

*Blow the whistle on*

# GAY HATE





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Been shouted at in the street recently? Called a faggot or dyke? Been beaten up or robbed because you're gay? Had your property vandalised? Walked away feeling furious, humiliated, shocked?

Then do something about it.

In this handy pocket-size guide from Stonewall learn...

- How to get yourself out of harm's way
- Why you need to report EVERY incident that involves homophobia
- Who you need to report stuff to
- What you need to say when you report it

**Let's blow the whistle on homophobes!**

# PICTURE IT:

*You're walking along, minding your own business, and you hear it...*

'OI,

*(add your own homophobic insult here)*

!"

For some people it happens so often they hardly even register it. Well, they should.

Or you may have been on the receiving end of a physical homophobic attack. A slap, a punch, a brick, your stuff vandalised... Do we need to go on?

One in eight gay men, lesbians and bisexuals experienced some sort of homophobia – whether 'everyday' or extreme – last year. Unfortunately, they didn't all report it. And not reporting it is a real reason why a lot of it goes on in the first place.

Whether it's being called names or something more serious, these are 'homophobic hate incidents' or 'homophobic hate crimes' - we'll tell you the difference later – and you can do – SHOULD do! – something about them.

**Here's how to tackle it. No special equipment or outfit necessary.**

## *Walk on by*



When you get called something in the street, you probably get an almost

irresistible urge to have a go back. **Don't!**

People who spend their time shouting abuse at passers-by are looking for a reaction. Which is why it's delicious not to give one.

More importantly, they are often looking for a fight. Your comeback may be all the excuse they need to escalate.

**Don't give them the satisfaction.**

# DON'T

*let it go!*

You probably don't care what someone you don't know (and don't want to know) thinks about your sexuality. But you should still do something about it.

You may have kept your cool and got yourself out of danger, but that doesn't mean the next person will be so lucky.

No matter how casual or ridiculous or insignificant the incident may seem, there are too many examples of homophobes who started out by throwing abuse about and ended up killing someone.

**You need to report any homophobic incident - literally anything! - to get it stopped. Before somebody gets hurt.**

## No **JOB** *too* **SMALL**

Don't feel you're over-reacting if you do something about a seemingly casual bit of homophobic abuse. Apart from nipping something more serious in the bud, you're helping the police do their job and identify trouble-makers. And deal with them.

Police put their resources where the problems are. If they don't know you're having a problem, how are they supposed to help solve it?

**The law is taking this sort of thing seriously. So should you.**

# HOW

## *to report an incident*

**If you're in real danger, you obviously phone 999. Enough said.**

Otherwise, you can call a non-emergency police number or third party reporting service. These vary depending where you are. It might be a good idea to find out the number for your area – just Google 'non-emergency police number' along with where you live – and put it into your phone. Do it now, then it's done.

You can also step into a police station and report an incident to the officer on duty (you can ask for a private space if you like). And don't be fobbed off: if you don't think this person is taking it seriously enough, ask to see someone else. Just say, 'I want to report a homophobic hate incident' and make sure that bit gets written down. You can also ask to speak to the gay liaison officer if you like – most areas should have one.

**Imagine if you don't do anything... what happened to you might happen to someone else. Reporting it could make all the difference.**

### *The police **should** take you seriously*

Not only do the police want to help but it's part of their job to do what they can to stamp out hate crime.

Yes, there was a time when gay men and lesbians were reluctant to call in the cops. But that was then, this is now. And if you feel like you're not getting the respect you deserve, you can do something about it. We'll tell you how later.

But most police are as anxious as you to get on top of homophobic abuse and homophobic violence – it is their job, after all. They'll be grateful for your help.

## *And if you don't want to talk to the police...*

Just because you don't necessarily see yourself talking to people in navy uniforms, that doesn't mean incidents – whatever the seriousness – have to go unreported. There are groups who can talk to the police for you.

Your local area should have an independent and anonymous third party reporting service who can tell

you what you should do. Or do it for you, if you prefer.

To find your local area, just Google 'third party reporting' along with where you live, and put it into your phone. Or contact Stonewall – we'll be able to give you info on services in your area – see the back of this booklet for our contact details.

## *KNOW WHAT YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT*

The police will listen to what you have to say, however you want to put it, but it'll be much easier if you feel you know what you're talking about. Which is why these terms might be handy.

**A 'homophobic hate incident' is according to the police...**

**Any non-crime incident which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a person's sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation.**

That means minor name calling, anti-social behaviour, that sort of thing. It's taken as seriously as a similar incident against someone because of their race or religion.

**A 'hate crime' is... Any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a person's sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation.**

So, if you get mugged or assaulted, or your house is vandalised, and a factor in that crime is that you are gay – or thought to be gay even though you're straight – you have been the victim of a hate crime.

It's important to mention why you think crimes were motivated by homophobia: Were you called names during the incident? Was it outside a gay bar? Had they been homophobic to you before?

**If you think it's homophobic, that's enough. They have to list it.**

Oh, and make sure you take down your crime number. You might need it later.

# *It's all about* **NUMBERS!**

Even if you don't care about being heckled in the street, you should still do your bit and report any 'hate incident'.

Not only because you might be preventing something more serious happening to someone else, but because if no one reports these 'incidents' or 'crimes', then no one knows they are happening. And if no one knows they are happening, then nothing is done to stop them.

**Statistics are powerful. They get things changed. If you do find yourself on the receiving end of a homophobic incident, the very least you can do is stand up and be counted. Literally, counted.**

## ***NOW WHAT?***

You have your crime number. You should be contacted by Victim Support and they'll be able to help you deal with what's happened, both practically and emotionally.

If you're not satisfied with the way you've been dealt with by the police, you should do something about that. Make sure you get the ID of anyone you're not happy with and make a note of the time and date etc. If possible, deal with it right there and then. There's nothing to worry about. Just say you'd like to make a complaint and ask how to do it. Just ask to see someone

from the Professional Standards Department (it impresses people if you know this stuff!).

If this all ends up in court you still get some say on how things go. The CPS (Crown Prosecution Service) will be in charge and might want you to be a witness in court. If you think this is going to be a problem – if it's going to out you, for instance – tell them. It won't be the first time they've heard it. They can help make the experience as easy as possible. And remember, if a judge thinks that it's homophobically motivated, he or she can give a tougher sentence.

**The most important thing is that you've done your bit. Now let the authorities finish it off for you.**



# *Where to get* **HELP**

**To do your bit and report any homophobic incident, you have a range of options.**

You can contact the police, either at the police station nearest to where the incident happened, or by calling a non-emergency number (obviously, if it's an emergency, call 999). To find the right number, Google 'non-emergency police number' along with where you live.

There are independent organisations who will anonymously report incidents on your behalf. To find your local one Google 'third-party reporting' along with where you live.

Or you can contact Stonewall and we will point you in the right direction.



**Stonewall**

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