

Race
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 orientation Nationality Refug ee Profession health
 Belief Age Pregnancy Religion
 Allergy
 Dress
 Autism
 Faith

Afraid
 Off work Moved
 On edge school
Anxious
 Intimidated Depressed Mental
 Avoid People Suicidal Avoid places Nervous Self health
 Cautious Medication
 Injured Isolated harming
 Stressed
 Can't sleep
 Angry

More than Just Words

Experiences of Hate Crime
in Cumbria



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1. Introduction

Hate Crime is defined by the Home Office as ‘any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice towards someone based on a personal characteristic.’ Currently, a crime can be deemed a ‘Hate Crime’ when the victim or any other person believes that one (or more) of five specific strands of a person’s identity were targeted, that is: disability, race, religion, sexual orientation and transgender status.

Nationally, over 105,000 Hate Crimes were recorded by the Police in the 2019/20 financial year¹. In Cumbria, 679 were recorded in the 12 months to March 2021, alongside 99 hate incidents, that is, those reported incidents where the individual’s behaviour do not break the law². The county had the sixth lowest number of Hate Crimes recorded across police force areas in England and Wales in 2019-20³. Data on crimes and incidents reported to Cumbria Constabulary can tell us some information on what the experience of Hate Crime is within the county. However, it is widely recognised, both from studies and by local agencies, that people who experience Hate Crime often do not report it to the Police. To address Hate Crime, a fuller understanding of the nature of Hate Crime people are experiencing needs to be developed.

The Law Commission is currently reviewing the limitation of the definition of Hate Crime to those five protected characteristics, following calls for the expansion of the legislation to cover other aspects of a person’s identity, such as gender and age, as well as other groups such as homeless people and alternative subcultures (for example goths or punks). It is therefore beneficial to take a broad definition of Hate Crime to understand which aspects of their identity people feel have been targeted.

What can be particularly distressing for people affected by Hate Crime is the feeling that they are being targeted because of who they are; that they have been singled out because of an aspect of their identity. Indeed, the Crime Survey for England and Wales, which asks households across the country about their experiences of crime, suggests that victims of Hate Crime are more likely to report that they have been affected by the incident than victims of other types of crime⁴. Understanding the experiences of victims of Hate Crime in Cumbria, the impact which it has had on them and implications for support is an important part of any approach to tackling Hate Crime.

This report provides the findings of a study into Hate Crime in Cumbria, which aims to deepen the understanding of all of these aspects.

¹ “Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2019 to 2020, Home Office Statistical Bulletin 29 20” (2020) London: Home Office.

² Cumbria Constabulary crime data. This shows all recorded crimes which have a Hate Crime indicator attached to the record.

³ “Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2019 to 2020, Home Office Statistical Bulletin 29 20” (2020) London: Home Office.

⁴ As above

2. Aims

A bid by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) to the Home Office Police Science, Technology, Analysis and Research initiative secured funding to support research into experiences of Hate Crime in Cumbria. It was felt that knowledge of the types and level of Hate Crime being experienced in the county was disparate and that both the provision of support for victims and approaches to tackling offending would benefit from bringing this together. This study therefore sought to gain a greater understanding of the nature of Hate Crime and who is being targeted. In doing this, the impacts of recent events including Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic have been considered, alongside any particular vulnerabilities and features of Hate Crime related to the rurality of the county. The research has focussed on victims' experiences and sought to understand the impact Hate Crime has had on them. People who reported being affected by Hate Crime were asked about what help they needed to deal with the impact and how well this was met, to understand any changes or improvements which could be made when support services for victims are developed or commissioned.

Within this research, a broad definition of 'Hate Crime' has been taken, to refer to "any acts of violence or hostility towards someone because of part of their identity". It has not been limited to the five strands of Hate Crime (race or ethnicity, religion or beliefs, sexual orientation, disability, transgender identity) which are centrally monitored by Government, in common with other similar studies. This was done to allow those affected to define what they felt was being targeted and to understand any other motivations for crime and harassment in the county. Consideration was given to which terminology would be best used to describe these types of crimes when consulting with victims, without getting into complex wording which attempted to cover prejudice, hate-motivated behaviour and the distinction between 'crimes' and 'incidents' in policing terms. It was felt that 'Hate Crime' was the terminology most commonly seen and likely to be identified with. The report is based on the feedback of those who felt directly affected by or witnessed what they perceived to be Hate Crime. A full Police investigation would be needed to determine whether it would amount to perpetrator being charged with a 'Hate Crime' under Police crime recording rules.

Throughout the report, the term 'victim' is commonly used to refer to the person who is perceived to be on the receiving end of the crime, harassment or abuse and directly affected by it. This is the terminology also used within criminal justice agencies. It is understood that some people affected or who work with those affected by crime and abuse prefer not to use the term 'victim' because they feel it has connotations of being vulnerable and could imply a 'victim' status. However, it is felt that the term is the best fit to represent the person the Hate Crime is directed at.

3. Methodology

This study has used a number of methods of collecting the experiences of people affected by Hate Crime, both first-hand experiences and those of people who have witnessed it or heard about it from someone they know or work with. An anonymous online survey was created to seek the views of people living and working in the county and to try to capture experiences which may not be reported to the Police or another agency. It was advertised via social media and a press release, which led to some coverage in local newspapers and on local radio in the south of the county. Alongside the survey, victims and witnesses of Hate Crime were encouraged to speak to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner's Victims Advocate to share their experiences. Both the survey and a request for volunteers to

speak in more detail was sent out via the Cumbria Community Messaging network by Cumbria Neighbourhood Watch and to agencies involved in the Safer Cumbria partnership, Safeguarding Adults Board and Safeguarding Children Partnership. A number of community and voluntary organisations and groups were also contacted. This included groups working with people who are Black and from Minority Ethnicities, faith groups via Churches Together in Cumbria, organisations working with people with various disabilities and groups involving people who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (or Questioning) and others (LGBTQ+). To develop the survey questions, the large study carried out for the Leicester Hate Crime Project by the University of Leicester's Centre for Hate Crime Studies was used as a starting point. It was open for 5 weeks.

177 people completed the online survey. The majority (62%) were completing the survey in relation to their own experience, with 15% covering something they had seen or heard. 34 people said that they were talking about the experiences of someone else: a friend or family member (12%) or someone they work with (7%). 4 people responded to the survey to say that they had not experienced any Hate Crime. The majority of experiences covered by the survey were within the last 12 months (68% of them), with a quarter in the last 5 years and a small number (11 people) talking about their most recent experience being over 5 years ago. This should be borne in mind when looking at trends in types of Hate Crime and how well organisations responded, as it may have changed in some cases but overall, the experiences will reflect the current situation, including during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Appendix 1 provides a series of charts and details about the demographics of survey respondents. Overall, these show that there is representation from the different 'protected characteristics', as defined in equality legislation: people who are Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual; people with physical and learning disabilities; people who are Black or from an Ethnic Minority. The number of people from religions other than Christianity was small (numbering 1 to 3 people for each) but the proportion is similar to that in the general population in Cumbria. In terms of the gender of respondents, there were fewer men responding than females and a lower proportion than in the general population. There was a spread of ages but under 18s and older people were less represented than in the general population. Almost 30% of people said that they lived in a village or a remote location which provides the opportunity to look at any particular trends relating to rurality.

32 telephone interviews were conducted plus 1 person corresponded by email. Of those, 14 people were talking about their own experience as a victim, 5 about family members and 10 about clients they have worked with. 2 people spoke about what they had seen or what they had read online and 1 spoke about their employees. Most of these accounts related to Hate Crime targeted at a person's ethnicity or religion, with some speaking about disability Hate Crime and others on several aspects of their identity. People who had experienced Hate Crime related to their sexual orientation did not tend to come forward to speak in more detail. A further 12 people gave their contact details and spoke with the Victims' Advocate about their experiences of crime or harassment. These people felt targeted as individuals or as a family. They gave details of repeated threats, damage to property and intimidating acts against them and felt the force of someone's 'hate' for them. However, on exploring their situation in more detail, these did not relate directly to an aspect of their identity which could be common with other victims. For example, a number explained that they were experiencing this from their neighbours who "just didn't like [them]". These cases have been included in the data on survey respondents and impact but not within the case studies and quotations.

A number of local organisations which work with people with protected characteristics were asked, via email or in telephone interviews, about Hate Crime experienced by people they work with. The experiences of refugees in various parts of the county was shared during the research by a number of people who work with them and who work in areas where refugees have been housed. Representatives from 2 groups working with people who are Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic and a group for people who identify as LGBTQ+ took part in a telephone interview. Representatives from 2 churches came forward, alongside a small number of Third Sector agencies with a broad remit. Service users of Mencap took part in a discussion with the Police and Crime Commissioner about social media which provided some useful feedback about their experience of dealing with online abuse.

Due to the restrictions related to the Covid-19 pandemic, it was not possible to carry out face-to-face interviews or focus groups, nor to go out into the community to collect survey responses or verbal feedback in the same way as other, larger Hate Crime research projects have done. With a lifting of restrictions and longer timescales, further targeted consultation work could be beneficial to supplement feedback, particularly for those who would find an online survey more difficult to complete, for example from those who speak limited English and those with learning disabilities. For these reasons and an understanding that victims of Hate Crime tend to be reluctant to come forward to report it, the research team understood that the survey would not deliver sufficient responses to provide a statistically significant sample which could be used to make estimates about the level of Hate Crime in the general population. However, it was felt that this was a valuable tool to collect qualitative information on experiences and feelings of victims, as well as an indication of the types of crime being experienced. Given the timescales and limitations on methods of consultation and based on previous consultation on similar topics, the number of responses to the survey and, in particular, the number of people willing to provide detailed feedback in an interview was higher than expected.

4. Experiences of Hate Crime

Case Study

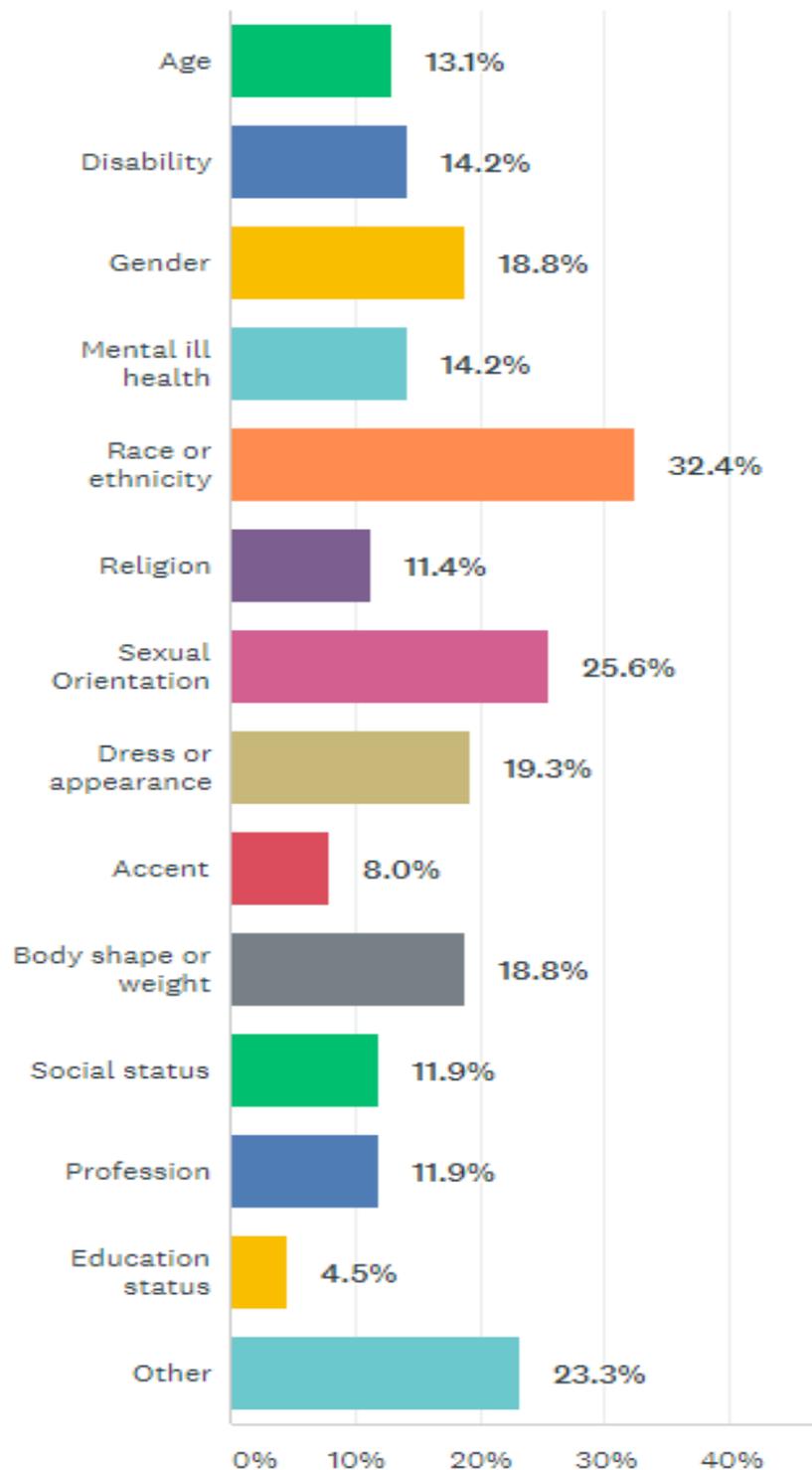
A man who uses a wheelchair drove to the train station and tried to park in a marked disabled parking bay. He found this to be blocked by a taxi driver, who had parked across several disabled bays. When the man asked the taxi driver to move, the taxi driver was verbally abusive and refused. He made comments like: "You people think you deserve things and you've never done a day's work in your life". The victim was shocked and felt torn about what to do about this. He considered calling the local police or British Transport Police but felt that it would not be taken seriously and that he "would hate to tie up resources which may be required elsewhere". The taxi driver said that it had been reported before and nothing had been done about it so he did not feel confident about doing this. Other members of the public and taxi drivers witnessed this and appeared to the victim to be shocked. They did not intervene. The man has also experienced abuse from people who have parked in disabled parking bays at the hospital and at a local supermarket, where they use them to make a quick stop at the cash machine. The victim is a former Royal Marine and police officer who used to engage with members of the public confidently in very challenging situations. Overall, it has made him feel vulnerable and that people have little respect for him. It has had a big impact on him, making him feel a mixture of emotions, including anger, anxiety and mistrust of others.

4.1 Why People Perceived that they Had Been Targeted

Within the research, respondents were asked about which aspect of their identity they felt had been targeted. The most common was race or ethnicity, followed by sexual orientation, dress or appearance, gender and body shape or weight. Other studies of Hate Crime victimisation have had similar findings, in that visual aspects of a person's identity have tended to increase the risk of victimisation.⁵ Other characteristics which were felt to be targeted were disability, mental ill health, age, profession, social status, accent and education status.

Data from Cumbria Constabulary provides a similar picture in that the most frequently recorded strand of Hate Crime was race (400 crimes in the 12 months ending March 2021). This is followed by a much lower reporting of disability (123) and homophobic (121) Hate Crimes. Religious (42) and transphobic (27) Hate Crimes are lower still. Currently, the Police can only put a Hate Crime marker on a crime that has been reported to them, such as a violent crime, where the characteristics which the victim perceives as being targeted fits under one of the five strands which are covered by Hate Crime laws. Thus, other aspects of visual difference as identified in the survey would not be flagged as Hate Crimes so data is not available on this.

⁵ Hardy S, Chakraborti N., (2016) "Healing the Harms: Identifying How Best to Support Hate Crime Victims", Leicester: University of Leicester.



Of the 14 people interviewed who talked about their own experiences, 6 felt the Hate Crime related to their ethnicity or race, 4 related to religion, 2 to disability, 2 to gender, 2 to their accent, 1 to their mental health, 1 to their profession and 1 to their social status. For many of those who felt their ethnicity was targeted, they also felt that another aspect of their identity was the target, although this varied: gender, accent, not being from the area originally, profession and a dislike of people in authority. These interviews revealed some of the specific aspects related to people's identity which were targeted. For example, several people described experiencing anti-Semitism, with a range of incidents which included a far-right flag being put up near their property and signs being posted referring to concentration

camp and holocaust memorials. Two people with physical disabilities reported receiving abuse and being mimicked because of the way they walk. Others explained how they have been challenged aggressively about their right to hold a Blue Badge. Women who wear a hijab were reported to have been verbally abused about it. Several participants felt that they had been targeted because of having a different accent and not being local. Overall, participants appear to have been targeted because of some degree of ‘difference’ identified by the perpetrators, either to themselves or the majority in the population. It was suggested by some that the fact that there is a smaller number of ethnic minorities in the county compared to other areas might lead to them being more likely to be targeted. A small number of examples were given of how they have not experienced the same problems where individuals have moved to larger urban areas. Another participant, an older female, believed that, rather than because of ‘difference’, she has been “taken advantage of because [I was] perceived as vulnerable”. What unites all of the individual victims is a feeling that the incidents were deliberately targeted at them personally because of who they are.

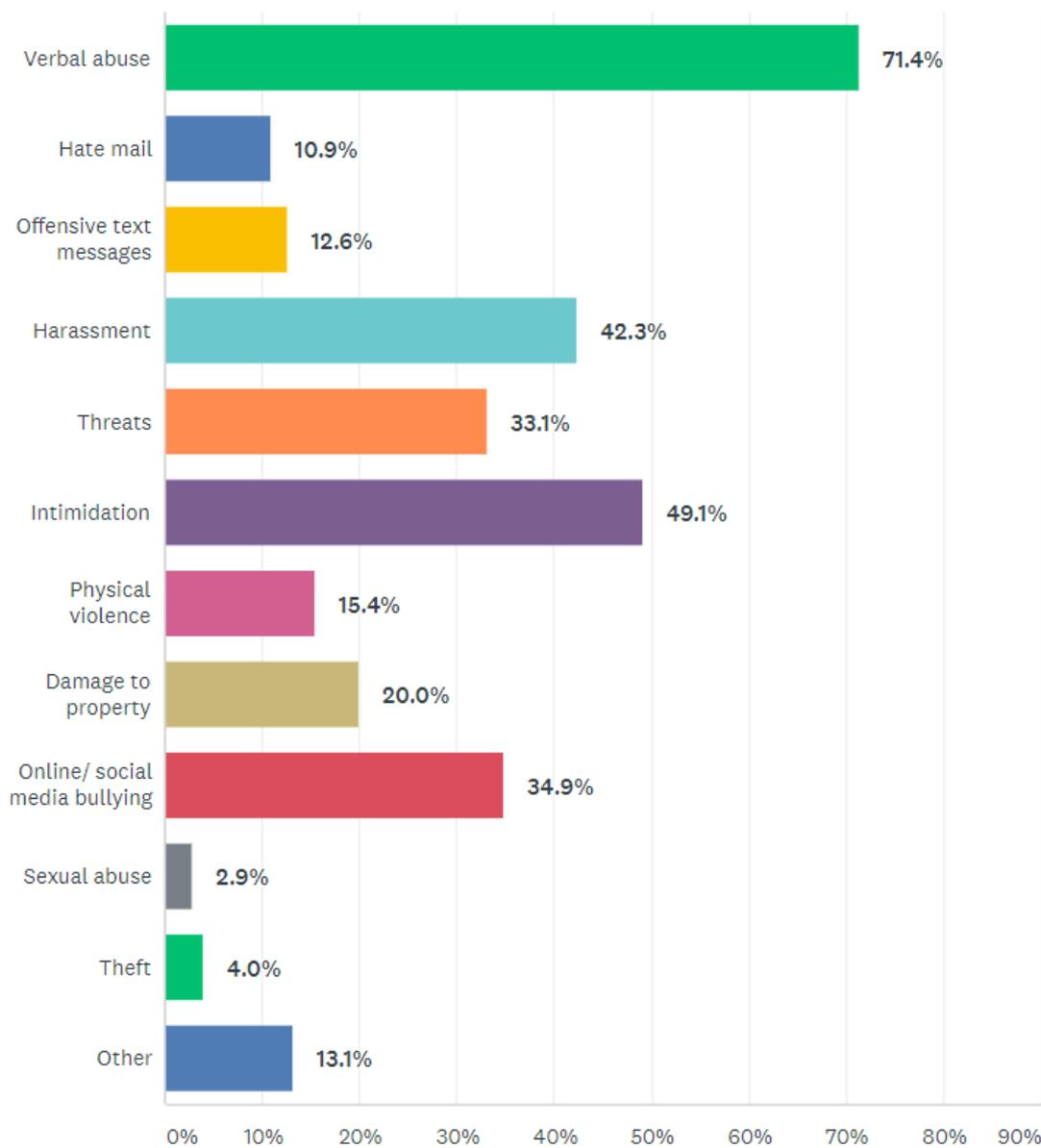
In order to understand if there were any difference between urban and more rural areas, the proportion of people who said they lived in a city or town was compared with those who said they lived in a village or remote location. It is recognised that some villages may be close to larger urban areas, however this was felt to be the best measure of rurality in Cumbria. The table below shows this comparison for the more frequent types of Hate Crime in the survey. This showed that the experience was similar for most types of abuse. Perhaps the most marked difference was in the level of verbal abuse experienced: this was significantly higher for those living in larger urban areas. Threats and online bullying were marginally higher in urban areas, whereas damage to property and harassment were higher in less densely populated areas. It is difficult to draw firm conclusions about this given the relatively small number of respondents and with no respondents having identified specific issues or vulnerabilities related to the nature of Hate Crime in rural areas.

Type of Hate Crime	Number of People who Reported having Experienced that Type		Proportion of People from that Location who Reported Experiencing that Type	
	Living in Villages and Remote Areas	Living in a City or Towns	Living in Villages and Remote Areas	Living in a City or Towns
Verbal abuse	26	83	56.5%	77.6%
Harassment	23	45	50.0%	42.0%
Threats	13	40	28.3%	37.4%
Intimidation	21	55	45.7%	51.4%
Acts of physical violence	7	17	15.2%	15.9%
Damage to property	12	20	26.1%	18.7%
Online or social media bullying	15	42	32.6%	39.3%
Other	6	12	13.0%	11.2%

4.2 Types of Crime Experienced

The survey asked about the “ways” in which people have experienced Hate Crime. The results of this are shown in the chart below. The most common form was verbal abuse,

which 71% of people had experienced. Many comments show an underlying prejudice against people with a particular characteristic and many are overtly racist or homophobic. Racist comments included: “Don’t like black doctors: can’t understand them” and offensive terms were used. A number of people reported being subjected to homophobic language and others were on the receiving end of more general abuse about them being, for example, a “disease” or a “paedophile”. The victim could feel the hate expressed in many of the comments: “[We] would not like to be served by a person like you”, “Why don’t you drink bleach?” and “You should be swinging from a lamppost”. They also involved threats to hurt and even kill people: “I’m going to burn your house down”. These are understandably very intimidating for the people receiving them. It is suspected that, in many cases, the perpetrator is doing so to get a “rise” out of the person or to intimidate them, without thinking much about it or understanding the impact of what they are saying. For example, a number of respondents to the survey had experienced young people shouting across to them on the street or riding past on their bikes shouting racist or homophobic comments.



As well as one-off incidents, there was evidence of repeated targeting of individuals. Intimidation and harassment were the next most frequent forms of Hate Crime experienced,

according to the survey, with almost 50% experiencing intimidation and outright threats being experienced by a third of people. Verbal abuse was the most common form of incident related to race and ethnicity, followed by harrassment, intimidation and online abuse. For sexual orientation, verbal abuse was also experienced most frequently but there was a higher proportion who had experienced online abuse (53%).

Overall, online or social media bullying was experienced with a relatively high frequency (35%) but offensive text messgaes and hate mail were much less common (12% and 11%). It appeared that the relative anonymity of social media was leading to some very prejudice, aggressive and prejudice comments. One respondent explained how “really nasty” and “vicious” comments seemed to be rife in relation to black people, Muslims and immigrants, with threats of violence and even death being made. Whilst this is not solely linked to Cumbria, it felt like it was everywhere on social media. Examples of offensive comments directed towards Gypsies were shared. A number of people cited the comments on news articles on various social media pages and websites as a source of such prejudice and aggressive statements. There was also ‘trolling’ by individuals or groups of people focussed against some victims, making threats. A number of people talked about how offenders filmed what they were doing and posted videos on social media such as TikTok. The interviews highlighted the current challenges of stopping online abuse. People have been banned from using Facebook but later create a new profile under another name and start making the comments again. With the increased reliance on social media to communicate during the Covid-19 pandemic, there is a risk that this type of Hate Crime will continue to increase.

Offenders were reported to have taken things further than being verbally abusive, including urinating through a victim’s letter box, spitting on their doorstep, throwing rubbish and dog poo into their garden and a brick through their windows. Victims experienced damage to property fairly frequently (20%), with cars being a common target and a number of people reporting that their house had been egged. Many of these have been experienced by resettled Syrian refugees, carried out by neighbours and people living in the communities in west and south Cumbria in which they have been housed. Another way in which several people felt targeted was by false allegations being made against them, unrelated to their protected characteristic, for example, for dog fouling and for breaches of Covid-19 lockdown restrictions. Some respondents provided more information on other types of Hate Crime they had experienced: 2 described it as bullying, 1 had experienced nuisance phone calls and 1 had had notes put on their windscreen. What was clear was that the majority of people experienced multiple forms of abuse. Although online abuse did happen in isolation, it was more common for this to be alongside verbal abuse, intimidation, harrassment and sometimes, physical violence.

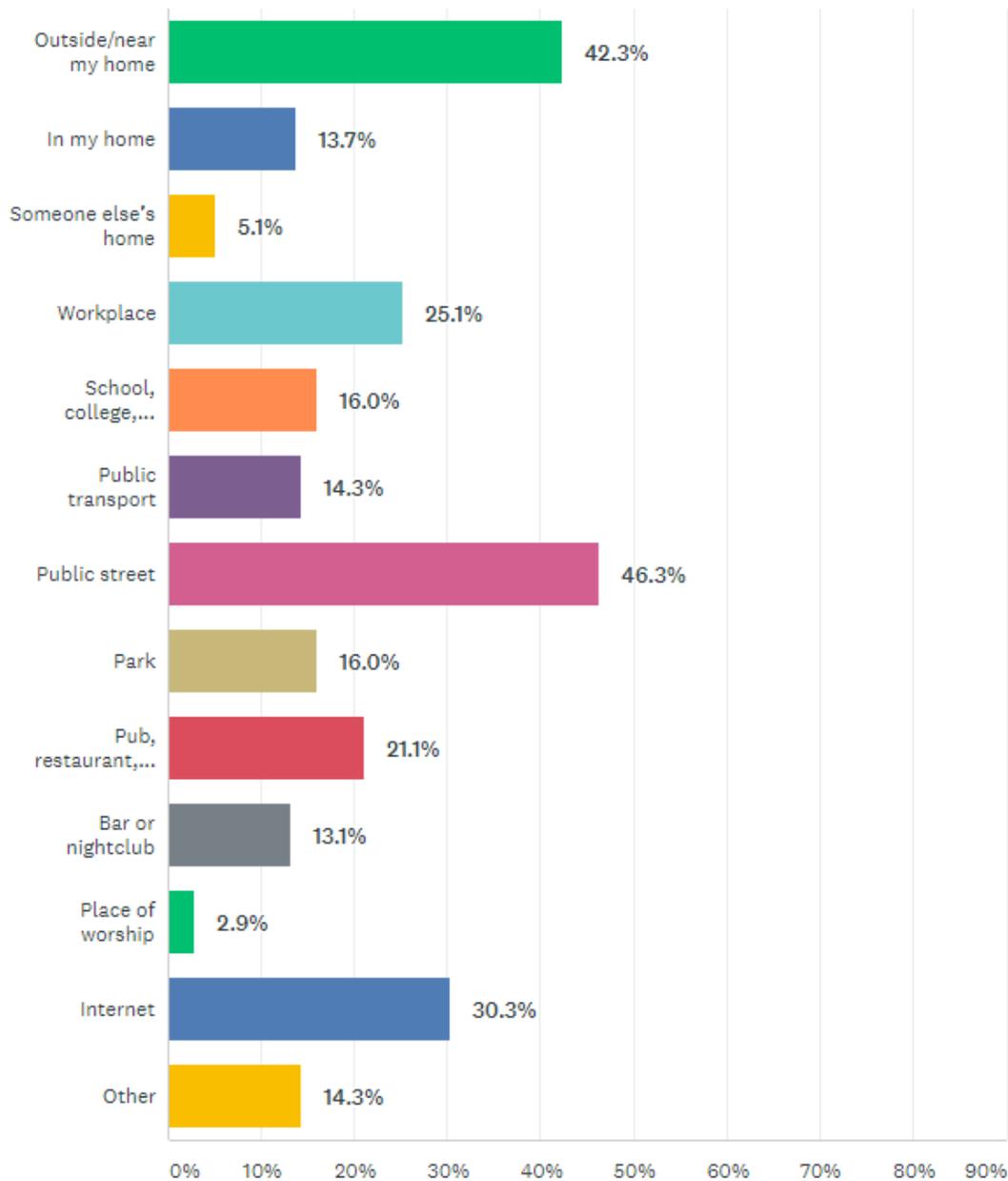
Whilst verbal abuse, intimidation, repeated harrassment and damage to property can have a significant impact on victims’ everyday lives, it is worth noting that serious crimes involving physical violence, theft and sexual abuse were less common experiences. Having said this, a small number of cases of quite serious physical violence were reported, for example, a young person with autism who was attacked. Some cases of inappropriate touching were also shared by female respondents.

Comparing these results with the crimes reported to Cumbria Constabulary, the picture of the types of crimes being committed is similar. The most frequent offences were ‘public order’ offences, specifically ‘Public Fear, Alarm or Distress’ (325, of which 196 were racially or religiously aggravated). There were 203 stalking and harrassment offences and 45 cases of criminal damage. Some serious offences were recorded: 29 offences of violence with

injury, 59 offences of violence without causing injury, 3 robberies of personal possessions, 1 rape, 2 other sexual offences and 6 theft offences.

4.3 Location of the Hate Crime

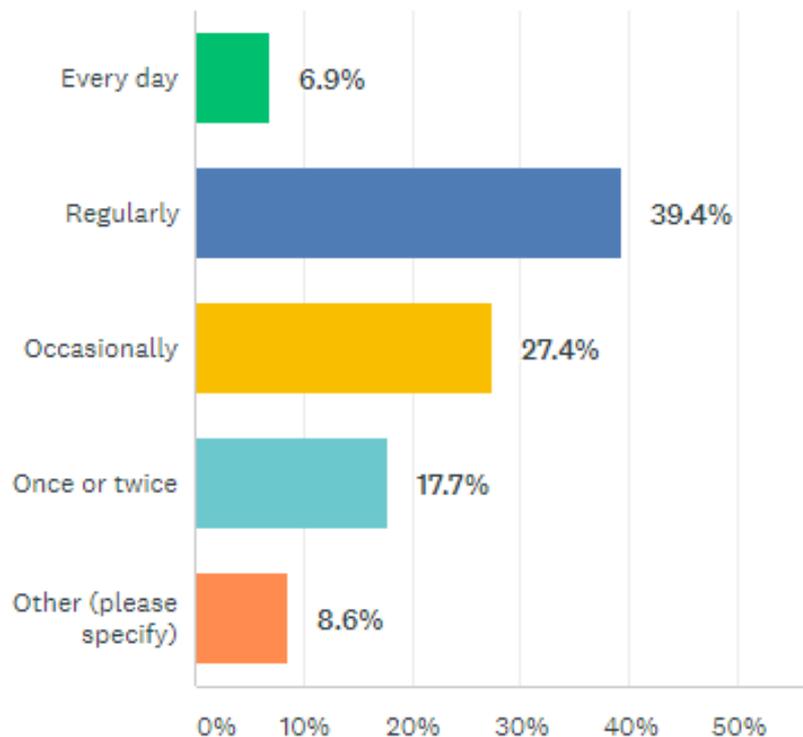
Close to half of all Hate Crime reported on in the survey took place on the street, as shown in the graph below. It is also common for this to be at or near the victims' homes. As may be expected from the types of abuse experienced, the internet was the site of the Hate Crime in almost a third of cases. However, one finding which is surprising is that, in a quarter of cases, the abuse was taking place in the workplace. Examples were given of several larger organisations in the county where workplace "banter" directed at the individual or out of their earshot was felt to represent hate, in particular against someone's race. In one case, notes were pushed under the office door and bananas were left on the employee's desk. Examples were also given of homophobic comments in the workplace. It was alleged that management was not taking sufficient action to address this. The night-time economy (pubs, restaurants, nightclubs and bars) was also the location for some Hate Crime, albeit much less common than in or near someone's home. This may have been impacted upon by the closure of hospitality venues due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Other locations described by respondents were supermarkets and shops (8 respondents) and over the telephone (2 respondents).



The highest number of responses were in relation to Hate Crime experienced in Barrow and Carlisle, with the lowest in Copeland and Eden. This distribution was broadly reflective of the spread of the population in the county, with slightly higher representation of Eden and Barrow and slightly lower of South Lakeland, Allerdale, Carlisle and Copeland. None varied by more than 6 percentage points for the proportion in the population. Similarly, Police data shows that in the 12 months to April 2021, the locations with the highest number of Hate Crimes and hate incidents recorded were in Barrow and Carlisle.

4.4 Frequency of Incidents Experienced

Although a significant minority (12 people, 6.9%) experienced Hate Crime every day, it was common for the incidents to happen regularly (39.4% of cases). The chart below shows the responses to the survey in relation to this.



Overall, the results indicate that the Hate Crime was not a one-off incident in the vast majority of cases. For those who had experienced racist abuse, many commented on how they had lived with it their whole lives and a number of people who were LGBTQ+ explained that they had been targeted from when they were young. Some respondents to the survey felt that prejudice is widespread. One man felt that there is “a low-grade but ever-present undertone to comments and conversation”. Other incidents seemed to be have triggered by events, such as moving into an area or an individual incident which had then escalated. Police data on repeat victims of Hate Crime shows that 280 people had experienced at least 2 Hate Crimes within the 12 month period to 31st March 2021, a total of 761 crimes, with the majority experiencing between 2 and 4 Hate Crimes and 11 people experiencing more. However, this was not everyone’s experience. One respondent, whose child has a learning disability and from an ethnic minority, said: “He has always been at least tolerated and usually welcomed in Cumbria and England in the [time] he has been here. The over emphasis of Hate Crime in a tolerant country risks making people scared and may encourage a couple of idiots.”

4.5 Changes in Hate Crime as a Result of Recent Events

In order to understand how Hate Crime might be influenced by wider events affecting society and whether this is a short-term impact or a permanent change, the research asked for views on whether they had experienced Hate Crime linked to three significant recent events. The study was carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic and during the third lockdown so the researchers were interested to find out whether the restriction on movement and increase in time spent at home had led to any changes in Hate Crime. Most respondents had not noticed any difference but almost 10% of people felt that it had. The introduction of compulsory wearing of masks in shops and other indoor premises was reported to have had a negative impact for people with disabilities, both visible and invisible. Several people who are exempt from wearing them reported how they had received abuse for not doing so or felt that this had provided another grounds for people to target them. As one respondent said: “It

is bad enough that by not wearing a mask, you have to wear 'on your sleeve' the fact you have a reason severe enough to warrant not wearing one". On top of this feeling of vulnerability or loss of privacy about sensitive characteristics such as disability or illness, several people had experienced verbal abuse and felt they had been questioned and treated unfairly in shops. They found this upsetting as it felt like they were being exposed to scrutiny for their illness or disability. A couple of respondents had experience of people who were classed as "foreigners", though may be British from a minority ethnic group, being blamed for "bringing the virus in[to the country]". One respondent reported how the person who was directing abuse at her had used the pandemic as an opportunity to report her falsely for breaches of the restrictions.

Case Study

A man of Asian ethnicity, who lives in West Cumbria, was queuing at the checkout, observing the social distancing rules by staying 2 metres behind the person in front and also wearing a face mask. An older man came and stood in front of him in the queue. Thinking that the older man had not realised he was in the queue, the man behind him said: "Excuse me, I'm in the queue". The older man looked at him and then headed to the basket checkout instead. As he did, he mumbled something inaudibly. When the younger man asked what he'd said, the older man first replied "I didn't say anything", then he paused and said "It's because of f*****s like you that we have to wear these". The victim felt that the older man was referring to his race and blaming people of Asian ethnicity or those who appear "foreign" for the pandemic and related restrictions. He was in disbelief and shock at what he had heard. It made him feel both angry and anxious, as well as mistrustful of people.

8% of respondents to the survey felt that there had been an impact on Hate Crime linked to Brexit. Several people interviewed (2 organisations whose role includes taking reports of or supporting people with Hate Crime and 1 individual) felt that Hate Crime increased around the time of Brexit. One commented that it had "stirred up hatred and provided licence for people to say and do what they want". Another highlighted that they felt this had had a massive impact on driving abuse, particularly against immigrants and certain minority groups, on social media, increasing threats and "vicious" comments. This fits with national evidence of a 'spike' in Hate Crime around the time of the EU referendum.

Similarly, 8% of people who responded to the survey felt that there had been some changes in Hate Crime linked to the creation of the Black Lives Matter movement during 2020. Details of how this had had an impact were limited so it is unclear what specific types of behaviour were being carried out. Other feedback about the impact of national and international events came from a mother whose children are from a minority ethnic group. She felt that relations were better during the 1990s and early 2000s when schools and other agencies had funding to do work on equality. She had seen a deterioration in recent years, partly, she felt, fuelled by Brexit and international politics, amongst other factors. More locally, one interviewee commented how the visits of well-known far right figures could act to stir up tension in their area. Overall, therefore, significant events can be used by some to act on their existing prejudices, leading to an increase or change in the nature of Hate Crime. This is something for local agencies to be aware of in terms of mitigating the impact on Hate Crime of any significant future events.

4.6 How the Hate Crime Was Addressed

A number of people who had experienced or witnessed verbal or online abuse had described how they had challenged it (verbally or online) or had put forward their perspective

on social media. As the case study below shows, some have been successful in stopping the abuse by doing this. However, there were concerns about doing so for some, particularly in some circumstances, such as where a child was present. One parent described how she did not want to make a “big thing” out of a racist insult in front of her child. Despite this, it appeared to feel like a significant issue, as it made her feel “anxious and angry”. Another example of where someone had taken their own steps to stop the Hate Crime was by installing CCTV at their property. The ability of a victim to deal with the issues themselves depends on a number of factors and some victims face barriers to doing this, such as a difficulty in communicating in the same language. Given the severity and volatility of these incidents, it would be concerning if there had been examples of people taking the law into their own hands.

Case Study

About 6 months ago, during the Covid-19 restrictions, a woman living the south of Cumbria started to receive abuse online and could see that someone had spat on her doorstep. Nails and screws were left out near her car, resulting in her having to buy new tyres and there was damage in her garden. This made her feel angry and anxious, as well as suspicious of people. She had moved into the village from another county and was conscious that she had a different accent but was not sure whether that was why she had been targeted. She did not know who was carrying out these acts but had suspicions of someone in the village. She decided not to involve the Police at this stage and felt that the best approach was to post on the village Facebook page, explaining what she was going through and that she would report anyone she saw for Hate Crime if it continued. After this, the damage and online abuse stopped.

A number of victims felt that the public’s right to freedom of speech was seen to be paramount and it meant that what they perceived as Hate Crime was allowed to continue. In relation to social media, some felt that it was not being dealt with adequately and not being challenged by others. As one respondent said: “It’s easy for people to hide behind their keyboards”. In a number of cases, the perpetrator had been blocked or had their profile deleted by the provider but this had not stopped them from continuing the abuse at a later date under a new profile. This reflects national calls for greater action by social media platforms to take tougher action to address bullying and harassment. This study also highlighted the difficulty victims may face in knowing how to deal with online abuse and their vulnerability to it. For example, the meeting with Mencap service users showed that they had struggled to know how to deal with people who were being “rude” and needed support to recognise that they were in control of who they became ‘friends’ with and who could comment on their posts.

Those who had experienced verbal abuse or harassment in the workplace felt that it should be dealt with more robustly by the management. There was an indication that this was something which employers were not used to dealing with and that the lack of decisive action meant that the prejudiced comments continued unchecked. A small number of young people responded to the online survey to share their experiences of being on the receiving end of abuse and who looked to the authorities, in one case their school, to intervene. Again, this was felt to be insufficient and did not reflect the severity of the situation as they saw it.

Recommendation 1: Criminal justice agencies should work with community organisations and groups to develop an appropriate intervention for perpetrators of Hate Crime to prevent escalation.

Recommendation 2: Partner agencies should review what more can be done locally to deal with offensive comments (which constitute Hate Crime) on social media.

4.7 Involving the Police

Although the main focus of this study was on the nature of Hate Crime and the resulting support needs of victims, the level of willingness to report to the Police forms part of that picture and so survey participants were asked whether they had done so. This triggered a significant amount of information on people's experience of reporting Hate Crime to the Police.

47.2% of respondents to the survey said that they did report it to the Police (and 91% of people answered the question). Nationally, it has been shown that victims of Hate Crime do not tend to report their experiences to the Police or other agencies. The most recent national data available suggests that a similar percentage of Hate Crimes come to the attention of the Police as was indicated in the survey (47%).⁶ Data from Cumbria Constabulary shows that there was an increasing trend of Hate Crimes being recorded up until 2020, in line with national trends. This might indicate that the public is becoming increasingly confident in reporting what is already believed to be happening. However, nationally, it has been attributed to improvements in Police crime recording procedures, as well as spikes in Hate Crime following certain events such as terrorist attacks and the EU referendum⁷. Reporting of Hate Crimes to Cumbria Constabulary plateaued in the 2020-21 financial year, whereas there has been a reduction in reported crime overall, believed to be as a result of the lockdown restrictions.

For those who did not report to the Police, the main reasons were that the person themselves did not feel that the incidents were serious enough or felt that the Police would not do so. Some believed that there was not sufficient evidence to prove what was going on so there was no benefit in involving the Police. Whilst there does have to be prioritisation of Police resources and a lack of corroborating evidence can lead to them taking no further action, it is a concern that people who have felt the incidents are significant enough to take the time to complete a survey did not feel it was right to report it. One interviewee highlighted a reluctance to give a statement and to have to go to court.

For those who had reported the incidents to the Police, the feedback centred on the action taken. Some positive feedback was provided. Respondents' frustrations centred on two main issues: feeling their case was not being taken seriously enough and wanting the response to be more joined up, both within the police force itself and with other agencies. In relation to the first issue, 6 people felt that the officer(s) involved had not understood the circumstances fully and had not recognised the crimes as Hate Crimes, that is, that they were targeting an aspect of that person's identity. This fact was very important for the victims. In terms of the victims' experience, a number reported that they found dealing with a different officer each time made them feel that they were having to repeat their story and that they were not making any progress. It also meant that any efforts to stop further Hate Crime were not co-ordinated. Some interviewees called for tougher action against those who commit Hate Crime.

It may be the case that those people who were not satisfied with their experience of reporting were more likely to volunteer to provide feedback to the Victims' Advocate than

⁶ "Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2019 to 2020, Home Office Statistical Bulletin 29 20" (2020) London: Home Office.

⁷ As above

people who have been happy with how it was dealt with. There was recognition amongst some respondents of the challenge of gaining sufficient evidence of offences for the Police to take action and that resources needed to be prioritised. Indeed, Cumbria Constabulary data on how crimes flagged as Hate Crimes are dealt with shows that a high proportion are closed without a resolution. The main reasons are that there are evidential difficulties (44% of cases), sometimes coupled with the victim not supporting or withdrawing support for Police action (22% of cases). In many cases where detailed feedback on their experiences was given, it was clear that it was a very complex situation, with allegations being made on all sides and each person feeling aggrieved by the actions of the others. It is perhaps understandable then that the Police face challenges in investigating and taking action against any party in some cases. However, there is learning which the Constabulary can draw from this feedback. Various processes are already in place within the Constabulary to review how Hate Crime incidents have been dealt with, including seeking feedback from victims. The OPCC also chairs a panel of representatives from a range of agencies which reviews Police cases which have been dealt with by way of an out of court 'disposal' (sanction) and this looks at cases of Hate Crime. The Quality Assessment Framework is used by criminal justice agencies, led by the OPCC, to review whether a sample of cases, including Hate Crime, were dealt with in accordance with the national Code of Practice for Victims of Crime. These are all positive approaches which provide the opportunity for learning and continually improving how Hate Crimes are dealt with.

Recommendation 3: Cumbria Constabulary should incorporate the findings on the impact of Hate Crime and anonymised case studies into officer training and briefings on Hate Crime.

Recommendation 4: The dip sampling of cases by the Out of Court Disposals Scrutiny Panel and Victims' Quality Assessment Framework work should continue to look at action taken on cases of alleged Hate Crime and a methodology developed to identify cases which could potentially be Hate Crime but have not been treated as such.

A different solution which may address some of the frustrations of victims about the lack of change to their situation would be to bring the victim and offenders together restoratively. 7.6% of people asked about their support needs said that would have liked the chance to tell the person who had committed the Hate Crime about the impact it had had. Restorative Justice is one example of where the parties could come together and would offer an opportunity to encourage the people committing the Hate Crime to understand the other person's perspective. Given that a number of cases identified in this research involved people making comments in passing and at a distance, across the street or via social media, they are unlikely to see the full impact of this abuse on the victim and potentially not thinking much about the impact of what they are saying.

Recommendation 5: Cumbria Constabulary and Remedi, as provider of restorative justice services, should promote the use of restorative justice in relation to Hate Crime.

4.8 Reporting

A further issue that was identified was that victims may not be aware that what they are experiencing is a 'Hate Crime' and be unaware of the different opportunities for reporting it. For example, a Citizens' Advice Bureau explained how they have worked with people who approached them about other issues and who have described experiencing what amounted to a suspected Hate Crime. The worker explained to them about Hate Crime and supported them with reporting it. Similarly, a housing association representative explained how their

tenants do make use of housing offices to report a range of issues, including antisocial behaviour and Hate Crime. Given some of the feedback provided is of a negative perception of the value of reporting Hate Crime to the Police, other agencies have a role in identifying potential cases of Hate Crime and supporting people to make an informed choice about reporting.

Recommendation 6: Criminal justice agencies should engage with organisations who work with people from different protected characteristics and community organisations to develop appropriate initiatives to encourage greater reporting of Hate Crime.

5. The Impact on those Affected

From the examples of verbal abuse shared by people involved in this research, it is understandable that a victim would feel threatened and targeted. It is not surprising that someone who repeatedly hears comments that tell them that people wish them to be harmed will eventually lose self-esteem and feelings of self-worth, leaving them depressed, self-harming or even suicidal. One example given was of a group of young people who had organised a Pride Day for LGBTQ+. Any positive feeling they had gained in organising a successful event was negated by the “outpouring of vile abuse” on social media after the event.

Whilst an individual perpetrator or a professional might feel that what was said were just words and that nothing more threatening was intended, it is clear that these words have a significant impact, affecting their whole life. Respondents told us that this made the victims afraid to go out, that they would avoid certain places and always feel scared and vulnerable. Events can have a lasting impact on the victim: “That incident happened over 5 years ago, but when I’m out shopping it is always in the back of my mind. Will I run into another person like him?” Where it had happened in the workplace, they now felt “really uncomfortable” about going to work. A number of people also felt uneasy or unable to use social media for fear of receiving “angry and aggressive” comments because of who they are. It had affected many people’s mental health, making them feel depressed, anxious and unable to sleep. Some had started to self-harm and had suicidal feelings.

How Hate Crime Has Affected Victims

Effect	Number	Percentage of respondents to that question
Anxious	119	73.5%
Angry	96	59.3%
Stressed	91	56.2%
Vulnerable	87	53.7%
Depressed	80	49.4%
Scared	77	47.5%
Avoid going to certain places	76	46.9%
Not trust other people	73	45.1%
Have trouble sleeping	61	37.7%
Irritable	58	35.8%
Afraid to go outdoors	42	25.9%
Other	34	21.0%
Suicidal	31	19.1%
Have time off work	21	13.0%
Aggressive towards other people	20	12.3%
Hurt myself/ self-harm	16	9.9%
Avoid using public transport	15	9.3%
Have time off school, college or university	14	8.6%
Dependent on alcohol	5	3.1%
Dependent on drugs	3	1.9%

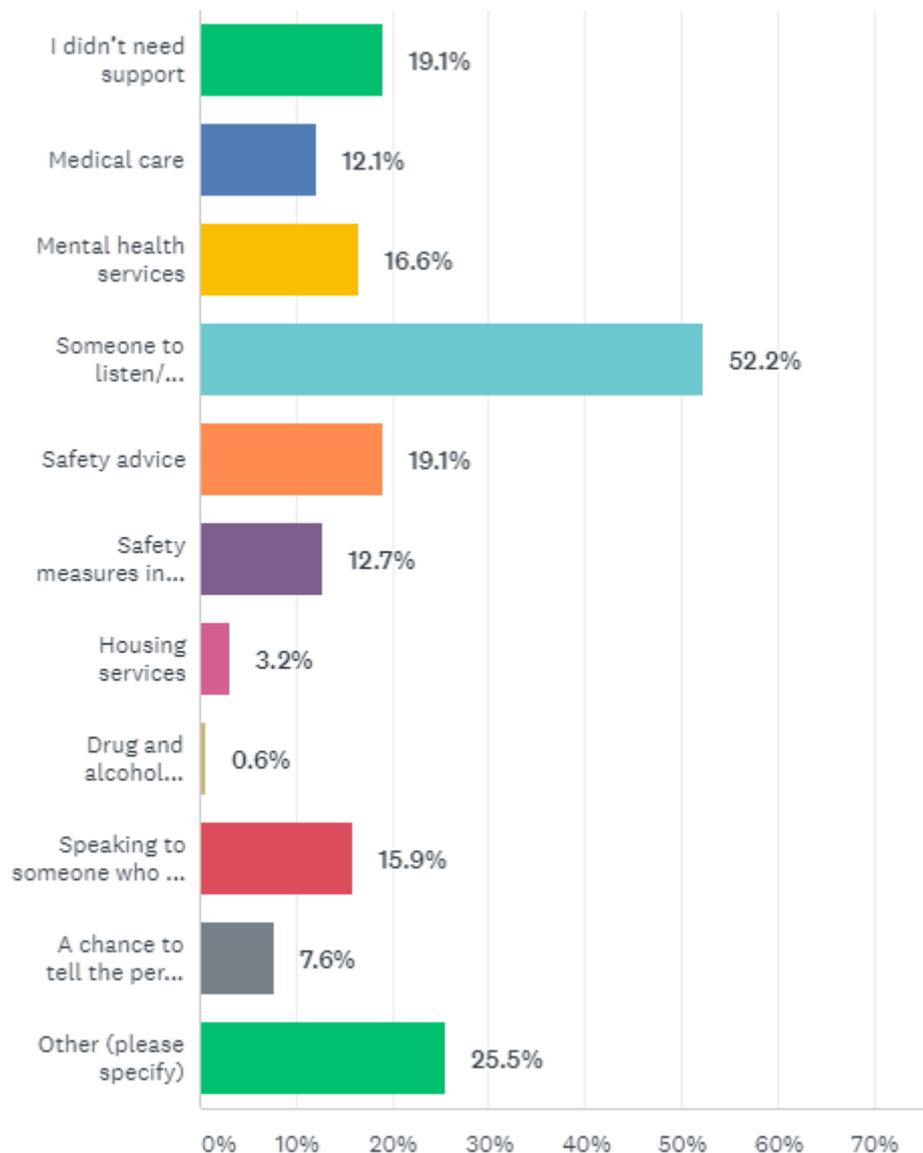
The most common impacts, according to participants in the online survey, were emotional: feeling anxious (73.5%), angry (59.3%), stressed (56.2%) and vulnerable (53.7%). Other impacts were as a result of those feelings: avoiding going to certain places (46.9%) and being afraid to go outdoors (35.8%), as well as 'not trust[ing] other people' (45.1%). Over a third of respondents said they had trouble sleeping as a result (37.7%). The level of people reporting turning to drugs or alcohol as a coping mechanism is fortunately low. It should be borne in mind that people with a dependency are probably unlikely to be completing an online survey, however this was not a trend picked up from discussions with support agencies.

The impact on young people who are being targeted can be huge, leading to them being cut off from social contact with others. Several examples were given where families had moved their children to a different school to stop them being targeted or had started to home school them. A range of emotional impacts has led some young people to self-harm, have longer-term mental health difficulties and even be suicidal.

The impact of repeated Hate Crime on some refugees' families has been significant. This has contributed to them moving out of the area. As one person working to support resettled refugees said: "This confirmed to the family that they should leave the area and move to a multicultural city where they would not feel 'other'."

6. Supporting Victims of Hate Crime

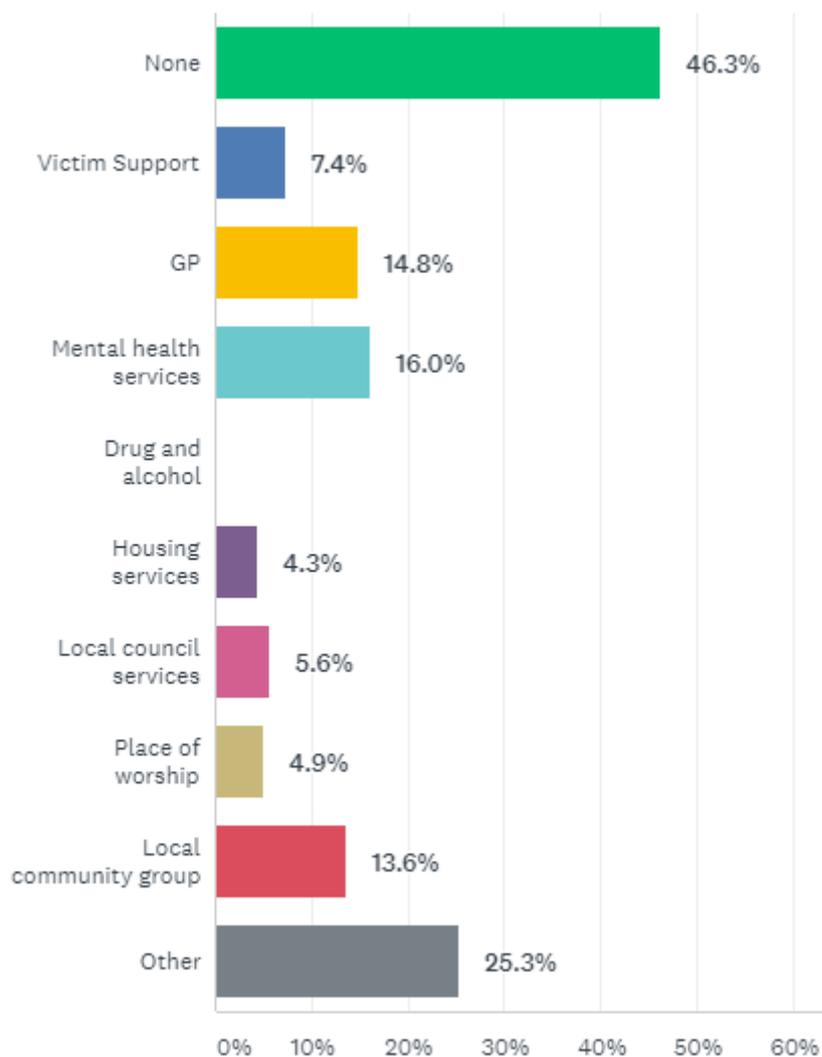
6.1 What Support People Affected Feel they Need



In terms of the support which victims who felt targeted with Hate Crime feel they needed, having someone to listen to them or emotional support was by far the greatest need (over 50% of respondents). This is perhaps not surprising given that the main impacts victims experience are emotional. Being able to speak to someone who had gone through a similar experience was also felt to be helpful (almost 16% of respondents). Linked to this, a significant minority felt they needed mental health services which confirms the level of impact which Hate Crimes can have on someone's mental health. The need for (physical) medical care was lower but still required for a tenth of the people who responded. Aside from this, the support needed varied: some people wanted advice and measures to make them safer and, importantly, to help them feel safer. The need for drug and alcohol services was low, reflecting the low number of responses about drug and alcohol dependency, as was the need for housing services. In addition, 11 people said they needed help from the Police, 6 from family or friends and 3 said they had sought support from other local organisations and

groups. Almost a quarter of people who responded did not feel that they needed support from others.

By comparison, the survey asked about which services had been accessed in practice. Despite 127 people identifying the need for some kind of support, only 87 number accessed some. Mental health services were one of the most accessed, which fits with the level of need identified by respondents. It is interesting to see that a similar number of people approached their GP to get support and this highlights the importance of health agencies, alongside others, having an understanding of the impact of Hate Crime in order to direct victims to appropriate services. Local community groups provided support to 13.6%, more so than places of worship and the specialist service run by Victim Support (used by 7.4%). This service could potentially have met the need of a larger group of people for emotional support but some responses suggested that this was also met by family or other support networks. Wider services such as housing and council services were used by some but not in the same numbers as other services.



6.2 How Well their Support Needs Were Met

46.9% of people agreed that the organisation(s) they sought help from met their needs. However, 43.8% of respondents did not feel that they had done so. Overall, the feedback on the reasons why they felt that the support had not met their needs was limited. It might be

expected that they felt that their emotional support needs had not been met but in fact, the most frequent concern was the fact that they felt that the action taken to resolve the situation was not sufficient compared with their expectations. A small number also commented that they still felt the impact of the incidents despite the help (longer-term problems specifically mentioned were having nightmares, panic attacks or mental health issues). Although not specifically asked, respondents did not feed back that they had not known how to access it and only one said that they felt the service was not approachable. Professionals, however, highlighted a risk the Covid-19 pandemic may reduce victims' awareness of and access to available support services. It appears to be the case that, as with other types of crime, some victims will be more likely to access support than others and many will choose not to use longer-term support.

Recommendation 7: The OPCC, as a commissioner of support services for victims of crime, and the Clinical Commissioning Groups, as commissioners of mental health services, should take account of the feedback about victims' needs and experience of accessing services.

7. Prevention

One recommendation for change which many interviewees discussed was the need to change attitudes about people of different ethnicity, religion, sexuality and other characteristics. For some, work to "educate" (as they described it) children and young people about others with different characteristics than them was felt to be key, particularly for those who had experienced verbal abuse from young people. By building some understanding of what is and is not acceptable in different cultures and why people dress or behave as they do, it was felt that some of the barriers could be broken down. As a person's fundamental values are formed at an early age, this would need to start with younger children, not just at the point where individuals start to throw insults and commit intimidating behaviour. There needs to be an awareness that changing a person's attitudes later on may be difficult but given the success of programmes which encourage young people (and adults) to understand the impact of actions on others, initiatives which promote empathy and understanding another person's point of view would appear to be beneficial. One specific example where work to develop mutual understanding may have helped is the introduction of resettled refugees into certain parts of the county. The interviews highlighted the intimidation which refugee families have faced. It was felt that this could have been reduced by the Local Authority support worker introducing the neighbouring families to them and for local families to know why they are there and what they have fled from.

Allied to this, the study revealed a number of examples of where members of the community are working to promote better understanding and more inclusivity in local communities. The Victims Advocate heard how community groups have been supporting refugees from Syria to resettle into Cumbria. This includes Carlisle Refugee Action Group who are working on the potential for making the city a 'City of Sanctuary' for refugees and asylum seekers. A number of individuals and groups have also taken on the role of challenging negative perceptions and prejudice comments in the media, particularly social media.

For some participants, a regular, high-profile local campaign in the media was needed, to reach a large number of members of the public and to start to change mindsets and challenge myths by providing positive stories about people from different backgrounds. In the case of refugees, examples were given of refugees who have professions in their home country but are not able to practise in the UK at present so are working hard to earn a living. It was felt that these case studies would help to dispel myths that they are taking "taking our

jobs” and claiming benefits. This could go further in encouraging people who witness Hate Crime not to be a ‘bystander’, as the national organisation Stonewall, which supports people who are LGBTQ+, terms it. This clearly needs to be done carefully so as not to put people at risk or encourage vigilant-type incidents. Campaigns such as ‘Show Racism the Red Card’ might be examples of where this has been mainstreamed.

Recommendation 8: Partner agencies should work together to identify and put in place appropriate initiatives for children and young people which promote understanding of different cultures, ethnicities, disability, sexual orientations (as appropriate to their age) and which promote empathy.

Recommendation 9: Partner agencies should consider the findings of this report to develop public communications campaigns which help to challenge prejudice and promote positive stories about people with different protected characteristics.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has shown that, whilst the number of Hate Crimes and incidents reported to Cumbria Constabulary is relatively small compared with other areas, people in the county are clearly experiencing hate against an aspect of their identity and in many cases, on a regular basis. It is happening across the county, in both urban and rural areas and towards all of the groups covered by national Hate Crime monitoring. People are being targeted because of an aspect of 'difference' perceived by the aggressor, often a visible characteristic or their dress, or due to a perceived vulnerability. This understandably makes the people affected feel threatened and vulnerable themselves. It is to an extent positive that the most common types of Hate Crime experienced are verbal abuse and offences such as damage to property or antisocial acts, rather than serious violence. However, the 'hate' which is being expressed in this abuse is quite shocking and understandably leaves victims feeling threatened, unsafe and vulnerable, affecting how they conduct their everyday life. The experiences shared by those who took part in the study have shown that the impact of the Hate Crime is significant, both on emotional well-being, mental health, their property and in some cases, their physical health. Sadly, some people who responded have just accepted that they have to put up with the incidents and many have adapted their life to avoid the triggers. However, many other people felt they needed someone to talk to or emotional support, as well as mental health services. Overall, the support needs of victims of Hate Crime are not complex. In many cases, what they felt they really needed was action by the authorities, particularly by the Police, against the offender, as they felt unable to stop it themselves. This all provides important learning both for agencies who deal with Hate Crime and for those who commission relevant services which can provide support.

The study identified several trends which it is important for agencies with a role in tackling Hate Crime to note. It was clear that online abuse, particularly via social media, was increasing and was felt to be particularly offensive and threatening. It felt relatively uncontrolled to respondents, allowing perpetrators to go unchecked in making offensive and threatening comments. Other trends were seen in relation to Covid-19, which had led to an increase in abuse and feelings of vulnerability for some people who could not wear a mask, as well as the blaming of people from minority ethnic groups for the spread of the virus. Events around Brexit and the Black Lives Matter movement were felt to have stirred up hatred and made people feel that they could be more open about their prejudices against people of other nationalities and who are from a minority ethnic background.

As one participant said, "[It makes me feel] sad. Just that I can't believe people still have so much hatred in this day and age." The study found evidence of people working hard to challenge prejudice but there is more to be done to encourage members of the community, from an early age, to understand and respect people from different backgrounds. This is the only way in which Hate Crime can be tackled and the only way to give a chance of living free from abuse to everyone who has an aspect of their identity which is 'different' from the majority.

A number of recommendations are made in this report, which centre around 3 themes: dealing with Hate Crime incidents, support for victims and prevention.

Dealing with Hate Crime

Recommendation 1: Criminal justice agencies should work with community organisations and groups to develop an appropriate intervention for perpetrators of Hate Crime to prevent escalation.

Recommendation 2: Partner agencies should review what more can be done locally to deal with offensive comments (which constitute Hate Crime) on social media.

Recommendation 3: Cumbria Constabulary should incorporate the findings on the impact of Hate Crime and anonymised case studies into officer training and briefings on Hate Crime.

Recommendation 4: The dip sampling of cases by the Out of Court Disposals Scrutiny Panel and Victims' Quality Assessment Framework work should continue to look at action taken on cases of alleged Hate Crime and a methodology developed to identify cases which could potentially be Hate Crime but have not been treated as such.

Support for Victims

Recommendation 5: Cumbria Constabulary and Remedi, as provider of restorative justice services, should promote the use of restorative justice in relation to Hate Crime.

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Prevention

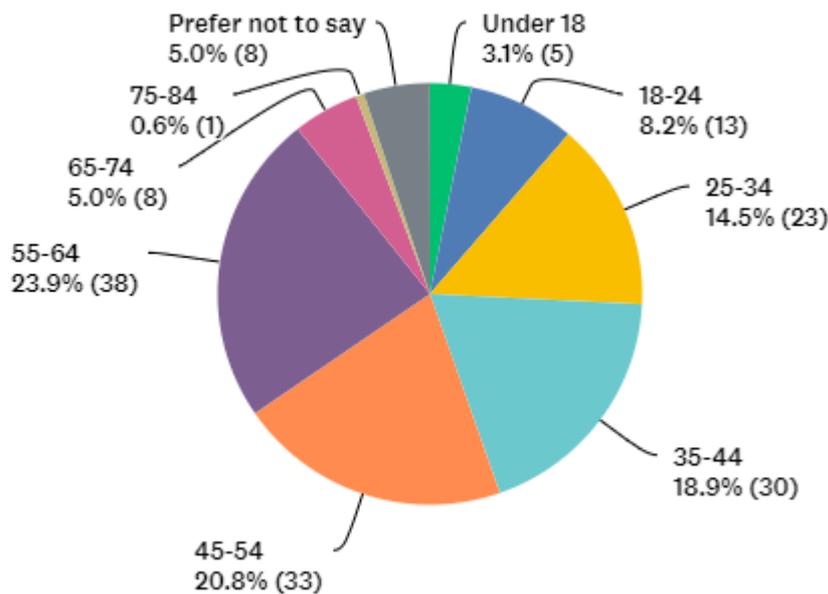
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Recommendation 9: Partner agencies should consider the findings of this report to develop public communications campaigns which help to challenge prejudice and promote positive stories about people with different protected characteristics.

Appendix 1

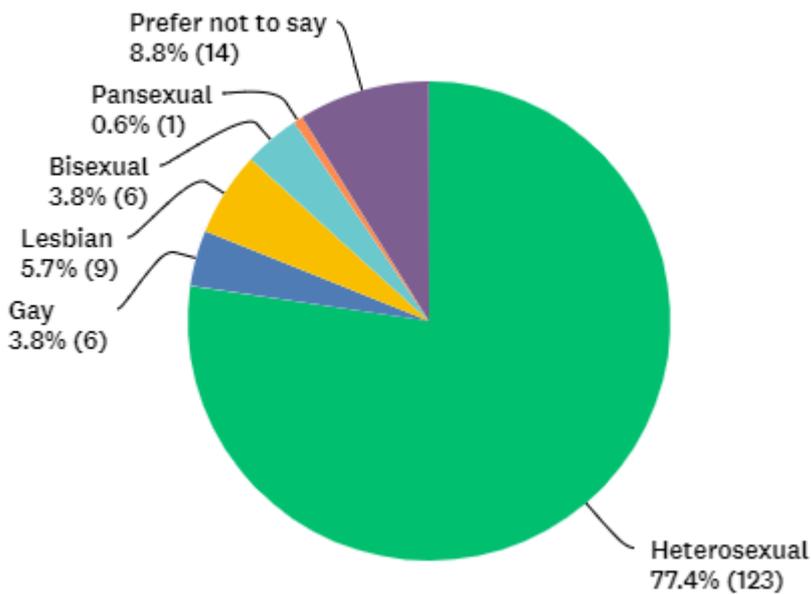
The following charts show the demographics of the respondents to the survey, for those who chose to give that information.

There is a spread of people responding from across the adult age ranges, although a lower number of people age 65 and over, which perhaps reflects the higher level of use of social media and the internet amongst younger adults compared with older people. Young people under the age of 18 are much less represented than in the general population. However, several detailed accounts by family members and support workers talked about the Hate Crime experienced by children and young people.

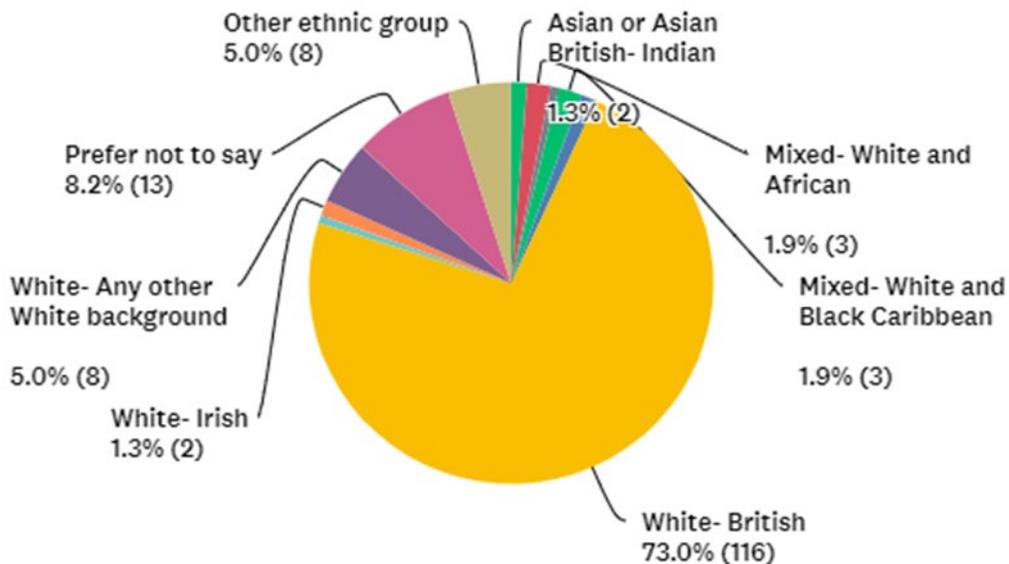


There was a higher representation of females in the responses (58.5%) than of males (32.7%). One person described themselves as transfeminine. 8% of respondents said they preferred not to say.

In terms of sexuality, the majority of respondents were heterosexual (77.4%), as can be seen in the chart. However, the proportion of people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and pansexual, when taken together, is significantly higher than the proportion estimated in the general population, although those estimates are recognised to have limitations because of the sensitivity of disclosing this to others for some people. It is not clear from the data how many people were transgender or transitioning to another gender but the individual responses show that there were some, albeit few.

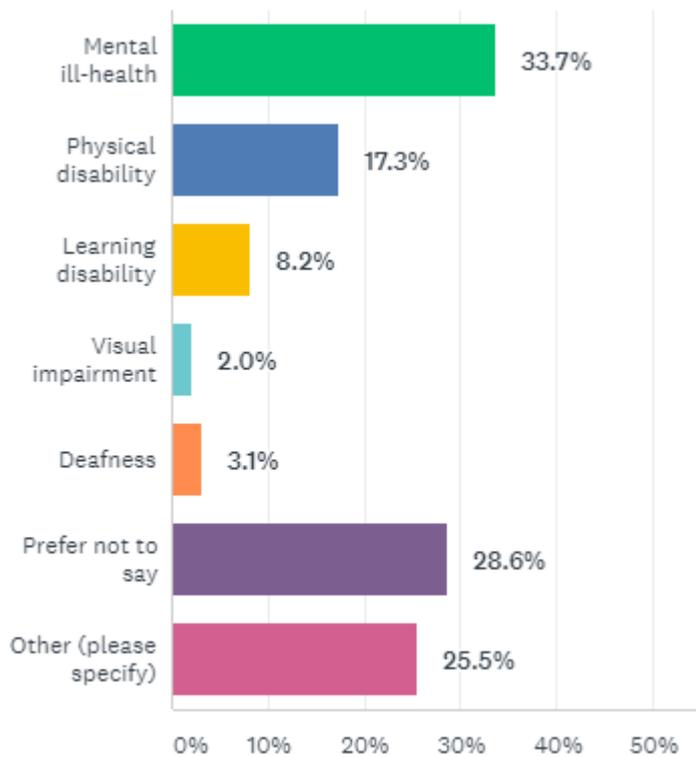


Compared with the ethnicities represented in the population of Cumbria, according to the 2011 Census, there is a slightly higher proportion of responses from people who are of a minority ethnicity. This is perhaps not surprising given that the most common form of Hate Crime (nationally and in Cumbria Police data) is related to race. Some of the respondents used the 'Other ethnic group' category as an opportunity to provide a specific ethnicity, including Middle Eastern/ Syrian, with two defining themselves as 'Cumbrian'. In terms of respondents' religions, the most frequent response was 'None' (48.7% of responses), followed by Christianity (32.3%), which has lower representation than in the general Cumbrian population. A high number of people said 'Prefer not to say' compared with other questions and there were very small numbers of other faiths or religions: Spiritualist, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism (1 to 3 people for each).

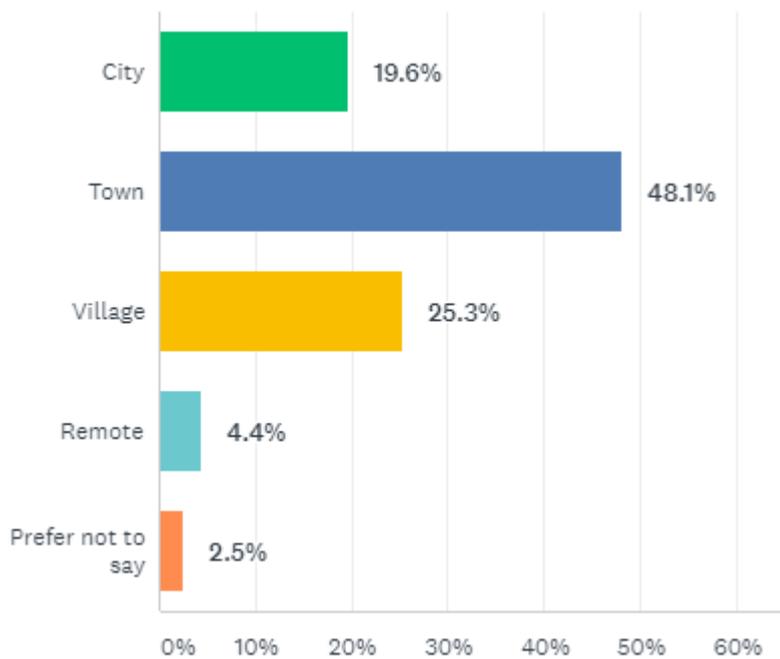


A significant proportion of the survey respondents reported having mental ill-health (33.7%), with others reporting that they had a physical (17.3%) or learning disability (8.2%). Many

people commented in the 'Other' category, with a common response being that they had no disability and a number explaining about a mental health condition or disability.



When asked about where they lived, most people classed themselves as being in a town. 29.7% of people lived in a village or remote location, compared with 67.7% in an urban location.



The highest number of responses were in relation to Hate Crime experienced in Barrow and Carlisle, with the lowest in Copeland and Eden. This distribution was broadly reflective of the spread of the population in the county, with slightly higher representation of Eden and Barrow and slightly lower of South Lakeland, Allerdale, Carlisle and Copeland. It is partly affected by 4 respondents living outside of the county. One had witnessed verbal abuse in Carlisle, another shared the impact of hate crime experienced in Yorkshire and 2 did not provide enough information to show whether the crime occurred in Cumbria.

	Number of Survey Respondents	Percentage of Survey Respondents	Percentage of the Cumbrian Population Living in that District	Variance between Proportion of Survey Respondents and Population
Allerdale	26	14.6%	19.6%	-4.9%
Barrow	30	16.9%	13.4%	3.4%
Carlisle	30	16.9%	21.7%	-4.9%
Copeland	20	11.2%	13.6%	-2.4%
Eden	20	11.2%	10.7%	0.6%
South Lakeland	26	14.6%	21.0%	-6.4%
I don't live in Cumbria	4	2.2%	Not applicable	
Total Response to that Question	156			



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