

Experiences of hate crime in Scotland

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Sexual orientation and transgender identity

During 2003 and 2004, the Equality Network conducted a survey of LGBT people's experiences of hate crime. 49 people filled in cards describing their experiences. Almost every report included verbal abuse (including graffiti, email and hate letters). 22 of the 49 responses reported physical attacks.

We have received further reports since.

Here are a few of the personal stories of hate crime experienced by LGBT people in Scotland:

Two lads, aged 18 and 16, assaulted me with a crow bar and Stanley knife. I spent a week in hospital and am left scarred around the left eye and now have to wear glasses.

I lived in a tenement flat for a year and experienced verbal abuse on the stair, had my door damaged and my bike on numerous occasions. The police refused to do anything about it saying the abuse and vandalism would only get worse if they got involved!

My gay friends and I were physically assaulted. We were targets because we were gay men in a straight bar. My teeth were broken.

Myself and friends began to experience a great deal of homophobic verbal abuse from neighbours during and after the 'Keep the Clause' campaign, culminating in my house being broken into and vandalised and my car being first graffitied then destroyed by these same people who'd been harassing us.

Earlier this year, in Cumbernauld (where I live) I was attacked by 4 guys. Started with them saying "fucking tranny" then I was clocked on the back of the head with a buckfast bottle. That knocked me out, I got a pretty severe assault, couple of cracked ribs, a lot of bruising, and one of them

put a cigarette out on my back. None of them were ever caught to my knowledge.

Disability

A Disability Rights Commission / Capability Scotland survey in 2004 collected reports of harassment and crime targeted at disabled people in Scotland:

We've been attacked since my disabled boy was put down, and that was six years ago. I get verbally attacked by the people who live next door every time I go out in my back garden. I can't go to my bin or to my car. The tyres on my car were let down not so long ago. It's because they can't see something wrong with me - I have MS and I have a spinal tumour. (Participant with mobility impairment)

A friend of mine with a guide dog was attacked by kids. They kicked and punched him, then took the harness off his dog and scared the dog away. He said there was no point in going to the police because, as the two young people who attacked him rightly said, he can't identify them. (Participant with visual impairment)

I got head butted on my way home at the beginning of November, and ever since then, whenever I see a group of youths coming towards me, I cross the street and try not to make eye contact with them. I avoid situations now. (Participant with mental health problems)

I am unable to go into my back garden as they threaten me and use abusive language. They have followed my husband and me to the supermarket. We now use a different supermarket. I saw the neighbours with an air rifle and they said to me, 'You make good targets.' They are harassing my husband because of me. We got the police out after they had stolen the edging from around our garden. Once the police had left they threw stones at the house. The police don't know how to deal with it. I've only been on a short holiday once in the last six years, as I'm frightened what they'll do to the house. The Council have told us to move house to get away from them. (Participant with a mobility impairment)

Reports from 'Hate Crime Against Disabled People in Scotland: A Survey Report', Disability Rights Commission and Capability Scotland, 2004.