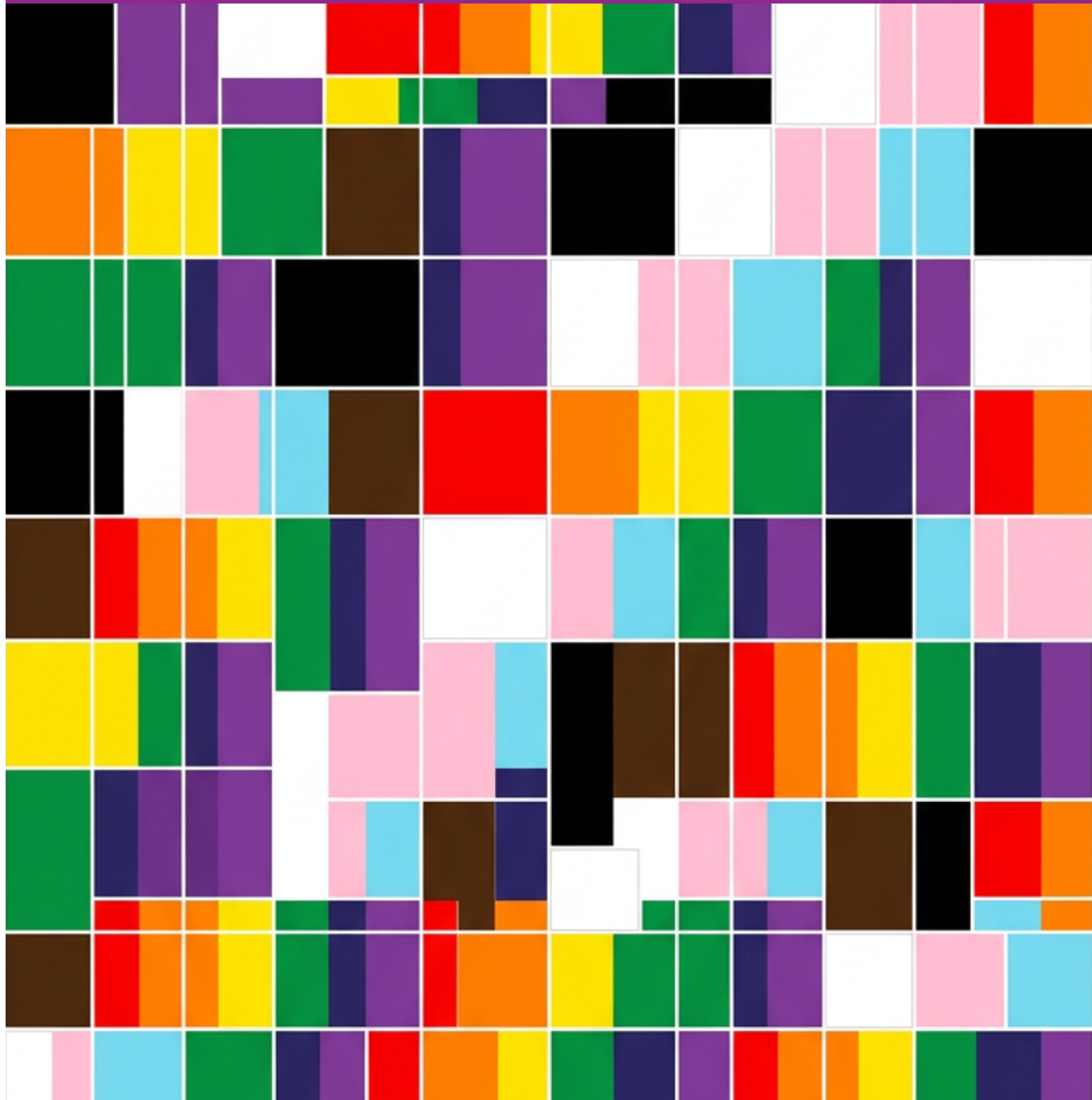


LGBTQ+ Hate Crime in Gateshead

A Community Response (2026)



Executive Summary

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This report presents the findings of the LGBTQ+ Hate Crime in Gateshead: A Community Response project, developed to better understand the experiences of LGBTQ+ people in Gateshead and to strengthen local responses to hate crime and discrimination.

The research highlights that LGBTphobia and hate-related abuse remain a significant issue across Gateshead. Over 72% of respondents said they had personally experienced, or witnessed, LGBTphobia in the past 12 months, while more than a quarter had experienced or witnessed incidents that may constitute hate crime. Public transport, online spaces, schools, workplaces, and public streets were all identified as areas of concern. This is significantly higher than our findings from across the region, in our LGBTPhobia study published in 2025, which can be downloaded at the bottom of this Executive Summary.

A key finding throughout the project was the issue of underreporting. Many participants said they did not feel confident reporting hate crime due to fear, stigma, mistrust, or uncertainty about what support exists. The research also showed that awareness of alternative reporting pathways beyond the police remains very low. These barriers are often even greater for people experiencing intersecting forms of marginalisation, including refugees, migrants, disabled people, and racially minoritised communities. At the same time, the project highlighted the strength and resilience of Gateshead's LGBTQ+ communities. Through consultations, podcasts, and community engagement events, participants spoke about the importance of change in Gateshead, visibility, solidarity, allyship, and their own trusted community spaces. Importantly, this project has already led to practical action. In response to the findings, OUT North East, Northumbria Police, and Connected Voice have developed a new community-based hate crime drop-in service at the ONE Centre, creating safer and more accessible opportunities for people to seek support and report incidents.

This report is both a reflection of both lived experiences and a call to action. Tackling LGBTQ+ hate crime in Gateshead will require continued partnership working, stronger community-based reporting systems, better awareness of support services, and long-term investment in inclusion, education, and prevention

Scan the QR code to read our research findings about LGBTPhobia in the North East:



What is a hate crime?

A hate crime is defined as “Any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's race or perceived race; religion or perceived religion; sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation; disability or perceived disability and any crime motivated by hostility or prejudice against a person who is transgender or perceived to be transgender”



The Scope of this Project

Vision:

Our vision is a Gateshead where LGBTQ+ people, particularly those who are experiencing intersectional forms of marginalisation, can live safely, openly, and with dignity, free from hate and discrimination. We envision communities where incidents of hate are taken seriously, where people feel confident to report abuse, and where services respond in ways that are accessible, inclusive, and rooted in respect for lived experience. Through stronger collaboration between communities, voluntary organisations, and public services, we aim to create a local environment where hate is challenged collectively and where those affected are supported to find safety, justice, and solidarity.

Mission:

Our mission through the Hate Crime Community Response Project has been to strengthen Gateshead's response to LGBTQ+ hate crime by bringing together people with lived experience, community organisations, and frontline professionals to develop more coordinated and inclusive responses. Through consultations, workshops, and partnership working, the project amplified the voices of LGBTQ+ people, including disabled individuals and those facing intersecting barriers related to migration, faith, poverty, or housing insecurity.

Ultimately, the project sought to move beyond recognising the problem of hate crime towards building practical, community-led solutions that improve reporting pathways, strengthen support networks, and ensure that LGBTQ+ people in Gateshead are better protected and heard.

Objectives:

- To understand the experiences of LGBTQ+ people in Gateshead who have been affected by hate crime, particularly those who experience other intersecting barriers, such as migration status, disability, and race.
- To explore the barriers that prevent LGBTQ+ people from reporting hate crime or accessing support services.
- To identify practical ways to improve reporting pathways and make support services more accessible, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of marginalised communities.
- To use lived experience and community insight to inform a more coordinated and community-led response to hate crime in Gateshead.

Key questions:

- What types of hate crime or targeted harassment are LGBTQ+ people in Gateshead experiencing?
- How do intersecting identities shape people's experiences of hate and access to support?
- What barriers prevent LGBTQ+ people from reporting hate crime to the police or seeking help from support services?
- How do victims currently access support, and where are the gaps in existing services?
- What would make hate crime reporting feel safer, easier, and more accessible for LGBTQ+ people?
- What long-term changes are needed to ensure LGBTQ+ communities in Gateshead feel safer and better supported when experiencing hate or discrimination?

The Scope of this Project

As part of this project, a survey was distributed to gather community views and experiences relating to hate crime and hate crime reporting in Gateshead. The survey asked participants about their experiences, perceptions, and reporting of LGBTQ+ hate crime and LGBTphobia in Gateshead. It first gathered background information about respondents, including whether they live, work, study, or volunteer in Gateshead, along with demographic information, such as age, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability status, and whether they were refugees or seeking asylum. This helped the project understand the diversity of people responding and whether particular groups experience hate differently.

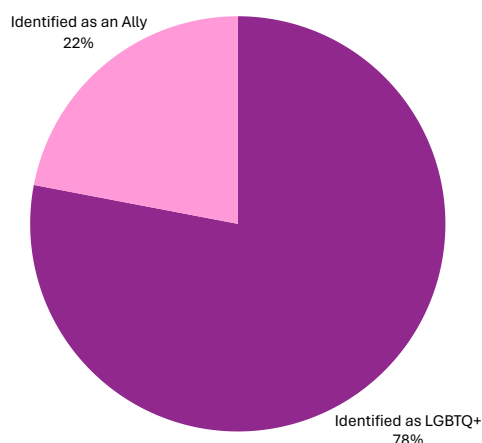
Participants were then asked about their perceptions of the climate of LGBTphobia in different settings, including across the North East, within Gateshead specifically, in workplaces or places of study, in social spaces, in public areas such as parks and shopping streets, and on public transport such as buses and the Metro. The survey also asked whether respondents had personally experienced or witnessed LGBTphobia in the past 12 months, and where these incidents occurred, including both physical locations and online environments. The survey then explored direct experiences of LGBTQ+ hate crime, asking respondents whether they had faced or witnessed a hate crime, what types of incidents occurred, and inviting them to describe these experiences in more detail if they felt comfortable. Participants were also asked about confidence in reporting hate crime, including whether they would feel safe reporting an incident to the police, and whether they knew about other reporting options available in Gateshead.

Finally, the survey focused on improving reporting mechanisms, asking participants what methods of reporting they would be most likely to use and inviting suggestions on how hate crime reporting systems could be made more accessible, visible, and supportive for LGBTQ+ people. The responses were intended to help identify barriers to reporting, and inform recommendations for improving hate crime reporting and support services in the borough. **In total, 93 people completed the survey.**

The consultations first began at the global LGBTQ+ #SaferToBeMe Summit in Gateshead, where participants highlighted the need for stronger local responses to hate crime and better support for LGBTQ+ people experiencing abuse and discrimination. The discussions at the summit helped shape the direction of the project and identified the importance of further community engagement. Following this, the project team took part in a series of community consultations, involving local partners and stakeholders, **engaging with 62 professionals from a range of sectors.** Consultations took place at the ONE Centre in Gateshead, at Integration Station, during a consultation with Connected Voice, and through engagement activities held at the Metrocentre and other community venues. These sessions brought together community members, advocacy organisations, service providers, and local stakeholders to discuss lived experiences of hate crime, barriers to reporting, and ideas for strengthening community responses.

Together, the survey and consultation activities provided valuable insight from both individuals and organisations, ensuring that the project was informed by a wide range of community perspectives and lived experiences. This engagement helped identify key challenges around under-reporting, mistrust of reporting systems, and the need for more accessible and community-based reporting options.

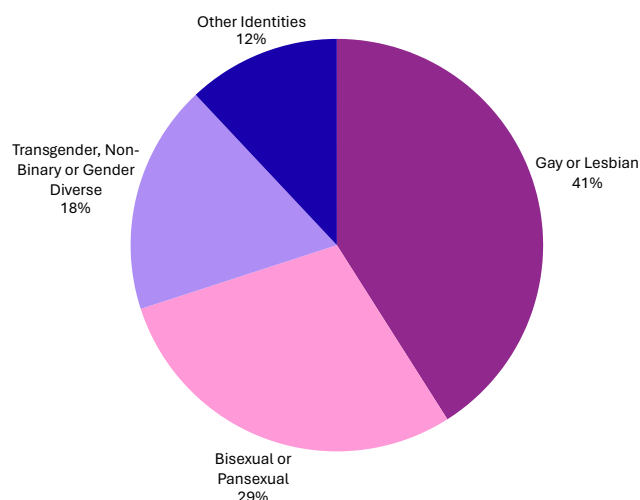
The Survey Sample



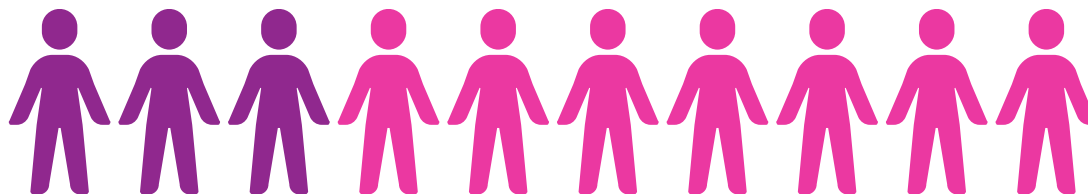
Of the 93 respondents, approximately 78% identified as LGBTQ+, while 22% identified as allies or supporters of the LGBTQ+ community, who wished to share their perspectives. This ensured that the survey captured both the lived experiences of discrimination and broader observations from people working within, or alongside, LGBTQ+ communities.

Respondents represented a range of gender identities and sexual orientations across the LGBTQ+ spectrum.

The largest proportion identified as gay or lesbian (around 41%), followed by bisexual or pansexual respondents (approximately 29%), with around 18% identifying as transgender, non-binary, or gender diverse, and 12% identifying with other identities within the LGBTQ+ spectrum.



The sample also included people with a range of intersecting identities and life experiences. Around 34% of respondents identified as being disabled, or having a long-term health condition, highlighting the importance of considering accessibility and additional barriers when addressing hate crime and reporting systems. Approximately 16% of respondents identified as being from racially minoritised backgrounds, while around 11% identified as migrants, refugees, or people with experience of seeking asylum. These intersections are important because experiences of hate are often shaped by multiple aspects of a person's identity, which can create unique forms of discrimination and vulnerability.



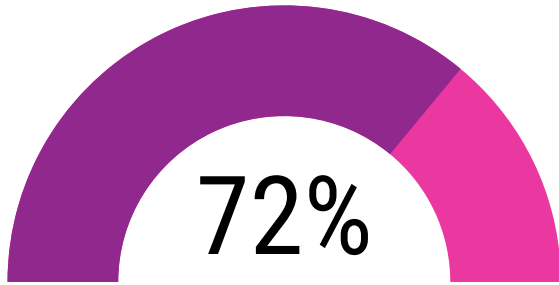
In addition to community members, the survey also captured responses from people involved in community work, advocacy, or service provision. Around 30% of respondents indicated that they were volunteers, professionals, or community organisers working with LGBTQ+ people in Gateshead. Their responses provided additional insight into patterns of hate incidents they observe through their work.

The 93 respondents represent a diverse cross-section of individuals connected to Gateshead, combining the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ people with insights from allies and professionals. While not representative of every experience across the borough, the responses provide a strong foundation for understanding local experiences of hate crime and identifying where reporting systems and community support can be improved.

Key Findings at a Glance

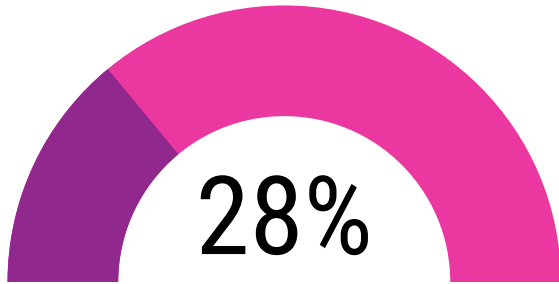
The survey received 93 responses from people who live, work, study, or regularly spend time in Gateshead. The findings provide important insight into the experiences of LGBTQ+ people and allies in relation to LGBTphobia and hate crime in the borough.

LGBTphobia remains widely experienced in Gateshead:



- **72.3% of respondents said they had personally experienced or witnessed LGBTphobia in Gateshead in the past 12 months.**
- 27.7% said they had not experienced or witnessed LGBTphobia.

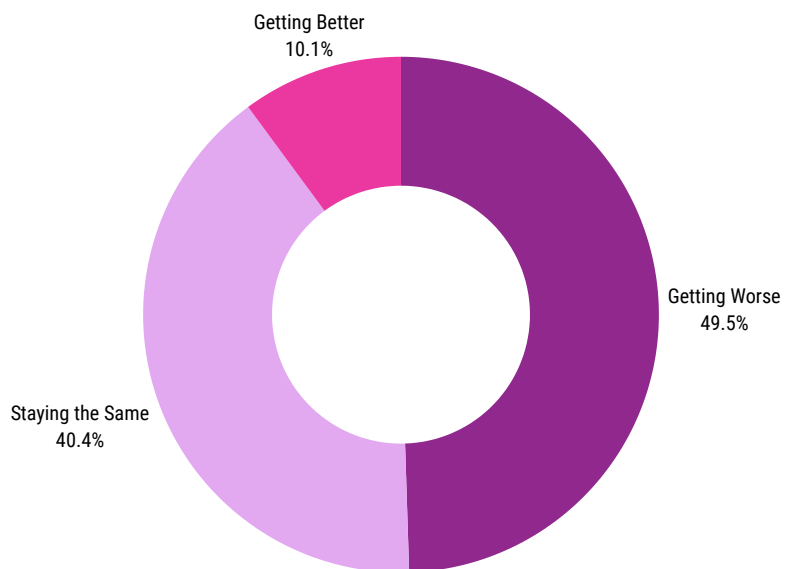
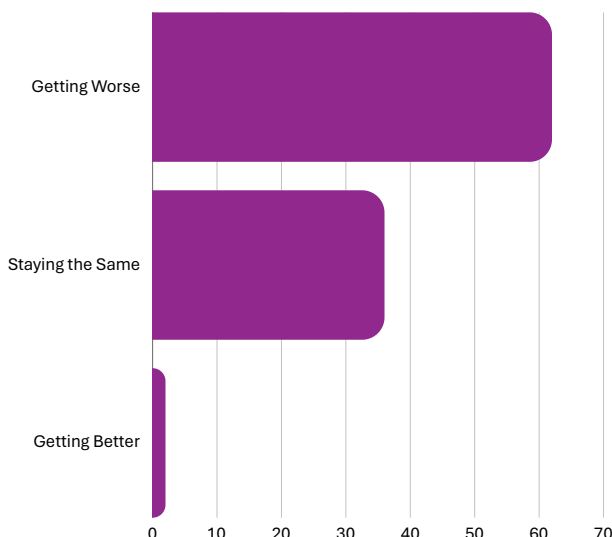
A significant minority experienced or witnessed a hate crime against LGBTQ+ people:



- **28% of respondents said they had experienced or witnessed an LGBTQ+ hate crime in the past 12 months in Gateshead.**
- While this number is smaller than general experiences of LGBTphobia, it still shows that over a quarter of respondents encountered incidents that may meet the threshold of hate crime.

Many people believe the climate of LGBTphobia is worsening in Gateshead:

- This means **almost 9 in 10 respondents** feel the situation is either worsening or not improving.



Public transport was identified as a major concern. When asked specifically about buses and the Metro:

- 62% said LGBTphobia is getting worse.
- 36% said it is staying the same.
- 2% said it is getting better.

Key Findings at a Glance

From the 93 responses from people who live, work, study, or regularly spend time in Gateshead, the findings provide important insight into the experiences of LGBTQ+ people and allies in relation to LGBTphobia and hate crime in the borough.

Confidence in reporting hate crime to the police is mixed:



- **63.8% said they would feel safe reporting an LGBTphobic hate crime to the police.**
- 36.2% said they would not feel safe reporting.
- This highlights that a significant minority of people lack confidence in formal reporting systems.

Awareness of other hate crime reporting pathways is very low:



- **68.1% of respondents said they did not know where else to report an LGBTphobic hate crime in Gateshead beyond the police.**
- Only 31.9% said they were aware of other reporting options.
- This finding strongly suggests that third-party reporting centres, advocacy services, and community-based reporting mechanisms are not widely known within the community.

A smaller group reported that they had experienced or witnessed an LGBTQ+ hate crime and provided further details about the forms it took. **The most common type was verbal abuse**, reported by 92.3% of respondents in this group. This included homophobic or transphobic insults, threatening language, and harassment in public spaces. **Harassment was also frequently reported**, affecting 46.2% of respondents. In addition, 38.5% **reported online hate or abuse**, such as hostile messages, posts, or comments targeting LGBTQ+ people on social media or digital platforms.

Other forms of hate crime were reported less frequently but remain significant. **Incitement to hatred** was reported by 30.8%, while **physical violence and damage to property** were each reported by 15.4%. Overall, the findings show that while verbal abuse and harassment are the most common forms of LGBTQ+ hate, more serious incidents including violence and property damage also occur.

Comments from the Survey

"I can't see that things have vastly improved but it is good to see more awareness training available at work. I am concerned that the rise of far right political organisations seems to have resulted in more hate crime towards people who have migrated to the UK, and that we may see this increasing LGBTPhobia as people feel emboldened to spread discrimination"

"I am one of the few male LGBTQ+ activists in North East Sport. I help run visibility campaigns in football, tennis and darts. Responses to the appearance of the rainbow flag at venues like my workplace, have recently drawn LGBTQ+phobic rhetoric disguised as free speech. Online hate in comments of posts go unchecked and unchallenged by the platforms. I am hearing more LGBTQ+ phobic slurs in pubs and clubs where I play darts, more openly now than 10 years ago. There seems to be a shift in attitudes towards D&I initiatives that are queer focused, as part of a wider political campaigning by right wing media to attack the rainbow flag and everything it stands for. I feel less safe today than I did 10-12 years ago which is something I don't say lightly"

"I feel like transphobia in particular is worse with a lot of people buying into the misinformation and scaremongering being spread"

"I feel as though the political climate is currently shifting towards a more LGBTphobic state, and harmful rhetoric being spread online is being more and more accepted by a wider range of people and it is creeping into the mainstream media and influencing the way that people see the community and its members"

"I have seen more homophobic comments and hatred on social platforms but it has been positive seeing companies and local authority calling this out"

"I have changed schools and at my old school 'gay' was thrown around quite a lot as an insult and homophobia was quite a large problem. I have since moved to a different school which has a pride club. I am in the sixth form which is quite detached from the rest of the school, but I have not seen or heard of anything, but I am in a very lovely friend group if I am being totally honest"

"The climate of homophobia is dire in Gateshead in particular within some schools...I can confidently say that my institution has ruined my mental health as a result of hatred and homophobia, aged only 15 years old each...every student is forced to endure lessons studying the ethics of being gay. I can say I have personally experienced this quote from a boy at my school talking about me: "she's so gay she's going to send her kids to an all trans school." This is not the first time, but certainly the most memorable, and this institution validates this. This school has made me hate my bisexuality and nothing is being done to change it"

"I do not feel safe on the Metro at all. There are lots of drunk people and people who are on drugs, even people who aren't, who start conversations with me or shout at me because of how I dress, or look. I have stopped using the Metro now because of it. Security is there, but we need security on every carriage and every station should have ticket gates, or this problem will never go away"

Comments from the Survey

"I'm not visibly queer, people assume I'm cishet (cisgender and heterosexual) and that keeps me safe - but the important factor here is that for the first time in my life I feel scared of letting people know who I am. I feel I have to hide my identity (particularly as a trans person) due to the rise in hate against us. I don't want to hide, I didn't think I would ever have to hide in my own city. We all know attacks on trans rights and the overall political climate right now is harming us; I worry for my [queer] community"

"I haven't had anything directed at me personally, it's more the impact of seeing things second hand. For example, Pride posters being defaced, flags at coffee shops being ripped down"

"The far right and mainstream media are using asylum seekers and the LGBTQ+ community as scapegoats to disguise their own agendas to make the poor, poorer, and the rich, richer, which has led to a rise in LGBTphobia"

"In general, I think Gateshead is a fairly tolerant place, especially towards cisgender lesbian and gays. I would personally not hold my partners hand in public, however I have never had to disclose my sexuality and I think public acceptance towards gay and lesbian people is better now than when I was younger. However, I think tolerance in society as a whole towards transgender people has decreased, and there are people who would feel more comfortable acting negatively towards LGBTQ+ in public/online than in the past"

"Hate crime, particularly on public transport, but this isn't just isolated to Gateshead. This is now rampant in our society and getting far far worse, especially compared to 10 years ago. When filling in the census, I didn't declare my sexual orientation as I don't want a government record knowing my identity. I have deleted my social media as I don't want a digital record. I am worried about where society is going, and the hateful, growing rhetoric. Reform Councils in the NE, hatred against Pride events. Awful to watch the hard work of our queer generations who paved the way, only for a hateful society to begin chipping away"

"Just a general feeling/undertone in Facebook posts. A lot of it is subtle phobia - complaints about why there is Pride, or why isn't there a straight pride. However it seems some people seem to think they have carte blanche when it comes to transphobia. People aren't afraid to openly talk in a phobic manner"

Survey participants described growing concerns about increasing anti-LGBTQ+ hostility, particularly online and within wider public discourse. Many respondents felt less safe openly expressing their identity than they had in previous years, with transphobia highlighted as a particular concern. Public transport, schools, online spaces, and public environments were commonly identified as places where discrimination and harassment occur. While some participants recognised positive progress in visibility and inclusion, many felt that social attitudes towards LGBTQ+ people are worsening. Overall, the comments demonstrate the continuing impact that hate, discrimination, and hostile rhetoric are having on feelings of safety and belonging within LGBTQ+ communities in Gateshead.



Responses from the Community

Case Study: Integration Station

A consultation session on hate crime and LGBTQ+ awareness was held at Integration Station with ten refugee community leaders representing a wide range of communities and faith backgrounds. Participants included leaders from Eritrean, Roma Gypsy, Sudanese, Ethiopian, Angolan, Ugandan, Rwandan, Iranian, Polish, and Pakistani communities. The group reflected significant cultural, national, and religious diversity, with faith representation ranging from Muslim to Christian leaders. This was also a learning experience to see how other communities reported hate crime.

Bringing together leaders from different backgrounds provided an important opportunity to discuss shared concerns, community experiences, and approaches to strengthening trust and understanding across communities. During the consultation, participants highlighted that refugees and people from refugee backgrounds often do not report hate crime incidents. Many shared that individuals within their communities believe reporting hate crime is pointless, as they feel the police may not take action or that reporting will not lead to meaningful change. Fear and mistrust of authorities were also raised as important barriers.

For some refugees, previous experiences with law enforcement in their countries of origin contribute to reluctance to engage with police services. In addition, concerns about immigration status, language barriers, and uncertainty about how the reporting system works were all identified as factors that discourage people from coming forward to report a hate crime.

Participants also emphasised the importance of trusted community spaces in addressing these challenges. Many felt that reporting mechanisms would be more accessible if they were embedded within familiar environments where people already feel safe and supported. Community leaders highlighted that trusted intermediaries and local organisations play a crucial role in bridging the gap between communities and statutory services. In response to the issues raised during the consultation, a new initiative has been introduced to improve access to hate crime reporting. A local police community officer now attends the organisation's office once a month and spends time within the community space at Integration Station.



Responses from the Community

Case study: The ONE Centre

A community consultation was held at the ONE Centre in Gateshead bringing together representatives from voluntary organisations, advocacy groups, local authorities, policing, and community organisations to discuss LGBTQ+ hate crime and reporting mechanisms. Participants included organisations such as Speaking Up Together, Your Voice Counts, Pride Action North, Connected Voice Advocacy, Gateshead Council, Northumbria Police, the Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner's Office, Youth Focus North East, and Gateshead College.

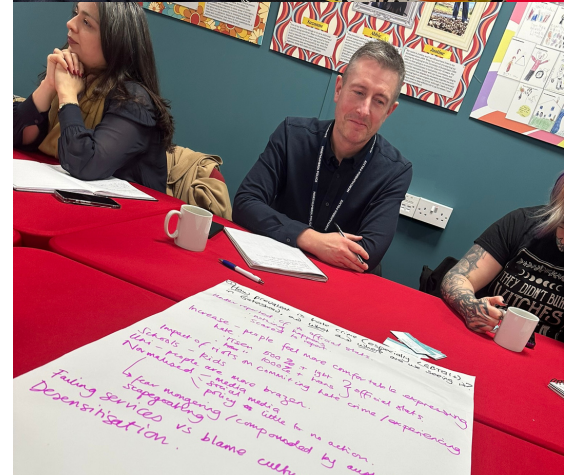
This consultation asked three key questions:

1. How prevalent is LGBTQ+ hate crime in Gateshead? What are we seeing and where are we seeing it?
2. Are the existing mechanisms for reporting LGBTQ+ hate crime in Gateshead suitable? Do you know what the different mechanisms are, and how to report hate crime?
3. What hate crime reporting mechanisms would you prefer or want to see?

The consultation highlighted that LGBTQ+ hate crime in Gateshead is significantly underreported compared to official statistics. Participants noted that many people do not report incidents because they believe nothing will happen, they are scared of reporting, or they distrust authorities. This gap between lived experiences and official figures was identified as a key issue masking the true scale of the problem.

Participants also discussed a perceived increase in hate incidents, with some suggesting that hostile attitudes towards LGBTQ+ people have become more visible and normalised. Social media and wider media narratives were identified as contributing to this environment, alongside political rhetoric and policy debates that can legitimise discriminatory attitudes. Schools and universities were also mentioned as spaces where hate attitudes can begin or become more visible.

Several common locations for hate incidents were identified. These included public transport, bus stops, streets at night, workplaces, and online spaces.



Responses from the Community

Case study: The ONE Centre

Participants noted that adults are often the perpetrators in street-based incidents, while online harassment is widespread across social media platforms. Transport hubs and buses were seen as particularly vulnerable spaces due to crowding and limited oversight.

In relation to reporting mechanisms, participants noted that existing systems exist, but are not well known or easily understood. Options such as reporting to the police, Citizens Advice Bureau, and Connected Voice advocacy services were mentioned, but many people remain unaware of these pathways. Fear of consequences, lack of trust, and uncertainty about what happens after reporting, were also identified as major barriers. Accessibility was highlighted as a concern, particularly for people with learning disabilities or those who need simpler reporting processes.

The consultation identified several improvements that communities would like to see. These included clearer and more visible reporting pathways, safer community-based reporting centres through charities and community centres, accessible digital reporting tools such as apps, and face-to-face reporting opportunities in trusted spaces. Participants emphasised the need for reporting to be quick, simple, and supported with clear follow-up and specialist support. There was also a strong call for education so that hate incidents are recognised as crimes, rather than dismissed as 'low-level' behaviour.

Finally, participants highlighted the importance of embedding lived experience in services and decision-making. This includes supporting advocates, ensuring services understand intersectionality, and providing training for organisations, including police, on the realities faced by LGBTQ+ people. The consultation concluded that improving reporting systems, increasing visibility of support services, and building trust between communities and institutions are essential steps to addressing hate crime more effectively in Gateshead.





Responses from the Community

Case Study: Community Podcasts

The Gateshead and Proud Podcast became a powerful exploration of LGBTQ+ life, visibility, safety, and community across Gateshead and the wider North East. Recorded across three key locations, Metrocentre, the #SaferToBeMe Summit in October 2025, and Pelaw Community Bowling Club, the podcast captured deeply personal stories, reflections on progress, and ongoing concerns around hate crime and social division. Through interviews with activists, community members, organisers, and local residents, the series documented both the resilience and vulnerability of LGBTQ+ people living in the region today.

#SaferToBeMe:

At the heart of the podcast was a strong sense of community solidarity. One activist attending the #SaferToBeMe Summit reflected that: "This summit really was full of people who want change and are working hard for it." Held in Gateshead and welcoming activists from across the UK and around the globe, the Summit demonstrated how the North East is increasingly becoming a space for international dialogue on LGBTQ+ rights, inclusion, and safety. Another participant noted simply: "The Northeast is a diverse place."

These conversations also explored how local experiences are shaped by wider political and social trends. Activists discussed the rise of anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric online and internationally, warning about how hate can spread rapidly across borders through social media and public discourse, landing in the U.K., and even Gateshead: "A lot of the rollback and rights we're seeing in The UK right now have all been seen in America just a few months or years earlier. And this isn't just opinions from governments, but from anti-LGBTQ+ speakers and social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok. The rise in these sites and their following have granted these people megaphones to feel hate across country lines."

Metrocentre:

Metrocentre recordings highlighted both the importance of visible LGBTQ+ spaces and the continuing reality of hate crime. One interviewee described meeting a family who had travelled from Morpeth specifically to bring their child into a visibly inclusive environment: "They wanted to bring them into a safe space to show that you can be whoever you are and that you're still loved."

Others reflected on how dramatically experiences in the North East have changed over time. One contributor recounted being violently attacked in Newcastle in the 1990s, in the Metro Centre, for wearing a pink t-shirt: "It was the first time that I'd ever been gay bashed. The Northeast forty years ago wasn't welcoming. Now it is better. And that's what it's all about, but it's about not forgetting the past." Another contributor recalled the fear many LGBTQ+ people experienced in earlier decades: "You couldn't hold hands in the streets... getting chased by skinheads, shouting abuse and throwing bottles."

While many interviewees acknowledged significant progress, there was also a recurring concern that social attitudes could deteriorate if communities become complacent, or hate crime is not tackled. The podcast itself became a direct example of why these conversations remain necessary.



Responses from the Community Case Study: Community Podcasts

During filming at the Metro Centre during a Pride event, the podcaster and some of the interviewees experienced homophobic abuse from some members of the public. The incident escalated to the point where colleagues had to intervene and de-escalate the situation. The experience highlighted the continuing presence of hostility faced by LGBTQ+ people in public spaces, even during community-focused events intended to celebrate inclusion and visibility.

Pelaw Community Bowling Club:

At Pelaw Community Bowling Club, conversations focused more closely on community belonging, allyship, and local identity within Gateshead. Contributors repeatedly rejected the idea that LGBTQ+ people should simply be “tolerated,” instead emphasising celebration, dignity, and shared humanity. The interviews also highlighted the role of allies and grassroots community support. One local resident explained that although they were not LGBTQ+ themselves, they had long been involved in supporting equality because discrimination simply felt wrong:

“They’re human beings. They’re citizens of Gateshead... It’s not about tolerating. It’s about the fact that we celebrate the wide diversity of people.”

Attention was also drawn to the importance of youth organisations and community initiatives such as the young people’s Drop-In, in Dunston. Contributors acknowledged that Gateshead’s LGBTQ+ infrastructure has historically been less visible than Newcastle’s, but that significant growth is now taking place:

“Gateshead’s always had a bit of a haphazard LGBTQ+ community in its development... but it’s growing.”

The development of spaces such as the Drop-In and ONE Centre, expanding LGBTQ+ youth groups, and stronger community networks were all identified as signs of positive change and increasing visibility across the borough. Overall, the Gateshead and Proud Podcast painted a nuanced picture of LGBTQ+ life in Gateshead: one marked by progress, resilience, community pride, and growing visibility, while also recognising the continued reality of hate crime, discrimination, and social tension.

As the podcaster concluded:

“This podcast has really shown me how strong our LGBTQ+ community in Gateshead is... Our community is truly tight knit and is only growing stronger and more welcoming by the day.”

**To listen to all three community
podcasts, scan the QR code:**



Our Trial: Community-Based Hate Crime Reporting and Support Services

As a direct outcome of the research findings, consultations, surveys, and community engagement carried out through this project, a new trial initiative was developed to improve access to hate crime reporting and strengthen trust between LGBTQ+ communities, community organisations, and statutory services in Gateshead. The trial project responds directly to one of the clearest findings throughout the research: many LGBTQ+ people either do not report hate crime or are unaware of where they can safely seek support beyond the police.

Across the survey and consultations, participants consistently highlighted concerns around fear, stigma, mistrust of institutions, accessibility barriers, and uncertainty about what happens after reporting. Many participants expressed that they would feel more comfortable accessing support in trusted community environments rather than formal institutional settings alone. Community-based and face-to-face approaches were repeatedly identified as essential for building confidence and improving reporting pathways.

In response, partners including OUT North East, Connected Voice, and Northumbria Police have worked together to pilot a regular hate crime drop-in service based at the ONE Centre in Gateshead. The project builds on the successful community-led approaches identified during consultations at both the ONE Centre and Integration Station, where participants emphasised the importance of trusted spaces, visible support, and relationship-building between communities and services. As described by Northumbria Police:

“Officers from Northumbria Police are holding a regular hate crime drop-in event, alongside partners from Connected Voice and OUT NE. The drop-in sessions are monthly and confidential for anyone affected by hate crime or hate incidents, providing a safe space to talk, ask questions and explore support. Held at the ONE Centre on Stonehills, Shields Road in Gateshead every third Monday of the month between 10am–1pm, the sessions aim to be a safe reporting centre. Hate crimes, particularly against the LGBTQ+ community, are often under reported for reasons such as fear, stigma or past negative experiences.”

“I didn’t know where to turn, I felt alone, this service has helped me to move forward”

(GATESHEAD RESIDENT)

Our Trial: Community-Based Hate Crime Reporting and Support Services

However, reporting hate crime can help ensure Northumbria Police is taking the appropriate action in keeping local communities safe. The drop-in sessions have been developed following feedback from the community, who requested more face-to-face opportunities to discuss and report hate crime.”

This pilot project represents a unique and important shift towards a more preventative, relational, and community-rooted response to hate crime in Gateshead. Rather than relying solely on formal reporting systems, the initiative creates opportunities for informal engagement, trust-building, advocacy, and early intervention within a familiar and inclusive environment. The ONE Centre was identified as a particularly appropriate location due to its established role as a trusted LGBTQ+ and community space within Gateshead.

Importantly, the trial project also reflects the wider findings of this report regarding intersectionality and access. Consultations with refugee and migrant communities demonstrated that many people face additional barriers to reporting, including language difficulties, fear linked to immigration status, previous experiences of policing in other countries, and limited understanding of reporting systems in the UK. Embedding police engagement within community settings was therefore seen as a practical way to reduce these barriers and create more accessible pathways into support.

The project additionally aims to increase awareness of third-party reporting mechanisms, which the survey identified as poorly understood across the community. With over two-thirds of respondents unaware of alternatives to reporting directly to the police, the drop-in sessions provide an opportunity to improve knowledge, visibility, and confidence around different forms of support available locally.

While still in its early stages, the trial project demonstrates how research, lived experience, and partnership working can be translated into practical action. It offers a model for how community organisations, advocacy services, and statutory agencies can work collaboratively to create safer, more accessible, and more trusted responses to LGBTQ+ hate crime in Gateshead.

“Having been a victim of hate crime, a safe space to talk about it really helps”

(GATESHEAD RESIDENT)

Our Recommendations

The findings from this research highlight the need for stronger, more visible, and community-led responses to LGBTQ+ hate crime in Gateshead. Based on the survey findings, consultations, and lived experiences shared throughout the project, the following recommendations are proposed:

Strengthen community-based reporting:

Trusted community spaces should continue to play a central role in hate crime reporting and support. Many participants said they would feel more comfortable speaking to someone in an inclusive community environment rather than through formal systems alone. Services such as the ONE Centre provide important safe spaces where people can access support, advice, and reporting pathways in a more approachable and less intimidating setting.

Increase awareness of reporting pathways:

The research found that many LGBTQ+ people were unaware of reporting options beyond the police. Greater public awareness is needed around third-party reporting centres, advocacy organisations, and available support services. Information should be made more visible across community venues, schools, transport hubs, healthcare settings, and online platforms, so that people understand both what hate crime is, and where they can safely seek help.

Build trust through partnership working:

Fear, stigma, and mistrust remain significant barriers to reporting hate crime. Continued partnership working between LGBTQ+ organisations, advocacy groups, local authorities, and Northumbria Police, is essential to building confidence within communities. Regular drop-ins, listening events, and visible engagement within trusted community settings can help strengthen relationships and encourage more people to come forward.

Address hate crime in public spaces:

Public transport, online environments, and public streets were repeatedly identified as places where LGBTQ+ people feel vulnerable to harassment and abuse. Greater partnership work is needed with transport providers, schools, community organisations, and local services to improve safety, visibility, reporting mechanisms, and public awareness around LGBTQ+ inclusion and anti-hate messaging.

Invest in advertising, education and prevention:

Long-term prevention work is essential in addressing rising anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric and discrimination. Advertising hate crime reporting methods is key, especially via methods which will be seen, and heard, by the LGBTQ+ community. Local schools, colleges, workplaces, and public services should continue investing in LGBTQ+ inclusion training, anti-bullying education, and awareness programmes that promote dignity, respect, and understanding. Preventative education remains one of the most effective ways to challenge hate before it escalates.

Embed lived experience in future work:

The voices and lived experiences of LGBTQ+ people should remain central to future policy development, service design, and community safety initiatives. Ongoing consultation with communities is essential to ensuring that responses remain relevant, inclusive, and grounded in the realities faced by local people.

Our Recommendations

Continue supporting LGBTQ+ community infrastructure:

Community organisations, youth groups, advocacy services, and peer support networks play a vital role in supporting LGBTQ+ people across Gateshead. Continued investment in these services is essential to maintaining safe spaces, reducing isolation, strengthening community resilience, and improving access to support for those affected by hate crime and discrimination.

Recommendation for future development of this pilot:

The community hate crime drop-in pilot developed through this project should continue to be monitored and evaluated over time. Early feedback from ONE Centre attendees suggests that community-based and face-to-face approaches can help improve trust, accessibility, and awareness around hate crime reporting. If the pilot proves successful, the model should be replicated across additional community venues and organisations within Gateshead and potentially expanded across the wider North East. This would help create a stronger network of trusted, localised reporting and support spaces for LGBTQ+ people and other communities affected by hate crime.





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