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28 percent rise in reported LGBT+ hate crime in UK a 'wake-up call'

Sunday 28 October 2018, by [BATHA Emma](#) (Date first published: 16 October 2018).

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LONDON, Oct 16 (Thomson Reuters Foundation) - Reported hate crimes against gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people in England and Wales have risen by 28 percent, according to figures released on Tuesday [1] that activists said were a "wake-up call".

Police recorded nearly 13,300 crimes in the year to the end of March [2], though rights group Stonewall said its research showed four in five incidents went unreported, with younger people particularly reluctant to go to the police.

"These statistics are a wake-up call," said Laura Russell, policy head at Stonewall.

"While some may suggest this rise is due to increased confidence in reporting, we fear these represent the tip of the iceberg in hate crimes against LGBT people."

The crime figures were released as Britain announced a review of hate crime legislation, which will look at how to make it more effective and whether it should encompass new categories such as misogyny.

"Hate crime goes directly against the long-standing British values of unity, tolerance and mutual respect - and I am committed to stamping this sickening behaviour out," Home Secretary Sajid Javid said in a statement.

The government also announced plans to enhance training for police handling hate crime [3], which includes offences motivated by hostility on the grounds of race, religion, disability, sexual orientation and trans identity.

Figures released by Britain's Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) on Tuesday showed courts were passing harsher sentences on hate crimes.

Prosecutors in such cases can ask courts for an increased punishment to reflect the aggravating circumstances.

Sentences were boosted in about 64 percent of convictions involving anti-LGBT hate crime between April 2017 and March 2018, up from nearly half of cases in the preceding year, according to the CPS's annual Hate Crime Report.

Prosecutors highlighted a case where a man on a train threatened to bring a bomb to a Pride march in the Welsh capital Cardiff and made homophobic comments.

The court boosted his sentence from nine months to a year to reflect the hate crime element.

Police recorded 11,638 hate crimes on the basis of sexual orientation between 2017 and 2018, up from 9,157 the previous year, and 1,651 hate crimes against transgender people up from 1,248.

They said the rise may reflect improvements in police recording of such offences and greater reporting of incidents, rather than a genuine increase.

But CPS data showed referrals by police remained low with only 1,564 cases passed to prosecutors in the same time period.

Police in London are visiting LGBT+ venues to listen to concerns during national hate crime awareness week which runs until Oct. 20.

“Our message to all victims is, don’t suffer in silence,” said Chief Superintendent Dave Stringer.

Overall, police recorded 94,098 hate crime offences last year, mostly race hate crimes, up 17 percent on the previous year.

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P.S.

- Openly, Thomson Reuters Foundation, Tuesday, 16 October 2018 14:34 GMT:
<http://www.openlynews.com/i/?id=a7fb0ccd-7791-4b61-b14c-928432ff2e5f>

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Footnotes

[1] <https://www.cps.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/cps-hate-crime-report-2018.pdf>

[2] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/748598/hate-crime-1718-hosb2018.pdf

[3] <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/hate-crime-plan-refreshed-to-protect-victims-and-promote-shared-values>