



Hate Happens: Technology's Role in Addressing anti-LGBTQ+ Hate Encounters in the UK

Analysis of reporting using
the Zoteria smartphone app

Dr. Kevin Guyan

zoteria

This report was written for Vodafone Foundation by Dr Kevin Guyan using data collected by the Zoteria app. Zoteria was developed by Vodafone Foundation in partnership with UK LGBTQ+ anti-abuse and rights charities Galop and Stonewall. Although this research report has been funded by Vodafone Foundation in furtherance of its charitable purposes, the report has been produced independently by its author and all research findings and discussion in the report are those of its author alone.

All case studies used in this report have been anonymised to protect people's identity.

About the author



Dr Kevin Guyan is a researcher and writer whose work explores the intersection of data and identity. He is the author of *Queer Data: Using Gender, Sex and Sexuality Data for Action* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2022), which examines the collection, analysis and use of gender, sex and sexuality data, particularly as it relates to LGBTQ+ people in the UK.

To cite this report:

Guyan, Kevin (2024). *Hate happens: Technology's role in addressing anti-LGBTQ+ hate encounters in the UK* (Vodafone Foundation: London).

About the partners



Vodafone Foundation believes the power of connectivity can change lives and address some of the world's most pressing problems. Through a strategy of Connecting for Good, Vodafone Foundation works in partnership with other charitable organisations and NGOs to create solutions that bring about long-term sustainable change and improve lives. This includes over a decade of work to connect nearly 3m people affected by domestic violence, abuse and hate crime to advice and support.

www.vodafonefoundation.org



Galop is the UK's LGBTQ+ anti-abuse charity. We work directly with thousands of LGBTQ+ people who have experienced abuse and violence every year. We specialise in supporting LGBTQ+ victims and survivors of domestic abuse, sexual violence, hate crime, honour-based abuse, forced marriage, and so-called conversion therapies. We run the National LGBTQ+ Abuse and Violence Helpline. We provide advocacy and therapeutic services, both in London and nationally, for LGBTQ+ victims who need longer-term support.

Stonewall

Stonewall stands for lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer, questioning and ace (LGBTQ+) people everywhere. Over the last 30 years, we have helped create transformative change in the lives of LGBTQ+ people in the UK and abroad, through campaigns, policy work and institutional change programmes.

Table of Contents

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| Table of Contents | 3 |
| Foreword | 4 |
| How to use Zoteria | 6 |
| Introduction | 7 |
| Case Study 1 | 10 |
| Findings | 11 |
| Case Study 2 | 18 |
| Summary of key findings | 19 |
| Case Study 3 | 20 |
| Using data for action | 21 |
| Recommendations | 22 |
| Appendix: Methodology | 25 |
| Endnotes | 26 |
| References | 27 |

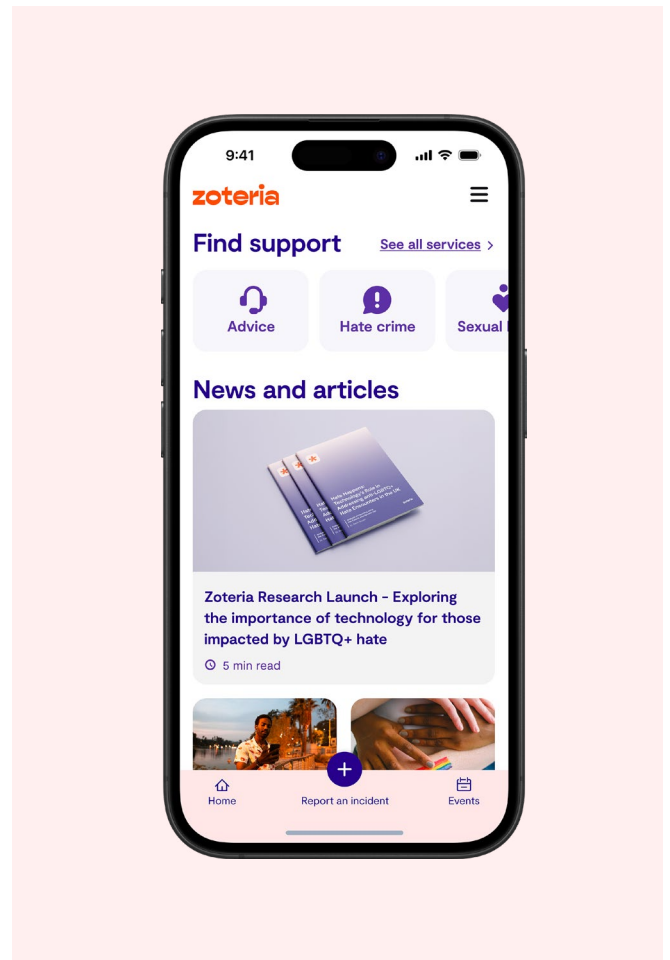
Foreword

Welcome to the first Zoteria report. Zoteria is a free app developed by Vodafone Foundation in partnership with LGBTQ+ charities Stonewall and Galop that enables users to safely and anonymously record/flag an anti-LGBTQ+ hate encounter and get support from an expert LGBTQ+ case worker if needed. Users can also find information, available services, LGBTQ-friendly event listings and news articles on the Zoteria app.

Why was Zoteria developed, why is it needed?

Recent Home Office figures suggest that reported anti-LGBTQ+ hate crime in England and Wales has grown at twice the rate of other forms of hate crime for the last two years. In the last five years, transphobic hate crimes have increased by 186%, while hate crimes against lesbian, gay, and bi people have increased by 112%.¹

Research from the Government's National LGBT Survey (2017) showed that over 90% respondents hadn't reported their most serious incident of hate crime.² Evidence from frontline workers at Galop, the UK's LGBTQ+ anti-abuse organisation, anecdotally shows that many people do not report encounters of verbal abuse from strangers. Galop runs the UK's National LGBTQ+ Hate Crime Helpline, and says that such abuse is frequently normalised or dismissed as just another part of being visibly LGBTQ+, a "rite



186%

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112%

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of passage” that many feel they must endure in silence. This pervasive underreporting means that the true scale of these hate encounters is often underestimated, and the impact on individuals and the community goes largely unrecognised. That is why initiatives like Zoteria are so vital. By providing an accessible platform for flagging these encounters, Zoteria is beginning to reveal the full extent of the abuse faced by the LGBTQ+ community, offering a clearer, more accurate picture of what we have long known: that these experiences are neither isolated nor acceptable. They deserve to be acknowledged

1 out of 8

Only one out of eight hate crimes were officially reported according to Galop’s 2021 research

and addressed.

But these figures are only the tip of the iceberg, as Galop’s 2021 research found that only one out of eight hate crimes were officially reported, and just one in five hate crime victims and survivors were able to access support.³ This means that anti-LGBTQ+ hate is likely to be much higher than official figures report, and the majority of victims and survivors haven’t been able to access support.

Zoteria allows LGBTQ+ people to flag their experience

of anti-LGBTQ+ hate, and access support, no matter where they are in the UK. When someone experiences abuse as a result of their identity, access to advice, information, advocacy, emotional support, and practical assistance are absolutely vital in their journey to recovery.

Flagging encounters on the app also helps to build a more accurate picture of anti-LGBTQ+ hate, by removing common obstacles that LGBTQ+ people may face when reporting to the police, such as, uncertainty whether the experience counts as a hate crime, fear of not being believed, fear of receiving a homophobic, lesbophobic, biphobic or transphobic response, and fear of repercussions.⁴

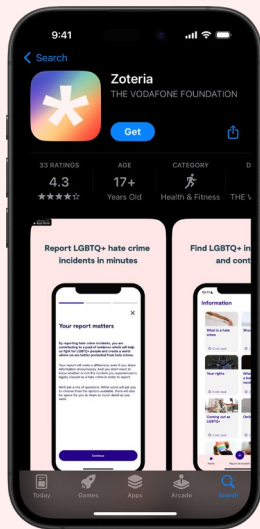
The LGBTQ+ community’s fears about reporting to the police are not abstract – they often stem from previous experiences of reporting, the experiences of friends, or a number of other recognised barriers. It’s vital that victims and survivors are able to flag anti-LGBTQ+ hate, access support, and report their experience to the police if they choose to do so.

What is the scope of this report?

This report looks at the data generated in the first year of the app, and what this can tell us about the role of technology and data in addressing LGBTQ+ hate in the UK. Data on hate encounters generated through Zoteria is not intended to represent or replace national statistics, but rather illustrate that this service is filling a gap for those who feel less able to request support or report an encounter, or who cannot access services.

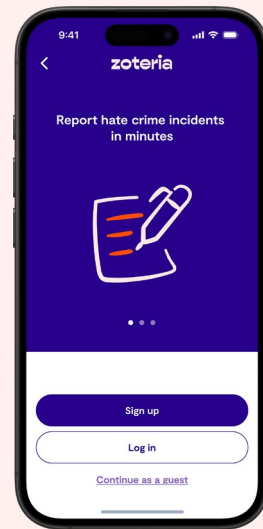
How to use Zoteria

1



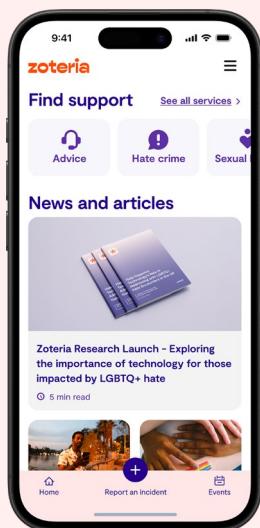
Download the free app

2



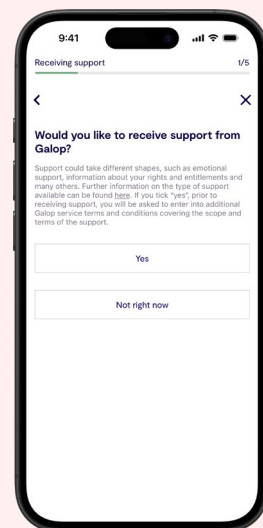
Register or proceed as a guest

3



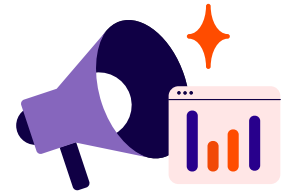
Home page

4



In case you decide to ask for support, Gallop will reach out to you by phone, SMS or email, and provide support as required

Introduction



When someone attacks us because of who we are (or are perceived to be) it hurts. Hate encounters do not just harm the individual targeted but also have negative impacts on their families, friends and the wider community.

Between 2022 and 2023, police forces in England and Wales received 24,102 reports related to sexual orientation hate crimes (a 6% decrease from 25,649 reports received in 2021/22) and 4,732 reports related to transgender identity hate crimes (an increase of 11% from 4,262 reports received in 2021/22).⁵ Despite the slight decrease in recent figures, over a two-year period the overall number of reported anti-LGBTQ+ hate crimes have increased by 35%. These figures likely reflect a small snapshot of the full picture as the vast majority of anti-LGBTQ+ hate crimes go unreported.⁶

This report explores the role of technology and data in addressing LGBTQ+ hate encounters in the UK. Zoteria launched in 2022 as an initiative between Vodafone Foundation and the LGBTQ+ charities Stonewall and Galop. The app was specifically designed to provide LGBTQ+ users with a simple method to report all types of hate encounters (including encounters that might not satisfy the legal threshold of a crime), to signpost relevant LGBTQ+ support services and to promote local LGBTQ+ related venues, groups and events.

Although third-party reporting services have been available for many years, the design and functionality of Zoteria is intended to flag encounters for people who might not normally choose to share their experience of anti-LGBTQ+ hate. It is hoped that the provision of more opportunities to anonymously report hate encounters and the availability of reporting platforms, independent of the police, will engage a wider proportion of the LGBTQ+ population.

24,102

reports related to sexual orientation hate crimes were made between 2022 and 2023 to police forces in England and Wales

A key objective of Zoteria is to record data about the prevalence of all types of hate encounters and provide a clearer picture of the problem. This ambition champions a logic of visibility: where the collection of more data about a problem makes a problem more visible, and prepares the ground for people with the power to act (e.g. in parliaments) to take meaningful action to address the situation.

The current situation and what needs to change

Any crime can be prosecuted as a hate crime in the UK if the offender has either demonstrated hostility based on race, religion, disability, sexual orientation or transgender identity, or been motivated by hostility based on race, religion, disability, sexual orientation or transgender identity.⁷

In 2021, the Scottish Parliament passed the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act, which consolidated existing pieces of legislation, updated the law's definition of 'transgender identity' and extended the offence of 'stirring up hatred' to include protections for LGBTQ+ people.⁸

In England and Wales, data on hate crimes primarily comes from two sources: the number of police reports in England and Wales and a survey conducted every three years that asks members of the public about their experiences of hate crime during the past 12 months.⁹

Separately (i.e. not part of the official data collection mentioned above) third-party reporting

systems also enable people to report hate encounters without having to engage directly with the police – for example, registering the encounter with a victim support charity, public library, LGBTQ+ equality group, student union or via an online platform.

Although multiple options already exist to report hate encounters, a vast amount of LGBTQ+ people choose not to report. The reasons that lie behind non-reporting are varied and complex but tend to relate to a person's:

- perception of the hate encounter that happened to them;
- previous experience of encounters with the police; and/or
- fear of repercussions.

A further problem relates to the provision of follow-up support for LGBTQ+ people who have experienced a hate encounter. Galop's research has reported that three in five LGBTQ+ people, who had experienced hate crime, wanted and needed help but only one in five were able to access support.¹⁰ Where support was available, eight in

| A vast amount of LGBTQ+ people
choose not to report hate encounters

10 respondents (80%) who accessed LGBTQ+ specific support were satisfied with the service they received, compared to only four in 10 respondents (38%) who accessed generic support.

The collection, analysis and presentation of data about the problem of LGBTQ+ hate encounters – information that tells us about what has happened in the past – is only one side of the coin.

This data also needs to be used to design and implement actions that respond to the problem of hate encounters – just collecting data is not enough. Alongside sharing findings and insights from Zoteria on the extent of the problem, this report also highlights the role of technology in fostering a queer collective, empowering individuals by giving them a voice to ‘flag’ what happened to them to specialist services and some of the challenges associated with counting and categorising minoritised communities.

Registering a hate encounter requires an individual to take time out of their day and believe there is value in flagging what happened to them and that, by sharing, they might help prevent this experience from happening to others. Zoteria provides a tool to help transform individual encounters into a bigger tapestry of experiences.

This report aims to chart a new course where we move away from only focusing on whether the reported number of hate encounters is going up or down, as this numerical data can only ever tell us so much. More importantly, we highlight the vital role of technology in supporting individuals to disclose as much or as little information they wish to share about their experiences of hate encounters. For those who wish to access support, the technology provides a discreet and safe means to direct users to appropriate services.

For those who wish to access support, the **technology provides a discreet and safe means** to direct users to appropriate services

The politics of numbers

The presentation of quantitative data can tell multiple, contradictory stories. Two observers might look at the same dataset and arrive at very different conclusions (e.g. the situation is getting better, the situation is getting worse) because of the knowledge and experiences they bring to their reading.

* In Focus

Case Study



A young trans+ woman was subjected to verbal transphobic slurs and assaulted by having an object thrown at them, constituting a transphobic hate crime in a public setting. The client stated that she has previously encountered similar forms of transphobic harassment. This time, she decided to flag the issue through the Zoteria app.

After opting in to receive further support, a Galop advocate reached out and scheduled a telephone appointment.

The Galop advocate provided emotional support on the phone call, listening to client's experience and verifying that it is a transphobic hate crime. Although she was scared and anxious, she said that getting confirmation that she had experienced a transphobic hate crime was validating and made her feel better.

The advocate let the young woman know the options she had for reporting and exploring criminal justice. This involved explaining the client's rights and entitlements under the Public Order Act, ensuring that she had all the information she needed, and the available options in order to make an informed decision about navigating the criminal justice system.

In the meantime, the Galop advocate worked with the young woman to create an Individualised Safety and Support Plan (ISSP), to help her feel more in control

of her own safety. She was extremely worried about the situation escalating the next time it happened. This personalised safety plan serves as a dynamic resource, equipping the client with proactive safety measures and actionable strategies to navigate any future instances of transphobic hate crimes. It also creates a systematic approach to seeking further assistance and recourse for the client to access the service again if needed.

The client identified that she was struggling with her mental health as a result of the abuse, so the Galop advocate referred her to ongoing LGBTQ+ specialist mental health and therapeutic support.

With the young trans+ woman feeling safer, and happy about the outcome of the support, including their ongoing specialist counselling, the case successfully concluded. The client knows she can get back in touch if she needs further support to pursue criminal justice.

Findings



This section presents findings from the Zoteria dataset, which includes 688 hate encounters reported between October 2022 and April 2024. These reports are described as hate encounters because it cannot be determined, from the information available, whether they count as hate encounters or hate crimes.

Gender

To facilitate people's willingness to flag hate encounters, the app does not require individuals to share any specific information about themselves. However, to develop a clearer picture of who experiences hate encounters and where they take place, Zoteria enables respondents to share information about their gender, ethnicity, geographical location, trans status/history and sexual orientation. All data recorded via Zoteria is self-identified, which means users describe themselves using the language and labels that best reflect their experiences.

Table 1. Zoteria respondents by gender

| Gender | No. | % |
|------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Female | 172 | 25.0 |
| Male | 300 | 43.6 |
| Non-binary | 131 | 19.0 |
| Other gender | 48 | 7.0 |
| Prefer not to disclose | 37 | 5.4 |
| Total | 688 | 100.0 |

More than two in five respondents identified as male (43.6%, n=300), one-quarter of respondents identified as female (25.0%, n=172) and the rest identified as non-binary (19.0%, n=131), another gender (7.0%, n=48) or selected Prefer Not to Disclose (5.4%, n=37). Zoteria's gender data is inclusive of both trans and cis respondents.

Zoteria also asked whether respondents identified as trans or as someone with a trans history (i.e. they transitioned in the past and no longer consider themselves trans).

Table 2. Zoteria respondents by trans status/history

| Trans status/history | No. | % |
|------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Yes | 224 | 32.6% |
| No | 329 | 47.8% |
| Prefer not to disclose | 135 | 19.6% |
| Total | 688 | 100.0 |

Just under half of respondents identified as cisgender (47.8%, n=329), just under one third identified as trans or as someone with a trans history (32.6%, n=224) and the remaining respondents chose Prefer not to disclose (19.65%, n=135). Trans history encounters make up 35% (n=273) of overall encounters, and 45% (n=54) of overall support requests.

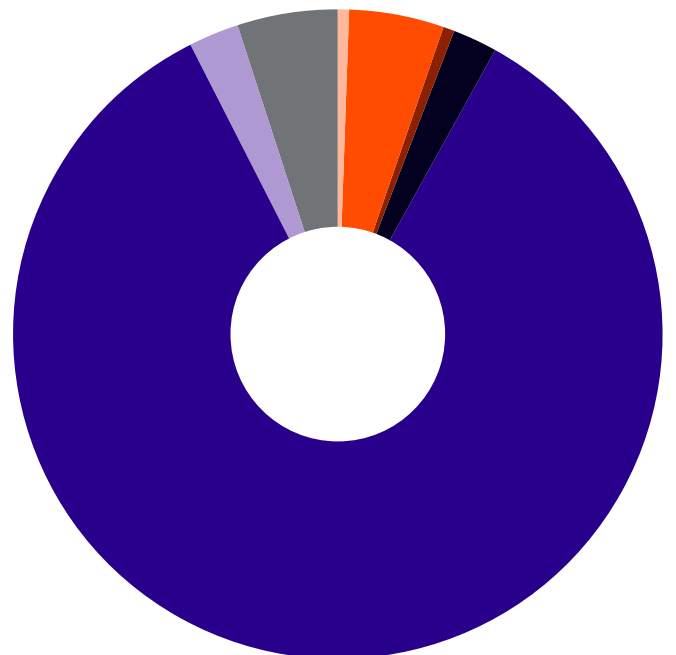
Ethnicity

Zoteria also offers respondents the option to share information about their ethnic group. The sample included 13 ethnic groups, in addition to respondents who selected Prefer Not to Disclose. To better understand the results, the data was aggregated to create six larger categories that matched the ethnic groups used in the English and Welsh 2021 census.

Overall, 580 respondents identified as white (84.3%), 74 respondents identified as an ethnic group other than white (10.8%) and 34 respondents selected prefer not to disclose (4.9%). In the 2021 English and Welsh census, 81.7% of usual residents identified their ethnic group within the high-level category of white.¹¹

Figure 3. Zoteria respondents by ethnic group

| | |
|--|------------|
| Arab | 5 |
| Asian or Asian British | 32 |
| Black, Black British, Caribbean or African | 5 |
| Mixed or multiple ethnic groups | 15 |
| White | 580 |
| Other ethnic group | 17 |
| Prefer not to disclose | 34 |
| Total | 688 |



Geography




The geographical spread of hate encounters is remarkable, with reports registered from all corners of the UK: from rural communities on the Islands of Scotland to cities on the English Channel.

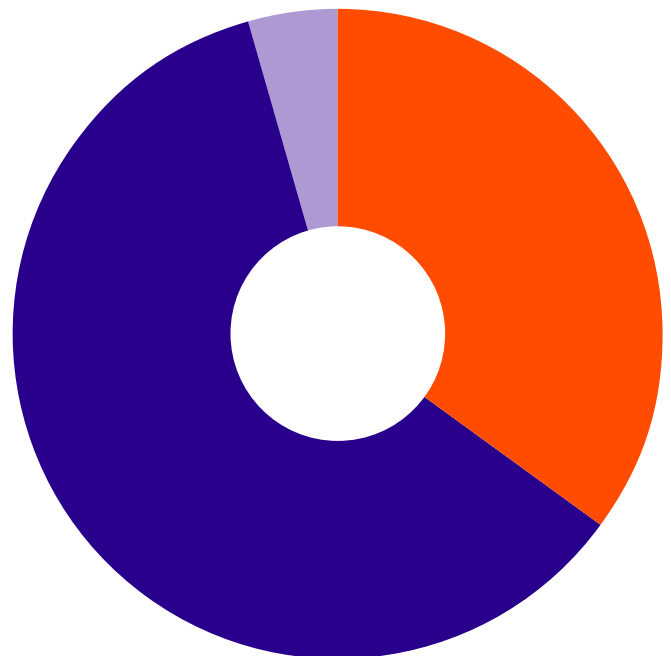
To analyse the geographical data, this report uses the concept of major queer cities (MQCs). In the UK, many LGBTQ+ people have historically moved from where they grew up to a small number of urban locations to seek safety and community. These locations tend to offer a greater provision of LGBTQ+ services such as health and wellbeing organisations, community groups and entertainment venues. In previous work undertaken by Galop, these locations were identified as:¹²

- London
- Manchester
- Brighton
- Birmingham
- Edinburgh
- Glasgow

Of course, LGBTQ+ people are located across all parts of the UK and many other towns and cities provide LGBTQ+ specialist services; however, this list enables us to draw insights about the locations of flagged encounters and whether these encounters align with locations where existing provisions are most extensive.

Figure 4. Zoteria respondents by location

| | | |
|---|------------------------|------------|
|  | Major queer city | 242 |
|  | Not a major queer city | 417 |
|  | No information | 29 |
| | Total | 688 |



242 encounters were from a MQC (35.2%) and 417 came from outside of a MQC (60.6%). For 29 reports (4.2%), information on the location of the encounter was missing.

This finding is important because it highlights the role of technology in reaching communities that may not ordinarily have access to LGBTQ+ specialist services and support.

Further analysis of this data was undertaken to see if encounters from MQCs and non-MQCs differed by gender.

As Table 5 shows, 117 reports from women (68.0% of all reports from women) were from outside a MQC, compared to 172 reports from men (57.3% of all reports from men) and 54 reports from non-binary people (54.3% of all reports from non-binary people).

Table 5. Zoteria respondents by major queer city and gender

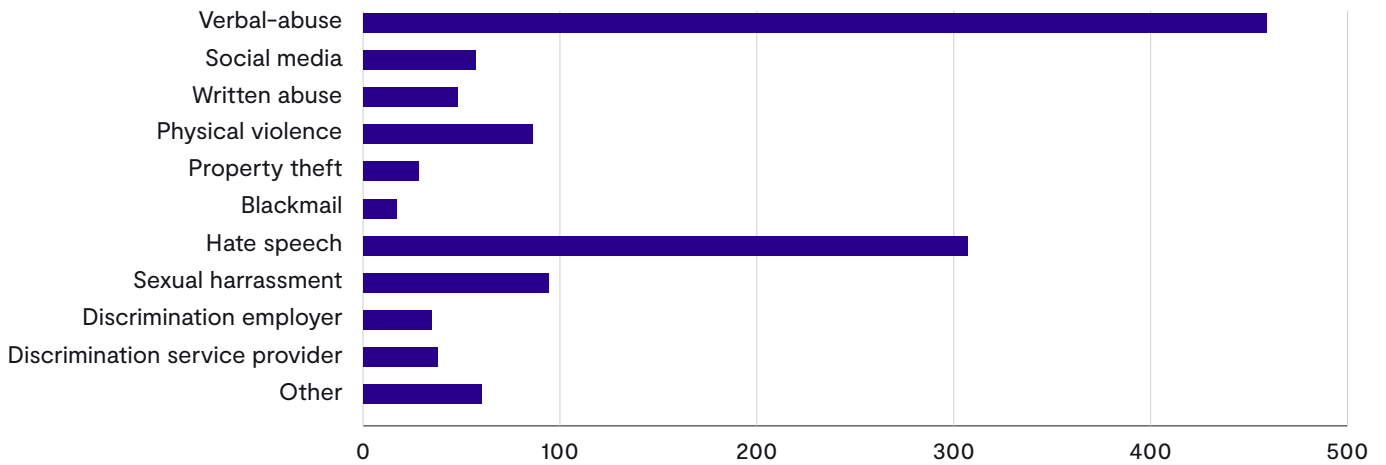
| Gender | MQC | | Not a MQC | | No information | | Total | |
|------------------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Female | 49 | 28.5 | 117 | 68.0 | 6 | 3.5 | 172 | 100 |
| Male | 121 | 40.3 | 172 | 57.3 | 7 | 2.3 | 300 | 100 |
| Non-binary | 54 | 41.2 | 71 | 54.2 | 6 | 4.6 | 131 | 100 |
| Other | 13 | 27.1 | 31 | 64.6 | 4 | 8.3 | 48 | 100 |
| Prefer not to disclose | 5 | 13.5 | 26 | 70.3 | 6 | 16.2 | 37 | 100 |
| All respondents | 242 | 35.2 | 417 | 60.6 | 29 | 4.2 | 688 | 100 |

Encounter type and motivation

The Zoteria dataset also includes information about the type of encounter and the perceived motivation for the hate encounter. To avoid over-analysis of small numbers, encounter types with fewer than 30 were excluded from the analysis (property theft n=28 and blackmail n=17).

Respondents could select as many encounter types as they wish to describe an individual encounter, hence the total number of encounter types exceeds the 688 hate encounters in the sample. Verbal abuse was, by far, the most frequently reported type of encounter (459 encounters), followed by hate speech (307 encounters).

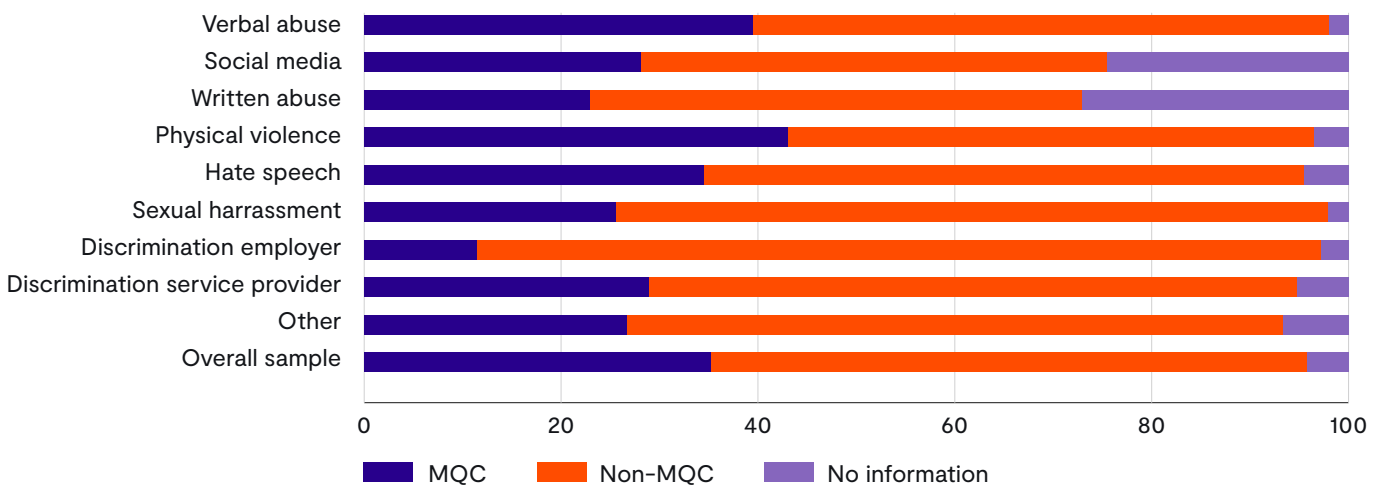
Figure 6. Encounter types flagged



When analysed by gender, the spread of encounter types generally reflects the overall gender composition of the sample. However, it is notable that men were over-represented in encounters related to

employer discrimination (57.1%, n=20 whereas men represented 43.6%, n=300 of the overall sample). Women were slightly over-represented in encounters related to social media (28.1%, n=16), whereas women represented 25.0% (n=172) of the overall sample.

Figure 10. Encounter type by location

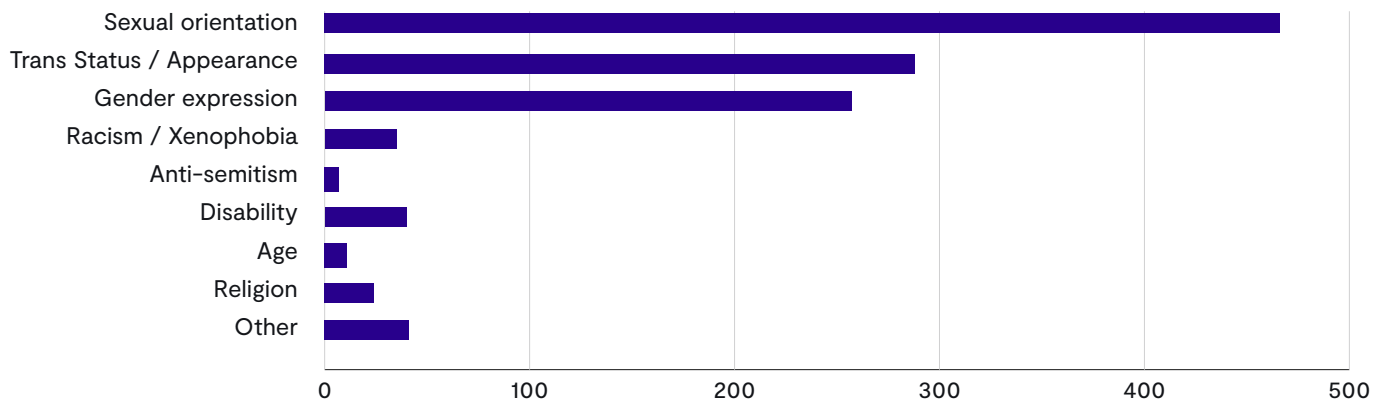


Finally, when encounter types were analysed by whether they were flagged in a MQC, a higher than expected proportion of encounters involved physical violence: 43.0% (n=37) of encounters occurred in a MQC, even though MQCs accounted for just 35.2% (n=242) of the overall sample.

Zoteria also collected information on the perceived motivation for the hate encounter.

As with encounter types, to avoid the over-analysis of small numbers, motivation types that recorded less than 20 counts were excluded from the analysis.

Figure 11. Perceived motivations reported



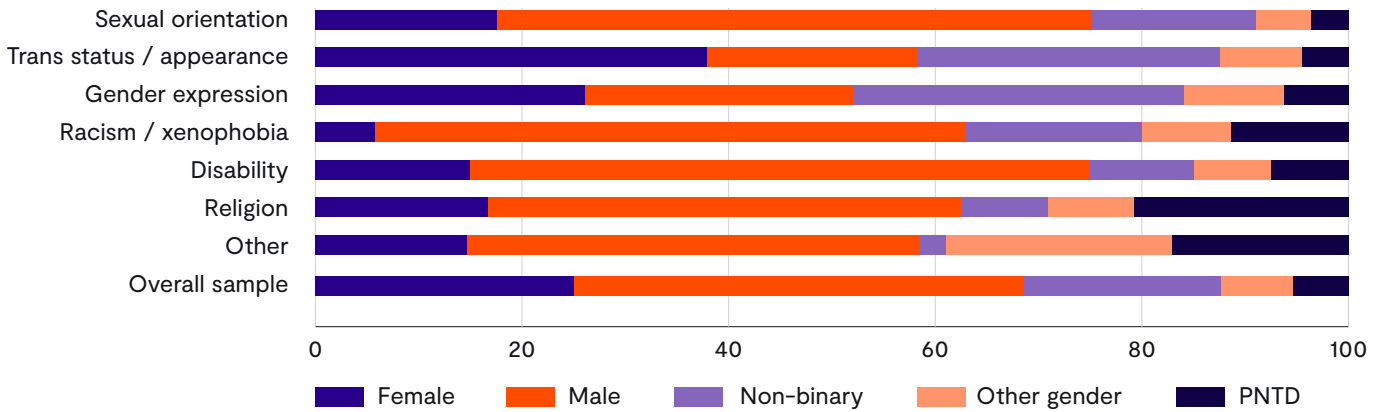
The perceived motivation with, by far, the largest number of flags was sexual orientation (466 encounters). It is important to note that Zoteria is primarily used to capture the experiences of LGBTQ+ communities. Although this data provides insights into intersectional experiences (e.g. hate encounters where disability and gender expression

were perceived motivations), we should interpret the small frequencies for characteristics not directly associated with gender, sex and sexuality as related to the types of communities using Zoteria to flag encounters rather than the prevalence of these encounters more generally.

More encounters or better reporting systems?

Interpreting hate encounter data is no easy task as it is sometimes difficult to tell whether an increase or decrease in reports reflects a higher prevalence of encounters (something undesirable) or an improvement in reporting systems, where LGBTQ+ people feel empowered to share information about their experiences (something desirable). It is therefore important to consider data on the number of hate encounters alongside other pieces of quantitative and qualitative data, including first-hand testimonies (presented in this report) and information shared with providers of LGBTQ+ services. When viewed in the round, and considering the high levels of underreporting, it is clear that hate encounters are increasing in frequency and severity.

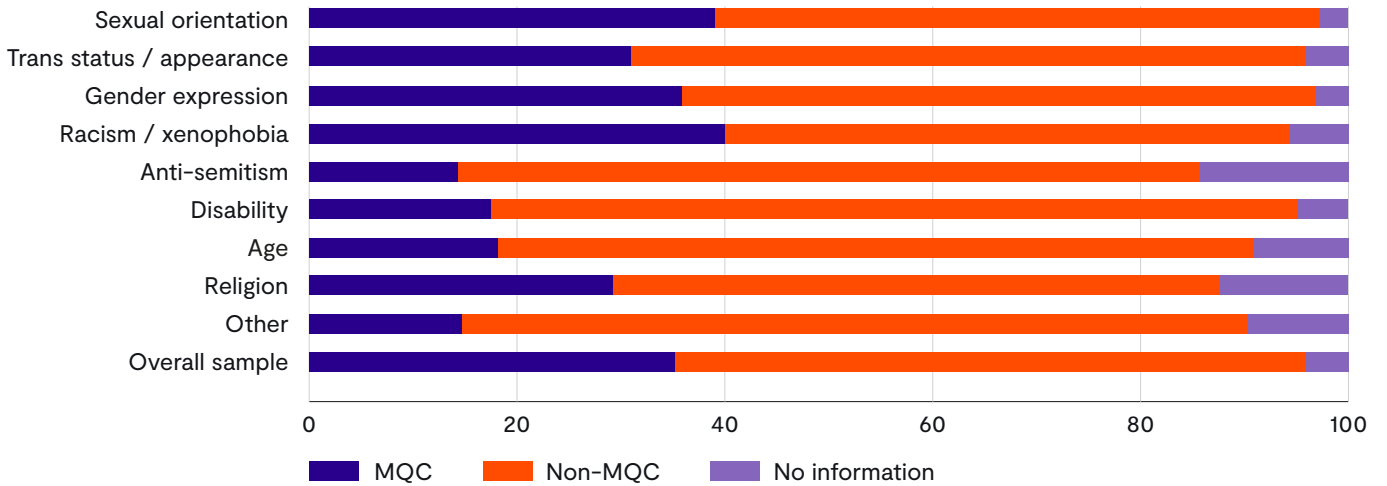
Figure 12. Perceived motivation type by gender



Finally, when the perceived motivation for hate encounters was analysed according to location, a slightly larger proportion of encounters motivated by racism/xenophobia (40.0%, n=4) and sexual

orientation (39.1%, n=182) were reported in a MQC than expected, based on the overall sample (35.2%, n=242 of reports were from a MQC).

Figure 15. Perceived motivation type by location



* In Focus

Case Study



A referral for urgent support was requested through the Zoteria app, following a distressing homophobic hate crime on public transport.

The client in question flagged an encounter in which he had endured verbal abuse, been subjected to anti-LGBTQ+ slurs, and had faced physical threats from an unknown perpetrator while travelling on a train, leaving him feeling deeply shaken and unsafe.

A Galop advocate immediately reached out to the client offering emotional support, while conducting a comprehensive needs assessment.

The client disclosed that this wasn't the first time he'd been subjected to this kind of abuse at his local train station. He was scared that because he 'physically presents' as a gay man, that the abuse would continue and potentially escalate.

Recognising the emotional toll that the hate crime had taken on the victim, the Galop advocate offered empathetic support, addressing trauma responses and providing a supportive presence throughout.

To support the client through his heightened fears of repeat victimisation, the Galop advocate facilitated a safety planning session.

Together, they worked to identify the safety strategies that would be most useful for his situation, creating a personalised safety plan.

The advocate also guided the client through his rights to report the encounter to the police, and his options within the criminal justice process under The Victims Code. Knowing that Galop could support the client through this process, the client felt more able to reflect on what way forward would be best for him.

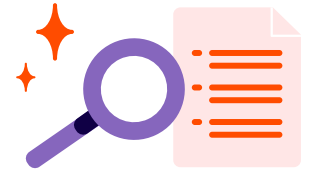
The client also expressed that he was struggling with his mental health and had fears around travelling or leaving his house, so the Galop advocate signposted him to LGBTQ+ specialist mental health services, ensuring that he had access to an LGBTQ+ friendly therapeutic environment for processing trauma.

Through Zoteria, the client accessed crucial, impartial, and LGBTQ+ specialist guidance on navigating the criminal justice system, empowering him to make informed decisions and access further support tailored to his needs.

This collaboration between Galop and Zoteria exemplifies a holistic approach to supporting LGBTQ+ victims and survivors of hate crime, ensuring access to comprehensive services that prioritise empowerment, trauma-informed care, and specialist advocacy.

2

Summary of key findings



Zoteria was launched in December 2022, this report discusses data up to April 2024. Our findings show that:

1 Three in five victims and survivors experienced hate encounters outside of major queer cities

Zoteria's importance lies in its use as a lifeline for LGBTQ+ people living outside of major queer cities (MQCs) (London, Manchester, Brighton, Birmingham, Edinburgh, Glasgow) that offer a high provision of LGBTQ+ services, community groups and entertainment venues. Of all reports made on the app, just over three in five (60%) were made outside of MQCs - in particular, more than two-thirds (68.0%) of women who reported hate encounters were located outside of MQCs. Overall, a larger proportion of men (43.6%) used Zoteria to report hate encounters than women (25%), non-binary individuals (19.0%) and people who identified as an other gender (7.0%).

2 Trans victims and survivors request support in greater numbers

Zoteria's data suggests that there is considerable need and demand for specialist LGBTQ+ support services for the trans community. Zoteria's gender data is inclusive of both trans and cis respondents, with just under half of all respondents (47.8%) identifying as cisgender. The app data shows that 20% of those with a trans history requested support from Galop, contrasting with 13% of those with non-trans history, and 12% of those who preferred not to disclose.

3 The intersectional nature of anti-LGBTQ+ hate

Sexual orientation was the most commonly perceived motivation for hate encounters (466 encounters). Trans status/appearance and gender expression were also frequently reported (288 encounters). When making a report, Zoteria users have the option to select multiple options for the perceived motivation, and encounters were also reported to be motivated by disability, racism/xenophobia and religion, demonstrating the intersectional nature of anti-LGBTQ+ hate. When analysed by gender, a disproportionate number of hate encounters motivated by disability, sexual orientation and racism/xenophobia were reported by men. The LGBTQ+ community is in every community; this impacts all of us.

4 Most hate encounters flagged on Zoteria are verbal abuse and hate speech

Verbal abuse was, by far, the most frequently reported type of encounter (459 encounters), followed by hate speech (307 encounters). Verbal abuse is abusive language directed towards an individual. Hate speech is when the verbal abuse is targeted towards a part of a person's identity, or the groups they belong to. Part of Zoteria's aim is for people to understand the terminology and their rights around hate encounters.

* In Focus

Case Study



An older trans woman used the Zoteria app to flag that she and her daughter were receiving abuse in their home town because of their identities. She requested further support through the app, and received a call back from a Galop advocate.

The client stated that she and her daughter have been subjected to ongoing transphobic and disability hate by a group of neighbours. She revealed that she and her daughter both have autism and hadn't been taken seriously by the police when contacting them about the ongoing harassment they were receiving.

This abuse was taking place daily, in the form of verbal abuse, stalking, harassment, threats to kill, stones being thrown at the client and her daughter and their windows being broken with stones by this group of neighbours.

After supporting the client to share their experiences, Galop worked with her to create a tailored support plan which included safety planning, risk reduction and criminal justice navigation. This meant identifying emergency contacts and safe spaces within the community, and strategically integrating meticulous documentation of encounters into the clients' routines. Galop also helped to implement safety measures such as window film, vibration sensors, doors sensors, a gate padlock and a lockable letterbox.

With permission from the client, Galop also worked as an intermediary between the client and their local police service. This advocacy laid the groundwork for a comprehensive plan to address the ongoing hate crimes, and ensured that the client felt confident in accessing the criminal justice system when needed.

This resulted in street wardens and neighbourhood policing teams patrolling the client's area, which led to the successful apprehending of several perpetrators.

The client stated she feels more confident in making sure her voice is heard by the police going forward.

As the client and her daughter were left shaken and scared from their lengthy and targeted abuse, the Galop advocate made referrals to local LGBTQ+ services in order to build resilience and sense of community. Galop also made specialist LGBTQ+ mental health referrals for both clients to receive therapeutic support.

Using data for action



Collecting more data about hate encounters, on its own, does not reduce the frequency or severity of hate encounters. Data collection, analysis and presentation must therefore not become an objective in its own right – rather, it must feature as a stepping stone to more ambitious action.

We must also acknowledge that simply gathering data about hate encounters and presenting this information to decision-makers is not always a guaranteed recipe for success. Even when the data tells us a shocking story, it does not always coax people into doing something meaningful in response.

Hate encounter reporting, and the broader datafication of hate crimes, relies upon the use of

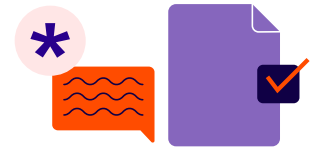
categories and classifications. Information gathered needs to be interoperable so that encounters reported at different times and in different locations are comparable. Yet, in the process of designing and implementing these categories and classifications (e.g. verbal abuse, written abuse, sexual orientation, gender expression), reporting tools partly play a role in determining what types of encounters are recognisable and countable.

The lives and experiences of LGBTQ+ people are not monolithic and, as highlighted by the different types of perceived motivations for hate encounters, intersect with other identity characteristics. It is important to remember that diversity among LGBTQ+ people also contributes to different experiences of risk, harm and exposure to hate encounters.

The policing of LGBTQ+ communities

The relationship between LGBTQ+ communities and the police is complex and often fraught with mistrust. For example, most historical encounters between the police and LGBTQ+ communities related to the policing of gender, sex and sexuality norms. When data was collected about individuals believed to be LGBTQ+, this information usually related to gathering evidence of criminality. Hate crime laws bring the police into closer proximity with the everyday lives of LGBTQ+ people, and for some LGBTQ+ people, this development is unwelcome.

Recommendations



Based on the analysis and discussion of the Zoteria data, Vodafone Foundation, Galop and Stonewall feel that a number of further actions should be considered.

1 Access to support for the LGBTQ+ community

Early data from the Zoteria app shows that LGBTQ+ people across the UK are being subjected to anti-LGBTQ+ hate.

In order to address that need, LGBTQ+ people should have access to effective, equitable and specialised, LGBTQ+, by-and-for support, no matter where they live. This support could include housing hate crime victims and survivors who need to flee their homes due to hate crime; mandating access nationally to appropriate support services for victims and survivors; and introducing statutory independent hate crime advocates, building on the independent domestic and sexual violence advocate models.

2 Improved reporting pathways and approaches to data collection

In compiling this report, we noted, in line with previous research, that available data to properly quantify the level of LGBTQ+ hate encounters in the UK is patchy. While we have noted that collecting more data about hate encounters, on its own, does not reduce the frequency or severity of hate encounters – we need to create reporting pathways and approaches to data collection that enable and empower people to share as much or as little data about what happened to them as they wish to do. These reporting pathways need to be inclusive and open to all, where all information captured is used meaningfully to address the problem of LGBTQ+ hate.

In England and Wales, an independent Hate Crime Commissioner would be able to hold the UK government to account on its understanding of the issue, police practices and outcomes for survivors.

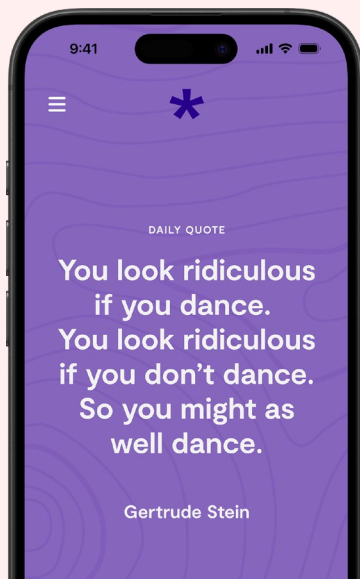
3 Structural and strategic approaches to addressing hate encounters

Work to address anti-LGBTQ+ hate needs to consider the wider structural and systemic factors that create environments where hate encounters happen, such as socio-economic inequalities. Not enough research has been undertaken to explore these underlying causes and where best to target interventions. In England and Wales, with rising violence against LGBTQ+ people there is also a need to implement a new Hate Crime Action Plan. The last national plan, Action Against Hate, ran from 2016 to 2020, with a refresh in 2018. Over the last five years there has been an increase of 57% in reported hate crimes in England and Wales. Without a Hate Crime Action Plan, we are in danger of a continued lack of focus on hate crime prevention and education, engaging affected communities including LGBTQ+ people.

4 Support for technologies that help address hate encounters

The success of Zoteria in its first year of operation highlights the potential for smartphone apps and other technologies to support the LGBTQ+ community – and indeed other marginalised groups – living away from (or unable to easily access for whatever reason) principle support services. While all problems cannot be solved by an app, ease of access to decentralised information and support services is increasingly valuable to enable people to live their lives wherever they choose to. It is important that apps like Zoteria are supported and promoted so that more people who need their services can access them.

Our thanks to every LGBTQ+ person who has taken the time to flag a hate encounter or engage with the Zoteria app. With your help, we hope to create real and lasting change for LGBTQ+ people.



To keep everyone safe, and to avoid members of the LGBTQ+ community from being outed, Zoteria “hides” behind a quotes app. It also has a secret mode and quick exit button.

It’s important to note that Zoteria is not linked to the police and is not an emergency app. If you, or anyone you are with, is in danger, you should still call 999 for emergency services.

Zoteria privacy policy can be found [here](#) and how Zoteria uses your data can be found [here](#).

What can anti-LGBTQ+ hate look like?¹³

Anti-LGBTQ+ hate crime

Anti-LGBTQ+ hate crime is a name for homophobic, transphobic, biphobic, acephobic or interphobic abuse, violence and intimidation. You can report it to the police and to Galop. This applies even if you are not LGBTQ+, but the person abusing you believes that you are.

Who faces hate crime?

Hate crimes target people because of who they are. That includes people targeting you for being lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, trans, queer, non-binary, intersex or ace. It also includes abuse based on someone’s race, faith or disability.

Don’t accept it

No one has the right to abuse you for who you are. You have a right to be respected and to express yourself free from abuse. If you do face homophobic,

biphobic, transphobic, acephobic or interphobic abuse, you have a right to expect authorities and support organisations to be on your side.

Anti-LGBTQ+ hate can include any abuse behaviour that expresses anti-LGBTQ+ prejudice. This can include, but is not limited to:

- Verbal abuse, such as calling someone anti-LGBTQ+ names
- Acting in a threatening or intimidating way
- Physical attacks
- Stealing or damaging your belongings
- Sending abusive or offensive messages
- Sexually threatening or violent behaviour

How are hate crimes different from other crimes?

The impact of abuse targeting part of your core identity can go deeper and last longer than other forms of abuse. It can cause a feeling of fear that prevents people from feeling able to be themselves. For that reason, Galop, the police, the state prosecutors, and the government have committed to combat hate crime and help people who face it.

Appendix: Methodology

This report presents an analysis of 688 hate encounters recorded on Zoteria between December 2022 and April 2024, and three anonymised testimonies provided by Galop.

Zoteria is a free app available to download to mobile devices in the UK.

The app collects the following information:

- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Geography
- Perceived motivation
- Encounter type
- Trans status or history
- Sexual orientation

| Zoteria categories | Census categories |
|---|--|
| African, Caribbean | Black, Black British, Caribbean or African |
| Arab | Arab |
| Bangladeshi, Chinese, Pakistani, South Asian, Other Asian | Asian or Asian British |
| Latin X, Other | Other ethnic group |
| Mixed Caribbean, Other mixed | Mixed or multiple ethnic groups |
| Prefer not to disclose | Prefer not to disclose |
| White | White |

Endnotes

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- 6 Among respondents to the UK Government's National LGBT Survey with an experience of a hate encounter in the preceding 12 months, more than 91% reported that they had chosen not to report, Government Equalities Office, 'National LGBT Survey: Research Report, 33. Furthermore, research conducted for Vodafone Foundation reported that, among queer people who had experienced a hate crime in the past year, 53% felt the encounter was too minor to report and 42% did not trust the police to take the report seriously, in Vodafone Press Office (2022). New App Launches to Tackle LGBTQ+ Hate Crime Following Rise in Reported Incidents across the UK. <https://www.vodafone.co.uk/newscentre/press-release/zoteria-app-tackle-lgbtq-hate-crime-following-rise-in-reported-incidents-uk/>.
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