

## Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into hate crime and its violent consequences: findings from the Sussex Hate Crime Project

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## **Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into hate crime and its violent consequences**

### **Findings from the Sussex Hate Crime Project**

This report is co-authored by Professor Rupert Brown and Dr Mark Walters, together with Dr Jennifer Paterson and Harriet Fearn, University of Sussex.

#### **[A] Authors' background**

Rupert Brown is Professor of Social Psychology at Sussex University (<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/profiles/95042>). Together with Dr Mark Walters, Reader in Criminal Law and Criminal Justice also at Sussex University, he directs The Sussex Hate Crime Project, a research programme funded by The Leverhulme Trust. Professor Brown and Dr Walters are also co-investigators of another project, Policing Hate Crime: Modernising the Craft, funded by the College of Policing/HEFCE. Dr Jennifer Paterson and Ms Harriet Fearn are, respectively, postdoctoral and postgraduate researchers working on the Sussex Hate Crime Project.

#### **[B] About the Project**

The Sussex Hate Crime Project<sup>1</sup> is a five year research study which is examining the **direct** and **indirect** impacts of hate crime on the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGB&T) and Muslim communities throughout England and Wales. Using large scale quantitative surveys, experiments, and qualitative interviews, we have examined the emotional, behavioural and attitudinal impacts that that hate crimes have on LGB&T and Muslim communities. We

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/psychology/sussexhatecrimeproject/>

have also examined factors that influence LGB&T and Muslim people's perceptions of policing and their reporting intentions in relation to hate crime.

In this short report we summarise some of our key findings from the quantitative surveys and experiments (with over 1400 respondents) and which are yet to be published. Some of the data below on police perceptions are aggregated into two areas: London (serviced by the Metropolitan Police Service) and all other areas in England and Wales. This allows for a comparison between the country's largest city (and largest police service) with the rest of the country.<sup>2</sup>

### **[C] Executive Summary**

The aim of this submission is to provide new empirical evidence on the wider community impacts of hate crimes, LGB&T and Muslim people's perceptions of the police and their reporting intentions, and recommendations on its policy implications.

- The majority of LGB&T and Muslim people have been a direct victim of some form of hate incident in the past 3 years, whether 'offline' or 'online'.

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<sup>2</sup>NB: Further access to research data will be considered by the Principal Investigator of this Project upon request by the Committee.

- Even more know someone who has been a victim.
- Knowing a victim of a hate crime has considerable impacts on other members of LGB&T and Muslim communities:
  - They feel more anger, anxiety, and shame
  - These emotions make them more likely to avoid certain locations, more likely to join community based organisations, and some are more likely to want retaliation
- Physical assaults and vandalism are incidents most likely to be reported.
- Verbal and online abuse are least likely to be reported.
- Police services are generally not seen to be effective or respectful when dealing with hate crimes.
- This negative perception makes people less likely to report hate crimes.

## [D] Submission

### 1. Statistical trends in hate crime: understanding the extent and impacts of direct and indirect experiences of hate crimes

Our two principal surveys focused on exploring LGB&T and Muslim direct and indirect experiences of hate crime (these terms are explained immediately below). Two smaller surveys focussed on online hate crime. Concentrating on verbal assaults and then physical assaults in the past 3 years, the figures below from the main surveys show three groups of people:

- Those who had **not** been a victim or did **not** personally know of other victims of a hate crime (No experience);
- Those who **personally knew** of at least one victim but had not been a victim themselves (Indirect only); and
- Those who both **personally knew** of a victim **and** had themselves **been a victim** of a hate crime in the past 3 years (Both direct and indirect).

**Table 1: LGB&T people's experiences of hate crime**

	None	Indirect only	Direct & Indirect
Verbal	72 (12%)	136 (23%)	382 (65%)
Assault	274 (46%)	236 (40%)	80 (14%)

**Table 2: Muslim people's experience of hate crime**

	None	Indirect only	Direct + Indirect
Verbal	59 (17%)	68 (20%)	218 (63%)
Assault	172 (50%)	118 (34%)	55 (16%)

### 1.1. What are the indirect impacts of hate crime?

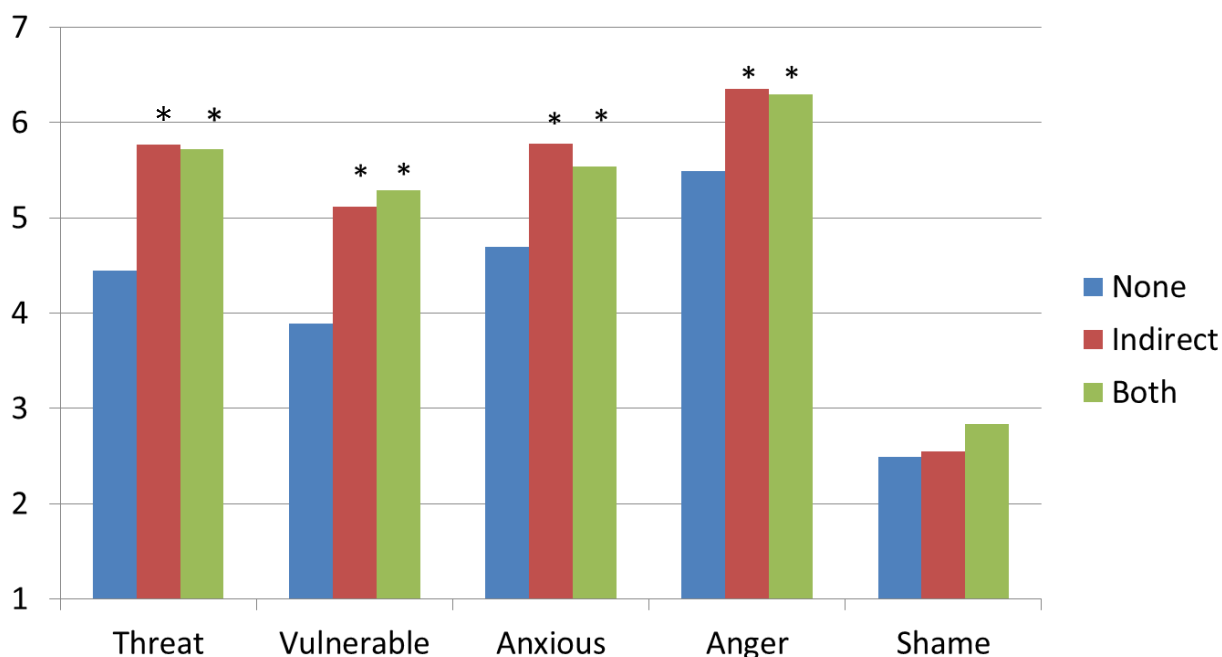
We next asked respondents how they would feel and what they would do if they heard about a hate crime in their neighbourhood (i.e., they *indirectly* experienced a hate crime).

We compared the emotional and behavioural reactions of those people who had no experiences with verbal hate crimes to those who knew a victim (indirect) and those who had been a victim and knew of a victim of a verbal hate crime (both direct and indirect).

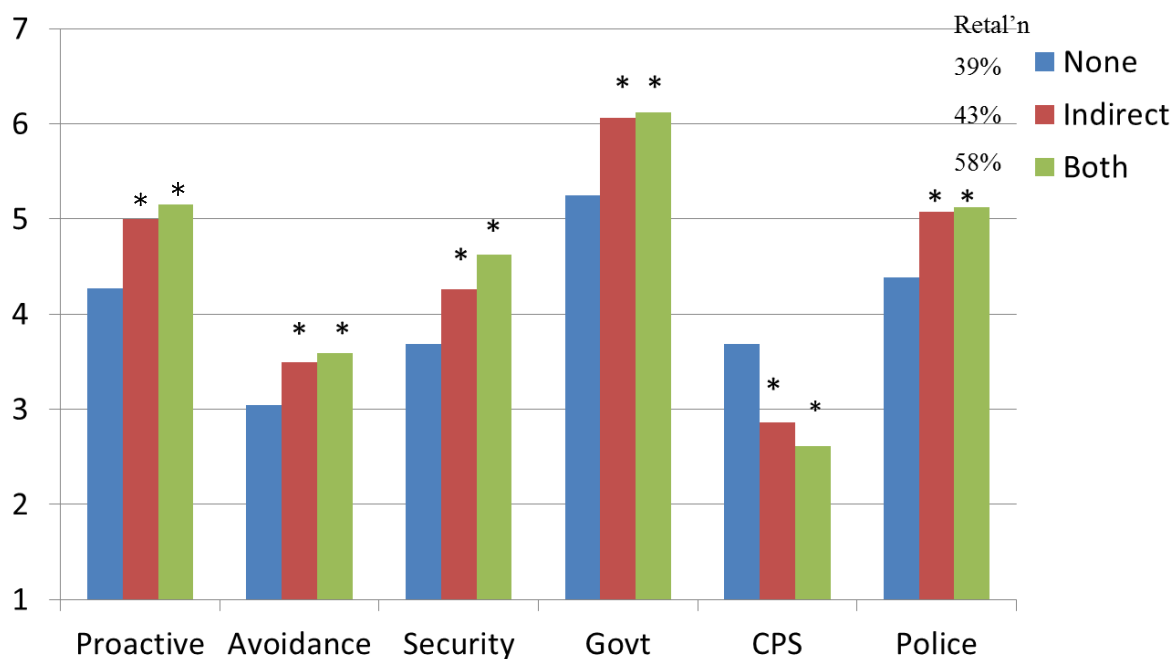
Here we show the effects for the Muslim sample. The results for the LGB&T sample were similar.

*\*The scales are answered on a 1-7 scale; \*indicates a significant difference from the None group.*

**Figure 1 The indirect impacts of Islamophobic hate crime (physical assaults)**



**Figure 2 Further indirect impacts of Islamophobic hate crime (physical assaults)**



As can be seen from Figures 1 and 2, those with prior indirect experiences of hate crime are more likely to:

- Feel that hate crimes pose a threat to themselves and their community.
- Feel more angry, vulnerable, and anxious.
- Engage in pro-active behaviour (e.g., join community based groups).
- Be more avoidant in their behaviour (e.g., dress differently, avoid certain locations) and be more concerned to increase their personal security (e.g., join self-defence classes).
- Seek retaliation against perpetrators, though this was mainly confined to those who had also had direct experience of hate crime as well.
- Believe that the Government and the Police should be doing more to tackle hate crime and have less confidence in the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).

## 1.2 Why do indirect experiences influence behaviour?

From our surveys we were able to use statistical analyses that showed connections between perceptions, emotions and, in turn, behavioural intentions and attitudes. These can be summarised thus:

**Indirect experiences → Threat → Anger and Anxiety → Proactive and Avoidant intentions**

- We found that the greater the number of victims people know of (indirect experiences), the more threatening they perceive hate crimes to be.
- These threat perceptions lead to people feeling more angry and anxious. For one group (LGB&T) it also led to them feeling slightly more ashamed.
- Feeling angry was associated with more pro-action and less avoidance; it was also associated with beliefs that the Police and the Government should do more to combat hate crime, and with less confidence in the CPS prosecuting offences.
- Feeling anxious was associated with more avoidance and more security based behavioural intentions.
- Those who experienced shame were more likely to want to retaliate, though this relationship was weak (though still statistically reliable).

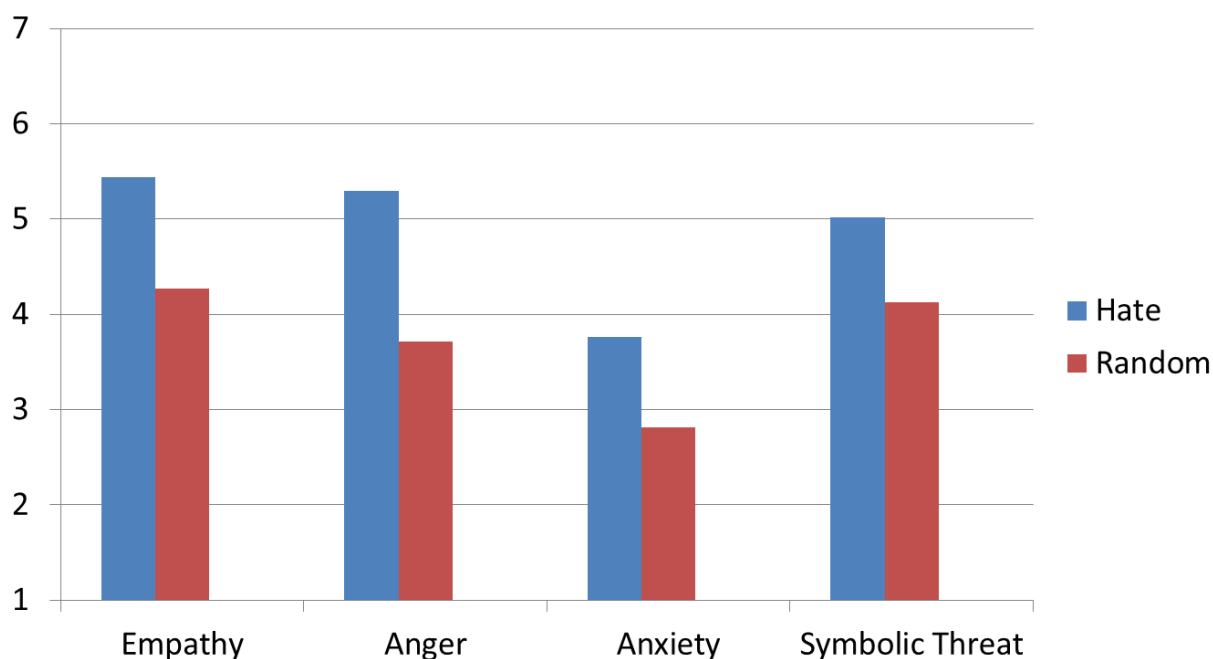
## 1.3 Experimental evidence

The above findings show that experiences of (indirect) hate crime victimisation are correlated with feelings of threat, negative emotions and various attitudes and behavioural intentions. To have more confidence that these relationships are causal in nature – that is, that indirect victimisation *leads to* feelings of threat and negative emotions etc. – we have conducted several randomised control experiments, also with members of the LGB&T and Muslim communities. The typical format of these experiments is to invite participants to take part in a study on ‘reactions to street crime’. The study begins with participants reading an apparently real (but actually carefully and realistically constructed) newspaper article which describes a crime – for instance, a mugging of a person or the vandalism of some buildings (these articles were constructed from real articles located by the researchers). Half of these articles would describe a crime that was obviously motivated by prejudice (e.g., homophobia, Islamophobia); the other half described an identical crime, of equal severity, but apparently not motivated by prejudice. For example, one headline read “Muslim leader mugged in hate attack”, while the equivalent



non-hate crime article had the headline, “Community leader mugged”. The accompanying text described the assault but in subtly different ways, making it clear that the former was a hate crime, while the latter was not. Participants then reported on their feelings and various behavioural intentions, as in the surveys. We consistently find that those who read the ‘hate crime article’ report higher levels of emotions than those who read the other article, as can be seen in Figure 3 below. Because participants are *randomly* assigned to read one article or the other, we can be confident that these differences are due to the exposure to the different material rather than being, for example, due to individual personal differences.

**Figure 3: Experimental evidence for the indirect impacts of hate crime (Muslim participants)**



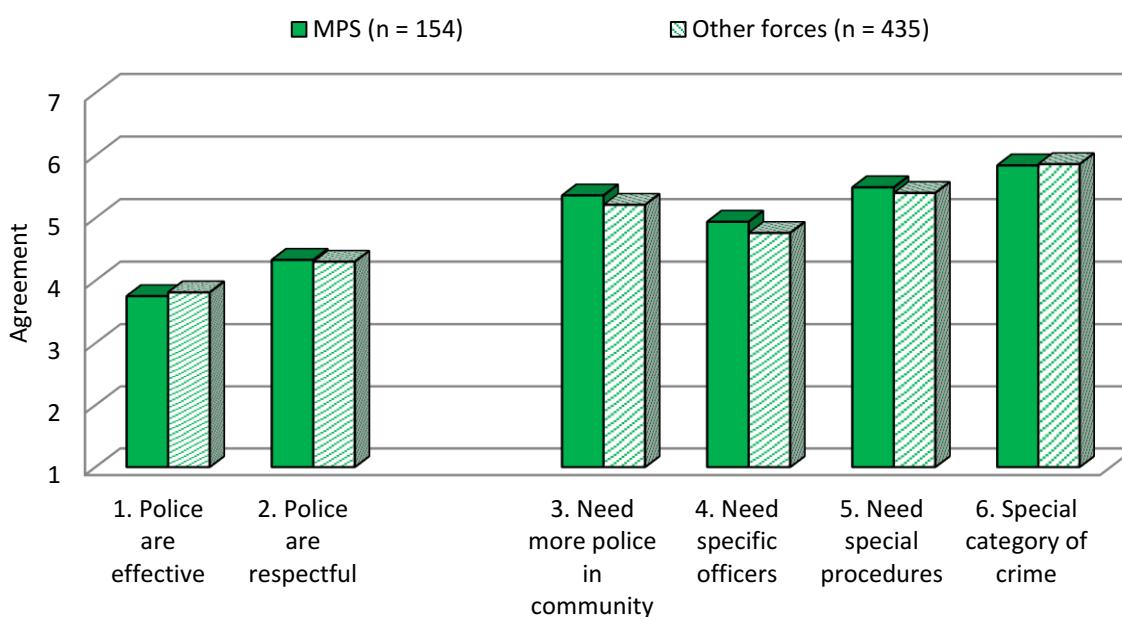
As can be seen, respondents typically felt more empathy for the victim, more anxious, angrier and more threatened after reading the ‘hate’ article as compared to the ‘non-hate’ article. In subsequent analyses we were able to show that the exposure to the ‘hate’ article led to different behavioural intentions (e.g., avoidance) *because* participants felt more empathy for the victim and then more anxious. Parallel experiments with exposure to online hate speech (e.g., on Twitter and Facebook) produced similar results. In these latter experiments, even members of non-targeted communities reacted more adversely to the online hate speech, suggesting that the community impacts of hate crime are wider than on just the particular groups targeted.

## 2 Barriers that prevent individuals from reporting hate crime, and measures to improve reporting rates and police perceptions

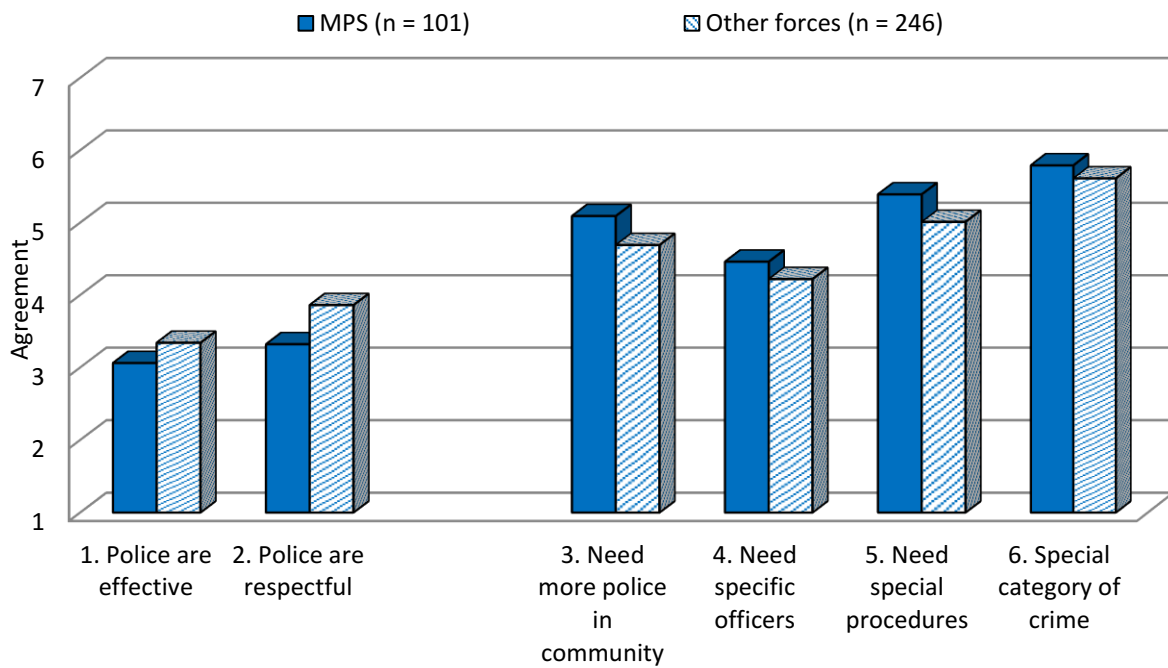
In order to understand further the impacts that hate crimes have on LGB&T and Muslim people's perceptions of criminal justice agencies and their likelihood in reporting incidents we also asked respondents what they thought about the police and law in relation to hate crimes. The graphs below show the opinions of LGB&T respondents and Muslim respondents served by the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) compared to those served by all other forces. These findings are from all respondents, regardless of their level of direct or indirect victimisation.

**Figure 4: Comparative perceptions of the Police and Criminal Justice System: London versus other areas**

### LGB&T: Perceptions of the police and law

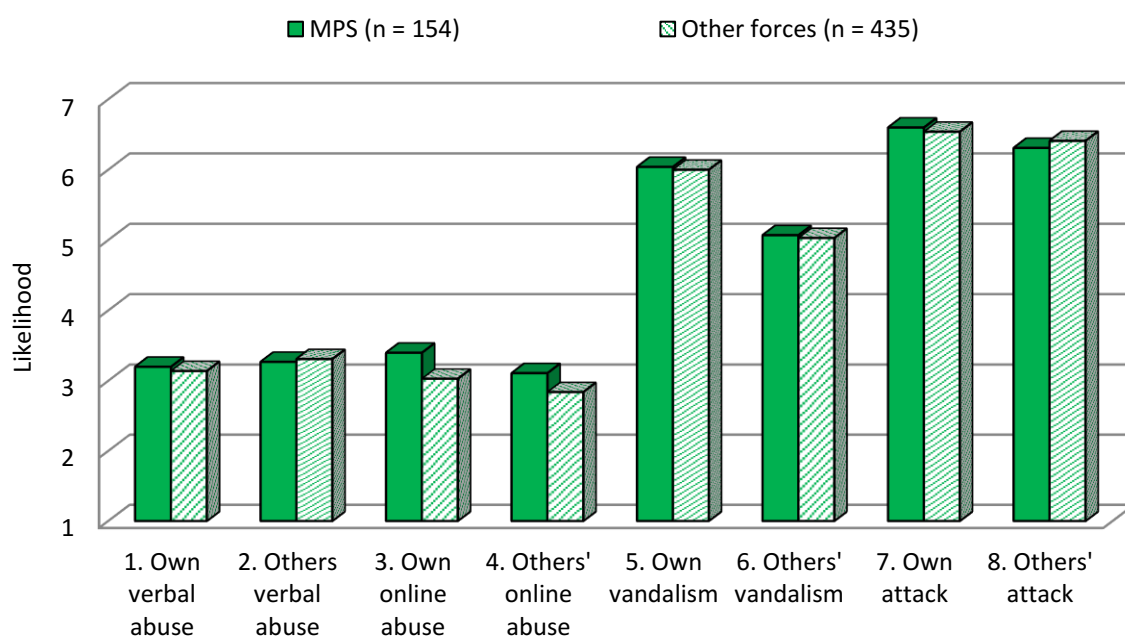


### Muslim: Perceptions of the police and law

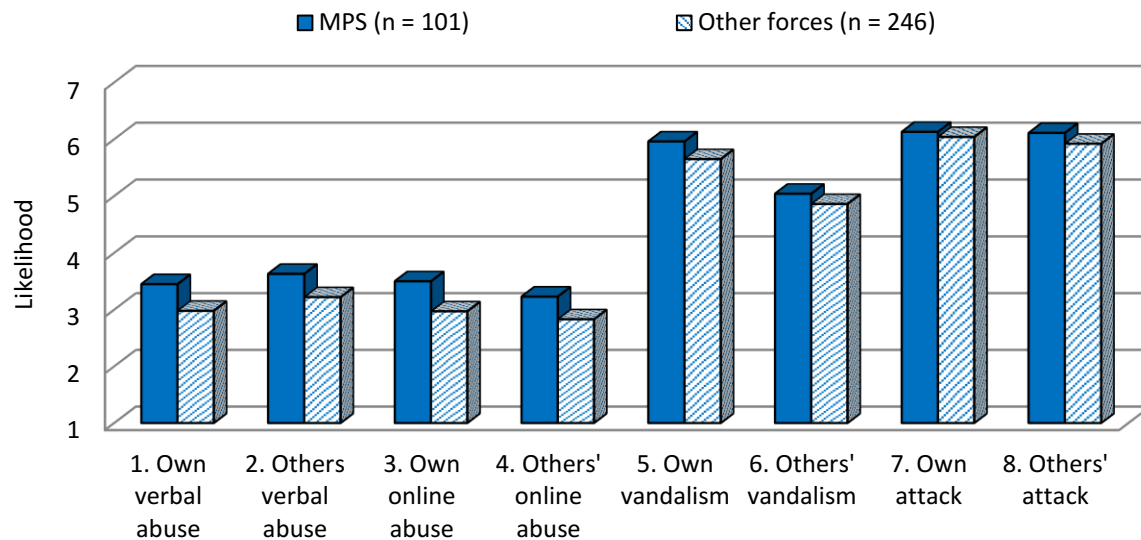


2.1 The next two graphs show how likely the LGB&T and Muslim respondents are to report hate crimes and incidents. Again, we compare the responses of those served by the MPS to those served by other forces.

### LGB&T: Likelihood to report to police



## Muslim: Likelihood to report to police



### Summary of respondents served by the MPS

- Respondents generally did not believe that the police are effective or respectful when responding to hate crimes.
- Respondents generally supported the use of specialised policing for hate crime.
- Respondents are likely to report physical hate attacks.
- Respondents were less likely to report verbal or online abuse.
- There were few overall differences for LGB&T respondents served by the MPS compared with other forces.
- Muslims served by the MPS tended to view the police less favourably compared with other forces. They believed the MPS were slightly less effective and less respectful and also believed that more specialised policing of hate crimes was needed compared with other forces. However, they are more likely to report hate crimes to the MPS than other forces.

### Summary of the comparison between the groups

- Neither LGB&T nor Muslim respondents thought the MPS were effective or respectful; however, Muslims were especially negative in these regards.
- Both LGB&T and Muslim respondents were generally supportive of specialised policing for hate crime, especially LGB&T respondents.
- Both LGB&T and Muslim respondents are not very likely to report verbal or online abuse, but Muslims are *more* likely to do so.

- Both LGB&T and Muslim respondents are more likely to report vandalism and physical attacks, with Muslims slightly less likely to do so.

### 3 What predicts people's likelihood to report?

Within our surveys we were able to use statistical analyses that showed associations between perceptions about the police and, in turn, respondents' likelihood of reporting:

#### **Indirect experiences → police perceived to be ineffective → less likely to report hate crimes**

- We found that the greater the number of victims people know of (indirect experiences) the less likely they are to perceive the police as effective and/or respectful when dealing with hate crimes
- We found that believing the police to be ineffective and disrespectful makes people less likely to report hate crimes

## **[E] RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Our findings strengthen the moral and legal arguments for treating hate motivated crimes as a special category of offence and should be used by policy-makers to support the case for a stronger legislative framework for all types of hate crime.
- Police and criminal justice agencies should make greater use of different community-based measures in order to properly address the indirect (community-based) harms caused by hate crime. One such measure is that of restorative justice (including community mediation) which has been shown to reduce anxieties and levels of fear amongst those who participate in meetings.<sup>3</sup>
- LGB&T and Muslim respondents were reluctant to report verbal and online hate incidents. We welcome the announcement by the MPS that a new Online Hate Crime Hub is being established to improve reporting and investigation of cyberhate. We

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<sup>3</sup> See further a detailed review of hate crime interventions in Walters, M.A and Brown, R. (forthcoming) *Combatting Hate Crime: Emerging practices and recommendations for the improved management of criminal justice interventions*, Crime Research Centre, University of Sussex and the International Network for Hate Studies, to be published later in September 2016.

recommend that similar initiatives be rolled out across the country to improve law enforcement for these types of hate crime, which should in turn increase reporting rates.

- The continued lack of trust in the police to treat victims with respect and/or a perception that police services are unlikely to respond to reported incidents effectively illustrates that there is much more work to be done in improving police confidence amongst targeted communities. Police services must continue to work and consult with LGB&T and Muslim communities to offer support for victims of hate crime and to encourage reporting.
- Since indirect hate crime victimisation is linked to beliefs that the police and government should be doing more, and to decreased confidence in the courts, this suggests that state institutions either:
  - are still not doing enough to successfully tackle hate crime, and therefore need to seek to understand how they can address this, or
  - they need to communicate more effectively to communities how they are successfully combating hate crime (e.g., by providing information on numbers and success rates of prosecutions; use of social media to increase reporting of hate crime; greater levels of consultation with victim communities).