

An Updated Study into the Characteristics of Police Recorded Hate Crime in Scotland



CRIME AND JUSTICE

An updated study into the characteristics of
police recorded hate crime in Scotland

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Executive summary

This report presents the findings of a study into the nature of police recorded hate aggravated crimes in Scotland. This includes new details on the characteristics of these cases, based on a random sample of police recorded crimes in 2020-21.

Hate crimes recorded by the police

The police recorded 6,927 hate crimes in 2021-22. Since 2014-15, the number of hate crimes recorded has fluctuated between 6,300 and 7,000 crimes.

In 2021-22, around three-fifths (62%) of hate crimes included a race aggravator and over a quarter (27%) included a sexual orientation aggravator.

Hate crimes in 2020-21:

The following summary excludes the estimated one in four hate crimes where the victim was a police officer in the line of duty. These cases are summarised separately further below.

Characteristics of hate crime:

Just under a third of hate crimes in Scotland involved a victim who experienced the incident at their place of work or whilst undertaking duties as part of their occupation. Most of these victims were working in retail or other service industries.

A majority of both hate crime victims (59%) and perpetrators (72%) were male. In 45% of crimes the victim did not know the perpetrator, whilst in 38% of cases the perpetrator was an acquaintance of the victim.

Cases occur in a range of settings. Fourteen percent of crimes involved a victim and perpetrator who were in different physical locations (including phone calls and cyber-enabled technologies).

The vast majority of hate crimes were reported by victims themselves, or those acting on their behalf such as parents, teachers, carers and employers.

For race aggravated hate crimes:

Where information was available on the ethnicity of victims, almost two-thirds (or 64%) of race aggravated hate crimes had a victim from a visible minority ethnic (non-white) group. This compares to 4% of Scotland's population at the time of the last census in 2011.

An estimated 18% of race aggravated hate crimes had a victim of African, Caribbean or Black ethnicity. This was followed by Polish or Other White and Pakistani, Pakistani British or Pakistani Scottish (with both groups accounting for 17% of cases each). At 12%, victims who were White Scottish made up the next largest group

In 36% of race aggravated hate crimes, the words used or actions taken by the perpetrator suggested an anti-Black prejudice and in over a quarter of cases prejudice was shown towards the Pakistani community. In almost one in five crimes the perpetrator made general xenophobic remarks not directed at any one group.

For the other hate aggravators:

A majority of disability aggravated hate crimes included a prejudice to those with a learning disability (73%). Just under one in six (15%) showed a prejudice to those with a physical disability.

In almost half of religion aggravated hate crimes the perpetrator showed prejudice towards the Catholic community (47%). The next largest groups were the Muslim and Protestant communities, both accounting for 16% of cases each.

In the vast majority of sexual orientation aggravated hate crimes, the perpetrator showed prejudice towards the gay (77%) and lesbian (23%) community.

In the vast majority (89%) of transgender identity aggravated hate crimes, the perpetrator showed prejudice towards those from the transgender community.

For hate crimes with a police officer victim:

In 46% of hate crimes experienced by police officers the perpetrator showed a prejudice towards the gay and lesbian community. This was followed by anti-Black (19%), anti-Learning disability (9%) and anti-Pakistani prejudice (9%).

Introduction

This report presents updated information on the number of hate crimes recorded by the police in Scotland during 2020-21 and 2021-22. It also includes new details on the characteristics of hate crime, based on a random sample of cases recorded by the police in 2020-21. The analysis of those characteristics includes information about the people involved (for example the ethnicity of victims and perpetrators), the types of prejudice shown by those committing hate crimes, and how these cases came to the attention of the police.

Users should view this publication as a follow up report to the '[Characteristics of police recorded hate crime in Scotland: study](#)', published in February 2021.

The report is split into the following sections:

1. A summary of information on the volume of hate crime recorded by the police between 2014-15 and 2021-22;
 - In relation to disability, race, religion, sexual orientation and transgender identity.
2. A description of hate crime characteristics for cases recorded by the police in 2020-21 (i.e. findings from the research outlined above) and;
3. An outline of plans to ensure the future production of disaggregated data on recorded hate crime in Scotland.

Recording of hate crime by police

What is the definition of a police recorded hate crime?

This report draws on information recorded by Police Scotland and adopts the categorisations and definitions used by them when they do this. Further information on how Police Scotland record hate crimes is provided below.

For the purposes of this report, a **hate crime** is any crime which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated (wholly or partly) by malice and ill-will towards a social group.

In Scotland, the law recognises hate crimes as crimes motivated by prejudice based on the characteristics listed below. Further information on the legislation used by the police to record hate crime is also available within Section One of the earlier [‘Developing Information on Hate Crime Recorded by the Police in Scotland’](#) report.

- Disability,
- Race,
- Religion,
- Sexual orientation,
- Transgender identity.

A person does not need to be a member of the social group being targeted by the perpetrator to be the victim of a hate crime. The law states that the identity of the victim is irrelevant as to whether something is a hate crime or not; the motivation of the perpetrator is the key factor in defining a hate crime.

Furthermore, in some cases a hate crime may be committed against a person where the prejudice being shown by the perpetrator was towards a third party who was not present at the time of the crime (albeit in the vast majority of hate crimes, the victim and the target are the same person(s)). Again, as noted above this is because the motivation of the perpetrator is the key factor in defining a hate crime, and not the victim’s background. In these cases, they will still be recorded as a victim of a hate aggravated crime and will therefore appear in the analysis below of victim characteristics.

It should be noted that a single report of hate crime can result in more than one hate crime being recorded and can include other crimes which are not hate-related.

Furthermore, not all hate-related incidents which come to the attention of the police will necessarily constitute a criminal offence (though the vast majority do). Where an incident does not include the recording of a hate crime, a similar definition to that outlined above (i.e. the perception of the victim or any other person of a

perpetrator's malice and ill-will towards a social group) is relevant as to whether or not it is defined as hate-related by Police Scotland.

What happens when a hate crime is reported to the police?

When a member of the public contacts the police to report an incident (or if a police officer is witness to an incident) the information is logged on Police Scotland's System for Tasking and Operational Resource Management (STORM) - this is Police Scotland's national command and control system.

STORM is largely used for resource allocation purposes. Depending on the information supplied and the outcome of additional enquiries, the incident may result in the creation of one or more crime reports on the relevant crime management system (CMS). If a crime report includes a hate element then the relevant aggravator(s) (i.e. disability, race, religion, sexual orientation and/or transgender identity) will also be highlighted on the crime report.

If the incident is assessed to have a hate element, a record should also be added to Police Scotland's Interim Vulnerable Persons Database (IVPD). The purpose of the IVPD is to ensure that any concerns for the victim, or any other person (subjects of concern), are assessed and the appropriate action taken. The IVPD is Police Scotland's national database for recording all hate-related information, allowing them to enhance understanding of the extent of hate-related activity across the country. It enables identification of repeat victims and offenders and allows for a holistic assessment of wellbeing concerns and needs which influence multi-agency investigations, interventions and support.

It should be noted that these systems operate independently of each other, although reference numbers should be recorded on each system for cross referral.

How are hate crimes reported to the Crown Office?

For police recording purposes, the perception of the victim or any other person is relevant when considering whether an incident is hate-related or in recognising the malice element of the crime. The perception of the victim should always be explored, however they do not have to justify or provide evidence of their belief and police officers or staff members will not directly challenge this perception.

In terms of reporting hate crimes to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS), Lord Advocate guidelines state that the victim's belief alone that an offence was aggravated by prejudice does not justify the charging of a statutory aggravation. If there is evidence to support that opinion, whether from one or more sources (including the victim), that should be reflected in the draft charge presented to the Procurator Fiscal, by including the relevant aggravation. This evidence will most frequently come from words spoken by the accused, but the important point is that there is evidence in addition to the victim's belief.

A hate crime is reportable to COPFS when the charge in aggravated form is assessed as having sufficient evidence of malice and ill-will to be put before the

court. In absence of words spoken, any report submitted should detail course of conduct by the accused that would evidence the crime was motivated by malice and ill-will.

Where can you find the data from this report?

All tables referred to throughout the bulletin are available in the [Supporting documents](#) Excel workbook. The workbook includes an 'Introduction' sheet, with information on how to navigate the tables, alongside a 'Notes' sheet, with relevant details to assist users when reading and interpreting results.

Hate crimes recorded by the police

Overview

There are a range of factors that could influence the number of hate crimes recorded by the police. Whilst changes in the number of crimes recorded could reflect a change in the number of crimes experienced by the population of Scotland, other factors are also likely to have an impact.

Trends can be affected by public reporting practices; attitudes to certain behaviour may change over time and reporting rates may vary by the type of crime.

Under-reporting of hate crime is also recognised as a key factor, and it could be that different groups in society may be more or less likely to report to the police that they have been the victim of a hate crime. For a broad example of this, the [Scottish Crime and Justice Survey \(SCJS\)](#) estimated that 40% of all crimes (as defined by the SCJS) were reported to the police in 2019-20.

In addition to the above, the nationwide lockdowns and other measures put in place to limit social contact during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic may also have had an impact on the type and volume of hate crime recorded in 2020-21 (and to a lesser extent in 2021-22). For example the study found a higher proportion of hate crimes in 2020-21 happened in a dwelling compared to 2018-19, and a lower proportion occurred in a retail or hospitality setting, likely reflecting the lockdown conditions within the latter year. On the other hand, the proportion of hate crime records that made direct reference to the pandemic in 2020-21 (for example those related to the policing of restrictions) was relatively low at 3% of all cases. Furthermore, several of the overall characteristics of hate crime, such as the prejudices shown within race-aggravated incidents, remained similar between 2018-19 and 2020-21. As such some caution is advised before necessarily attributing all changes in hate crime over the related period to the pandemic, with longer term trends in some types of offending likely remaining a factor.

Given the above, and as with all crime committed in Scotland, the analysis provided in this report on the characteristics of hate crime can only inform users about cases that were reported to the police. These may not necessarily be the same as for those hate crimes that didn't get reported by a victim or anyone else, and therefore the characteristics of all hate crime in Scotland could be different.

Recording procedures

Contraventions of Scottish criminal law are generally divided for statistical purposes into crimes or offences. For the purposes of this report the term 'hate crime' includes both crimes and offences.

'Crime' is generally used for the more serious criminal acts; the less serious termed 'offences', although the term 'offence' may also be used in relation to serious breaches of criminal law. The distinction is made only for working purposes and the

'seriousness' of the offence is generally related to the maximum sentence that can be imposed. More information can be found in the [Annex](#), along with definitions of the most frequently committed hate crimes.

The information provided below on the volume of hate crime recorded by the police during 2014-15 to 2021-22 is drawn from the Interim Vulnerable Persons Database (IVPD). Whilst the IVPD itself is not Police Scotland's crime recording system, should criminality be identified as part of a hate-related incident then the appropriate crimes will also be recorded in the IVPD.

Further information on the recording of crime can be found in the guidance provided to officers in the [Scottish Crime Recording Standard: Crime Recording and Counting Rules](#).

As noted in the introduction, for the purpose of this report, a hate crime is any crime which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated (wholly or partly) by malice and ill-will towards a social group.

Not all crimes will necessarily have a victim. One example may be where racist graffiti not directed at any individual (i.e. a hate crime of vandalism with a race aggravator) is discovered and reported. A hate concern would be raised on the IVPD with the witness (i.e. the person reporting) being identified as the subject of concern.

Number of hate crimes

The police recorded 6,927 hate crimes in the IVPD in 2021-22. Since 2014-15, the number of hate crimes recorded in the IVPD has fluctuated between 6,300 and 7,000 crimes (Table 4).

Geographic location of hate crimes

In 2021-22, the number of hate crimes recorded by Police Scotland per 10,000 of the population was highest in Glasgow City and the City of Edinburgh local authority areas (26 and 20 crimes per 10,000 population respectively) (Table 5). The Highland and Orkney Islands local authority areas had the lowest rates.

Whilst the Glasgow City and City of Edinburgh local authority areas collectively accounted for 21% of Scotland's population in 2021 [note 1], they accounted for around two-fifths (39%) of all hate crimes recorded by Police Scotland in 2021-22. This could, at least in part, relate to the relatively higher level of ethnic diversity present within these two areas (the majority of associated hate crimes included a race aggravation – see Table 6). The [2011 Scottish Census](#) reported that Glasgow City and the City of Edinburgh local authority areas have 12% and 8%, respectively, of their population comprised of non-white ethnic groups, compared to the Scottish average of 4%. Other factors that may lead to the relatively higher number of recorded hate crimes within these two local authorities include the presence of a large night-time economy, and a large daily influx of visitors, workers and tourists.

They are also more frequently used as the location for large scale events and the holding of demonstrations.

Notes for Geographic location of hate crimes section.

Note 1. The population data is sourced from the mid-year population estimates produced by NRS and available [here](#).

Hate crimes by aggravator

For the purposes of this analysis, we have included any crime where the specific aggravator being measured (such as race, sexual orientation etc.) has been assigned to the record. As such, any crime with multiple aggravators will be included in the figures for each of the aggravators associated with it. For example, if a crime was aggravated by race and sexual orientation, it will be included in the total number of crimes with a race aggravator and in the total number of crimes with a sexual orientation aggravator. This means the total number of crimes for each aggravator will sum to more than the total number of recorded hate crimes in Scotland. In 2021-22, just over three-fifths (62%) of hate crimes included a race aggravator, over a quarter (27%) included a sexual orientation aggravator, 8% a disability aggravator, 7% a religion aggravator and 3% a transgender identity aggravator. As noted above, any individual crime can include multiple aggravators. In 2021-22, 5% of hate crimes included more than one aggravator.

Since 2014-15 there has been a small fall in the overall number of recorded hate crimes, decreasing by 1%. There was also a decrease in the number of recorded hate crimes that included a race aggravator (down 18% from 5,178 crimes in 2014-15 to 4,263 crimes in 2021-22) as well as the number that included a religion aggravator (down 30% from 682 in 2014-15 to 478 in 2021-22). The number of recorded crimes with a sexual orientation aggravator increased over the same time frame (up 67% from 1,110 in 2014-15 to 1,855 in 2021-22). The number of crimes with a disability aggravator doubled (from 260 in 2014-15 to 552 in 2021-22), and the number of transgender identity aggravated hate crimes has more than tripled, albeit from a relatively smaller base (from 53 to 185).

Hate crimes by crime type

In 2021-22, just over half (53%) of hate crimes recorded were 'Threatening or abusive behaviour' under Section 38 of the Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010 (Table 7) (see the [Annex](#) for definitions of selected crimes). This was followed by 'Racially aggravated conduct' which represented 13% of hate crimes recorded. 'Racially aggravated conduct' covers some offences under Section 50A of the Criminal Law (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 1995 where the perpetrator acts in a racially aggravated manner and this causes, or is intended to cause, a person alarm or distress. 'Racially aggravated conduct' is recorded where the behaviour is corroborated by one or more witnesses, otherwise an offence such as 'Threatening or abusive behaviour' with a racist aggravator would be recorded. A further 11% of hate crimes recorded in the IVPD in 2021-22 were 'Common assault' (see the [Annex](#) for more information on the definition of 'Common assault').

The total number of 'Threatening or abusive behaviour' offences recorded in the IVPD has increased from 2,432 in 2014-15 to 3,703 in 2021-22. Over the same period, the number of 'Racially aggravated conduct' offences recorded in the IVPD has fallen from 2,196 to 932.

Type of hate crime by hate aggravator

With the exception of race, in 2021-22 the most common hate crime recorded across each of the different aggravators was 'Threatening or abusive behaviour' (Table 7).

As might be expected, a far higher proportion of crimes recorded with a race aggravator were 'Racially aggravated conduct'. This is because it is a standalone offence relating to racially aggravated behaviour, whereas there are no standalone offences relating to the other strands. There was a correspondingly lower proportion of 'Threatening or abusive behaviour' offences recorded in the IVPD for crimes with a racial aggravator. Again, this would be expected as the offence of 'Racially aggravated conduct' is similar to the offence of 'Threatening or abusive behaviour' [note 1].

There were a slightly higher proportion of 'Vandalism' crimes recorded in the IVPD for hate crimes with a religious aggravator than for the other strands. There are some other small differences in the proportions across other categories, however due to the smaller number of crimes recorded with a disability and transgender identity aggravator, the proportions are more likely to fluctuate year to year. Further definitions can be found in the [Annex](#).

Notes for Type of hate crime by hate aggravator section.

Note 1. The difference being that corroboration of the racially aggravated nature of the victim's behaviour is required to record the standalone offences of 'Racially aggravated conduct' and 'Racially aggravated harassment'

Characteristics of hate crimes recorded in 2020-21

Methods

Two systems were used to review the characteristics of hate crimes recorded by the police in Scotland – the Interim Vulnerable Persons Database (IVPD) and the Crime Management Systems (CMSs).

The IVPD is an incident based database which was introduced in 2013, and became a national system in 2014. Police Scotland use the IVPD to record information about individuals who are, or are perceived to be, experiencing some form of adversity and/or situational vulnerability which may impact on their current or future wellbeing. This is the only national system that can currently identify the totality of hate crime recorded by the police in Scotland.

In addition to the IVPD, hate crimes will also be recorded on a local CMS. The CMS is used to actively manage the investigation of recorded crime, and like the IVPD, it also holds details of the people involved. As highlighted in the [recording practices section](#) the process of recording crimes through a CMS is governed by the [Scottish Crime Recording Standard \(SCRS\)](#).

Given the established governance arrangements for the recording of crime through the CMSs, these were chosen as the basis for this research, rather than a review of records held within the IVPD. However, at present, Police Scotland use a number of local CMSs, which were inherited from the previous legacy police forces. As such the research methodology was designed to use the national coverage of the IVPD to identify all hate crimes recorded in Scotland. From this, a sample of crime records was randomly drawn, with Scottish Government statisticians then using the associated reference numbers to locate each hate crime within a local CMS. These cases were then reviewed, with information recorded about their characteristics.

Using the methodology outlined above, a total of 2,000 hate aggravated crime records were sampled from 2020-21, representing 30% of all cases recorded by the police during this year. The proportion sampled varied across the five hate aggravators, ranging from 21% for Race to 100% (or all records identified within the IVPD) for Transgender identity ([Table 1](#)). This variation ensured a sufficiently large number of records were reviewed for those aggravations with relatively fewer cases, so as to allow a robust measure of their characteristics to be produced. The sample was also stratified by Police Scotland division, ensuring the prevalence of hate crime across the 13 geographic areas covered by those divisions was reflected within the research.

Information was recorded about the circumstances of each crime and the characteristics of the people involved. No personal information relating to those involved (such as names, dates of birth and addresses) was collected.

With the exception of the Transgender Identity strand, this research is based on a sample of police records (rather than all records), therefore the percentages (proportions) presented in this report are estimates. The true value may differ slightly from the findings presented below due to sampling error. As such, users should treat the following analysis as a broad indication of the characteristics of hate crime, rather than as an exact measure. Figures are presented at the national level, as sample sizes are insufficient to provide robust estimates at local authority and individual police division level.

There are several methods of calculating an average, in this report the median is used to present the average age of victims and perpetrators (i.e. the age at which half the individuals are older and half are younger). The mean measure of average age can be more influenced by values at the upper end of the distribution (i.e. the older ages) and may not be truly representative of the average age. By taking the middle value of the data, after sorting in ascending order, the median avoids this issue and is consequently considered a better indication of a typical 'average' age.

Table 1. Proportion of crimes sampled by hate aggravation, 2020-21.

| Aggravation | Sample | Population [notes 1 and 2] | % of population sampled |
|------------------------|---------------|---|------------------------------------|
| All hate crimes | 2,000 | 6,698 | 30% |
| Disability | 300 | 433 | 69% |
| Race | 900 | 4,303 | 21% |
| Religion | 300 | 572 | 52% |
| Sexual orientation | 450 | 1,675 | 27% |
| Transgender identity | 113 | 113 | 100% |

Notes for Table 1.

Note 1. These figures are accurate as of September 2022, when the data was originally extracted from the IVPD. As this is a live operational system these figures will not match those presented in the Tables.

Note 2. The combined total for the individual aggravators exceeds the total of hate aggravated crimes recorded by the police as any individual crime can include the recording of one or more aggravators.

Discussion of relative sample weights for summary analysis

As shown in [Table 1](#), there is some variation in the proportion of records sampled across the five aggravators. As such some aggravators made up a greater proportion of the sample than they do the overall population (for example disability

aggravated crimes - which are 15% of the sample and 6% of all hate crimes). Others make up a smaller proportion of the sample than they do the population (with racially aggravated crimes making up 45% of the sample and 64% of all hate crimes).

The majority of the findings presented in this report focus on discussing each of the five hate aggravators in isolation, rather than making any direct comparisons between them. For these findings the variation in the proportion of records sampled by aggravation has no effect on the results. However some sections look at hate crime as a whole (i.e. across all aggravators). This includes the [Summary of recorded hate crimes](#), [Summary of hate crimes with a non-police officer victim](#) and [Police officer victims of hate crime](#) sections.

Due to the difference between the proportions of each aggravator within the sample and their proportions within the overall population of hate crime, it was necessary to apply a weighted adjustment to the findings in these sections. This was carried out according to the proportion of each respective aggravator within the overall population of hate crime. Continuing with the illustration above, it means that each sampled race aggravated crime was given a greater weight in the analysis looking at hate crime as a whole, and each sampled disability aggravated crime was given a lower weight. This means that when presenting findings on hate crime as a whole it is reflective of the distribution of aggravators within it.

Categorisation of the ethnicity of victims and perpetrators

When reviewing each crime record, the available information on the ethnicity of victims and perpetrators was collected and, where possible, assigned to one of the 20 census codes as defined in [Scotland's Census](#).

Records excluded from the analysis

Just over one in ten crimes (12%) in the original sample of 2,000 hate crimes has been excluded from the analysis presented below. This includes cases where (i) analysts were unable to locate a hate crime in the CMS due to issues with the crime reference recorded within the IVPD, (ii) a crime did not appear to include a hate element (in some cases this may also have been an issue with the crime reference), and (iii) on further investigation by the police, the hate crime had been re-designated to not constitute a crime or offence.

Further analysis

This report focuses on providing a high level summary of the characteristics of hate crime in Scotland. Further analysis and breakdowns are available at request from: justice_analysts@gov.scot.

Summary of recorded hate crimes

While there are important distinctions across the five hate aggravators in terms of their characteristics, including who was involved, where they happened, and how they were reported to the police, there are some general statements that can be made about hate crime as a whole.

In a majority of hate crimes, the victim was a male or all male group. This was also the case for race, religion and sexual orientation aggravated hate crime, whereas for transgender identity aggravated crimes, the majority of victims were female or an all female group.

In a majority of hate crimes, the perpetrators (where identified) were also male or an all male group, and this was the case for each of the five aggravators.

We estimate from the research that there were 5,790 hate crimes in 2020-21 that had a person-based victim, this is a slight increase (+220) from the previous research conducted in 2018-19, which estimated 5,570 person based victims. Additionally, a relatively smaller number (170) either had no victim or the victim was a business or organisation.

For those 5,790 hate crimes that were estimated to have a person-based victim, one quarter (or 1,450) had a victim who was a police officer in the line of duty. The remaining 4,340 hate crimes had a victim who was not a police officer. Between 2018-19 and 2020-21, the estimated number of crimes with a police victim increased by 34%, from 1,080 to 1,450.

Given the relatively high proportion of hate crimes with a police officer victim, the characteristics of these cases have been detailed separately in the [second section](#) below, with the [first section](#) focusing on the characteristics of those crimes where the victim was not a police officer.

As noted on [page 10](#), police recorded hate crime only covers those cases that come to the attention of the police. Given it is likely that all (or almost all) hate crime targeted against the police will be included within the measure of recorded hate crime, the estimated one in four cases with a police officer victim will likely be higher than the equivalent measure for all hate crime committed in Scotland (i.e. including those cases that don't get reported).

Estimated volume of hate crimes recorded by the police in 2020-21



- 1,080 Police Victims in 2018-19
- 1,450 Police Victims in 2020-21 (+34%)



- 4,490 victims who were individuals (non-police victim) in 2018-19
- 4,340 victims who were individuals (non-police victim) in 2020-21

Non-police officer victims of hate crime

The information presented in this section includes only those cases where the victim was not a police officer. Information on the characteristics of cases where the victim was a police officer is provided in the [Police officer victims of hate crimes](#) section.

Where information is presented on the characteristics of victims, this only includes those cases that had a person-based victim, and excludes those which either had no victim or the victim was a business or organisation. Such cases are however included in the discussion of all other factors, such as the characteristics of the perpetrator, location of the crime and how it was reported to the police.

All tables referred to throughout the bulletin are available in the [Supporting documents](#) Excel workbook.

Summary of hate crimes with a non-police officer victim

What proportion of victims were working at the time of the crime?

Across the five hate aggravators, just under a third (31%) of these crimes involved a victim who experienced the incident at their place of work or whilst undertaking duties as part of their occupation (Table 8). This figure is relatively higher than for all crime committed in Scotland, albeit it only covers hate crimes reported to the police. The [Scottish Crime & Justice Survey](#) suggested that 21% of crimes (including both those reported to the police and not reported) happened to people at or near their place of work in 2019-20. Of the 31% of hate crime victims who were working, two thirds (65%) were working in Retail or other service industries, which equates to one in five (20%) victims of hate crimes with a person-based victim.

What was the gender of victims, and how did they know the perpetrator?

The majority of hate crime involved a male or all male group of victims (59%), and over a third involved a female or all female group (36%) (Table 9). Three percent of crimes involved a mixed group.

In 45% of crimes the victim did not know the perpetrator, whilst in a further 38% of cases, the perpetrator was an acquaintance [note 1] of the victim (Table 10).

Where did the crimes happen and how were they reported to the police?

Just under a third of crimes (31%) occurred in an Open space and just over a quarter (26%) in or around a Dwelling. A further 17% of crimes occurred in a retail or hospitality setting (Table 11).

In 14% of crimes the victim and perpetrator were not in the same location (including the use of phone calls and cyber-enabled technologies). Less than one-in-ten hate crimes (9%) specifically involved the use of cyber-enabled technologies (Table 12).

The vast majority of hate crimes were reported to the police by the victim (88%). This includes 7% of cases which were reported by someone on behalf of the victim - including parents, teachers, carers and employers. In 8% of cases, the crime was reported by a witness (Table 13).

What was the gender and age of the perpetrators?

The majority of hate crimes, where an individual was identified, had a male or all male group of perpetrators, representing 72% of such crimes.

Around one quarter of crimes (26%) had a female or all female group of perpetrators, and a further 2% involved a mixed group of perpetrators (Table 14).

The median age of a perpetrator was 33 years old.

What has changed since the previous study into the characteristics of hate crime in 2018-19?

Both of the studies (2018-19 and 2020-21) are based on a sample of hate crime records. In order to determine whether any changes were not due to random chance (as a result of drawing the sample) each result was tested for statistical significance.

It should also be noted that where a statistically significant result was found, there are only two data points available for comparison. As such it cannot be concluded whether any detected changes would be indicative of a longer term trend, or just random year-to-year variations within the data. In addition to this, and as discussed further on [page 10](#), it is also possible that the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the associated measures put in place to restrict social contact may have had at least a partial impact on the type and volume of hate crime recorded in 2020-21 compared to the earlier study in 2018-19.

For all recorded hate crimes where the victim was not a police officer, the overall picture remains broadly similar to before. However, there have been some changes detected in both the circumstances of the crimes and of the people involved.

Compared to 2018-19, a smaller proportion of victims were working in a retail or other service industry in 2020-21 (dropping from 24% to 20%).

There were multiple changes found in where the crimes took place. A higher proportion of crimes took place in or around a dwelling (26% in 2020-21 vs 20% in 2018-19), and also more crimes occurred where the perpetrator and victim were not in the same place (14% in 2020-21 vs 11% in 2018-19). The proportion of crimes that made specific use of cyber-enabled technology is unchanged.

A smaller proportion of crimes took place on public transport (1% in 2020-21 vs 3% in 2018-19) and also in a retail or hospitality setting (17% in 2020-21 vs 22% in 2018-19).

How the crime was reported also changed between the two studies. In 2020-21 a higher proportion were reported by the victim, or on behalf of the victim (88% vs

84% in 2018-19), while a smaller proportion were reported by a witness (8% vs 12% in 2018-19).

2020-21 saw an increase in the proportion of victims who were females or part of an all female group (up to 36% from 32% in 2018-19).

Notes for Non-police officer victims of hate crime:

Note 1. Acquaintances include individuals who have a prior relationship with the victim but are not a family member, a partner or ex-partner for example a friend, neighbour, work colleague or classmate.

Disability aggravated crime

This section looks at hate crimes that had a race aggravator attached, including cases where there was more than one aggravator present. It should also be noted that all information presented in this section does not include incidents where the victim was a police officer in the line of duty, details on these cases are available in the section on [Police Officer victims](#).

All tables referred to throughout the bulletin are available in the [Supporting documents](#) Excel workbook.

What proportion of victims were working at the time of the crime?

The vast majority of disability aggravated hate crime victims (93%) did not experience the incident whilst at a place of work, or whilst undertaking duties as part of an occupation (Table 8).

What was the age and gender of victims, and how did they know the perpetrator?

Victims of disability aggravated hate crimes were evenly split between male or all male groups (46%) and female or all female groups (48%). A further 5% of victims were part of a mixed group.

The average age of a victim was 32 years old (Table 9).

In over half of these crimes (55%), the victim and perpetrator were acquaintances [note 1], with a further 26% involving a perpetrator not known to the victim (Table 10).

What was the ethnicity of victims?

Where information was available on the ethnicity of victims, just under four fifths (or 78%) of disability aggravated hate crimes had a victim of White Scottish ethnicity (Table 15). The second largest ethnic group was Other White British (10% of victims). This was followed by Other White and Other Asian (4% and 3% respectively). All other ethnic groups accounted for the remaining 5% of victims.

Where did the crimes happen and how were they reported to the police?

The most common locations for disability aggravated hate crimes were in and around a Dwelling, and an Open space (36% and 27% respectively) (Table 11). In 24% of crimes, the victim and the perpetrator were not in the same location. Just under one-in-five disability aggravated hate crimes (18%) specifically involved the use of cyber-enabled technologies (Table 12).

The vast majority of disability aggravated hate crimes were reported to the police by the victim (91%) (Table 13). This breaks down into 79% reported by the victim directly and 12% which were reported by someone on behalf of the victim (including

parents, teachers, carers or employers). In 8% of cases, the crime was reported by a witness.

What was the age, gender and ethnicity of perpetrators?

The majority of disability aggravated hate crimes had a male or all male group of perpetrators, representing over two-thirds (70%) of crimes (Table 14). 28% of crimes had a female or all female group of perpetrators.

The average age of a perpetrator was 27 years old.

Where information was available on the ethnicity of perpetrators, over four in five (or 84%) of disability aggravated hate crimes had a perpetrator of White Scottish ethnicity (Table 16). The second largest ethnic group was Other White British (11% of perpetrators). All other ethnic groups accounted for the remaining 5% of perpetrators.

When committing disability aggravated hate crimes, what prejudices were shown by perpetrators?

The information provided below on the prejudice shown by the perpetrator is most often based on the words used or actions taken during the crime. A person does not need to be a member of the social group being targeted by the perpetrator to be the victim of a hate crime and their identity or other characteristics do not need to align with the perpetrator's perceptions. A perpetrator can also show prejudice against multiple social groups as part of the same crime.

Nearly three quarters (73%) of disability aggravated hate crimes involved the perpetrator showing prejudice towards those with a learning disability, which equates to an estimated 210 crimes (Table 17). A further 15% of crimes involved the perpetrator showing prejudice towards those with a physical disability (around 40 crimes). In just over one in ten crimes (12%), the perpetrator's actions didn't include remarks directed at any specific disability, equating to around 30 crimes.

What has changed from the previous deep dive in 2018-19?

Police recorded hate crimes occurring in the year 2018-19 were also previously examined and analysed in the same way. In both cases it was not feasible to gather details on every police recorded hate crime, so a sample of the records was taken. In order to determine that any changes were not due to random chance each result was tested for statistical significance.

It should also be noted that where a statistically significant result was found, there is only a total of two data points available for comparison. It remains unclear whether any detected changes would be indicative of a trend, or just random year to year variations within the data.

For disability aggravated hate crimes, the overall picture remains broadly similar to how it was previously. However, there has been some changes in both the circumstances of these crimes and the people involved.

The proportion of disability aggravated hate crimes that occurred in the public sector [note 2] decreased from 14% of crimes in 2018-19 to 5% in 2020-21.

A higher proportion of crimes were reported by the victim or on behalf of the victim. In 2020-21, 91% of crimes were reported by these means, compared to 79% in 2018-19. Fewer crimes were reported by a witness, 8% in 2020-21 down from 16% in 2018-19.

More detailed analysis of the prejudices shown by perpetrators for disability aggravated hate crime

Where prejudice was shown towards those with a learning disability

In nearly three quarters of disability aggravated hate crimes, the perpetrator showed a prejudice towards those with a Learning disability (73%). This equates to around 210 crimes recorded by the police in 2020-21.

It was found that victims were split evenly between males and females, and the average age of a victim was 31 years old. The majority of perpetrators (70%) were male or part of an all male group, and the average age of a perpetrator was 27.

In the majority of crimes, the victim and the perpetrator were acquaintances (57%) and in a further quarter of crimes they were strangers.

Only 6% of victims were working at the time of the incident.

Notes for disability aggravated hate crimes:

Note 1. Acquaintances include individuals who have a prior relationship with the victim but are not a family member, a partner or ex-partner for example a friend, neighbour, work colleague or classmate.

Note 2. Public sector includes places such as educational facilities, medical facilities, prisons and care homes.

Race aggravated crime

This section looks at hate crimes that had a race aggravator attached, including cases where there was more than one aggravator present. It should also be noted that all information presented in this section does not include incidents where the victim was a police officer in the line of duty, details on these cases are available in the section on [Police Officer victims](#).

All tables referred to throughout the bulletin are available in the [Supporting documents](#) Excel workbook.

What proportion of victims were working at the time of the crime?

Over a third of racially aggravated hate crime victims (36% of cases) experienced the incident at their place of work or whilst undertaking duties as part of their occupation (Table 8). Additionally, 62% were not at their place of work or undertaking work-related duties. For the remaining 2% it is not known if the victim was working at the time of the incident. Where victims were working, most were in Retail and service related industries, representing 70% of victims in work and 25% of all victims.

What was the age and gender of victims, and how did they know the perpetrator?

The majority of racially aggravated hate crimes had a male or all male group of victims, representing three-fifths (60%) of crimes. The average age of a victim was 35 years old (Table 9).

In half of these crimes (50%), the victim did not know the perpetrator, with a further third (33%) involving a perpetrator who was an acquaintance [note 1](Table 10).

What was the ethnicity of victims?

Where information was available on the ethnicity of victims, almost two-thirds (or 64%) of race aggravated hate crimes had a victim from a visible minority ethnic (non-white) group (Table 18). This compares to 4% of Scotland's population at the time of the last census in 2011.

Table 18 provides a more detailed breakdown of victims by ethnic group and is available in the 'Supporting files'. Further analysis on those ethnic groups that feature most frequently within the research is also provided below. Table 19 provides the same information but using broader categorisations of ethnicities.

Where did the crimes happen and how were they reported to the police?

A third of racially aggravated hate crimes (33%) occurred in an Open space, followed by in or around a Dwelling (24%) and a Retail or hospitality setting (20%) (Table 11). In just over one in ten crimes (11%) the victim and perpetrator were not in the same location. This category includes cases that involved the use of cyber-

enabled technologies, accounting for 7% of racially aggravated hate crimes (Table 12).

The vast majority of racially aggravated hate crimes were reported to the police by the victim (89%) (Table 13). This breaks down into 81% reported by the victim directly and 7% which were reported by someone on behalf of the victim (including parents, teachers, carers or employers). In 9% of cases, the crime was reported by a witness.

What was the age, gender and ethnicity of perpetrators?

The majority of racially aggravated hate crimes had a male or all male group of perpetrators, representing three-quarters (75%) of crimes (Table 14). The average age of a perpetrator was 33 years old.

Where information was available on the ethnicity of perpetrators, around four in five (or 79%) of racially aggravated hate crimes had a perpetrator of White Scottish ethnicity (Table 18). The second largest ethnic group was Other White British (10% of perpetrators). All other ethnic groups accounted for the remaining 11% of perpetrators.

When committing racially aggravated hate crimes, what prejudices were shown by perpetrators?

The information provided below on the prejudice shown by the perpetrator is most often based on the words used or actions taken during the crime. A person does not need to be a member of the social group being targeted by the perpetrator to be the victim of a hate crime and their identity or other characteristics do not need to align with the perpetrator's perceptions. A perpetrator can also show prejudice against multiple social groups as part of the same crime.

In 36% of race aggravated hate crimes, the words used or actions taken by the perpetrator suggested an anti-Black prejudice. As noted above, in these crimes the victim does not necessarily need to self-identify as black and in some cases they may have been targeted simply because the perpetrator perceived them to be from a visible minority ethnic (non-white) group.

In 27% of hate crimes the prejudice shown was towards the Pakistani community. In 18% of crimes the perpetrator made general xenophobic remarks not directed at any one group. Table 17 provides a more detailed breakdown of the prejudices shown by perpetrators when committing race-aggravated hate crimes and is available in the 'Supporting files'.

Notes for Race aggravated hate crimes:

Note 1. Acquaintances include individuals who have a prior relationship with the victim but are not a family member, a partner or ex-partner for example a friend, neighbour, work colleague or classmate.

More detailed analysis of victim ethnicity for race aggravated hate crime

African, Caribbean or Black

An estimated 18% of racially aggravated hate crimes had a victim of African, Caribbean or Black ethnicity (compared to 1% of the population in the 2011 census). This equates to around 550 crimes recorded by the police in 2020-21.

61% of victims were male or part of an all male group and the average age of victims was 36 years old. Nearly three quarters (74%) of perpetrators were male, and their average age was 33 years old.

Just over half (52%) of perpetrators were not known to the victim, while a third (33%) were an acquaintance of the victim. A further 11% of victims had a professional relationship with the perpetrator.

It was found that 27% of crimes occurred in or around an open space, and just under a quarter (23%) occurred in a dwelling. Just over a third (34%) of victims were working at the time of the incident.

The vast majority of crimes showed anti-Black prejudice (89%), and 16% showed general xenophobia not directed at one specific group. Since a perpetrator can exhibit more than one form of prejudice in the course of committing a crime, totals may add up to over 100%.

Polish or Other White

An estimated 17% of racially aggravated hate crimes had a victim of Polish or Other White ethnicity (compared to 3% of the population in the 2011 census) [note 1]. This equates to around 540 crimes recorded by the police in 2020-21.

Victims were split evenly between males and females, while the average age of victims was 37 years old. A majority of perpetrators were male or part of an all male group (60%) and the average age of a perpetrator was 35.

Just over half (53%) of perpetrators were an acquaintance of the victim, while just over a third (36%) were unknown to the victim.

43% of crimes occurred in or around a dwelling, and just over a third (36%) occurred in an open space. A fifth (20%) of victims were working at the time of the crime.

In 52% of these crimes, the prejudice shown by the perpetrator was against those from the Polish community, and in 33% of cases the prejudice took the form of general xenophobia (i.e. without reference to any specific group).

Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish or Pakistani British

An estimated 17% of racially aggravated hate crimes had a victim of Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish or Pakistani British ethnicity (compared to 1% of the population in the 2011 census). This equates to around 530 crimes recorded by the police in 2020-21.

The vast majority of victims were male or part of an all male group (84%) and the average age of a victim was 35 years old. Four out of five perpetrators were male (80%), and the average age was 31.

Just over 42% of crimes occurred in a retail or service industry setting, a further 28% of crimes occurred in an open space. A majority of victims were working at the time of the crime (61%).

In 68% of these crimes, the prejudice shown by the perpetrator was against the Pakistani community, and in 34% of crimes it was against the Black community. Since a perpetrator can exhibit more than one form of prejudice in the course of committing a crime, totals may add up to over 100%.

White Scottish

An estimated 12% of racially aggravated hate crimes had a victim of White Scottish ethnicity (compared to 84% of the population in the 2011 census). This equates to around 360 crimes recorded by the police in 2020-21.

Over half of the victims were female or part of an all female group (59%) and the average age of a victim was 33 years old. The vast majority of perpetrators were male (83%) and the average age was 31.

Just under three in ten crimes took place in a dwelling and an open space each (29% and 28% of crimes respectively). 17% of victims were working at the time of the incident.

In 32% of these crimes, the prejudice shown by the perpetrator was against those who are black. In 24% of cases the prejudice shown by the perpetrator was against those who are Pakistani. Some of these cases related to incidents where the prejudice shown was directed towards a third party who was not present at the time and not the person who was the victim of the crime. In other cases, the victim's self-identified ethnicity did not align with the prejudice shown by the perpetrator.

In 15% of cases with a White Scottish victim, the prejudice shown by the perpetrator was against those who are white. For the remaining cases with a White Scottish victim (where the prejudice shown wasn't anti-black, anti-Pakistani or anti-White) a diverse range of racial prejudices were shown.

Notes for More detailed analysis of victim ethnicity for race aggravated hate crime

Note 1. For the purpose of providing this analysis, the 'Other White' category excludes those of White Scottish, Other White British or White Irish ethnicities.

Religion aggravated crime

This section looks at hate crimes that had a religion aggravator attached, including cases where there was more than one aggravator present. It should also be noted that all information presented in this section does not include incidents where the victim was a police officer in the line of duty, details on these cases are available in the section on [Police Officer victims](#).

All tables referred to throughout the bulletin are available in the [Supporting documents](#) Excel workbook.

What proportion of victims were working at the time of the crime?

Just under a fifth of religion aggravated hate crime victims (19% of cases) experienced the incident at their place of work or whilst undertaking duties as part of their occupation (Table 8). A further 72% were not at their place of work or undertaking work-related duties. For the remaining 9% of victims it is not known if they were working at the time of the crime. Where victims were working, they were generally in either Retail and service industries or Other areas, each of which represented 9% and 11% of all victims respectively.

What was the age and gender of victims, and how did they know the perpetrator?

Most religion aggravated hate crimes had a male or all male group of victims, representing over half (55%) of crimes. The average age of a victim was 40 years old, the oldest for any aggravator (Table 9).

Just over half of these crimes (52%) involved a perpetrator who was an acquaintance [note 1], with a further 26% of crimes where the victim did not know the perpetrator (Table 10).

What was the ethnicity of victims?

Where information was available on the ethnicity of victims, nearly two thirds (or 63%) of religion aggravated hate crimes had a victim of White Scottish ethnicity (Table 15). The second largest ethnic group was Other White British (9% of victims) followed by Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish or Pakistani British (8%) and Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups (5%). All other ethnic groups accounted for the remaining 14% of victims.

Where did the crimes happen and how were they reported to the police?

Just under two fifths of religion aggravated hate crimes (39%) occurred in a dwelling, followed by 21% which occurred in an Open space (Table 11). In 16% of crimes, the victim and the perpetrator were not in the same location. One in ten (10%) specifically involved the use of cyber-enabled technologies (Table 12).

The majority of religion aggravated hate crimes were reported to the police by the victim (77%)(Table 13). This splits into 72% which were reported by the victim

directly and 4% which were reported on behalf of the victim (including parents, teachers, carers or employers). In a further 14% of cases, the crime was reported by a witness.

What was the age, gender and ethnicity of perpetrators?

The majority of religion aggravated hate crimes had a male or all male group of perpetrators, representing over four fifths (83%) of crimes (Table 14). The average age of a perpetrator was 42 years old, the oldest for any aggravator.

Where information was available on the ethnicity of perpetrators, over four in five (or 82%) of religion aggravated hate crimes had a perpetrator of White Scottish ethnicity (Table 16). The second largest ethnic group was Other White British (8% of perpetrators). All other ethnic groups accounted for the remaining 10% of perpetrators.

When committing religiously aggravated hate crimes, what prejudices were shown by perpetrators?

The information provided below on the prejudice shown by the perpetrator is most often based on the words used or actions taken during the crime. A person does not need to be a member of the social group being targeted by the perpetrator to be the victim of a hate crime and their identity or other characteristics do not need to align with the perpetrator's perceptions. A perpetrator can also show prejudice against multiple social groups as part of the same crime.

In just under half (47%) of religion aggravated hate crimes, the perpetrator showed prejudice towards the Catholic community, which equates to an estimated 150 crimes (Table 17). A similar proportion of crimes showed prejudice towards the Muslim community and the Protestant community, equating to 16% (or 50 crimes) each.

What has changed from the previous deep dive in 2018-19?

Police recorded hate crimes occurring in the year 2018-19 were also previously examined and analysed in the same way. In both cases it was not feasible to gather details on every police recorded hate crime, so a sample of the records was taken. In order to determine that any changes were not due to random chance each result was tested for statistical significance.

It should also be noted that where a statistically significant result was found, there is only a total of two data points available for comparison. It remains unclear whether any detected changes would be indicative of a trend, or just random year to year variations within the data.

For religion aggravated hate crimes, there were some changes found, more notably around the circumstances of the crimes.

When looking at the relationship between the victim and perpetrator, there was a larger proportion of crimes where the perpetrator was an acquaintance in 2020-21

compared to 2018-19 (52%, up from 29%). There was also a decrease in the proportion where the perpetrator was a stranger (26%, down from 49%).

Some changes were found in the location of the crimes too, in 2020-21 more took place in a dwelling (39% vs. 22%) and fewer took place in an open space (21% vs. 33%).

Additionally, fewer crimes were reported by a witness in 2020-21 compared to 2018-19, 14% compared to 24%.

For the type of prejudice shown, it was found that a smaller proportion of crimes showed anti-Islamic prejudice, 16% of crimes in 2020-21 compared to 26% of crimes in 2018-19.

Notes for religion aggravated hate crimes:

Note 1. Acquaintances include individuals who have a prior relationship with the victim but are not a family member, a partner or ex-partner for example a friend, neighbour, work colleague or classmate.

More detailed analysis of the prejudices shown by perpetrators for religion aggravated hate crime

Where the perpetrator showed prejudice towards the Catholic community

In nearly half of religion aggravated hate crimes the perpetrator showed a prejudice towards the Catholic community (47%). This equates to around 150 crimes recorded by the police in 2020-21.

Victims were evenly split between male and female groups, the average age of a victim was 43 years old. The vast majority (88%) of perpetrators were male or an all male group, the average age of a perpetrator was 38 years old.

In 60% of cases the perpetrator was an acquaintance of the victim and in 22% of cases they were a stranger.

43% of crimes took place in or around a dwelling and in 27% of crimes the location was an open space. Just over one in ten (11%) of victims were working at the time of the incident.

Sexual orientation aggravated crime

This section looks at hate crimes that had a sexual orientation aggravator attached, including cases where there was more than one aggravator present. It should also be noted that all information presented in this section does not include incidents where the victim was a police officer in the line of duty, details on these cases are available in the section on [Police Officer victims](#).

All tables referred to throughout the bulletin are available in the [Supporting documents](#) Excel workbook.

What proportion of victims were working at the time of the crime?

A quarter of sexual orientation aggravated hate crime victims experienced the incident at their place of work or whilst undertaking duties as part of their occupation (25% of cases) (Table 8). A further 75% of victims were not at their place of work or undertaking work-related duties. Where victims were working, 43% were in Retail and service related industries, the remaining 57% were working in another type of industry.

What was the age and gender of victims, and how did they know the perpetrator?

Just under two-thirds of sexual orientation aggravated hate crimes had a male or all male group of victims (65%) (Table 9). Crimes with a female or all female group of victims accounted for one third of cases (33%). Further analysis on the characteristics of these crimes by victim gender is provided below. The average age of a victim was 29 years old.

In just under half of these crimes (48%), the victim and perpetrator were acquaintances [note 1]. In a further 35% of cases, the victim did not know the perpetrator (Table 10).

What was the ethnicity of victims?

Where information was available on the ethnicity of victims, four fifths (or 80%) of sexual orientation aggravated hate crimes had a victim of White Scottish ethnicity (Table 15). The second largest ethnic group was Other White British (10% of victims) followed by 3% for Other White. All other ethnic groups accounted for the remaining 7% of victims.

Where did the crimes happen and how were they reported to the police?

30% of sexual orientation aggravated hate crimes occurred in and around a Dwelling, followed by 28% which occurred in an Open space (Table 11). In 19% of crimes, the victim and perpetrator were not in the same location. This category includes cases that involved the use of cyber-enabled technologies, accounting for over one-in-ten (or 13%) of sexual orientation aggravated hate crime.

The vast majority of sexual orientation aggravated hate crimes were reported to the police by the victim (88%) (Table 13). This breaks down into 81% which were reported by the victim directly and 8% which were reported by someone on behalf of the victim (including parents, teachers, carers or employers). In 6% of cases, the crime was reported by a witness.

What was the age, gender and ethnicity of perpetrators?

The majority of sexual orientation aggravated hate crimes had a male or all male group of perpetrators, representing three quarters (75%) of crimes (Table 14). The average age of a perpetrator was 33 years old.

Where information was available on the ethnicity of perpetrators, more than four in five (or 82%) of sexual orientation aggravated hate crimes had a perpetrator of White Scottish ethnicity (Table 16). The second largest ethnic group was Other White British (11% of perpetrators). All other ethnic groups accounted for the remaining 7% of perpetrators.

When committing sexual orientation aggravated hate crimes, what prejudices were shown by perpetrators?

The information provided below on the prejudice shown by the perpetrator is most often based on the words used or actions taken during the crime. A person does not need to be a member of the social group being targeted by the perpetrator, to be the victim of a hate crime and their identity or other characteristics do not need to align with the perpetrator's perceptions. A perpetrator can also show prejudice against multiple social groups as part of the same crime.

In the vast majority of sexual orientation aggravated hate crimes, the perpetrator showed prejudice towards the gay and lesbian community (Table 17). This includes over three-quarters (77%) of crimes where the words used or actions taken by the perpetrator showed a prejudice towards the gay community, with a further quarter (23%) showing prejudice towards the lesbian community. In the small number of remaining cases, perpetrators either made remarks that targeted other groups, or were not directed at any specific community. A further breakdown of these cases isn't possible given the infrequency with which they were found within the sample.

Notes for sexual orientation aggravated hate crimes:

Note 1. Acquaintances include individuals who have a prior relationship with the victim but are not a family member, a partner or ex-partner for example a friend, neighbour, work colleague or classmate.

More detailed analysis of sexual orientation aggravated hate crime by gender of victim

Male or all male group

Around two-thirds of sexual orientation aggravated hate crimes had a male or all male group of victims (65%) This equates to around 500 crimes recorded by the police in 2020-21.

In almost all cases (99%), the prejudice shown by the perpetrator was against those from the gay community.

The average age of male victims was 29 years old. The vast majority of perpetrators were male or part of an all male group (81%) and the average age was 33.

In half of these crimes, the perpetrator was an acquaintance of the victim (50%) and in just over a third (36%) of cases they were a stranger.

A third of crimes occurred in an open space (33%) and a further 31% occurred in or around a dwelling. Just over a fifth of victims were working at the time of the incident (22%).

Female or all female Group

33% of sexual orientation aggravated hate crimes had a female or all female group of victims. This equates to around 250 crimes recorded by the police in 2020-21.

In the majority of cases (71%), the prejudice shown by the perpetrator was against those from the lesbian community.

The average age of female victims was 31 years old. Two thirds (or 66%) of perpetrators were male or part of an all male group and the average age was 36. In just under half (46%) of the crimes the perpetrator was an acquaintance of the victim, and 29% were a stranger.

Just under three in ten (or 29%) of crimes occurred in or around a dwelling. In 27% of crimes the victim and perpetrator were not in the same location and occurred remotely (with some making specific use of cyber enabled technology). In just over a quarter of crime (26%) the victim was working at the time of the incident.

Transgender identity aggravated crime

This section looks at hate crimes that had a transgender identity aggravator attached, including cases where there was more than one aggravator present. It should also be noted that all information presented in this section does not include incidents where the victim was a police officer in the line of duty, details on these cases are available in the section on [Police Officer victims](#).

All tables referred to throughout the bulletin are available in the [Supporting documents](#) Excel workbook.

What proportion of victims were working at the time of the crime?

Just under 6% of transgender identity aggravated hate crime victims experienced the incident at their place of work or whilst undertaking duties as part of their occupation (Table 8). The vast majority of victims (93%) were not at their place of work or undertaking work-related duties.

What was the age and gender of victims, and how did they know the perpetrator?

Over half of transgender identity aggravated hate crimes had a female or all female group of victims (56%) (Table 9). Crimes with a male or all male group of victims accounted for 43%. The average age of a victim was 28 years old.

Just over half of crimes (53%) with a transgender identity aggravator involved a perpetrator not known to the victim, with a further third (35%) of crimes where the victim and perpetrator were acquaintances [note 1](Table 10).

What was the ethnicity of victims?

Over two thirds of victims (or 70%) were from a White Scottish background. The next largest group was Other White British (20% of victims), followed by Other White (6%). All other ethnicities made up the remaining 4% of victims (Table 15).

Where did the crimes happen and how were they reported to the police?

Over three in ten (31%) transgender identity aggravated hate crimes occurred where the victim and perpetrator were not in the same location (Table 11). 27% of crimes specifically involved the use of cyber-enabled technologies (Table 12). Following this, 28% occurred in an Open space and 23% occurred in or around a Dwelling.

The vast majority of transgender identity aggravated hate crimes were reported to the police by the victim (92%) (Table 13). This breaks down into 88% which were reported by the victim directly and 4% which were reported by someone on behalf of the victim (including parents, teachers, carers or employers). In a further 6% of cases, the crime was reported by a witness.

What was the age, gender and ethnicity of perpetrators?

The majority of transgender identity aggravated hate crimes had a male or all male group of perpetrators, representing around three quarters (74%) of crimes (Table 14). The average age of a perpetrator was 26 years old.

Where information was available on the ethnicity of perpetrators, the vast majority of transgender identity aggravated hate crime had a perpetrator of White Scottish ethnicity (84%) (Table 16). The second largest ethnic group was Other White British (13% of perpetrators). All other ethnic groups accounted for the remaining 4% of perpetrators.

When committing transgender identity aggravated hate crimes, what prejudices were shown by perpetrators?

The information provided below on the prejudice shown by the perpetrator is most often based on the words used or actions taken during the crime. A person does not need to be a member of the social group being targeted by the perpetrator to be the victim of a hate crime and their identity or other characteristics do not need to align with the perpetrator's perceptions. A perpetrator can also show prejudice against multiple social groups as part of the same crime.

In the vast majority (89%) of transgender identity aggravated hate crimes, the perpetrator showed prejudice towards those from the transgender community (based on the words used, actions taken or perceptions of the victim) (Table 17). In the small number of remaining cases, perpetrators either made remarks that targeted other groups, or were not directed at any specific community. A further breakdown of these cases isn't possible given the infrequency with which they were found within the sample.

Notes for transgender identity aggravated hate crimes:

Note 1. Acquaintances include individuals who have a prior relationship with the victim but are not a family member, a partner or ex-partner for example a friend, neighbour, work colleague or classmate.

More detailed analysis of transgender identity aggravated hate crime by gender of victim

Female or all female group

Over half of transgender identity aggravated hate crimes had a female or all female group of victims (56%). This equates to around 50 crimes recorded by the police in 2020-21.

In almost all cases (94%), the prejudice shown by the perpetrator was against those from the transgender community.

The average age of female victims was 30 years old. The vast majority of perpetrators (80%) were male or part of an all male group and the average age was 25.

In a majority of cases (59%) the perpetrator was not known to the victim and in just over three in ten cases the perpetrator was an acquaintance of the victim.

A third (or 33%) of crimes occurred in an open space and just over a fifth (or 21%) of crimes occurred where the victim and perpetrator were not in the same location and happened remotely (some of which made specific use of cyber enabled technology).

Male or all male group

Over two-fifths of transgender identity aggravated hate crimes had a male or all male group of victims (43%). This equates to around 40 crimes recorded by the police in 2020-21.

In 82% of those cases, the prejudice shown by the perpetrator was against those from the transgender community.

The average of victims was 22 years old. In nearly two thirds (65%) of crimes the perpetrator was male or part of an all male group and the average age was 26.

In just under half of crimes (or 47%) the perpetrator was an acquaintance of the victim.

Just under a third (or 32%) of crimes occurred in an open space, and a further 32% of crimes occurred where the victim and perpetrator were not in the same location and happened remotely (some of which made specific use of cyber enabled technology).

Police officer victims of hate crime

As outlined in the [Summary of recorded hate crimes section](#), in an estimated one in four (or 1,450) hate crimes recorded in 2020-21, the victim was a police officer in the line of duty.

All tables referred to throughout the bulletin are available in the [Supporting documents](#) Excel workbook.

[Table 2](#) below provides an estimate of the volume of hate crime with a police officer victim by hate aggravation. Sexual orientation and religion aggravated hate crimes had the largest proportion of cases where the victim was a police officer (at 45% and 37% respectively).

Table 2. Proportion of crimes with a police officer victim and estimated volume of crimes by hate aggravation, 2020-21.

| Aggravation | % of crimes | Estimated volume [note 1] |
|------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| All hate crimes | 24% | 1,450 |
| Disability | 22% | 80 |
| Race | 16% | 620 |
| Religion | 37% | 190 |
| Sexual orientation | 45% | 670 |
| Transgender identity | * | * |

Notes for Table 2

Note 1. The estimated volume for each aggravator will not total that for all hate crime as any individual crime could include one or more aggravators.

Where did the crimes happen?

Around two fifths (41%) of these crimes occurred in a Police facility, including police stations and police vehicles (Table 11). A further 24% happened in an Open space and 23% occurred in a Dwelling, less than one in ten (7%) occurred in a Public sector setting [note 2].

What was the age, gender and ethnicity of perpetrators?

Where at least one perpetrator was identified the vast majority were male or an all male group, representing 84% of cases (Table 14). The average age of a perpetrator was 30 years old.

Where information was available on the ethnicity of perpetrators, the vast majority (or 88%) of hate crimes with a police officer victim had a perpetrator of White Scottish ethnicity. The second largest ethnic group was Other White British (6% of perpetrators). All other ethnic groups accounted for the remaining 5% of perpetrators.

What prejudice was experienced by police officers?

The information provided below on the prejudice shown by the perpetrator is most often based on the words used or actions taken during the crime. A person (or in these cases a police officer) does not need to be a member of the social group being targeted by the perpetrator to be the victim of a hate crime and their identity or other characteristics do not need to align with the perpetrator’s perceptions. A perpetrator can also show prejudice against multiple social groups as part of the same crime.

Crimes in which the victim was a police officer were generally aggravated by either sexual orientation (43% of crimes) or race (40%). Around one in ten (12%) were for religion and around one in twenty (5%) were disability aggravated.

Looking at the prejudices shown, in almost half of hate crimes experienced by police officers (46%), the perpetrator showed a prejudice towards the gay and lesbian community, this equates to around 670 crimes.

In almost one in five crimes, the perpetrator showed prejudice toward the Black community (19%), this equates to 270 crimes. Nearly one in ten crimes showed prejudice against those with a learning disability and the Pakistani community, accounting for 9% (or 130 crimes) each.

In less than one in ten crimes, the perpetrator showed prejudice toward the Catholic community (8%), equating to 110 crimes.

Table 3. Proportion and estimated volume of crimes with a police officer by the prejudice shown by the perpetrator, 2020-21

| Prejudice shown | % of crimes [note 3] | Estimated volume |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Against the Gay and lesbian community | 46% | 670 |
| Anti-Black | 19% | 270 |
| Anti-Learning disability | 9% | 130 |
| Anti-Pakistani | 9% | 130 |
| Anti-Catholic | 8% | 110 |

Notes for Table 3

Note 1. It is important to note that as part of any individual hate crime, the perpetrator can show prejudice towards more than one community.

Future production of data on hate crime

The Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021 received royal assent on the 23 April 2021. Section 15 of the Act provides for the publication of future reports on hate crime recorded by the police in Scotland, including on offences aggravated by prejudice within the meaning of section 1 (of the Act) and offences under the Act. This should also detail, to the extent that this information has been recorded by the police, the age, sex and ethnic or national origins of any person recorded as being the victim, perpetrator or suspected perpetrator of the offence. Furthermore the report must include, again to the extent that this has been recorded, information on the specific prejudice being shown by the perpetrator across the different aggravators. Further information on the content of the Act is available from the [Scottish Parliament website](#).

In order to implement Section 15 (and Section 14 on publication of reports on hate crime convictions), justice partners will be required to complete a number of IT change programmes in advance in order to comply. For example, Police Scotland systems will need to be updated to allow police officers to record further information about the victims of hate crime beyond the characteristics listed in the Act. Prior to full roll-out of these changes and the release of the first results under the Act, Scottish Government statisticians will keep the publication of further updates on the volume of recorded hate crime under review and will inform users of future developments through the [Scotstat network](#).

Finally, to support the work above, we would welcome any feedback on the value of the information provided in this report. Please contact us at:

Justice_Analysts@gov.scot

Annex

Recording of crimes and offences

Contraventions of Scottish criminal law are generally divided for statistical purposes into crimes or offences. 'Crime' is generally used for the more serious criminal acts; the less serious termed 'offences', although the term 'offence' may also be used in relation to serious breaches of criminal law. The distinction is made only for working purposes and the 'seriousness' of the offence is generally related to the maximum sentence that can be imposed.

The detailed classification of crimes used by the Scottish Government to collect criminal statistics contains around 500 crime codes.

This study presents crime statistics using the new set of crime and offence groups approved by the [Scottish Crime Recording Board](#), following a [public consultation](#) of users. Responses to this consultation were published in March 2022 alongside [a report outlining a package of changes to the production of Scotland's recorded crime statistics](#). The changes include the introduction of a new set of crime and offence groups and categories. The largest change is the transfer of Common assault and Stalking from the Miscellaneous offences group to the Non-sexual crimes of violence group, and by extension the recorded crime total for Scotland. To maintain time series analysis, all data was back-revised.

These are grouped in the bulletin as shown in the table below:

| Crimes | Includes |
|---|---|
| Non-sexual crimes of violence and sexual crimes | Murder, attempted murder, serious assault, culpable homicide, robbery, threats and extortion, common assault, stalking. Rape & attempted rape, sexual assault, crimes associated with prostitution, other sexual crimes. |
| Crimes of dishonesty | Housebreaking, theft of motor vehicle, shoplifting, fraud, other crimes of dishonesty. |
| Damage and reckless behaviour | Fire-raising, vandalism, other malicious and reckless conduct. |
| Crimes against society | Crimes against public justice, handling offensive weapons, drugs crimes, crimes against public justice. |

| Offences | Includes |
|--------------|---|
| All offences | Breach of the peace, threatening or abusive behaviour, offensive behaviour at football, threatening communications, racially aggravated harassment, racially aggravated conduct, antisocial behaviour offences, Communications Act 2003 offences, motor vehicle offences. |

Crime definitions

Assault - In Scotland, assault is a common law offence. In order to distinguish between serious and common assaults, Police Scotland use a common definition for serious assault as outlined in the [Scottish Crime Recording Standard](#):

‘An assault or attack in which the victim/reporter sustains injury resulting in detention in hospital as an inpatient, for the treatment of that injury, or any of the following injuries whether or not detained in hospital:

- Fractures (the breaking or cracking of a bone. Note - nose is cartilage not bone, so a 'broken nose' should not be classified unless it meets one of the other criteria)
- Internal injuries
- Severe concussion
- Lacerations requiring sutures which may lead to impairment or disfigurement
- Any other injury which may lead to impairment or disfigurement.’

Threatening or abusive behaviour - Section 38, Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010 - a person commits an offence if,

- a) they behave in a threatening or abusive manner,
- b) the behaviour would be likely to cause a reasonable person to suffer fear or alarm, and
- c) intends by the behaviour to cause fear or alarm or is reckless as to whether the behaviour would cause fear or alarm.

This applies to,

- a) behaviour of any kind including, in particular, things said or otherwise communicated as well as things done, and

b) behaviour consisting of –

- i. a single act, or
- ii. a course of conduct

Standalone racially aggravated offences - the offender asserts towards the person affected, malice and ill-will based on that person's membership (or presumed membership) of a racial group; or the course of conduct or action is motivated (wholly or partly) by malice and ill-will towards members of a racial group based on their membership of that group:

- **Racially aggravated harassment** - a racially aggravated course of conduct, amounting to harassment.
- **Racially aggravated conduct** - to act in a manner, including speech, which is racially aggravated and which causes, or is intended to cause, a person alarm or distress.

Communications Act 2003 offences - Section 127(1) (Non-Sexual) - a person is guilty of an offence if they:

- a) send by means of a public electronic communications network a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character, or
- b) causes any such message or matter to be sent.

How to access background or source data

The data collected for this social research publication:

- are available in more detail through the [Scottish Government open data platform](#)
- are available via an alternative route
- may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors. Please contact JusticeAnalysts@gov.scot for further information.
- cannot be made available by Scottish Government for further analysis as Scottish Government is not the data controller.



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