

MAY 2021

HATE CRIME AWARENESS PROJECT REPORT

SOUTH EAST LANCASHIRE
COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP



Produced by Dr Stephanie Dermott

Community Rail Development Officer
South East Lancashire Community Rail Partnership

Contents

Introduction.....p.3

The Project.....p.3

The Survey.....p.4

Key Findings.....p.5

Related Research.....p.7

Recommendations.....p.7

Other Comments.....p.8

This report was produced as part of a South East Lancashire Community Rail Partnership project for Greater Manchester Hate Crime Awareness Week 2021, and was funded by Bolton CVS.





SOUTH EAST LANCASHIRE COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP

HATE CRIME AWARENESS PROJECT REPORT

Introduction

Hate Crime, in the form of physical and verbal abuse, or other forms such as vandalism and harassment, is still a significant problem in the UK. According to recent reports, there were a staggering 105,090 hate crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales in 2019/20, an increase of 8% compared with the previous year (Home Office, 2020). In Greater Manchester, there were 488 hate crime prosecutions from March 2019 to March 2020, and in Bolton we have recently seen regular reports of incidents from disabled women abused while shopping, to racial abuse at school gates (The Bolton News, 2021). In addition, it has been argued that the Covid-19 pandemic has also had a significant impact on the prevalence of hate crime, with the number of racially or religiously aggravated offences in June 2020 a third higher than in June 2019 (Home Office, 2020).

As a community rail partnership, working with and amongst a variety of people from a range of backgrounds and communities, we felt it was important for us to address this issue, and as a result we developed our first Hate Crime Awareness project that took place between February and May 2021.

The Project

The project was developed as part of Greater Manchester Hate Crime Awareness Week (1st – 7th February 2021), and was funded by Bolton CVS.

We collaborated with community partners including Bolton City of Sanctuary, to develop several key elements for the project. These included: a social media campaign, an online survey, artist-led creative workshops, and an art exhibition.

Due to the ongoing context of Covid-19, all project elements took place online. Artist-led workshops took place using Zoom, and work produced was either photographed or collected safely from participants after all the sessions were complete.

This report seeks to highlight some key findings of our online survey that relate specifically to issues of safety and security on public transport, specifically in relation to hate crime.

The Survey

The survey was developed to collect data about people's experiences of hate crime in Bolton, and specifically included a question on the topic of using public transport. We sent out the survey link to community groups in Bolton, and also used promoted posts on social media in order to increase engagement and gather a range of responses.

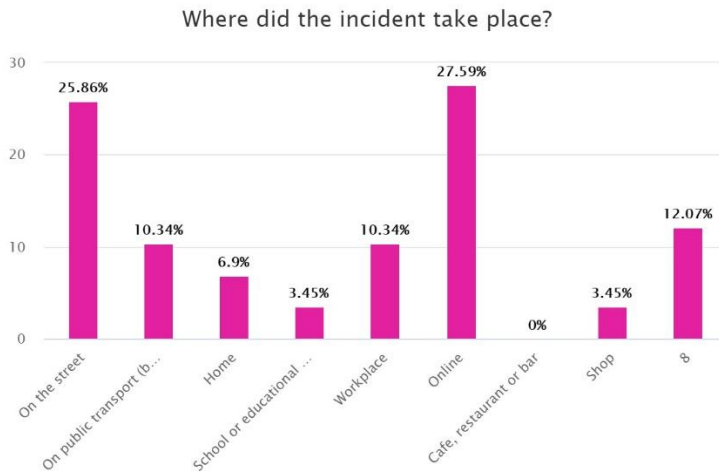
Over a period of 3 weeks, between 18th January and 8th February 2021, we received a total of 84 individual survey responses from a mix of genders, ages, ethnicities and religious backgrounds.

The questions asked in the survey were as follows:

- Participant Info
 - Gender / Age / Ethnicity / Religion / Postcode (first three letters)
- Have you heard of the term 'Hate Crime' before?
- What do you think the term 'Hate Crime' means?
- Have any of the following things happened to you in the past 12 months? (*tick all that apply*)
 - Bullying or Harassment (threatening, abusive or intimidating behaviour that is committed on more than one occasion) / Threats (with the intention to cause you or others pain, injury or damage) / Verbal abuse (name calling, offensive jokes) / Physical assault / Damage to your property or vehicle (including graffiti) / Online abuse (for example on social media) / Hoax calls, abusive phone or text messages, hate mail
- In your opinion was the incident in any way related to any of the following? (*tick all that apply*)
 - Race / Religion / Disability / Sexual orientation / Transgender identity/ Subculture identity or other personal characteristic
- Where did the incident take place? (*tick one*)
 - On the street/ On public transport (bus, train, tram, etc.) / Home / School or educational setting / Workplace / Online / Café, restaurant or bar / Shop/ Other
- Do you believe this was a hate crime? - Did you report it?
- Who would you contact first regarding a hate crime? (*tick one*)
 - Community representative/ Voluntary organisation / School / Manager (work) / Online reporting / Police / Local authority / Other
- If you didn't or wouldn't report the incident, why not? (*tick all that apply*)
 - Didn't know it was a crime / Didn't know how to report it / Didn't know who to report to / Don't trust the police / I can't speak English / I am used to it / I was discouraged by someone / I was afraid to report it / I don't want to go to court / I don't want to make a fuss / It was only once / I didn't think anything would be done about it / Other
- What do you feel may put people off from reporting hate crime?
- What might encourage people to report hate crime?
- Do you feel more at risk of hate crime while travelling on public transport? - If yes, why?

Key Findings

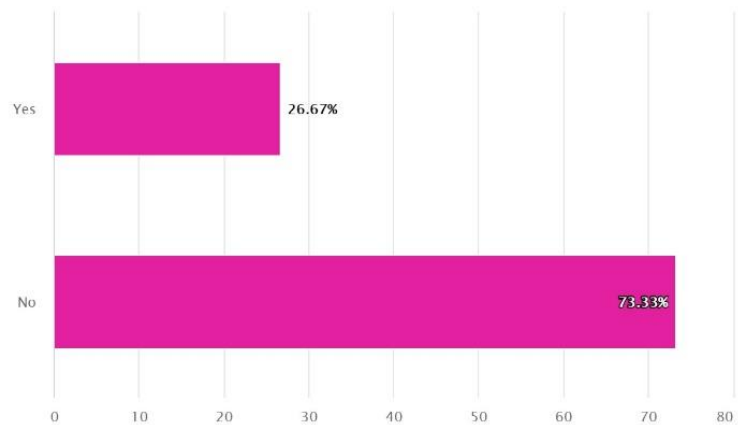
Below are some key findings from the survey, including pie charts generated through the platform used, and a selection of written responses to the question regarding use of public transport.



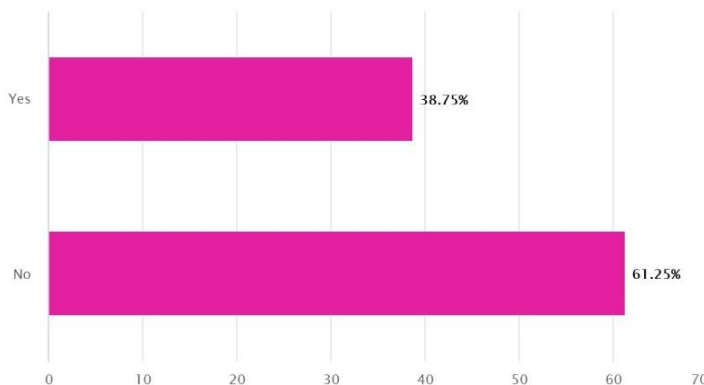
*When asked where people had experienced hate crime, the majority of incidents had taken place online or on the street. **10.34%** of respondents had also experienced hate crime on public transport.*

73.33% of respondents stated that they did not report the hate crime described

Did you report it?



Do you feel more at risk of hate crime while travelling on public transport?



38.75% of respondents said that they felt more at risk of hate crime while travelling on public transport

When participants were asked why they felt more at risk on public transport, responses included:

'There's nowhere to go on the mode of transport i.e you're trapped and no police' (Asian, Male, 40-49)

'No back up' (White, Male, 50-59)

'Stuck in a confined space with people and nowhere to escape - people try their luck when usually you can cross the street or walk a different way if someone looks at you like they might do something. I think some people use it as an opportunity' (White, Female, 16-24)

'Lots of people, no one help you if you get hurt' (Asian, Male, 25-39)

'When gangs get on the trains in Bolton the ticket collectors just hide in the back. No security at night on stations. There's a great deal of staring and some spitting. Nobody dares say anything.' (White, Other, 40-49)

'It's a confined space, and I'm a young woman so people could find it easier to take a chance' (White, Female, 16-24)

'I was kicked once on public transport by a white man. No one said anything' (Asian, Female, 50-59)

'Open space, there are cameras on the buses but if you are sworn at then it doesn't record the voice. Also I noticed on public transport if something happens no other passenger will help because they are scared that they will get in trouble with police. I went to London once on train via Manchester, was abused by group of white men who were drunk; no-one said anything to them. I had to get up go to another carriage.' (Asian, Female, 40-49)

'Lots of young children very abusive and I am an old man. I was on the bus and kids were trying to take my walking stick. Driver saw this did nothing. Other people did tell them to stop but they didn't listen. They came off the bus next stop. Public transport lot of people getting on and off so you can do a lot of things to people and get off on the next stop. no evidence.' (Asian, Male, 60+)

'Lack of security' (White, Male, 25-39)

'More exposed and worry that no one will intervention to help.' (Mixed/Multiple Ethnicities, Male, 40-49)

'Because these days there are no ticket conductors on buses and trains to act as a deterrent to people /groups that prey on people. Makes people feel less safe.' (White, Female, 40-49)

-

It was clear that a large number of responses raise issues with security and safety on public transport. Many responses reference the feeling of being 'stuck' in an 'enclosed' or 'confined' space, and some described feeling more vulnerable when alone on public transport. Significantly, a number of respondents emphasised concerns related to a lack of staffing or inaction of staff when incidents take place, as well as lack of support from the general public. Overall, the findings appear to highlight some key areas of potential improvement or consideration with regards to customer experience when travelling on public transport.

Related Research

The findings of our survey were recently referenced in another research study, conducted by an undergraduate student at The University of Bolton, as part of the 'Jenkinson Bid' project to which we are also a contributor. The study focused specifically on the question of 'Do women feel safe when using railway spaces?' and data was collected from women belonging to a range of backgrounds.

Survey responses and focus groups revealed that **28.9%** of women did not feel safe when using public space, and **35.9%** of women did not feel safe when using Bolton Railway Station. When asked why women did not feel safe at Bolton Railway Station, responses included: "It's dark", "Not enough security", "There is not always a guard on duty who is visible to me when I get on or leave a train at night time", "It is so dark and gloomy, it's not very well staffed and I feel on edge", "Last time I used it there was hardly any staff and lots of people just hanging around", "Feel a bit vulnerable on my own", "At peak times I would but during quieter periods I wouldn't like to alone", "During the night time I feel less safe and imagine that I could be the target of male violence, I always avoid dimly lit places".

These findings again highlight key concerns related to staffing and security linked with feelings of vulnerability, and many participants expressed a subsequent reluctance to use this form of public transport.

Recommendations

- Practical recommendations:
 - Improvements to lighting – particularly on platforms and outside the station entrance
 - Increased visibility of staff on the station – regular patrol of platforms and engagement with service users
 - Marketing campaigns displaying information of who to contact / how to report an incident – including reference to hate crime reporting, BTP and railway staff
- Broader recommendations:
 - Successive research into issues of safety on public transport – with hate crime as a key consideration for this
 - Additional data collection / community consultation regarding safety and security at stations
- Potential outcomes:
 - Decrease in hate crime incidents / antisocial behaviour
 - Increased confidence in using public transport (particularly alone at quieter times or at night)

Other Comments

It must be noted that a potential criticism of the research may be that the data collection may have been affected by the distribution methods used, as those accessing specific community groups may be more likely to have experienced hate crime, and social media engagement may be affected by those 'sharing' the survey in order to provoke particular responses (e.g. several responses all referred to notions of 'over-sensitivity' and 'political correctness' that sought to purposely downplay the issue of hate crime). For this reason, we would suggest that these issues are considered in any future research.

For more information on the survey or the project, please contact Dr Steph Dermott – steph@boltoncommunityrail.org.uk

