasion, offering no support whatsoever. They refused to entertain the possibility of this being a homophobic/hate crime because they 'do not really have a problem' in the area. *Asima, 41, West Midlands*

PROPERTY AND PERSONAL CRIMES

One in every hundred victims of hate incidents had their home burgled or broken into and damage caused.

Three per cent had property stolen from outside their home. **Five per cent** were a victim of robbery or theft.

WHAT DID THE HATE INCIDENT INVOLVE?



3

The extent of hate incidents

- **A third** of lesbians and a **quarter** of gay men have experienced a hate incident in the last three years.
- **One in eight** lesbian, gay and bisexual people have experienced a hate incident in the last year.
- **Over one in ten** lesbian and gay people think that there is a 'big problem' of homophobic hate crimes and incidents in their local area.
- **Three in five** lesbian and gay people have been a victim of any crime or incident in the last three years.

ALL CRIME

Three in five lesbian and gay people have experienced a crime or incident in the last three years. These crimes are not necessarily homophobic hate crimes or incidents, but general crimes which range from insults and harassment to serious physical and sexual assaults. **One third** of lesbian and gay people have been insulted or harassed in the last three years, **one in eight** have been threatened with violence, **one in twelve** have been physically assaulted and **one in sixteen** have experienced unwanted sexual contact. Black and minority ethnic lesbian and gay people are **three and a half** times more likely than white people

to have experienced unwanted sexual contact in the last three years.

Lesbian and gay people who have experienced a crime or incident in the last three years often have been the victim on more than one occasion. Victims of insults and harassment are the most likely to be repeat victims.

Over a third of those who have experienced a crime or incident have also experienced a homophobic hate incident in the last three years.

HOMOPHOBIC HATE INCIDENTS

- The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) defines a hate crime as '*any hate incident, which constitutes a criminal offence, perceived by the victim or any other person as being motivated by prejudice or hate*'. A hate incident is defined as '*any incident, which may or may not constitute a criminal offence, which is perceived by the victim or any other person as being motivated by prejudice or hate*'.

One in eight lesbian, gay and bisexual people, equivalent to over 450,000 people in Britain, have experienced a homophobic hate incident in the last year. **One in five** have experienced one in the last three years.

Lesbians are most likely to experience a hate incident.

A third have been a victim in the last three years compared to **a quarter** of gay men. Lesbians are also over **one and a half** times more likely to have experienced one or more homophobic hate incidents in the last year, compared to gay men.

Bisexual men and women are far less likely to experience a

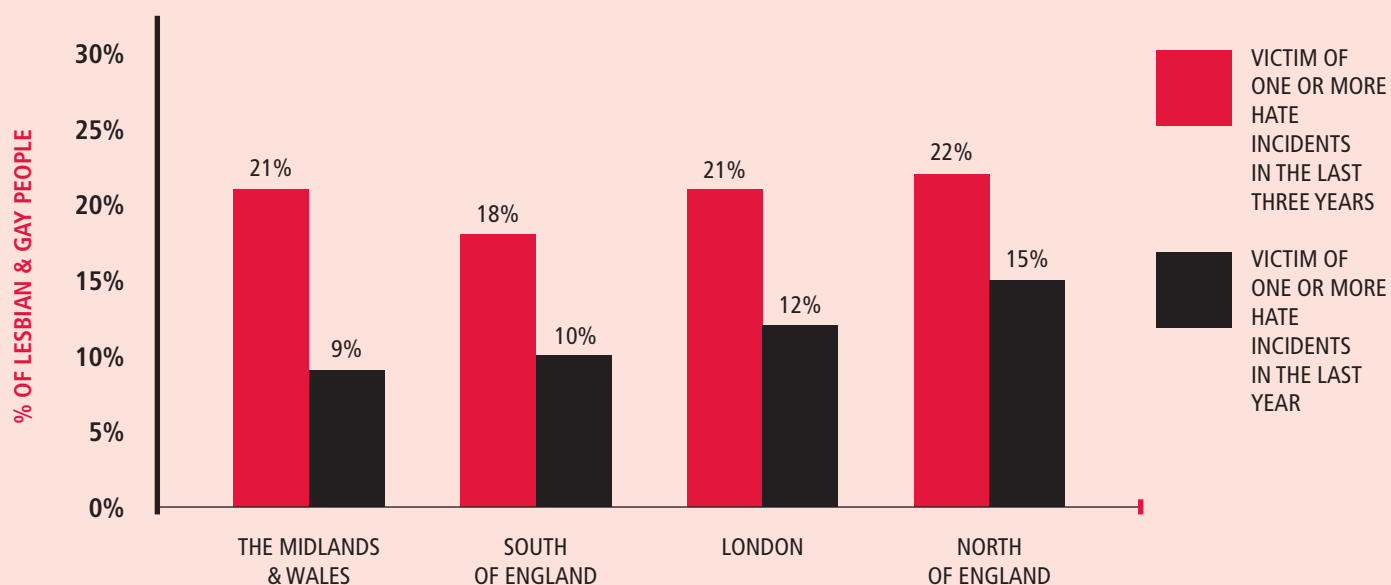
homophobic hate incident. **One in twenty** bisexual people have experienced a homophobic hate incident in the last year, and less than **one in twelve** in the last three years. Many bisexual respondents to the survey felt that they were at lower risk of homophobic hate crime because they are not identified as lesbian or gay.

Young lesbian and gay people are slightly more likely to experience a homophobic hate incident than older lesbian and gay people, with almost **one in four** 18-24 years old having been a victim in the last three years compared to **one in five** 45 to 54 year olds.

➤ I am personally less likely to be the victim of these crimes as I am older as I don't go out as much at night and I live in a good area. I think there are a lot of these crimes and incidents happening to younger people and in different areas of town.

Gwen, 66, South West

HAVE YOU BEEN THE VICTIM OF A HATE INCIDENT IN THE LAST THREE YEARS?



There are also regional differences. Over **one in six** lesbian and gay people in the north of England have experienced one or more hate incidents in the last year, compared to **one in eight** in London and **one in ten** in the rest of the south.

Lesbian and gay people are concerned about hate crimes and incidents. **One in ten** lesbian and gay people think that there is a 'big problem' of homophobic hate crimes and incidents in their local area. Black and minority ethnic lesbian and gay people are over **one and a half times** more likely than white people to think that there is a

problem in their local area.

Again, there are regional differences, with lesbian and gay people in the West Midlands **three times more likely** to think homophobic hate crimes and incidents are a problem in their area than those in the South West.

Lesbians are more likely to think hate crimes and incidents are a problem in their local community. **One in six** lesbians say hate crimes and incidents are a problem in their area compared to **one in eight** gay men.

HOW MUCH OF A PROBLEM ARE HOMOPHOBIC HATE CRIMES AND INCIDENTS IN YOUR AREA?



4 Who commits hate incidents?

- **Three in five** victims experienced a hate incident committed by a stranger under the age of 25.
- Over **seven in ten** victims of hate incidents aged 18 to 24 say they were committed by a stranger under the age of 25.
- Nearly **one in six** victims experienced a homophobic hate incident committed by one or more offenders who lives in the local area.
- **One in ten** were a victim of an incident committed by a work colleague.

As with all crimes, hate incidents can be committed by individuals or groups of people.

A significant number of hate incidents are perpetrated by individuals known to the victim. Nearly **one in six** victims experienced a homophobic hate incident perpetrated by one or

more offenders who live in the local area. **One in ten** were victim of an incident committed by a work colleague. Lesbians are more likely to be the victim of a hate incident committed by someone they know, with over **one in five** victims of hate incidents saying they were perpetrated by a neighbour or resident in the local area and **one in eight** by a work colleague.

- Nearly one in five lesbian and gay people have experienced bullying in the workplace in the last five years.

Serves You Right, YouGov poll of 1,700 lesbian, gay and bisexual people commissioned by Stonewall (2008)

- Over three in five young lesbian and gay people feel that there is neither an adult at home nor at school who they can talk to about being gay.

The School Report, survey of 1,145 young lesbian, gay and bisexual people by Stonewall (2007)

➤ I have in the past had windows broken and been assaulted, although these were not random acts but carried out by people who I have worked with and still work with...

Tom, 43, Scotland

Young people are particularly vulnerable to hate incidents committed by family members. Lesbian and gay people aged 18 to 24 are **four times more likely** than average to experience a hate incident committed by family members. Lesbians are also **twice as likely** as gay men to experience hate incidents committed by family members.

Strangers were involved in perpetrating the majority of homophobic hate incidents. **Three in five** victims experienced a hate incident committed by a stranger under the age of 25. Gay men are more likely to be the victim of a hate crime committed by a stranger than lesbians.

➤ My partner and I do not conceal our relationship and it seems that most of our neighbours are aware and perfectly comfortable with it, but we were at that time threatened by boys saying things like 'You're lesbians, and we know where you live' and telling us they vandalised plants in our garden (which they had). *Claire, 47, Scotland*

Perpetrators of hate incidents appear to single out victims of their own age group. Over **seven in ten** victims of hate incidents aged 18 to 24 say they were committed by a

stranger under the age of 25. Lesbian and gay victims aged over 25 are more likely than those under 25 to experience a hate incident perpetrated by someone also over 25.

➤ Some people think it has gone away but children are probably the worst homophobes of all. *Annette, 59, Yorkshire & the Humber*

➤ It seems to be teenaged and early 20s men that seem to think they can abuse anyone who is different to them when they are in a group in a public place.

Nabeel, 32, South East

5

The triggers of hate incidents

- **Over a third** of victims say that the perpetrator(s) could tell they were gay because of who they were with or where they were at the time of the incident.
- A **third** of lesbians who experienced a hate incident say being a lesbian was identifiable to the perpetrator from the way they look.
- Lesbians are over **one and a half times** more likely to experience a hate incident when they are with their partner than gay men with their partner.
- **Half** of all gay male victims of hate incidents and **one in five** lesbian victims of hate incidents were on their own at the time of the incident.
- **Six per cent** of hate incidents experienced by lesbians took place when a child was present.

WHO THEY ARE WITH

Over a **third** of victims say that people could tell they were gay because of who they were with or where they were at the time of the hate incident, such as with gay friends or at a

gay bar. A **third** of victims were with their partner at the time of the hate incident and **over one in six** occurred when the victim was with lesbian and gay friends.

- I know it shouldn't be the case but you get used to homophobic verbal abuse. I work part time in a gay orientated bar, and it is a regular occurrence but it just goes with the job. *Richard, 34, Scotland*
- Violence often occurs, be it verbal or physical when entering or leaving a known gay bar or club. Several straight men hang around and look for an 'easy target'. Sadly it seems that the police are never around at the time these crimes are committed. *Stephen, 42, Yorkshire & the Humber*

➤ I only really feel afraid when I am out with friends or am going to or from gay venues.

Rebecca, 57, North West

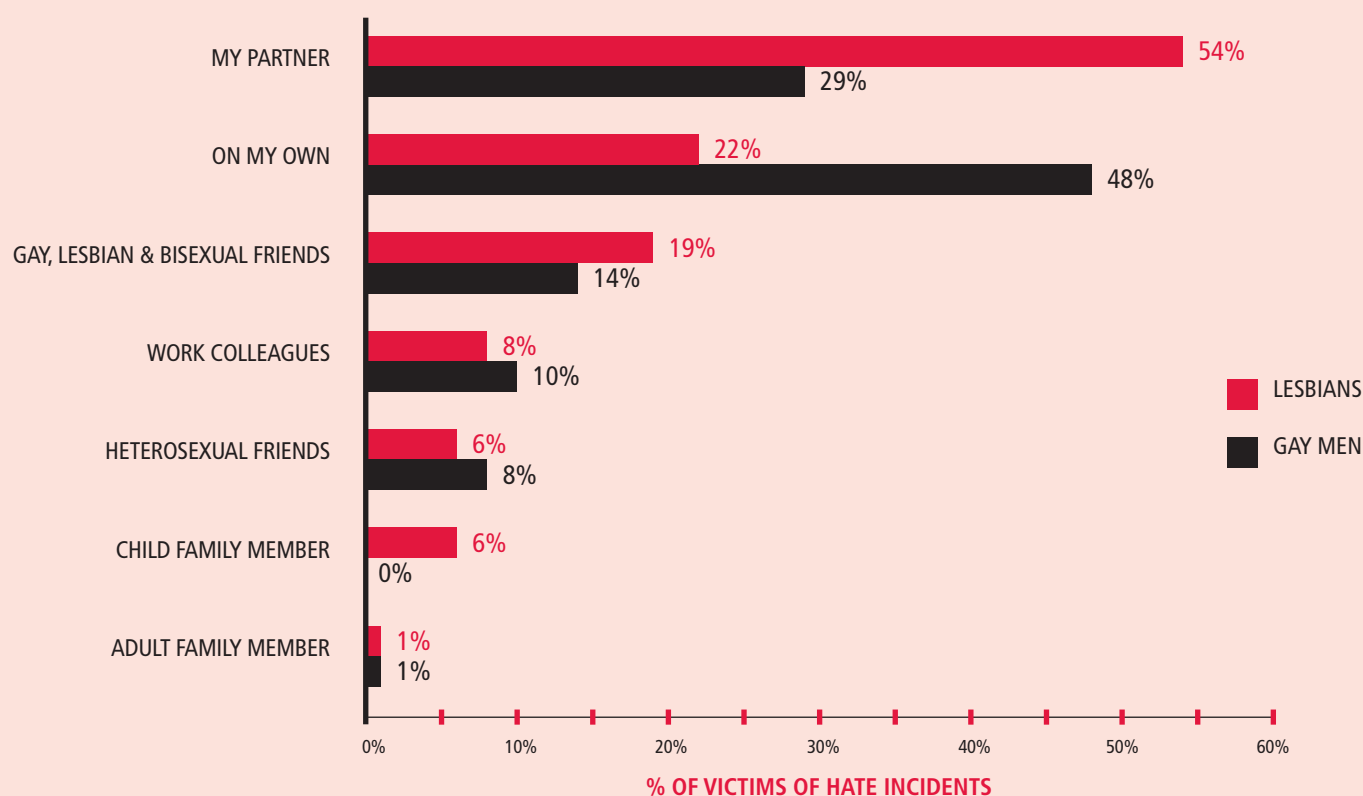
➤ Recently my friend (a 23 year old female) was punched in the face by a man in his 50s. It took place in the female toilets of a gay pub in town. He had followed her in there with the intention of attacking her because she was gay. Sarah, 22, North West

One in twelve victims were with heterosexual friends when the hate incident occurred. One in twelve were with work colleagues and two per cent were with a child at the time

of the incident. This means that heterosexuals might also experience, or at very least be exposed to, homophobic hate crimes and incidents.

➤ My son was constantly teased and bullied because his mum likes girls... It is the kids in the area where you live that are the problem and if it is out of school hours the schools cannot do anything. One time my son was chased up a tree and four kids stood at the bottom throwing rocks and even an open pen knife at him yelling things like 'gay lord' and 'faggot'. Jill, 31, South East

WHO WERE YOU WITH AT THE TIME OF THE INCIDENT?



➤ I am lucky because my area is fairly safe but I do feel at risk when I'm with my partner in the city. We can't show any form of affection in public as we would be risking verbal abuse, threats and physical violence. I know a lot of people who live in constant fear of being attacked because of their sexual orientation. My partner is frightened that if it became known locally that she was gay, her home would be attacked by local youths and her life made a misery by threats and abuse. *Unnamed*

Almost **half** of lesbians who experienced a hate incident say who they were with or where they were at the time of the incident identified them as lesbian, compared to a third of gay men. Half of all hate incidents experienced by gay men and a **fifth** experienced by lesbians occurred when they were on their own.

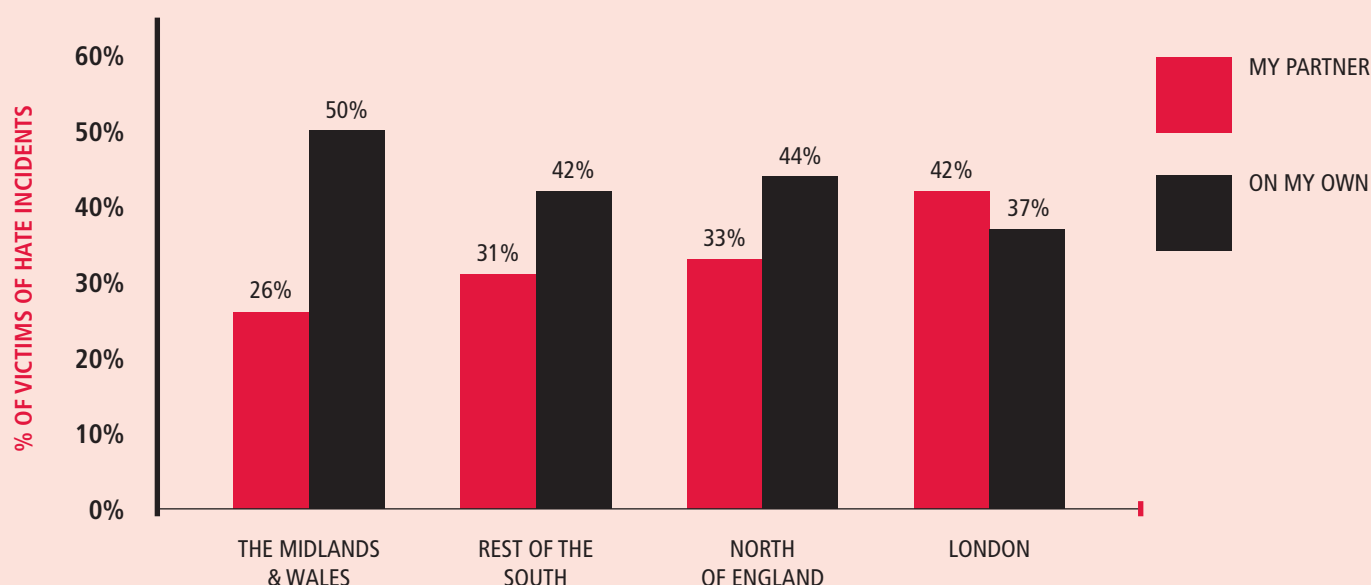
Lesbians are **over one and a half** times more likely than gay men to experience a hate incident when they are with their partner while **six per cent** of lesbians experienced a

hate incident when a child was present.

One in five lesbians were with gay and lesbian friends when they experienced a homophobic hate incident compared to **one in seven** gay men.

There are regional differences too. Lesbian and gay people in London are **one and a half times more likely** to be the victim of a hate incident when with their partners than lesbian and gay people in the Midlands and Wales.

WHO WERE YOU WITH AT THE TIME OF THE INCIDENT?



HOW THEY LOOK

Almost **one in five** victims of homophobic hate incidents say that being gay was identifiable to the perpetrator because of the way they looked or dressed. A **third** of lesbian and gay people alter their behaviour so they are not perceived as being gay specifically to prevent being a victim of crime.

Lesbians who experienced a hate incident are over **twice as likely** as gay men to say that they were identifiable to the perpetrator as gay because of how they looked. A **third** of lesbians who experienced a hate incident say being a lesbian was identifiable by the way they look.

WHY DO YOU THINK IT WAS A HATE INCIDENT?



➤ I have never suffered a homophobic incident, but then I don't 'look' gay. However, I have friends who do fit the stereotype better and they suffer from them regularly, particularly the men, even if they aren't actually gay. *Jenn, 36, London*

➤ I have experienced two minor incidents of verbal abuse based on a stranger thinking I was gay, but this was about five years ago. Since then I have never experienced any 'homophobic hate crimes', but that does not necessarily reflect on society as I am not out, am not 'on the scene' and don't 'look gay', whatever that means! *Ailsa, 26, South West*

➤ One thing which often seems to be overlooked is the vulnerability of lesbians (particularly those who look butch) to violence. My partner has been beaten up on several occasions in the last decade, needing prolonged hospital treatment on one occasion. Men seem to want to target her because of how she looks rather than me – I look stereotypically feminine. *Carol, 27, South East*

6

Reporting hate incidents

- **Seven in ten** victims of homophobic hate incidents reported them to no one.
- **Three in four** victims of homophobic hate crimes did not report them to the police.
- **Two in five** victims of homophobic hate incidents did not report them to anyone because they did not believe that what they had experienced was serious enough to report.
- **Over a third** did not report hate incidents to the police because they did not believe they could or would do anything about them.
- **One in six** lesbian and gay people reporting homophobic incidents did not report them as homophobic.
- **Fourteen per cent** of victims of homophobic hate crimes or incidents did not report them to anyone because they happen too frequently to report.

WHO DO THEY REPORT TO?

Three in four victims of homophobic hate crimes and incidents did not report them to the police, in comparison to three out of five of all crimes which were reported, according to the 2006/07 British Crime Survey.

Gay men who have experienced a hate incident are more likely to have reported it to the police than lesbians. Lesbians however are **twice as likely** as gay men to report incidents to their local council or to a third party reporting service or a lesbian, gay and bisexual organisation.

Young lesbian and gay people are more likely to experience a hate incident than older lesbian and gay people, yet an 18 to 24 year old is **two and a half** times less likely to report a hate incident to the police than a 45 to 50 year old.

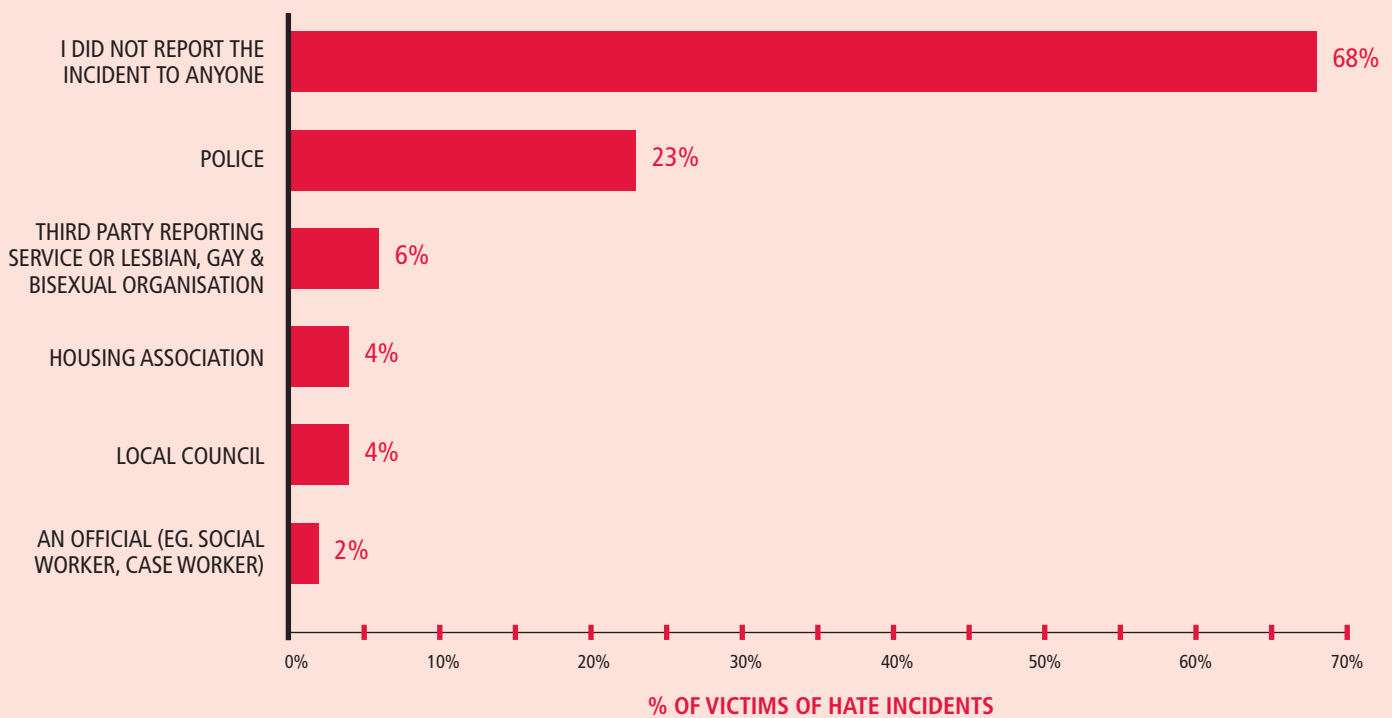
One in six lesbian and gay people reporting homophobic incidents did not report them as homophobic.

- **Even in the case of serious crimes, many will omit the fact that they believe it to be homophobically motivated because they are not sure whether the officers they are talking to are not homophobic themselves.** *Rachel, 20, South East*

➤ My partner was attacked before Christmas receiving a cut to the top of his head and a broken wrist. He told the nurse at the hospital he was drunk and fell over the night before. He was in truth struck twice with a cricket bat, once from behind on his head and the second hit his arm. He was not drunk! We had just left a gay club, he was on call so could not drink. The attacker called him a fag and queer. He was chased off by a taxi driver. My partner will not report it and most of us don't!

Unnamed

WHO DID YOU REPORT THE HATE INCIDENT TO?



REASONS FOR NOT REPORTING

Seven in ten victims of homophobic hate incidents did not report them to anyone. Even some of the most serious incidents, such as physical assault, are not reported.

Fourteen per cent of victims of homophobic hate crimes or incidents did not report them to anyone because they happen too frequently to report. **A fifth** of gay men and a **third** of lesbians who did not report homophobic hate incidents gave this reason.

Although **seven in ten** hate incidents involved homophobic abuse, **two in five** victims did not report hate incidents to anyone because they did not believe that what they had experienced was serious enough to report. **Three quarters** of 18 to 29 year olds who did not report incidents, compared

to just over half of 30 to 50 year olds, gave this reason.

One in five gay men and a **third** of lesbians who experienced hate incidents did not report them to the police because they did not think that they had been a victim of an offence. **Over a third** did not report hate incidents to the police because they did not believe they could or would do anything about them.

One in ten victims of hate incidents did not report them because they were concerned about homophobia and **seven per cent** did not report because they did not want to out themselves. Gay men are over **two and a half** times more likely not to report incidents than lesbians because they are afraid of outing themselves.

➤ **Safety and protection of my children is always my first priority so that is why I do not take further action against others that do 'petty' crimes against me.**

Esther, 41, Yorkshire & the Humber

➤ **To be honest, verbal abuse is just a part of life as a gay man these days. I just ignore it and move on. To report every incident would cause way too much work for the police and wouldn't actually do anything constructive.**

Daniel, 25, North East

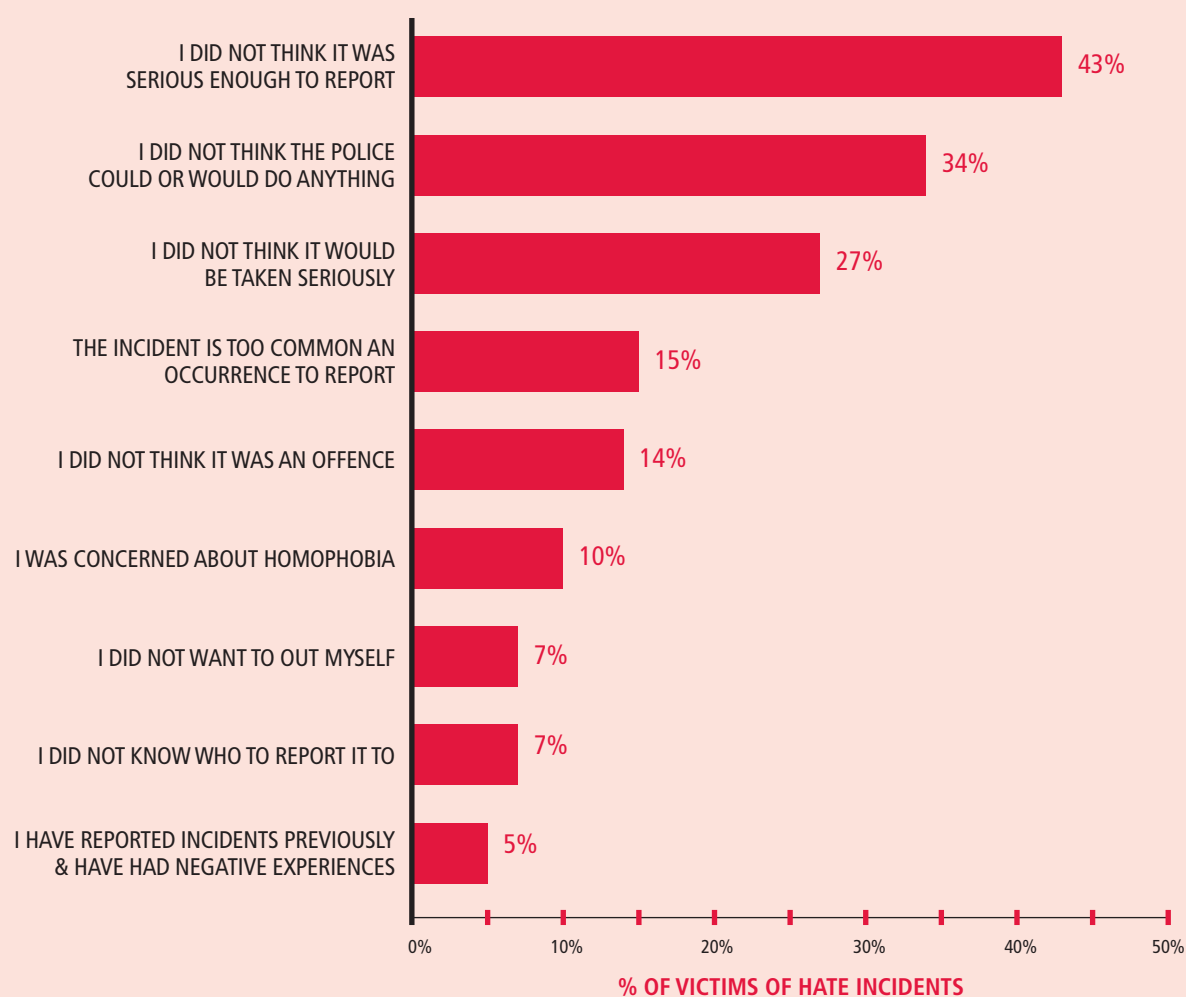
- A quarter of lesbian and gay people expect to be treated worse than other victims of crime by a police officer because of their sexual orientation if reporting a homophobic hate crime. One in five expect to be treated worse if they reported a non-homophobic crime to the police. *Serves You Right, YouGov for Stonewall (2008)*
- I would not feel happy reporting to all the police forces... some are still very homophobic I think. *Jon, 43, East Midlands*
- I have experienced consistent and repeated homophobia from the police forces in this country. *Charlotte, 21, South East*
- The local police are extremely poor on homophobia, perpetrators are excused because of their 'culture' or their 'religion'. The police themselves have been involved in homophobic actions against gay community venues and there have been unconfirmed reports of police officers on duty giving verbal abuse to people leaving gay venues. Very few lesbian, gay and bisexual people in my city remotely trust the police.
Ciarán, 35, West Midlands

Seven per cent of victims did not report because they did not know who to report hate incidents to. Lesbians are almost **one and a half times** more likely than gay men to not report hate incidents to anyone because they do not know who to report them to. Younger lesbian and gay people are more likely than 30 to 50 year olds to give this reason for not reporting hate incidents.

One in twenty victims did not report hate incidents because they were worried about being publicly outed as lesbian or gay in court proceedings. Gay men who do not report are **forty per cent more likely** than lesbians to give this reason for not reporting hate incidents. Lesbian and gay people aged 30 to 50 who do not report are **six times more likely** to think this than those under 30.

- Section 46 of the Youth and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 allows an application to be made, including by the CPS, for restrictions on the reporting of certain details of witnesses in the media that may lead to their identification. A section 46 direction can cover revealing the sexual orientation of the witness and can therefore provide a very important protection for people who are concerned about being outed in the media because they give evidence in a case involving a homophobic crime.

WHY DID YOU NOT REPORT THE HATE INCIDENT TO ANYONE?



7

Experiences of the police and the CPS

- Only **one per cent** of victims report that a homophobic hate crime or incident resulted in a conviction.
- **Half** of all hate incidents reported to the police resulted in no action being taken other than it being recorded.
- **Two thirds** of those reporting hate incidents were not referred to or informed about any support or advice services available to them.
- A **quarter** of victims who reported hate incidents to the police say they were not recorded as hate incidents or crimes.
- **One in seven** did not seek support because they do not think suitable advice or support was available to them.
- **One in ten** lesbian and gay people who did not seek support after experiencing a hate incident did not know where to get it.

INVESTIGATING INCIDENTS

Of the **one in four** victims who reported hate incidents to the police, only **six per cent** say that it resulted in a charge and only **five per cent** who reported an incident say it resulted in a conviction. Only **one per cent** of all victims report that the homophobic hate crime or incident eventually resulted in a conviction.

Half of victims who reported hate incidents to the police say

it resulted in no action being taken other than the incident being recorded. A **quarter** say the incident was not recorded as a hate incident or crime. Almost **three in ten** victims who reported hate incidents to the police do not know whether they were recorded as a homophobic hate incident or crime.

Almost **three in ten** victims who reported hate incidents to the police say they were investigated but no charges were brought.

- I know from talking to others they just don't bother as nothing is ever done. Considering the number of assaults that occur the numbers reported to police are extremely small by comparison to those where action is taken! *Martin, 40, London*
- Although I have not had too many problems myself, many of my friends have. These have ranged from harassment to physical assaults. When reported there was a tendency to blame them and their lifestyle rather than treating the crime itself. *Rebecca, 57, North West*

➤ There was no follow-up by the police to the incident in which I was shot in the head with an air gun. A week later I contacted my MP and within hours the police contacted me and made an appointment to return to the scene and investigate by which time there was no point.

Liam, 39, London

➤ The police in this area are homophobic and if you are assaulted they say you deserved it and take NO action. *Alec, 67, Yorkshire & the Humber*

➤ I do not feel that the police take homophobic hate crimes seriously (even though I work for them). Police forces now go through a paper exercise to prove they take hate crime seriously without asking members of the gay community or even gay members of staff for feedback. People who try to report homophobic crimes are generally treated as a joke. *Phillip, 28, Wales*

PROVIDING ADVICE AND SUPPORT

Victims of homophobic hate incidents also appear to receive little support or information from the police when deciding whether to press charges. **Two thirds** of those who reported hate incidents were not referred to or informed about any

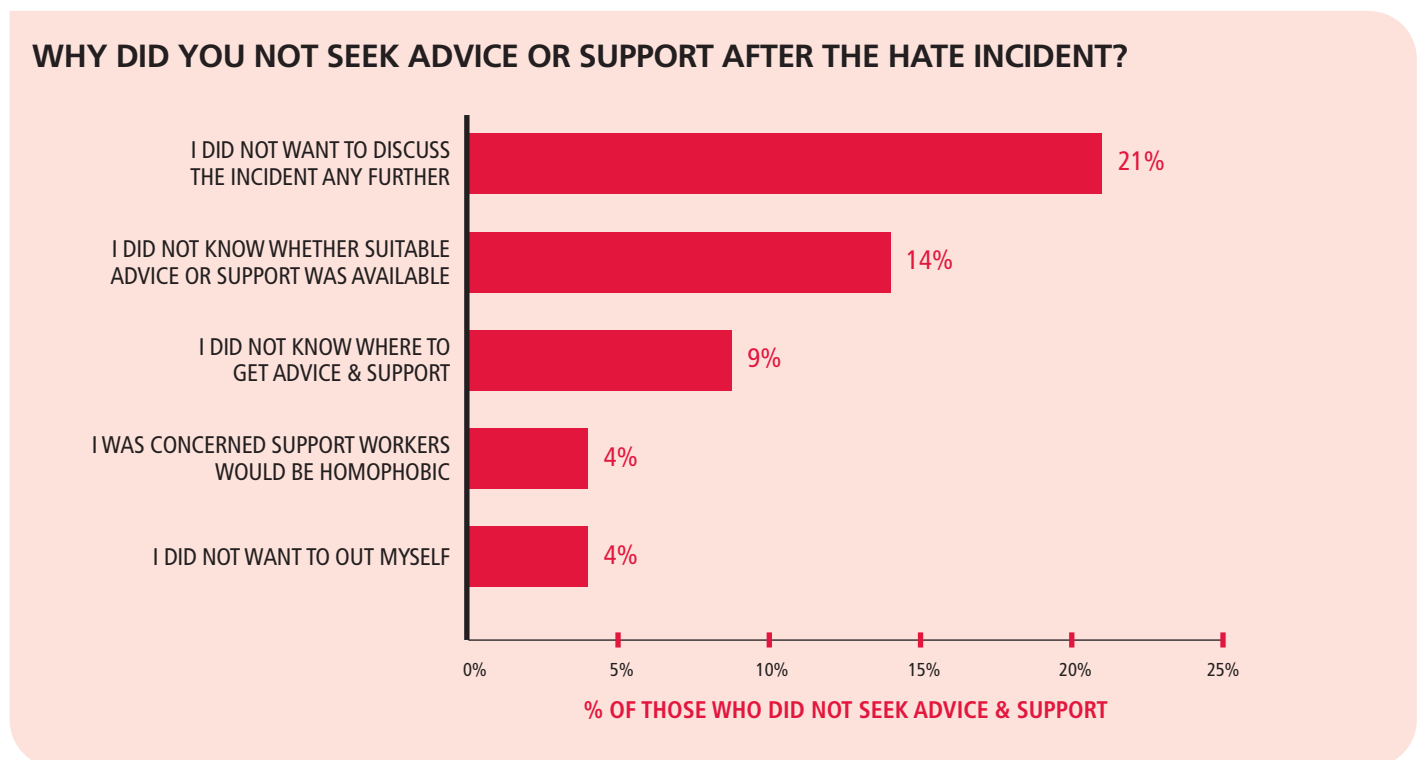
support or advice services available to them.

Nine in ten victims of homophobic hate incidents did not seek any form of advice or support after experiencing a

hate incident. Of the victims who did not seek support **one in ten** did not seek it because they did not know where to get it, while **one in seven** did not seek it because they did not think suitable advice or support was available to them. **Four per cent** of those who did not seek support did not

seek it because they were concerned about support workers being homophobic and a further **four per cent** did not seek support because they did not want to out themselves to support workers.

- The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime states that should they decide not to investigate a crime, the police must *'advise the victim of that fact as soon as possible and within five working days at the latest'*. The police must also ensure that all victims can access information about local support services and contact details for those services no later than five working days after an allegation of a crime is made.
- I feel the policing issue is very important – the negative response one generally gets when mentioning that a crime is homophobically motivated is depressing and doesn't inspire you to take a matter further. *Adam, 47, London*
- Because of the nature of this kind of crime very few individuals/organisations actually do support the victim, which includes a high proportion of the police mainly due to negative stereotyping and lack of empathy. *Tony, 46, Yorkshire & the Humber*



Younger people are more vulnerable to being the victim of a hate incident but are less likely to seek advice and support afterwards. Victims between the ages of 45 and 54 are

almost **three and a half times more likely** as those aged 18 to 24 to seek support after a hate incident.

BEING GAY-FRIENDLY

A number of lesbian and gay people indicate that a police force's reputation, not just in tackling homophobic hate crime, but also as a gay-friendly employer, has a positive

impact on whether they report, or would report, homophobic hate incidents to the police.

- Lothian and Borders Police have recently received an award for their attitude to the gay community. *Ted, 75, Scotland*
- The police in my area (Hampshire) deal with homophobic crime very strongly and robustly. I have full confidence in them should I report an offence of this nature. *Graham, 30, South East*
- I am secretary of my local gay group and we have excellent relationships with the police who regularly come to talk to us and update us on any relevant issues. *Joseph, 67, South West*
- South Wales Police as an organisation tends to be very good with homophobic hate crime. *Angela, 33, Wales*

8

The impact of hate incidents

- **Seven in ten** lesbian and gay people think they are at greater risk of being insulted or harassed than heterosexuals.
- Almost **half** (46 per cent) of lesbian and gay people think they are more at risk of being physically assaulted than a heterosexual.
- **Two in five** lesbian and gay people say they are worried about being a victim of crime.
- A **third** of lesbian and gay people alter their behaviour so they are not perceived as being gay specifically to prevent being a victim of crime.
- Lesbian and gay people in London are over **one and half times** more likely to alter their behaviour than gay and lesbian people in the South West and Wales.
- **One in ten** lesbian and gay people say that being a victim of crime is their biggest worry.

➤ You have to become immune to it, because how would you find emotional reserves to get angry or upset each and every time it happens. It ought to be changed, but I can't imagine how it can be. *Chris, 22, London*

WORRIES ABOUT CRIME

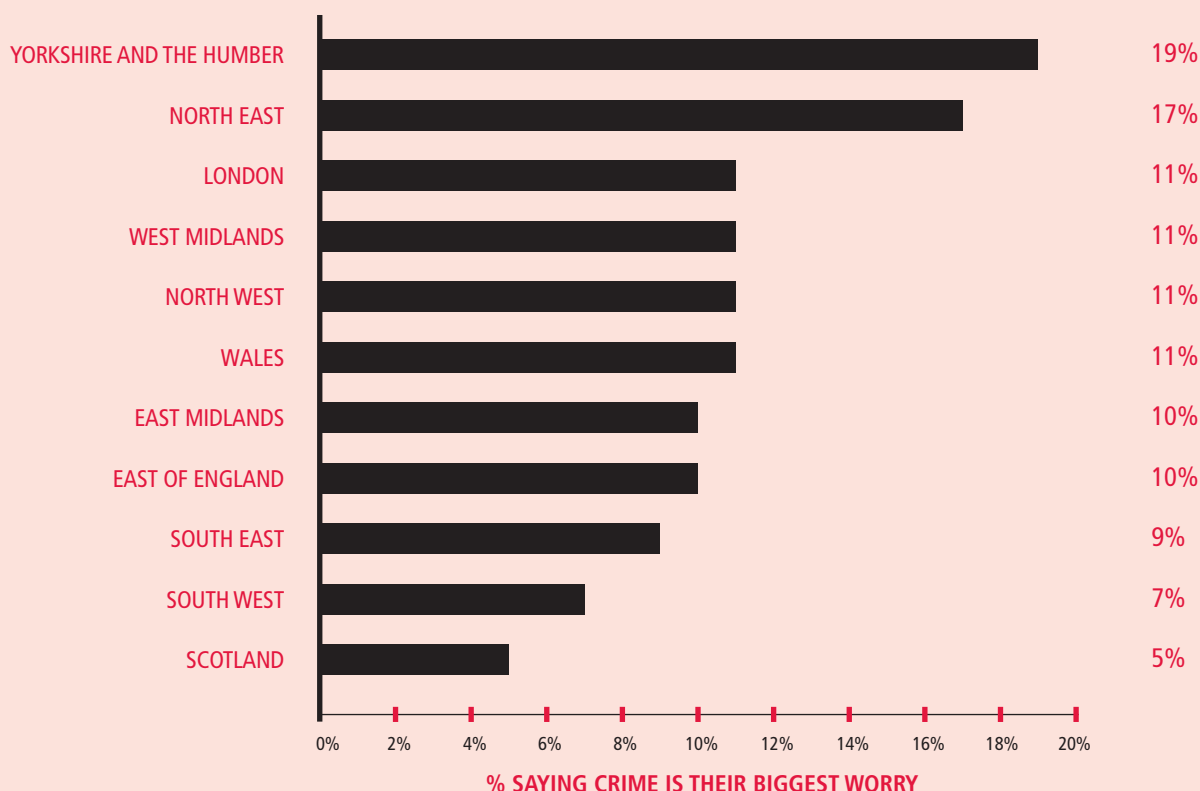
Nearly **two in five** lesbian and gay people say they are worried about being a victim of crime in general and **one in ten** say that being a victim of crime is their biggest worry, above being ill or having financial debts.

Gay men are almost **twice as likely** as lesbians to say being a victim of crime is their principal worry. There are regional differences, with lesbian and gay people in Yorkshire & the Humber **four times more likely** than

those in Scotland to say that crime is their biggest worry.

Three out of ten lesbian and gay people say that they are worried about being insulted or harassed. Similar numbers are worried about being a victim of physical assault and being threatened with violence. **One in six** say they are worried about being a victim of unwanted sexual contact. Lesbians are **three times more likely** to be worried about being a victim of unwanted sexual contact than gay men.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST WORRIED ABOUT?



BEING AT RISK OF CRIME

Seven in ten lesbian and gay people think they are at greater risk of being insulted or harassed than heterosexuals. **Three in four** 18 to 24 year olds think they are more at risk for being gay, compared to under **three in five** lesbian and gay people over 55.

Almost **half** (46 per cent) of lesbian and gay people think they are at more risk of being physically assaulted or

threatened with violence than a heterosexual, with gay men and those under 25 again feeling more at risk than lesbians and those over 55.

Despite lesbians being almost **20 per cent more likely** to have been the victim of homophobic hate incidents, many lesbians wrongly believe they are at less risk than gay men.

➤ Unfortunately I think that when it is known that someone is gay/lesbian this does put them at a higher risk. I have experienced this myself when I lived in a different area and I was seeing a girl at the time and some louts saw us walking home together. This was not in terms of very serious crimes but shouting, harassment and throwing stones, apples, etc at us or any visitors to my house. *Lydia, 25, Wales*

➤ It is also my experience that gay men are more likely to be targeted than gay women. *Janita, 27, East of England*

- I think as a lesbian I have a much easier time than many gay men get. I personally don't see any difference between gay men or women, however society has been much more liberal in regards to its attitude towards lesbians. It is time their feelings towards gay men caught up. *Janet, 21, Scotland*
- In my experience it is mostly gay men who suffer the brunt of homophobic crime, with butch women coming a far second. *Unnamed*
- These crimes seem to be more directed towards gay males rather than gay females. *Kath, 25, Scotland*

ALTERING BEHAVIOUR AND CRIME PREVENTION

- If I place myself in a position where I am likely to suffer for my sexual orientation, then that's my own fault for being there. *Simon, 65, South West*

A **third** of lesbian and gay people alter their behaviour so they are not perceived as being gay specifically to prevent being a victim of crime. This includes not showing affection for their partners in public, dressing differently and avoiding areas where they could be identified as lesbian or gay. Gay

men and lesbians are **thirty per cent** more likely to alter their behaviour than bisexuals. White lesbian and gay people are **twenty five per cent** more likely than black and minority ethnic people to alter their behaviour.

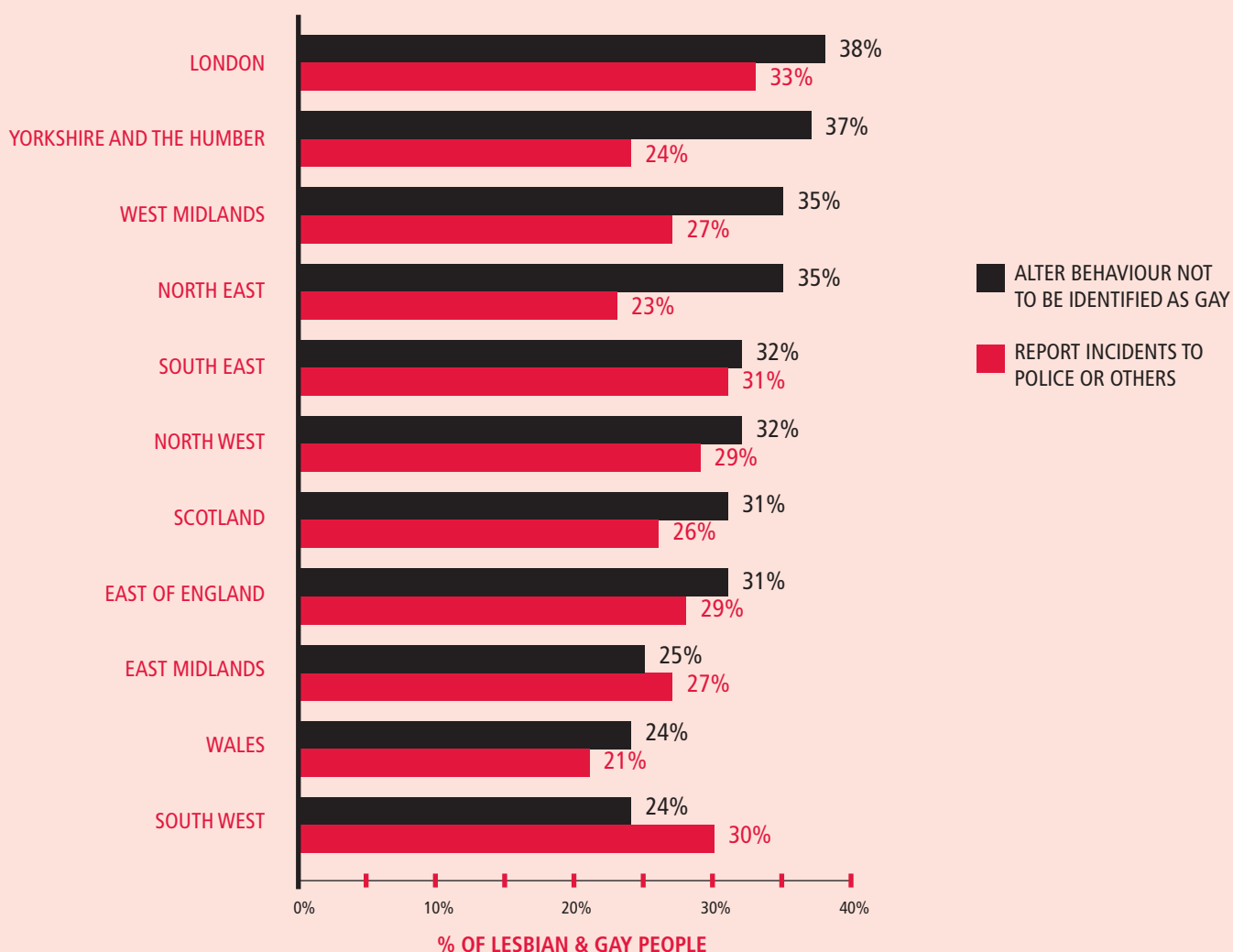
- I keep a low profile so am less likely to experience these hate crimes, but this is at great personal expense. *Joanna, 57, London*
- I think most attacks can be avoided by a change in behaviour, however this is not the solution as people in same sex relationships should be able to act and behave in public as heterosexuals do. *Rosalyn, 39, South East*
- I had become complacent and thought times had moved on! The threat of violence was almost astonishing to me! I could hardly believe someone could be moved to violence simply by seeing two men hold hands! *Russell, 34, London*
- I am the one who feels ashamed because the inference is that they abused me in this way because of my body language or even the way in which I looked at them prior to the verbal abuse. *Patrick, 46, South West*

- We censor our behaviour so much. If I behaved as I would like to – holding hands with my husband in public etc, then things would be very different! *Zaheer, 44, South East*
- Even in London, I would feel uncomfortable holding hands with my boyfriend, which I think is a real shame. *Mark, 27, London*
- I am aware of incidences of violence directed against gays and lesbians, but feel that this type of violence is rarer in London where I live than it might be in provincial towns and cities with less diversity. *Matt, 42, London*

Lesbian and gay people in London are over **one and half** times more likely to alter their behaviour than gay and lesbian people in the South West and Wales.

In all but two regions of Britain, the East Midlands and the South West, lesbian and gay people are more likely to alter their behaviour to prevent being the victim of a crime, than to report incidents to the police.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO AVOID BEING THE VICTIM OF A CRIME?



9

Recommendations

1. Encourage lesbian and gay people to report hate incidents

- Police forces should ensure that lesbian and gay people have a clear understanding that they can report homophobic hate crimes and incidents directly to them and all their staff have been adequately trained to deal with them.
- All police officers should be trained to recognise homophobic hate incidents (even if the victim has not identified them) and ask open questions to encourage lesbian and gay people to tell them what has happened.
- Police forces should ensure that all officers understand that it is not the fault of lesbian and gay people if they experience a hate crime or incident.

2. Educate and inform lesbian and gay people about homophobic hate incidents

- Police and local Community Safety Partnerships should initiate campaigns to educate local lesbian and gay communities as to what constitutes a homophobic hate crime, why they should be reported and what the police can do and have done to tackle them.
- Police and local Community Safety Partnerships should provide a means for lesbian and gay people to report hate incidents such as verbal abuse, even if they do not result in conviction, to help them identify perpetrators of homophobic hate incidents and crimes.
- Police and local Community Safety Partnerships should have dedicated LGB liaison officers with responsibility to inform and educate the local lesbian and gay community about homophobic hate crimes and incidents.

3. Improve investigation and conviction rates

- Police should investigate all homophobic hate crimes reported to them.
- In deciding whether to investigate cases of homophobic hate crime or incidents, and in deciding whether to charge individuals in cases, police and the Crown Prosecution Service should explain to lesbian and gay people why a case has not been taken to court.
- The criminal justice system should publicise successful cases so that lesbian and gay people can better understand what hate crimes are.

4. Improve recording mechanisms

- The British Crime Survey should ask participants about homophobic hate crime and incidents to inform and support the work of police forces and the criminal justice system to tackle and prosecute the perpetrators of homophobic hate crimes and incidents.
- Police should improve the recording of homophobic hate crime by ensuring that all officers are trained to understand and identify when a hate crime has occurred or is being reported.
- Police should inform all lesbian and gay people who report a homophobic incident or crime whether it is being recorded as such and why. Whenever the police record incidents they suspect as being potentially homophobic, even when the victim has not identified it themselves, the police should also inform the victim that they are doing so, and why.

5. Tackle homophobic bullying in schools

- Schools should tackle homophobic bullying and send a clear message to all pupils that homophobia and homophobic bullying is unacceptable.
- Police and local Community Safety Partnerships should work with schools and young people to help educate them that homophobic bullying is unacceptable.
- Police and local Community Safety Partnerships should work with local lesbian and gay youth groups to help inform young lesbian and gay people as to what constitutes a hate crime and incident, why the police take them seriously and how young people can report them.

6. Provide support and information to victims of hate crime and incidents

- Police should ensure that everyone who reports homophobic hate incidents is told whether it will be investigated or if it is just being recorded.
- Police and the CPS should ensure that victims of hate crimes and incidents are kept informed about the status of their case.
- Police should ensure that everyone who reports a hate incident is referred to advice and support services and, where available, specific homophobic hate crime support services.

7. Provide lesbian and family friendly initiatives

- Police and local Community Safety Partnerships need to do more to engage lesbians and gay people with families to encourage them to report hate incidents. They need to do this by targeting the lesbian community through means other than gay venues such as GP surgeries, local authorities and schools.
- Lesbians should be offered specific crime prevention advice and support regarding how to prevent being a victim of crime without having to alter the way they look or any behaviour which may identify them as lesbian.
- The partners and children of victims of homophobic hate crimes should also be offered support and advice suitable to their needs as they are often witness to or victims of homophobic hate crimes or incidents themselves.
- Local authorities and housing providers should develop and enforce rigorous schemes to tackle homophobia in local communities, particularly against lesbians. Local authorities should consider taking more action, such as anti-social behaviour orders, to deter members of communities committing homophobic hate crimes and incidents.

8. Encourage heterosexuals to report homophobic hate crimes and incidents

- Police and local Community Safety Partnerships should publicise to the whole community the seriousness of homophobic hate crimes and incidents and the importance of reporting any incidents people may witness.
- Police and local Community Safety Partnership partners should ensure that all staff are trained to not assume that someone reporting a homophobic hate incident, as a victim or a witness, is lesbian or gay.

9. Work with employers

- Employers should have a rigorous and enforceable zero-tolerance policy on homophobic bullying in the workplace.
- Employers should establish clear reporting systems for incidents of bullying and harassment in the workplace.
- Police and local Community Safety Partnerships should work with employers to help them identify when homophobic bullying and harassment may constitute a hate crime and employers must report any incidents of homophobic bullying and harassment to the police which they suspect may constitute a hate crime.

10. Be a good employer

- Police forces should ensure that they not only comply with the law outlawing discrimination in employment, but take positive steps to promote equality and diversity in the workplace.
- Police forces should join Stonewall's Diversity Champions scheme to access advice and support on becoming a gay-friendly employer and to share knowledge and experiences with the 22 police forces across Britain which are already members of the scheme.
- Police forces should actively recruit staff from the lesbian and gay community and take creative steps to encourage lesbian and gay people to join their local force.

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Methodology

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. The total sample size was 1,721 lesbian, gay and bisexual adults from across Britain. Fieldwork was undertaken between 29 February and 4 March 2008. The survey was conducted using an online interview administered to members of the YouGov plc GB panel of 185,000 individuals who have agreed to take part in surveys. Selected panellists who had indicated they are lesbian, gay or bisexual, were contacted by email inviting them to take part in the survey and providing a link to the survey. The resulting data was analysed and presented by Stonewall. Respondents who answered 'do not know' to questions were excluded from analysis unless statistically significant. Some figures are presented in summary form rather than percentages. Data from Scotland has been included in the analysis, but the recommendations only apply to England and Wales. Full statistics for references in the report are available on request.

➤ I have been called a pervert, a paedophile, dyke. It was reported to the police and the council but nothing was done for 15 months. My life was made a living hell.

Gillian, 36, North East

➤ I could hardly believe someone could be moved to violence simply by seeing two men hold hands!

Russell, 34, London