

# LGBTQ+ HATE CRIME REPORT 2024

PRODUCED BY

THE   
DIVERSITY TRUST  
INFLUENCING SOCIAL CHANGE



# BACKGROUND

As part of National Hate Crime Awareness Week 2024, The Diversity Trust wanted to capture the voices of the LGBTQ+ community in the South West of England.

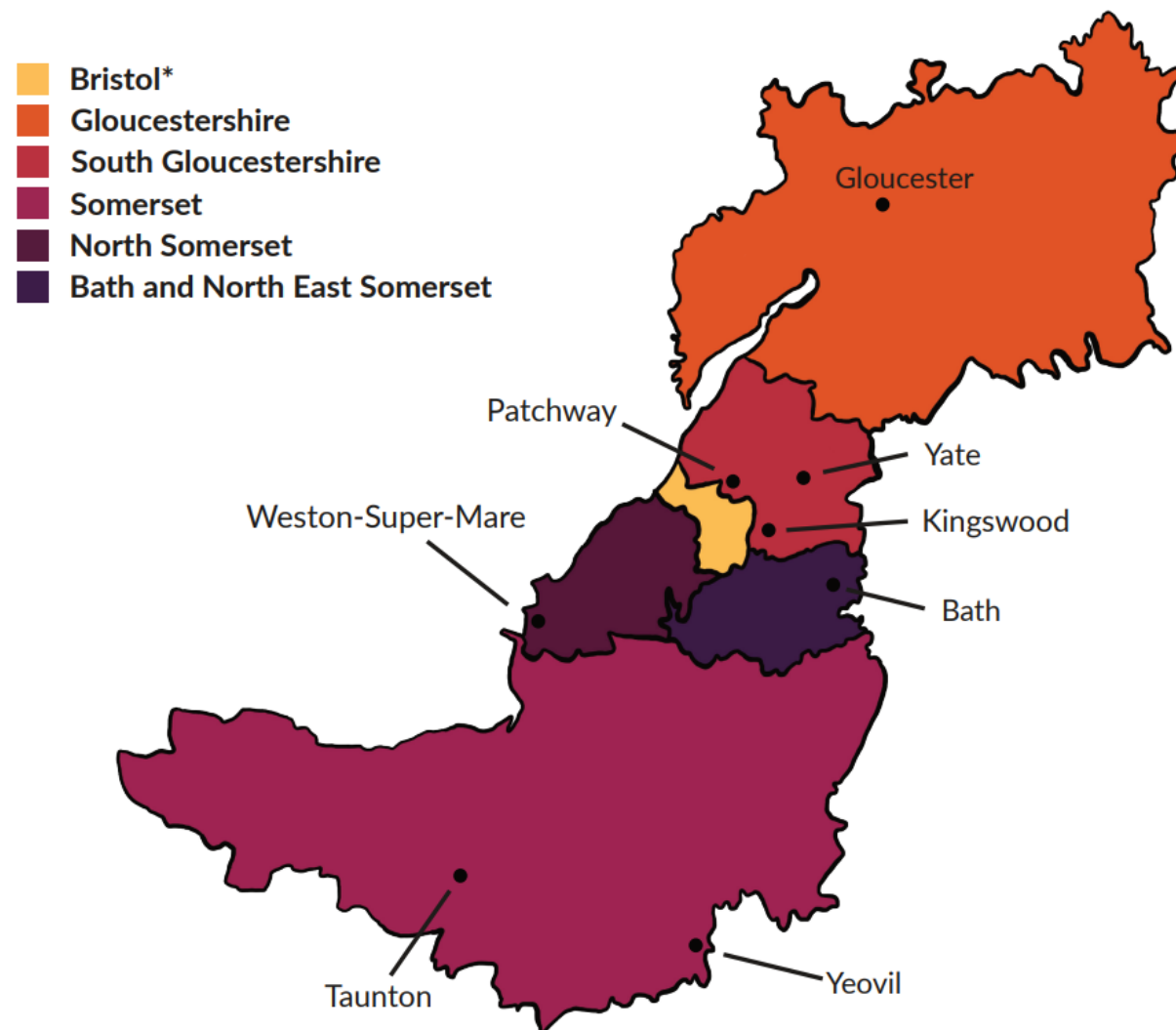
The aim of this project is to identify what barriers exist for LGBTQ+ people when it comes to reporting a hate crime or accessing additional support following an incident. Through hosting a series of in-person workshops, online surveys and anonymous feedback boxes, the Trust aimed to gather tangible evidence - and therefore a collective voice - as to what needs to change to improve the LGBTQ+ experience when it comes to reporting hate crimes.

At The Diversity Trust our mission is to influence social change to create a fairer and safer society. In March this year we announced a new grant award from the National Lottery Community Fund which is

enabling us to provide voice and representation to the LGBTQ+ communities across the Avon & Somerset and Gloucestershire regions.

During the period of October 14 - 19, the Diversity Trust hosted a series of workshops across the regions in Bath, Weston-Super-Mare, Yeovil, Yate and Wincanton to engage with local LGBTQ+ communities. Alongside these workshops there was an online survey which was sent out to the wider community in a bid to capture as many voices as possible.

It is our mission to help amplify the voices of LGBTQ+ people in our region and as such we are hoping that by presenting these findings, it will open up conversations with support services, local authorities, commissioners and funders around giving better opportunities and support for LGBTQ+ people.



# WHY THE NEED FOR THIS REPORT

Historically, it has been well documented how underreported LGBTQ+ hate crimes are and that national statistics are not a true reflection of the incidents which are taking place.

Within the LGBTQ+ community there is still a sense that being a victim is "part of life", and that people don't report incidents because "nothing will happen / change".

In the reporting period of April 2023 - March 2024 the Crime Survey for England and Wales showed there were 22,839 reports of hate crimes based on a person's sexual orientation and 4,780 transgender-based hate crimes.

Even though these figures are a slight decrease compared to previous years (sexual orientation fell by 8% and transgender incidents dropped by 2%), we know the lasting impact these crimes have on LGBTQ+ people, and their already broken trust in the police and support systems.

Research carried out by the national LGBTQ+ charity Galop found that only 1 in 8 LGBTQ+ people reported their experiences of hate crime to the police, with figures from the reporting app Zoteria showing that verbal abuse was the most common type of hate crime LGBTQ+ people experienced.

Statistics gathered from Avon & Somerset Constabulary showed between July 2023 - July

2024, they had 952 LGBTQ+ hate crimes reported to them, with 52.9% of these reports being violence against a person and 40.3% being public order offences.

**BETWEEN APRIL 2023 - MARCH 2024  
22,89 SEXUAL ORIENTATION HATE  
CRIMES WERE REPORTED AND 4,780  
WERE TRANSGENDER-BASED HATE  
CRIMES**

## WHAT WE ASKED:

- **WHAT BARRIERS STAND IN THE WAY OF REPORTING ?**
- **WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOU FACE IN ACCESSING SUPPORT?**
- **WHAT WOULD GIVE YOU MORE CONFIDENCE IN REPORTING HATE CRIME ?**
- **WHAT NEEDS IMPROVING IN REPORTING SERVICES?**

# HOW WE COLLECTED THE DATA



As stated above, the Trust realises the information that is represented in this report is just a small proportion of the national picture.

The work we are carrying out through the National Lottery Community Fund means that our focus is on the South West of England, and as such this is where we collected the vast majority of our data.

In an attempt to represent as much of the LGBTQ+ community as possible with the most possible information and data, we used a variety of different research methods in a bid to get as much information as we could.

To do this, we composed an online survey which was sent out to people via our social media platforms and our own LGBTQ+ Networks, which we have set up throughout the Avon, Somerset and Gloucestershire regions.

Even though this was mainly targeted at people who live in the aforementioned areas, we left the online survey open to all as we did not want to exclude other people's views and experiences.

Alongside the online survey we hosted a series of in-person workshops across the Avon & Somerset region, this again was in a bid to capture voices of people who live in different

areas as they will potentially have different experiences / understanding of hate crimes.

We held these events in Yate, Bath, Weston-Super-Mare, Yeovil and Wincanton. At the workshops, we split people into groups and asked them to discuss the four main questions that we wanted to focus on and then feedback to the wider group.

At the workshops, we also had anonymous answer boxes for those people who didn't feel confident to talk about their experiences in front of other people so their views could still be capture as part of the report.

We heard from 58 people during the period of October 13 - October 19 2024.

As well as using our own research, this report will make reference to the latest figures released by the Crime Survey for England & Wales (CSEW) which were published on October 10, 2024 - a few days before Hate Crime Awareness Week - as well as data provided by Avon & Somerset Constabulary from July 2023 - July 2024.

These statistics will help give this report a more national comparison and we can compare how the research we undertook compares to the national picture.



# OUR FINDINGS

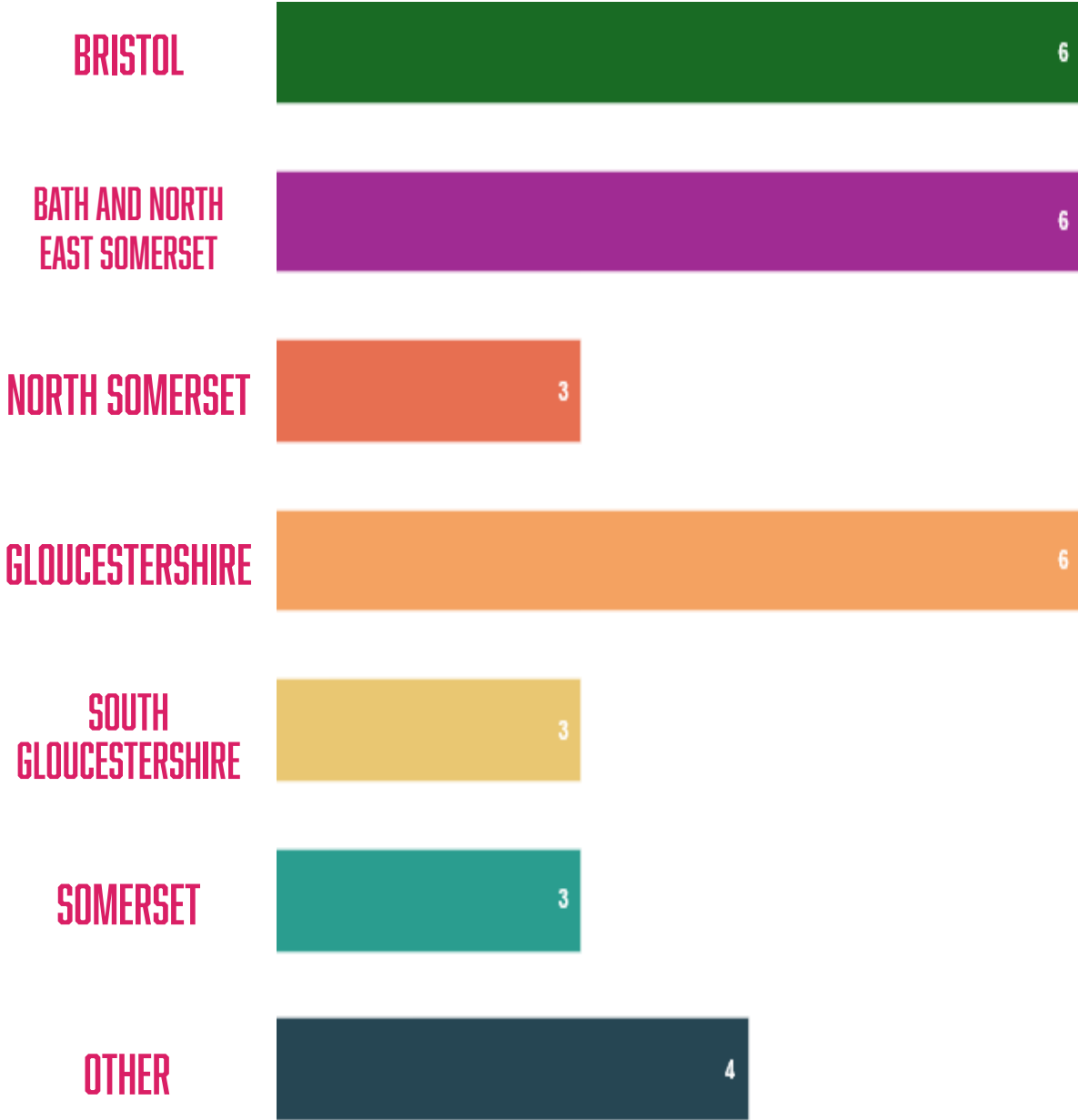
As well as capturing the voices and experiences of the people we spoke to, we also wanted to get a better understanding of the demographic of the people who responded to the workshops and survey we put out.

From a combination of the online survey and workshops we managed to get a really good cross section of representation from the people who responded. With no one clear area across the South West being represented more than the others. We had an even split of 19% of people coming from

Bristol, Gloucestershire and Bath & North East Somerset.

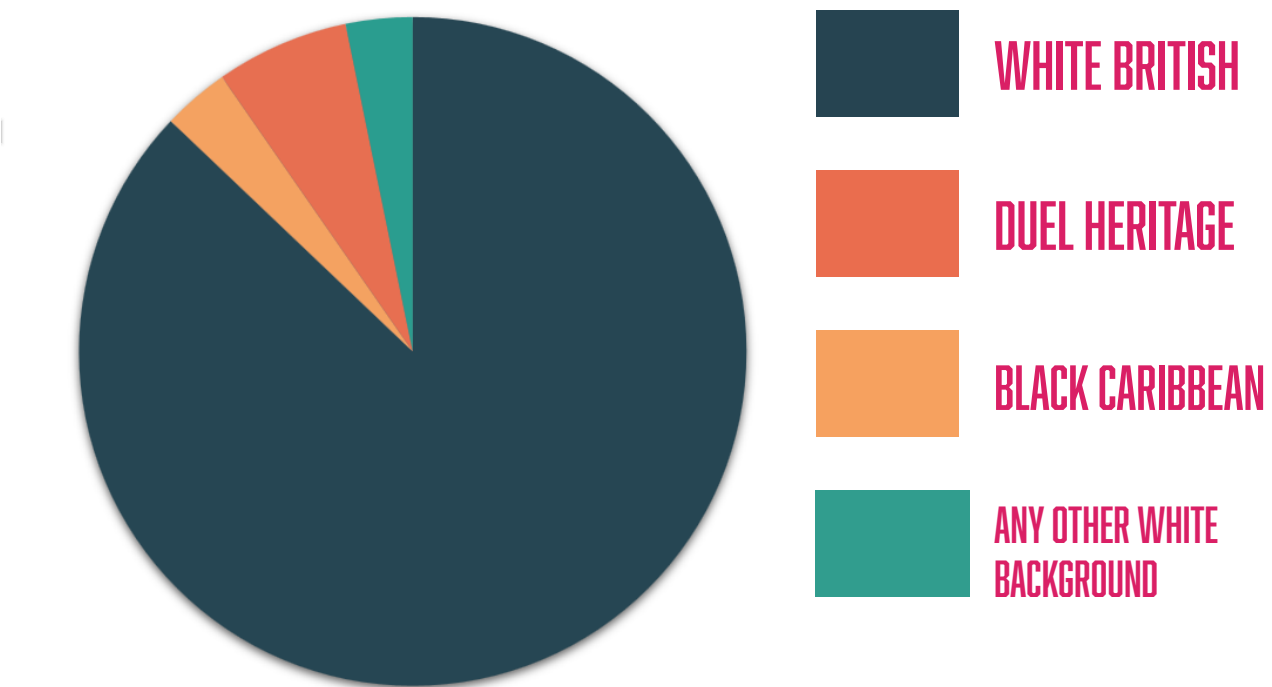
However, the majority of people who took part in the survey were White British, with 87% saying they were of White British ethnicity. This shows that there is still a gap when it comes to connecting with marginalised communities and we are still not getting a true reflection of the intersectional experiences surrounding LGBTQ+ hate crimes which are being reported.

## REGION





# ETHNICITY



We also found that most people who responded to both our survey and attended the workshops were over the age of 25, with 38% of respondents falling into the age bracket of 25-24, and 19% were aged between 35-44 and 16% were aged 18-24.

Out of the responses that we received to the online survey, 22% identified themselves as non-binary, queer or gender fluid, with 32% saying they self-identified as female / woman and 12% saying they identified as transgender.

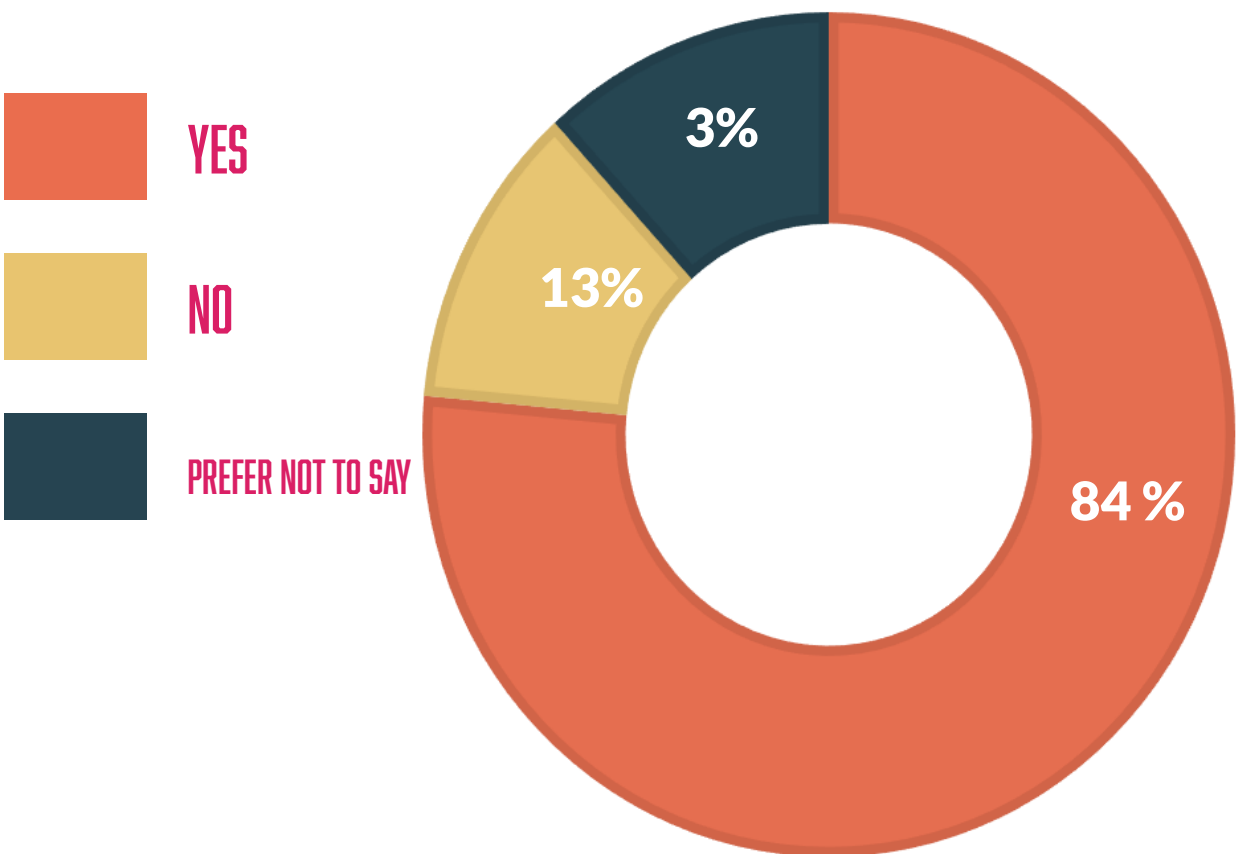
When it came to people's sexual orientation, 48% said they identified as either gay or lesbian, with 16% saying they are Queer or questioning.

By showing the different types of demographics we were able to reach through this work, it gives a good indication of the voices we were able to capture and represent as part of this report.

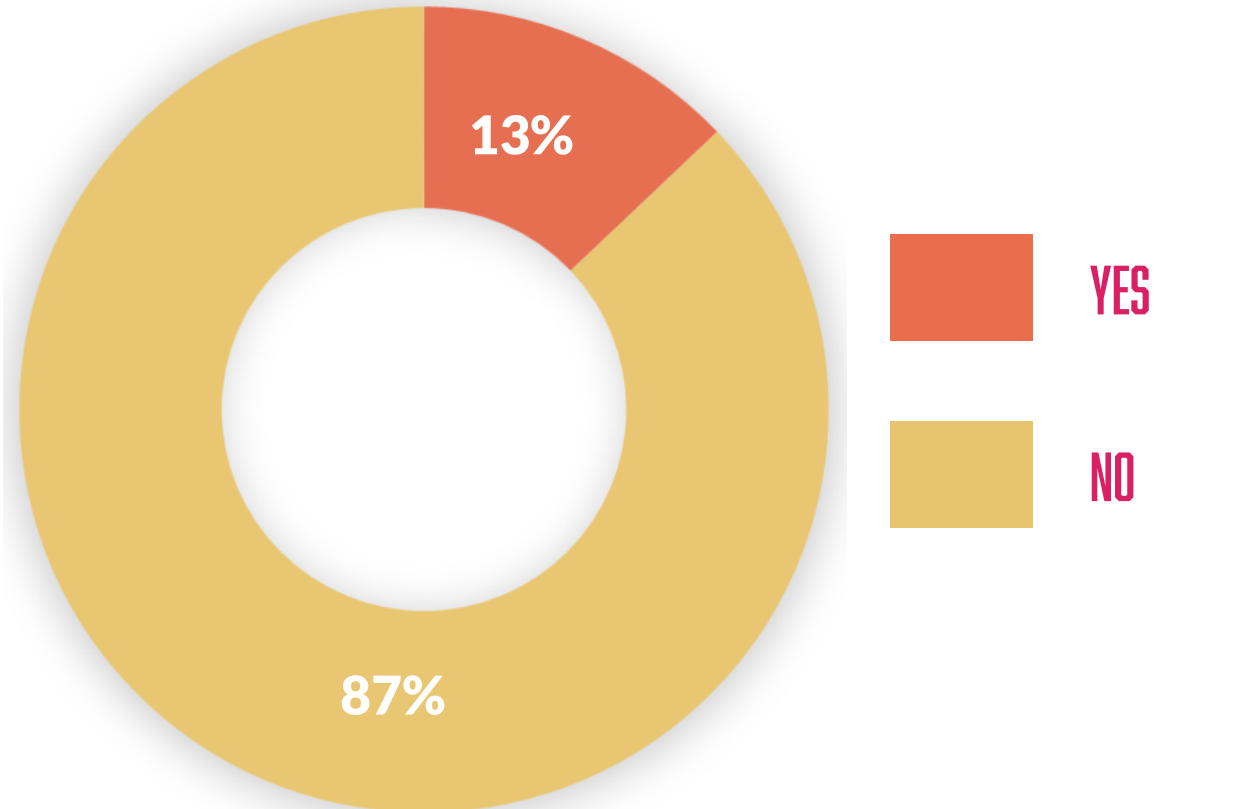
# AGE



# PERCENTAGE OF HATE CRIME VICTIMS



# PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE WHO REPORTED



# BARRIERS TO REPORTING

According to statistics released by CSEW in the year ending March 2024, there had been a decrease of 5% in the overall hate crimes which had been reported. However, there were still 140,561 hate crimes reported in this period. Of these 22,839 were reports of hate crime against someone's sexual orientation and 4,780 were transgender based hate crimes.

These figures show an 8% decrease in reports for sexual orientation and a 2% drop for transgender hate crimes, however, we know from history that reports of LGBTQ+ hate crimes are always low and are never a true reflection of the real number of incidents that occur.

This could be for a variety of different reasons, such as lack of faith in statutory bodies, a feeling of nothing will be done or that it is "just part of people's everyday lives".

Of the people who responded to our online survey, 83% said that they had been a victim of a hate crime, and the most common ways this manifested was either through verbal abuse (77%) or online abuse (32%).

However, when it came to reporting these incidents to the police, 87% of people who said they had been a victim of a hate crime added that they did not report these incidents to the police.

83 PER CENT OF  
RESPONDENTS TO OUR  
SURVEY SAID THEY HAD  
BEEN A VICTIM OF AN  
LGBTQ+ HATE CRIME

A lot of this is down to the fact that victims rarely see tangible outcomes, with Avon & Somerset Constabulary statistics showing that out of the 952 specific LGBTQ+ hate crimes reported to them, only 12% of suspects received a formal outcome and with only 8% of cases having a charge or court summons.

During our in-person workshops we wanted the attendees to think about what stops them reporting incidents to the police and why is the uptake of pursuing police action so low.

Some of the common themes which came out across the five workshops that The Diversity Trust held were: there was a lack of understanding of the process and that police officers never really explained what would happen once a report is made; that

41 PER CENT OF PEOPLE SAID THEY  
WOULD NOT REPORT A HATE CRIME  
FOR FEAR OF REPERCUSSIONS OR  
BECAUSE THEY FELT LIKE THEY  
WOULD NOT BE BELIEVED

their reports would not be taken seriously; and there was fear of further repercussions or that people would be "outed" if they reported.

From our research, a lack of faith in the police and criminal justice system were the main reasons why people from the LGBTQ+ did not report incidents of hate crime (67% and 74% respectively). And in line with what people had said at the workshops, 41% of people said they would not report a hate crime for fear of further repercussions or because they felt like they would not be believed..

AT THE END OF MARCH 2024,  
22,839 SEXUAL ORIENTATION HATE  
CRIMES AND 4,780 TRANSGENDER  
HATE CRIMES WERE RECORDED IN  
AVON AND SOMERSET

# VOICE OF THE COMMUNITY

We also asked people, where they felt comfortable, to share why they did not report their incidents to the police. Here are some of the responses that we received:

"As an asexual, my sexual orientation isn't legally recognised e.g. the Equality Act defines sexual orientation in a way that asexuality is not considered a 'protected characteristic'. My understanding is therefore that what I've experienced isn't legally considered a crime so nothing can be done about it."

"Hate crimes against marginalised communities online are so commonplace it feels like it won't be taken seriously."

"Didn't see the benefits of reporting, it would have dragged out the issue for longer when I wanted to move past it. I had been drinking so I would have been worried about being judged or not believed."

"Many of my queer friends who went to the police didn't get any help from the police and me neither."

"Too anxious. Didn't think they'd care. Didn't see that any good would come of it. A lot of police officers used to be the 'school bullies' so felt like they would probably 'agree' with the people who had hate crimed me."

"MANY OF MY QUEER  
FRIENDS WHO WENT TO  
THE POLICE DIDN'T GET  
ANY HELP FROM THE  
POLICE AND ME  
NEITHER"

- NON-BINARY PERSON

"On occasion I get heckled by people passing by on the street with slurs or jabs. It's not remarkably often, and I'm not even sure if it's severe enough to meet the legal bounds for a hate crime, but it does affect me."

"TOO ANXIOUS.  
DIDN'T THINK THEY'D  
CARE. DIDN'T SEE  
THAT ANY GOOD  
WOULD COME OF IT"  
- GAY MAN

The majority of people who gave a response matched the overall feeling that if they were to report a hate crime, it would not be taken seriously, or they would be judged by the police.

However, despite the lack of faith in the police and the criminal justice system, those people who did report their incidents to the police seemed to have a positive experience.

These comments centred around the conduct of the officer who was dealing with the case rather than the wider systemic trust issues that many who identify as LGBTQ+ link to the police.

One person said: "Community Police Officers came to our house to talk to us, then followed up by calling at neighbours' houses who may have been perpetrators."

There were still negative interactions with police officers when reports were made, and this has then actually had a further impact on the person who has experienced a hate crime.

One participant told the Trust "The police were quite unhelpful and not very caring for my well-being and fairly dismissive," this led to this person becoming unwell and the whole ordeal left them feeling very isolated and hopeless.

From the information the Trust has been able to gather, many of the barriers to reporting lie in the lack of faith in the police and the criminal justice system, and that victims not feeling like there will be any positive outcomes.

We will go into what people said would give them more confidence in reporting hate crimes later in this report. However, there was one suggestion at one of the in-person sessions which is worth noting.

A group at one of the sessions suggested that people who committed the hate crime should face more consequences to their actions and that they would have to complete a course, similar to a speed awareness course, around educating themselves on LGBTQ+ issues or face a financial penalty.

It also indicates that there is still a lot of mistrust when it comes to statutory services, especially the police, and that there needs to be some major bridge building until we are likely to see tangible changes.

**“MYSELF AND MY PARTNER NOW ARE WARY OF HOLDING HANDS AND BEING VISIBLY OUT IN PUBLIC FOR FEAR OF FURTHER HATE CRIMES OCCURRING.”**  
- TRANS MASCULINE PERSON

One of the easiest outcomes which could change an experience of reporting a hate crime for people would be a better understanding of the process and what happens once a report is made. It is well documented how busy and understaffed the police are.

It is well documented how busy and understaffed the police is, however, if there is more awareness around the steps in the reporting process as well as what an investigation into a hate crime looks like, then this could potentially give people a better understanding and more confidence to report.

It is important to note that, whilst we have seen a drop nationally in LGBTQ+ hate crimes, this doesn't mean that the actual number of incidents have gone down. If we



can increase the confidence in hate crime reporting then we would be able to give an accurate reflection of what the LGBTQ+ community experiences, and as a result more resources could be provided to prevent these incidents in the first place by educating people more generally.

**“I HAVE FALLEN IN ON MYSELF AND BECOME DEPRESSED AND PUT ON A LOT OF WEIGHT.”**  
- GENDER FLUID PERSON, FROM GLOUCESTERSHIRE

## CHALLENGES TO ACCESSING SUPPORT

When it comes to additional support for LGBTQ+ people who have been a victim of a hate crime, there are various third party and voluntary organisations who are able to provide both emotional and practical support.

There are national organisations such as Stop Hate UK, Victim Support and Galop. Locally, in the South West, there is Stand Against Racism & Inequality (SARI) and Victims of Crime Advocacy Service (VOCAS). Apart from Galop none of these services have a sole LGBTQ+ focus, and this is what stops a lot of people from seeking professional support.

If after an incident, victims need legal help, or support with their mental health, financial implications are often a barrier.

Even though these organisations exist to support victims of hate crime it appears there is also a lack of visibility for them within the LGBTQ+ community.

Research undertaken by Galop in 2021 found that three in five LGBTQ+ people who had experienced hate crime, wanted and needed help but only one in five were able to access support.

When the Trust spoke to people at our in-person workshops, several people said they did not know what support was available to them or where to even look for help.

This was also reflected in people saying that even though there are support services available, they do not reflect the community

they are trying to help, i.e. they have no LGBTQ+ lived experience within their organisation so therefore could not relate to the person they are supporting.

One participant said that how an organisation advertises itself can either be welcoming or uninviting. They said: “If I look at a leaflet and it's all doom and gloom, it doesn't scream ‘we're here to help’. As cliché as it is if I saw a plain leaflet next to one with a rainbow flag on it nine times out of ten, I am picking up the one with the rainbow flag over the plain one.”

Through our online survey the question of “would you access additional support?” was very split, with 58% saying they would and 41% saying that they would not seek any additional help.

It was also a common theme that people who had been a victim of a hate crime were left to find their own support, whether that be professionally or through their family and friends.

Even though Avon & Somerset Constabulary has its Lighthouse Safeguarding service, some people who reported hate crimes said they had never heard of this and felt that any additional support should be automatically put in place at the point of reporting.

We asked those who said they would not access additional support to elaborate as to why they didn't see any benefits

**41 PER CENT OF PEOPLE SAID THEY WOULD NOT SEEK ANY ADDITIONAL SUPPORT**



Here are some of the responses that people gave us:

“Don’t believe they would actually be able to make any difference.”

“Some support services aren't fully inclusive of identities in the + of LGBTQ+ and so my main concern would be whether I'd experience further distress ... How am I supposed to trust an organisation that doesn't even recognise my existence?”

**“I DON'T REALLY KNOW WHAT SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE AND HOW IT WOULD BENEFIT ME TO ACCESS IT.”**  
**- LESBIAN, FROM GLOUCESTERSHIRE**

“I have never been aware of support services available to me.”

“It depends on the severity of the hate crime, if it was physical for example I probably would access additional support.”

“All words and as it appears to me little support or action.”

“I would feel that the services could be used for people with greater need.”

**“SPEAKING TO A PERSON WHO IS A MEMBER OF THE LGBTQI + COMMUNITY.”**  
**- GAY MAN, FROM SOMERSET**

## INSIGHTS FROM PEOPLE’S VOICE

These responses show us two key themes for people when it comes to accessing support when LGBTQ+ people have been a victim of a hate crime:

1. That the community believes any support will either not make a difference or what they have experienced is now “severe” enough to warrant additional support,
2. That LGBTQ+ people do not see support services as suitable for

themselves or as being for LGBTQ+ people.

We will go into this in more detail in the recommendations of this report, however, from what the Trust has found it does appear that support services themselves need to be more visible to the LGBTQ+ Community, as many participants weren’t aware of what support was available or that local organisations would support LGBTQ+ people.

## THE IMPACT THIS HAS ON LGBTQ+ VICTIMS

In this report we have spoken a lot about the experience for the victim of an LGBTQ+ based hate crime, and how barriers to reporting and accessing support make an already traumatic event feel even more stressful.

However, what we have not discussed is how much of a lasting impact that being a victim of a hate crime can have on a person. This can sometimes be the part of the experience which is not reported or recognised in data around hate crime reporting.

In reality the impact of a person being a victim of a hate crime is a fundamental part of what they have experienced and can have a much longer lasting effect on a person than the incident itself.

One of the obvious impacts on a person is when the crime has a physical nature to it, as this can lead to physical injuries, which can lead to other areas of a person’s life being impacted, for example, not being able to work, deteriorating mental health or isolation - just to name a few.

## WHAT IMPACTS VICTIMS

The below graph illustrates some of the key things which people shared with the Diversity Trust which have an impact on

whether they would report a Hate Crime or access additional support services.



As The Diversity Trust, we asked the people who complete our online survey if they were comfortable to share how their experience of being a victim of a hate crime impacted their life.

Here are some of the responses we received:

**“IT MADE ME MORE UNCOMFORTABLE IN PUBLIC, MORE SELF-AWARE OF WHAT I WEAR.”**  
- TRANS MAN FROM NORTH SOMERSET

“Myself and my partner now are wary of holding hands and being visibly out in public for fear of further hate crimes occurring. I no longer dress as colourful or prideful in fear of being visible and receiving hate again. I tend to be hyper vigilant when around in public to try and catch someone if it happens again and to try and stop it catching me off guard.”

“It made me more uncomfortable in public, more self-aware of what I wear.”

“I have fallen in on myself and become depressed and put on a lot of weight.”

“I sometimes see people that look like the perpetrator and I start panicking and can't think about other things.”

“I was verbally and aggressively abused on a bus for wearing pink trainers and sitting femininely. It impacted my willingness to travel on public transport, especially late in the evenings and on weekends. I stopped wearing certain colour clothes for a number

of years in the hope I would not be commented on for my appearance.”

“Made me question whether I was worthy of living.”

Even though a lot of these responses are quite difficult reading, there were a couple of participants who said that their experience made them stronger people and more vigilant people.

By showing these examples of how being a victim of a hate crime impacts someone who is LGBTQ+, it gives a sense of the true experience of a person, not just the statistics and what they represent.

We also want to make sure that by sharing these stories that people in the future don't have to experience the same thing. By telling statutory bodies and emergency services how exactly being a victim can impact a person, then changes, and more preventative measures, can be put in place.

**“I SOMETIMES SEE PEOPLE THAT LOOK LIKE THE PERPETRATOR AND I START PANICKING AND CAN'T THINK ABOUT OTHER THINGS.”**  
- TRANS MASCULINE PERSON, FROM BNES

## INTERSECTIONAL EXPERIENCE

In this section, we want to acknowledge and emphasise that the data that The Diversity Trust has collected on this subject is just the “tip of the iceberg” when it comes to hate crime reporting.

We also need to point out that we cannot talk about LGBTQ+ hate crimes without considering the intersectional experience of these crimes.

Intersectionality refers to the interconnectedness of social categories, such as race, gender, class, sexuality, and ability – all of which shape an individual's experiences and opportunities.

was attacked for her disability, this would be logged as a disability-based hate crime and would not factor in any of the additional repercussions that would apply if the victim was a trans woman.

The reason we wanted to focus on the intersectionality of hate crimes is to raise awareness that there still needs to be a lot of work done in making sure this is reflected in statistics. In the recent publication of the CSEW statistics it showed that recorded disability-based hate crimes are down 18% and that religious-based hate crimes have risen by 25%.

**ONLY 6 PER CENT OF PEOPLE WHO RESPONDED TO OUR ONLINE SURVEY IDENTIFIED AS DUAL-HERITAGE, AND 3 PER CENT AS BLACK CARIBBEAN**

How this relates to the LGBTQ+ experience is that there are many people who have a range of protected characteristics other than their sexual orientation or gender reassignment.

For example, a Black lesbian is going to have a very different experience in life to a White gay man. Yes, they could both face discrimination in various forms, but the societal and cultural impact could potentially be more volatile for the Black lesbian.

It is also important to note that both in local and national recorded statistics, the recording of hate crime reports does not account for this intersectional nature. Again, for example if a disabled trans woman

Now, these figures could be even higher if they incorporated any element of intersectionality to these crimes.

It is also important to note that the most marginalised people within the LGBTQ+ community are still hugely underrepresented. In our own research only 6% of people who responded to our online survey identified as dual-heritage and 3% as Black Caribbean.

This shows that there needs to be more of a focus from both statutory bodies and third sector parties to engage with these marginalised groups to make sure their voices are captured and that they are also represented when it comes to these types of conversations.



# WHAT WOULD CREATE MORE CONFIDENCE IN REPORTING

As well as using this report to highlight the disparity in the LGBTQ+ experience when it comes to reporting and being supported when someone is a victim of a hate crime, we want to use this as a way to feedback how these experiences can be improved.

The data is already available to highlight how LGBTQ+ people do not feel supported / listened to / believed when it comes to their experiences of hate crime. So how do we make things better?

This report is going to be circulated with decision-makers and members of Avon & Somerset Constabulary, as well as available nationally. The reason for doing this is to share the collected voice of the LGBTQ+ community on how they feel they are being failed by a service which at its heart is meant to be protecting them.

to light which would give people more confidence, was for perpetrators to receive harsher punishments, and more widely publicised stories of good outcomes. The groups we spoke to said if they could see that reporting would have a worthwhile outcome, they would feel more inclined to do so.

Another topic which came up on several occasions, was that specific LGBTQ+ or specific transgender awareness courses are rolled out to police officers or funding made available for a small LGBTQ+ specific team within police services.

By creating this, people said they would feel comfortable talking to someone they knew has an understanding of their unique experience as an LGBTQ+ person, and that the victims don't have to worry about being

allyship rather than just virtue signalling by putting a rainbow flag on their social media when it comes to pride month.

Some of these views were echoed in the responses from our online survey, with people commenting saying it would give them more confidence if they could see, "perpetrators got harsher punishments" and "seeing justice actually being done, rather than being told that nothing can be done at all."

People also said that a clearer direct online reporting system would help them, and having people / the police sharing positive lived experience messages would give the community more confidence.

So, one of the key things people are asking for which would give them more confidence is a clearer understanding of

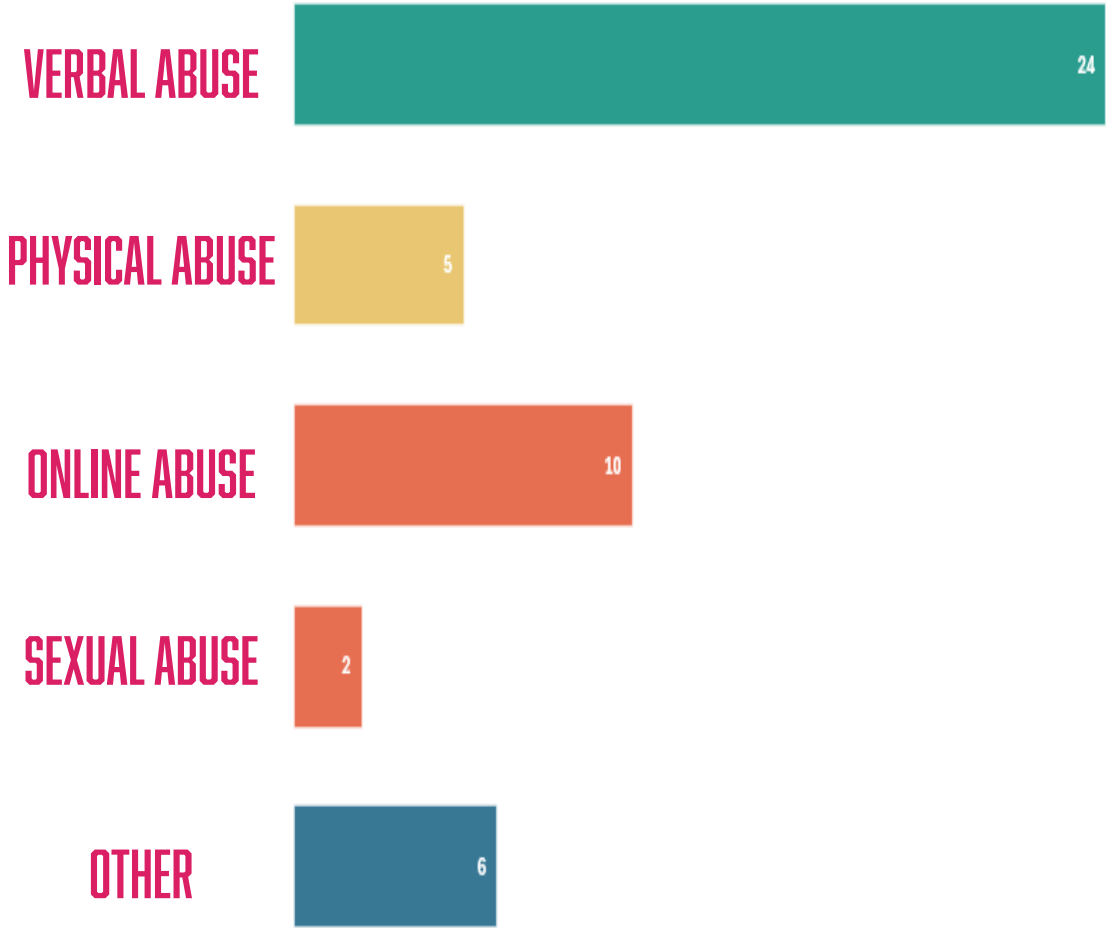
the process, why reporting is important, and how it will improve the experience for LGBTQ+ people.

One person shared that they would like to see more active allyship from the police, adding "I feel like the majority of police take a tokenistic photo with a pride flag but are not actually interested in building connections with the LGBTQ+ community to support us in making it easier to report hate crime."

If statutory bodies can make steps to making these requests a reality for LGBTQ+ people, it may mean that we see a better / truer representation of LGBTQ+ hate crimes, and if we see more positive outcomes / harsher punishments then it would act as a deterrent to potential perpetrators.

## MOST COMMON HATE CRIMES WHICH WERE REPORTED

Below is a graphic to indicate the different types of hate crime faced by the LGBTQ+ community and ones which have actually been reported to the police in the past 12 months.



“KNOWING THAT PEOPLE UNDERSTAND AND RESPECT MY IDENTITY ENOUGH”  
- ASEXUAL MAN, BRISTOL

By giving direct quotes in this report, we hope that statutory bodies and support agencies will see firsthand exactly what the community needs / is asking for so that their experiences around being a victim of a hate crime can be one with as little additional stress as possible.

One way we hope to achieve this is by giving the LGBTQ+ community we serve the opportunity to feedback exactly what would give them more confidence to report a hate crime to the police in the first place.

When we spoke to people during our workshops, a lot of the themes which came

further discriminated against by an officer who does not truly understand specifics when it comes to people's gender identities or sexual orientation.

Something else which came out from our in-person sessions was people wanted to see police services taking a more proactive approach to calling out anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric publicly. For example, if a public figure is using their platform to clearly say something which is transphobic then constabularies should make a clear and concerted effort to call this out. The people we spoke to said that this would be important to them as it shows supportive

# INCREASING CONFIDENCE IN ACCESSING SUPPORT

On putting this report together at The Diversity Trust, we recognise that when it comes to hate crime, all the work doesn't lie at the door of the police. The support that is in place should also properly reflect those LGBTQ+ people who need to access it.

We have already highlighted in this report, that a lot of LGBTQ+ people would not access additional or further support. Furthermore, people aren't aware of what support is available to them.

This is why as well as asking what would improve the reporting process for LGBTQ+ people, we wanted to know what would give people more confidence to access support if someone was a victim of an LGBTQ+ hate crime.

Similarly to the reporting process, a few people emphasised that by making the process of accessing these additional resources easier for LGBTQ+ people would be a start.

But the biggest common factor was that a lot of people did not know who to turn to for support or that there was not enough of a visible representation from support agencies that signalled that they either have an LGBTQ+ focus or have an understanding of the unique experience of LGBTQ+ people.

Another theme which came through from our participants was that a better linked up support system between the police and support agencies was key. For example, the police putting the support in place straight away with a victim's consent and that the details are shared in better detail so that victims don't have to repeat themselves and retraumatise themselves over again.

The lack of visible LGBTQ+ support also seems to be a big sticking point for some people, with one person saying "For me personally it would be very important that I could verify the group giving support has a grounded and compassionate understanding of trans issues. A "We're trans friendly" badge on a website proves nothing to me."

This marries up with the information we gathered at the in-person sessions where more than 50% of the people we spoke to were unaware that the local hate crime charity supported LGBTQ+ people, or even knew who the local hate crime charity was.

Something else people suggested was for support agencies to shout about and champion their success stories. If LGBTQ+ people can see how these support services are able to make change and make a difference for people, then others are more inclined to use them if they are needed.

Another suggestion made by many people was that the formal support approach didn't always work for them, and that a form of peer support was better suited. However, they found that across the vast majority of the Avon & Somerset region there is support for young trans / queer people and peer / social groups for the over 50 LGBTQ+ people. But there is almost nothing for people between the ages of 25-49.

This matches with some other research that The Diversity Trust has carried out across Avon & Somerset, and is currently a piece of work which as an organisation we are looking to change. However, it also needs the support of local authorities to back it and make it a success.

**50 PER CENT OF PEOPLE DIDN'T  
KNOW THEY COULD ACCESS  
SUPPORT THROUGH A LOCAL  
CHARITY**

# HOW SERVICES CAN PREVENT LGBTQ+ HATE CRIMES

As we have now looked at what the impact of LGBTQ+ hate crimes are and what the community believes needs to improve to make their experience of navigating systems, we now want to look at how these crimes can be prevented in the first place.

We know that education and awareness is one of the key things that a lot of people – not just those who took part in our research – have said is a starting point to better understand LGBTQ+ identities and how people who come under this umbrella experience hate crime.

This isn't just education at early stages – schools, college and higher education – but also education within work environments and within the police themselves.

This would also transfer into a lot of different areas of people's lives; so by creating a better understanding of all identities. This could mean updating policies, processes, forms etc., using their position to push for inclusive changes in the law, recognising diverse identities.

One participant in our research said that by showing reports are taken seriously, and once again that perpetrators get tougher consequences, it would be a start to

potentially putting people off from committing a hate crime in the first place.

Some people also said this should extend to the Crown Prosecution Service; that they should regularly publicise when people have been punished for committing an LGBTQ+ hate crime to act as a deterrent to others.

Others believe that if authority figures made more of an effort to build connections with LGBTQ+ groups, this could help spread information and education. For example: having the police attend community events to pass on resources; or to explain in more detail how people can report a hate crime; and what will be done with this information.

Another participant told us "In my experience, bars / clubs / late nights are a much bigger offender now, these places need strong rules and environments to show this behaviour is at the least unacceptable, and the most, seriously punishable."

What people have told us about how services can prevent LGBTQ+ specific hate crimes will be reflected in our recommendations.

## CONCLUSIONS

gathering data about hate crimes and incidents, and presenting this information to decision-makers, is not always a guaranteed success. Even when the data tells us a shocking story, it does not always coax people into doing something meaningful in response.

Therefore, to actually implement change, we must make sure that we have the voices of those most affected and showcase this to decision-makers. This is not just an ask but a must to improve people's lives.

We have also outlined that when it comes to accessing further support for people who have been a victim of a hate crime there is a lack of visibility or knowledge of who is there to offer the support.

This leads to there needing to be more general outreach and understanding from both the police and support services, so that the LGBTQ+ community that they are meant to be serving at the moment, don't feel even more isolated.

Therefore, there needs to be more of a bridging of the gap between statutory bodies and third sector organisations to the LGBTQ+ community to ensure changes are being made to prevent and minimise hate crimes against LGBTQ+ people.

Even though the research sample of people we used for the report is relatively small in the context of the wider LGBTQ+ hate crime picture, we can still see there is a huge misrepresentation in the national and local statistics.

If we look at the data and compare it to national data and local police service data, there is an overwhelming lack of under-reporting of LGBTQ+ hate crimes.

Through this report, we have been able to identify that some of the key barriers which LGBTQ+ people face when it comes to reporting to the police when they have been a victim of a hate crime. Some of the main barriers identified include a lack of understanding around the reporting process, and a lack of faith in the police and criminal justice system.

From our research, we found there needs to be clearer processes in place for LGBTQ+ people when it comes to reporting tools. We know there is the app Zoteria, where people can anonymously report hate incidents that occur to them, but if systemic changes are to be made, this needs to be something which comes from public authorities.

We must also acknowledge that simply

# RECOMMENDATIONS

From undertaking this work, we have managed to gain a wide perspective of different LGBTQ+ experiences and how they have interacted with law enforcement and support services, or just the general impact an LGBTQ+ hate crime has had on them.

As such, there are a series of recommendations which The Diversity Trust would like to put forward which we

will be presenting to decision-makers at a local, regional and national level.

This report will be given to law enforcement agencies, local councils, mental health professionals, support agencies and will also be accessible to the LGBTQ+ community to share.

These are our recommendations:



## CLEARER PATHWAYS FOR REPORTING HATE CRIME

The research that we have conducted has shown that LGBTQ+ people don't have a clear understanding of the reporting process and how reporting incidents can help improve experiences. We recommend that police create a resource which is an easy-to-follow reporting guide which can be shared with the community, as well as hosting surgeries where police officers can explain clearly the investigation process and link with community leaders.



## IDENTIFY TRUSTED PEOPLE / REPORTING HUBS

The creation of regional reporting hubs where people can go and speak to someone about their experience free of judgement or discrimination. This could be led by community leaders, or by building a relationship with specific officers within the police who are known as a trusted contact to the community.



## MORE PUBLICITY OF POSITIVE OUTCOMES

The police and support services need to better publicise when they have good outcomes, whether that be a conviction, community order or just making a difference on the victims experience / life. By being able to share these stories of success, it will foster a pattern of trust that reports will be taken seriously and acted upon.



## HARSHER PUNISHMENTS FOR PERPETRATORS

This links to recommendation three, in that if LGBTQ+ people are able to see there are harsher punishments for people who are perpetrating hate crimes, they would be more likely to report them. Also, if there were harsher punishments to people, it will also act as a deterrent and be a step towards preventing LGBTQ+ hate crimes in the first place. A suggestion which was posed to the Trust while carrying out this work was the idea of something similar to a "driving awareness course" so that people either get a hefty financial penalty or have to go on an educational course led by people with lived experience.



## TRAINING ON LGBTQ+ IDENTITIES AND ALLYSHIP

There is still a lack of confidence when it comes to people in power of how to support LGBTQ+ people correctly. This doesn't just mean gay / lesbian or trans people. But those who fall into the "plus" category. As an organisation which specialises in lived experienced training this is something that The Diversity Trust provides and can support with.



## AN LGBTQ+ SPECIFIC SUPPORT SERVICE

As has been highlighted throughout this report, it is clear that within the Avon & Somerset area there is a lack of visibility / understanding of what support is available to LGBTQ+ people. The participants who took part in our research said if they could see an organisation which was run by people or had people with lived experience at its heart, that it would give people more confidence to reach out and seek support. This also goes to advertising and outreach as existing services do not look approachable to LGBTQ+ people.



## LGBTQ+ ISSUES TO BE A KEY STRATEGIC FOCUS

Any work to address anti-LGBTQ+ hate needs to consider the wider structural and systemic factors that create environments where hate encounters happen, such as socio-economic inequalities. Not enough research has been undertaken to explore these underlying causes and where best to target interventions, especially at a time with rising violence against LGBTQ+ people in England and Wales. Therefore, we believe that region specific, LGBTQ+ specific hate crime action plans should be developed and make sure that people with lived experience are involved in the development.







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