VS VICTIM SUPPORT
ESSEX

STOP HATE UK
STOP HATE. START HERE

Dealing with
Online Hate

victimsupport.org.uk

Hate crime is defined as any incident which is perceived as being motivated by prejudice or hostility towards an individual due to their race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.

This includes any hate expressed online, either at an individual or against a group. It could be an abusive message, a campaign of cyberbullying, or an attempt to incite hatred at a group of people, but whatever it is, if it is motivated by prejudice toward one of the five characteristics it may be considered a hate crime or hate incident.

Three online case studies:

1. Abbott shared an image on social media of himself and his work colleagues attending the event 'Let's celebrate our diverse communities', where he also had his own stall with traditional home-made Jewish food. Although the majority of people shared and liked the post, Abbott started receiving personal messages on social media targeting him because of his religion and ethnicity. The comments were personal attacks on Abbott and made accusations about Jews trying to poison the community.

2. Over the weekend a simple image was shared on social media showing a group of children lined up to play a football match on their school's football pitch. The game was scheduled in the light of the FIFA World Cup 2018 and appeared to be a huge excitement for the youngsters. A majority of people were happy to see children getting involved in outdoor activities, but this was followed by number of racist comments relating to the ethnicity of children and linking this to the concept of "white genocide".

3. Darren noticed that his social media account was continuously targeted with homophobic comments of a similar nature. Darren and his friends repeatedly reported the account 'final_solution' to the social media provider for its hostile and prejudiced comments. However, as soon as the account was suspended they noticed it would appear again with a slightly modified username, for instance, 'final_solution123' and continue with its homophobic comments. Darren became worried because he now felt that these fake profiles had been set up and were being used maliciously to harass him because of his sexuality.

"Whether shouted in their face on the street, daubed on their wall or tweeted into their living room, the impact of hateful abuse on a victim can be equally devastating."

Alison Saunders, Director of Public Prosecutions, Crown Prosecution Service.

The impact of hate crime can often be greater because the person affected is targeted for a central element of their identity. In 2014–2015, 92% of hate crime victims reported being emotionally affected by the incident, with a third being highly affected. The most prevalent emotional effects of hate crime reported were anger, annoyance, shock, fear and loss of confidence.

Online hate crime also carries consequences for those that post it. High profile figures like Jack Maynard, Stormzy, and others have apologised publically for comments made on social media many years before. Our online activity often leaves an indelible footprint, requiring us to think carefully about what we put our names to online.

In 2016/17, the police recorded 80,393 hate crime offences, an increase of 29% compared with the previous year. However, the Crime Survey for England and Wales estimates that only 48% of hate crime is reported to the police. This is often because victims believe the incident to be too trivial or believe the police would not take the incident seriously or be able to tackle it.

Online hate crime is no different; the impact can be felt by the individuals and the community around them, but people can still be reluctant to report.

In Essex there are several ways to report online hate crime

Contact Stop Hate UK on **0800 138 1625**. The service is also available by text message on **07717 989 025**, by email on **talk@stophateuk.org**, online chat via **www.stophateuk.org/talk** and web form via **www.stophateuk.org/tell**

If you are not sure whether the online incident has broken the law, and you want to talk about it with someone else first, Stop Hate UK can offer information, advice and support to people affected by hate crime in Essex.

Contact Essex Police: Online hate crime can be reported to Essex Police on **www.essex.police.uk/do-it-online/** or by calling **101**. In case of an emergency, call **999**.

Use TrueVision: The online reporting facility for reporting hate crimes. You can report anonymously if that is your wish. Visit the site which includes helpful guidance, at: **www.report-it.org.uk/**

Contact a Hate Incident Reporting Centre: Hate Incident Reporting Centres, or HIRCs, are community venues where individuals can report hate incidents and hate crimes, either as a victim or a witness. Find your local HIRC by visiting: **www.essex.police.uk/advice/hate-crime/**

For other forms of online safety visit: **www.getsafeonline.org/**

There are a number of steps you can take when if you encounter online hate speech. Overleaf is a flow-chart with the key actions to consider, but below are three examples of how online hate speech can be resolved.

Three online case studies:

1. A member of the public alerted Stop Hate UK to a number of racist comments, referring to people as 'chimpanzees' and suggesting that they 'go back to their uncivilised country'. The comments were featured on Facebook page to which the member of the public was able to supply links.

Stop Hate UK provided support and advice to the client regarding the incident, reported the comments to the Social Media provider via their Trusted Flagger Status, and had the posts removed.
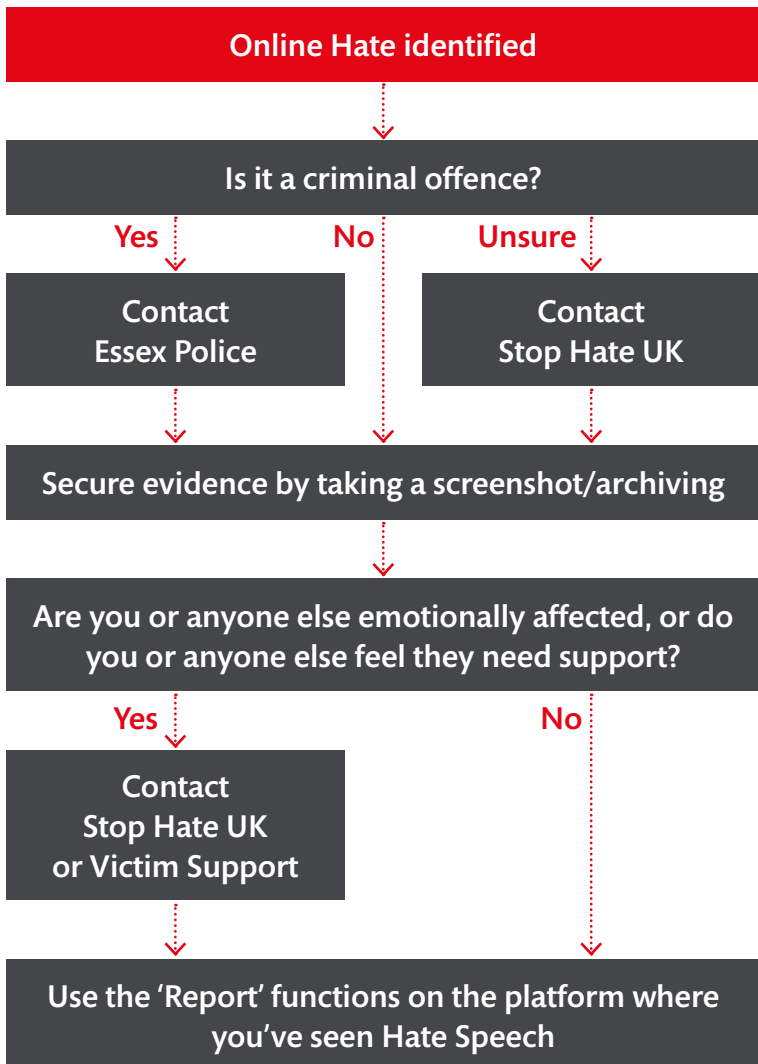
2. In 2017, Paul Hepplestall was found guilty of 'racially aggravated malicious communications', after posting a threatening and grossly abusive video targeted towards members of the Pakistani and Muslim communities. Paul was arrested and following his trial was sentenced to 20 months in prison and given a five year restraining order stopping him from deleting his internet history.

3. A member of the public contacted Victim Support after they were targeted on social media by a person known to them. The messages received included homophobic abuse.

The frequency of the comments were very distressing but Victim Support were able to provide immediate emotional support, give advice regarding reporting the comments to the social media platform, and refer in to a local support service specialising in LGBTQ+ issues, where people with similar shared experiences could offer peer support.

VICTIM SUPPORT
ESSEX

STOP HATE UK
STOP HATE. START HERE

Here are some of the key actions to consider if you receive or identify online hate speech:

Online Hate identified

↓

Is it a criminal offence?

Yes ↓   **No** ↓   **Unsure** ↓

Contact Essex Police   **Contact Stop Hate UK**

↓

Secure evidence by taking a screenshot/archiving

↓

Are you or anyone else emotionally affected, or do you or anyone else feel they need support?

Yes ↓   **No** ↓

Contact Stop Hate UK or Victim Support

↓

Use the 'Report' functions on the platform where you've seen Hate Speech

We are an independent charity offering free, confidential support to people affected by crime and traumatic incidents.

For information and support, contact us by:

- calling: Supportline **08 08 16 89 111**
- using Next Generation Text (add **18001** before any of our phone numbers)
- Online: **victimsupport.org.uk**

To find out how you can help us, visit **victimsupport.org.uk/get-involved**

victimsupport.org.uk

f **VictimSupport**   🐦 **@VictimSupport**

Business Disability Forum
Building disability-smart organisations

Leaders in Diversity

Stonewall DIVERSITY CHAMPION