

**Advice and guidance about what to do next in cases of:**

**Sexual Violence**

**Harassment and Bullying**

**Hate Crime and Hate Incidents**

When someone has experienced or witnessed sexual violence, harassment, bullying, a hate crime or hate incident, it can be difficult to know what to do or how to navigate through the many different options with respect to getting support and reporting the incident. The information here provides you with the information, advice and guidance to make an informed decision about what to do next.

**Sexual Violence**

Any kind of unwanted sexual act or activity, including rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, revenge porn and many others.

**Harassment and Bullying**

Offensive, malicious or insulting behaviour which undermines, humiliates, degrades or causes injury.

**Hate Crime and Hate Incidents**

Crimes and other acts motivated by hostility and prejudice on the basis of race, religion, sexual orientation or other grounds.

**Defining the abuse**

Understanding key terminology relating to sexual violence, harassment and bullying and hate crime and hate incidents.

**Sexual Violence**

* **Getting emergency help**
* **Preserving evidence**
* **Accessing support**
* **Reporting**
* **Making sense of what’s happened**

**Getting emergency help**

**“(I think) I’m at risk or others may be at risk”**

* If you are in immediate danger, seriously injured or in case of an emergency…

On campus: contact Security (0208 411 6200 or go to the 24hr security desk in the Quad).

Off campus: call the Police or call an ambulance (999 or 122 from a mobile)

Examples of an emergency would include if the incident is happening now, the perpetrator is nearby, somebody has been injured or there is a risk that somebody could get hurt. A non-emergency would be, for example, if the incident had already occurred and you want to make the Police aware of the issue.

**“I need urgent medical help”**

* If you need urgent medical help, go to Accident & Emergency (A&E) at your nearest hospital.
* If you require medical treatment but not urgently, you can either go to your nearest Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) [see ‘Sexual Assault Referral Centre’ for more details; click [here](https://www.thehavens.org.uk/contact-us/) to find your nearest SARC in London] or go to Accident & Emergency (A&E) at your nearest hospital.
* If you are in immediate danger or seriously injured….
* On campus: (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm): call a First Aider (0208 411 6200 or go to the security desk in the Quad).
* Off campus: call an ambulance (999 or 122 from a mobile). If you don’t require emergency treatment, you should not call for an ambulance.

**“I’m not at any further risk”**

* If an incident has just taken place go to place where you feel safe. If this isn’t possible and you are scared or fearful, call a friend to come to be with you, or, if on campus, call Security (0208 411 6200 or go to the 24hr security desk in the Quad).
* If you think you might be in shock, make sure you are somewhere warm and tell somebody so that they can keep an eye on you.
* If you do not feel at further risk and the situation is not an emergency but you wish to report the incident to the Police, call 101. See ‘Reporting’ for further information about the options available to you.

**Collecting and preserving evidence**

It is entirely up to you whether or not you choose to report the incident to the Police. If you do wish to report to the Police, it will help if you are able to present evidence of the incident (for example, saliva, marks on body, urine samples, bedlinen, photos).

You may well need time to think about the options open to you and whether or not you wish to go to the Police (use this tool to help you understand these options). At the moment you may not wish to go to the Police but it is quite possible that you later change your mind. Acting now can enable evidence to be preserved should you wish to report to the Police at a later date. Any evidence can be collected at your nearest Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) and stored whilst you decide whether or not to report at a future date. If you want forensic evidence collected, try to go to the SARC straight away if possible (click [here](https://www.thehavens.org.uk/contact-us/) to find your nearest SARC in London).

Until you have been to the Police, a SARC or Accident & Emergency at your nearest hospital, or have decided that you definitely do not wish to report the incident to the Police…

* Don’t drink
* Don’t eat
* Don’t wash
* Don’t smoke
* Don’t brush your teeth
* Don’t urinate
* Don’t change your clothes
* Don’t worry if you have already done any or all of the above – it is possible that there is still forensic evidence to collect
* Keep any used condoms or bedding in a plastic bag
* Take photos (e.g. on your phone) of the place where the incident took place
* Take screenshots on your phone of any text messages
* Keep secure any emails or letters
* Keep secure anything else you might think could be used as evidence

**Understanding time constraints**

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| **Drug testing** | If you suspect you were given any type of drug, it is best to be tested within 24 hours. Go to Accident & Emergency (A&E) at your nearest hospital. |
| **Emergency contraception** | If you want emergency contraception, access advice as soon as possible. There are several options available and there is the possibility of contraception five days or 120 hours after the incident.  Go to your local Pharmacy (if you are under the age of 25, you can access the pill free over the counter). |
| **Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)** | If you think you have contracted a Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI), you can access sexual health services at a [Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)](https://www.thehavens.org.uk/contact-us/) or a [sexual health clinic](https://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Sexual-health-information-and-support/LocationSearch/734). Sexual health clinics may not be open at weekends or on public bank holidays. In the event that a health clinic is closed, go to Accident & Emergency (A&E) at your nearest hospital.  PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis) are antiretroviral medicines taken after being potentially exposed to HIV to prevent becoming infected. PEP must be started within 72 hours after possible exposure to HIV. If you require PEP, go to Accident & Emergency (A&E) at your nearest hospital immediately. |

* Whether or not you want to report to the Police, the University or another agency right now, it can be useful to keep a record of the incident(s) in case you decide to take action at a later date, for example if the incident escalates.
* If the abuse is ongoing, try to document it as it occurs so there is a complete picture with evidence of all incidents. Seemingly one-off or trivial occurrences can sometimes multiply over time into a pattern of behaviour that is an offence, such as stalking or harassment.
* Make a note of the date/time of the incident; any details about the perpetrator; what the abuse was, and; the impact it had on you.
* Even if you don’t want any further action to be taken at the moment, it’s important to keep a record in case you change your mind and want to report in the future, or if the incident escalates.

**Accessing support**

* **Getting University support**
* **Getting external support**

**Getting University support**

**Safeguarding Officers**

* **What are Safeguarding Officers?** Safeguarding Officers are the first responders for the university’s Care & Concern team which helps put in place appropriate support for you both in the short and longer term.
* **What will a Safeguarding Officer do?** A Safeguarding Officer will listen. They will be able to talk through your options and next steps in confidence as well as to provide information of the support available to you, both at the University and externally.
* **How can I contact a Safeguarding Officer?** Contact a Safeguarding Officer (Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm) by calling 0208 411 6200 or go to the 24hr security desk in the Quad and asking for the designated safeguarding officer (or) emailing [care&concern@mdx.ac.uk](mailto:care&concern@mdx.ac.uk).

**Counselling and mental health support**

* The university’s team of Counsellors and Mental Health Advisors offer free and confidential support. The quickest way to see one of the team is to attend a drop-in session (Monday to Friday).
* Just go along to Sunny Hill House at 2:00pm. Alternatively, if you would like ongoing counselling sessions, you can complete an online application form via [UniHub](https://unihelp.mdx.ac.uk/counsellingandmentalhealth).

**Financial support**

* The university’ Student Welfare Advice Team (SWAT) can provide information, advice and guidance about immediate and longer term financial and housing support available.

**Academic support**

* If your studies have been affected by your experience, you can speak to either your personal tutor or a tutor in your academic department, both of whom will be able to refer you to a Progression and Support Advisor.
* If, however, you would prefer not to speak to a member of your academic department, you can visit the Unihelp desk or call 020 8411 6060 or submit an [online](https://emea01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwgfp-prrw02.mdx.ac.uk%3A8001%2Fticket%2Fportalticketcreation.aspx&data=02%7C01%7C%7Ce8667a3358104888007408d616fbd306%7C38e37b88a3a148cf9f056537427fed24%7C0%7C0%7C636721668152960895&sdata=wdFP6lWBglaMyFw2evdgXzSnZjuWzTiOpPrxObVe9Xc%3D&reserved=0) query and ask to be referred directly to the Progression & Support team who will be able to guide and support you.
* One option is to submit [extenuating circumstances](https://emea01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Funihub.mdx.ac.uk%2Fstudy%2Fassessment%2Fextenuating-circumstances&data=02%7C01%7C%7Ce8667a3358104888007408d616fbd306%7C38e37b88a3a148cf9f056537427fed24%7C0%7C0%7C636721668152960895&sdata=i0H3r7BchRPbgfMR4TsuFQ%2BFo6rwrNa%2BYRgLFiCVU78%3D&reserved=0).  The Progression and Support team will be able to provide you with more information, advice and guidance on this process and help you to navigate the extensive support services available to you.

**Students’ Union**

* Middlesex University’s Students’ Union can provide independent advice and support on a range of issues. Further information about their services can be found on the Middlesex University webpages.

**Getting external support**

**Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)**

* **What is a SARC?** SARC’s have specialist staff that are trained to help you make informed decisions about what to do next. They provide comfortable and private spaces for interviews and examinations, and some may also offer counselling services.
* **What happens at a SARC?** At the SARC, you can have a forensic medical examination, as well as tests for sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy. They can store the results of the forensic examination (or evidence) until you make up your mind whether or not to report to the Police. You will be looked after by a Support Worker and Forensic Medical Officer (a specialist nurse who can collect forensic evidence). It is recommended that you take a supportive friend or relative with you and that you take a change of clothes as they will need the clothes you are wearing.
* **Can I go to a SARC if I don’t go to the Police?** A SARC provides a service of support regardless of whether you choose to report the offence to the Police or not. The SARC will not pressure you into reporting to the Police.
* **How can I access a SARC?** You can self-refer to the Havens SARCs in Camberwell, Paddington and Whitechapel during the week (Monday to Friday), between 9am to 5pm For more information, click [here](http://www.thehavens.co.uk/). It is not possible to self-refer to the Haven SARCs at the weekend or in the evenings. If you are unsure, you can access the SARC at any time by reporting to the Police and then if you change your mind, you can opt out of the reporting process – it’s your choice whether or not to report to the Police.

**Independent Sexual Violence Adviser services (ISVAs)**

* **What is an ISVA?** An ISVA is trained to look after your needs, and to ensure that you receive care and understanding. They will help you understand how the criminal justice process works, and will explain things to you, such as what will happen if you report to the Police, and the importance and process of forensic DNA retrieval.
* **What will an ISVA do?** An  ISVA will provide you with information to ensure that you make the right decision for you with respect to accessing support and reporting. An ISVA is there to provide you with information only so that you can make the right decision for you.  By contacting them, you are *not* expected to report any offence to the Police.
* **How can I contact an ISVA?** Click [here](http://thesurvivorstrust.org/isva/) to find details of an [ISVA](http://thesurvivorstrust.org/isva/) near you.

There are a range of organisations and services that offer free practical and emotional support.

* [**The Survivors Trust**](http://thesurvivorstrust.org/isva/) - information about Independent Sexual Violence Advisers and contact details.
* [**Victim Support**](http://victimsupport.org.uk/)- a national charity dedicated to helping anyone affected by crime – not just victims and witnesses, but friends, family and anyone else caught up in the aftermath.
* [**Rape Crisis**](http://rapecrisis.org.uk/) - a national charity offering confidential help, advice and a range of Rape Crisis Centres around the UK.
* [**Galop**](http://www.galop.org.uk/) - a national charity providing advice and support to members of the LGBT community.
* [**Survivors UK**](https://www.survivorsuk.org/) - a national charity supporting men who have been raped or sexually assaulted.
* [**ManKind**](http://www.mankindcounselling.org.uk/) - specialist advice and counselling for men affected by sexual violence.

**Reporting**

* **5 Reasons Why You Should Report It**
* **Reporting to the Police**
* **Reporting to the University**
* **Reporting online abuse to the website or app**

**5 Reasons Why You Should Report It**

Sexual violence, harassment and bullying, hate crime and hate incidents are entirely unacceptable. Everyone has a right to live free from abuse. It is vital that victims have the confidence to report. If you have experienced, or think you have experienced abuse, report it to:

* Enable action to be taken in response to a specific incident and bring those responsible to justice. Don’t let them get away with it.
* Stop it from happening again or things getting worse. Leaving something to go unreported may mean that it escalates into something more damaging.
* Protect your community and others from coming to harm.
* Provide intelligence that can help to identify particular areas of concern where further strategies, resources and measures are needed to address these issues. Information about even apparently “minor” incidents can help build a picture of concerns which warrant further investigation.
* Send a powerful deterrent to other potential offenders.

**Reporting to the Police**

**“I want to report to the Police”**

* You can report an incident to the Police at any time. Call 999 (in an emergency) or 101 (non-emergency) or visit your local Police station (click [here](https://www.met.police.uk/contact/contact-us/find-a-police-station/) to find your nearest police station).
* You can call [Crimestoppers](https://crimestoppers-uk.org/) on 0800 555 111 or use their online form.
* You can report online via [True Vision](http://www.report.it.org.uk) or by downloading the Self Evident app.
* Call 0800 40 50 40 or text 61016 if the incident occurred on public transport.
* If you are worried about reporting in English, you can access the Language Line interpreting service when you dial 999. If you are deaf, deafened, hard of hearing or have a speech impairment, a text phone is available on 18001 101.
* You can specify how you want to be contacted and if being contacted would cause any difficulties for you. You may chose for the Police to contact or meet you at university – speak to a Safeguarding Officer who will be able to facilitate this for you.

**“I want to report an incident to the Police anonymously”**

* There are various ways in which you can report an incident without having to provide your details. Anonymous reporting helps the Police prevent future crimes.
* You can call [Crimestoppers](https://crimestoppers-uk.org/) on 0800 555 111 or use their online form.
* Third party reporting is where information is passed onto the Police without giving away any details which could identify you. The University, [Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)](https://www.thehavens.org.uk/)and [Survivors Network](http://www.survivorsnetwork.org.uk/sites/default/files/Third%20Party%20Reporting.pdf)can all act as a third party reporter. They will always ask your permission before they pass on any information.

**“I’m sure I don’t want to report to the Police”**

* If you are certain that you don’t want to report to the Police at any time, then you can still access the support of the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC). You can chose not to provide forensic evidence but you can still receive specialist medical support and be referred to an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA).
* You can still access various support services including: the free counselling service at the University; 24 hour access to Accident & Emergency (A&E), and; treatment at your local sexual health clinic for sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

**“What happens if I report an incident to the Police?”**

* If you choose to report an incident of rape or sexual assault to the Police, a specially trained Sexual Offences Liaison Officer (SOLO) will be sent to see you or will speak to you over the phone. The officer will ask some basic questions to make sure you feel safe and to find out what happened, when and where, and who was involved. They will work out what needs to be done next and tell you about the support services that are available locally.
* A SOLO will also be able to take mouth and urine samples immediately so that forensic evidence can be preserved and you can eat, drink and go to the toilet without fear of losing evidence. At some point you will be asked to give an official statement to the Police.
* The SOLO may, with your permission, take you to the nearest Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC). There you will be looked after by a Support Worker and a Forensic Medical Officer (a specialist nurse who can collect forensic evidence). It is recommended you take a supportive friend or relative with you.
* If you report to the Police you can still opt out of the reporting process at any point. This will not affect your right to access the support of the SARC. In the event of opting out of reporting, you should be offered a referral to an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) as well as free counselling from a specialist service in your local area. Click [here](https://www.met.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/rsa/rape-and-sexual-assault/how-to-report-rape-and-sexual-assault/) for further information about the reporting process to the Police.
* For sexual violence cases which do not constitute sexual assault or rape, the Police will ask you to make a victim personal statement either at a Police station, the University, your home, or somewhere where you feel comfortable. Here, you would need to include the events of the incident in the order in which they happened, the names and a description of anyone involved, and any other relevant details.
* Your statement may later be used in court if the case goes to trial and therefore you should provide accurate information. This statement is a signed document and it is an offence to provide false information. Any subsequent action will depend on the nature of the incident and will depend on other factors such as evidence and witnesses.

**Reporting to the University**

If you chose to report an incident, whether this relates to another student, or a member of staff or someone outside of Middlesex University, you can do so via the Care for Concern procedure. This can be done by calling 0208 411 6200 and asking to speak to a Designated Safeguarding Officer; emailing [care&concern@mdx.ac.uk](mailto:care&concern@mdx.ac.uk), or; asking any member of staff to make a referral on your behalf.

**We will listen**

* We will make sure that we listen to you and ensure that you’re able to tell us whatever you want about what happened.
* We will not force you to tell us anything that you do not want to disclose to us.
* The University takes all incidents very seriously and is committed to protecting and supporting victims and holding students who commit misconduct to account.
* We want all students to have the confidence to come forward and report to the University, no matter how minor the offence may appear. Your report will be treated with dignity and respect.
* You may be asked detailed questions about the incident – that doesn’t mean we don’t believe you but may be required particularly if we need to establish enough evidence to pursue an allegation through the Student Conduct and Discipline rules.

**You will decide what happens next – including reporting to the Police**

* Where possible, we will ensure that you are able to decide what happens next. It is your decision whether you wish to report to the Police. Only in exceptional circumstances will the University report an alleged crime to the Police contrary to the wishes of the reporting student.
* Documents used by the University during its own investigation e.g. case notes, could be requested by the Police, as could members of staff involved in the investigation be asked to give evidence in Court. There will be very limited circumstances in which the University will disclose information about the incident to third parties.

**We will manage any allegation against another student under the Student Conduct and Discipline rules**

* The [Student Conduct and Discipline rules](https://www.mdx.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0022/424183/Student-Conduct-and-Discipline.pdf) sets out the types of unacceptable behaviours by which the University can discipline students. The allegation has to be proven on the balance of probabilities, the most serious action being permanent expulsion.
* In contrast to the university’s investigation, the criminal process (or Police investigation) deals with the allegation of a criminal act. The allegation has to be proven beyond reasonable doubt, the most serious outcome being imprisonment.

**We will support you**

* Our priority is your safety and the safety of others. We will take appropriate action to ensure all students and staff are kept safe.

**Making sense of what’s happened**

Sexual violence can have a negative impact on your physical, emotional and mental wellbeing, as well as impacting on your behaviour and many aspects of your life.

Sexual violence is likely to result in a range of emotions:

* **Confusion** - it can be confusing in the aftermath to understand why this has happened to you – remember the only confusing thing should be why anyone would do this to somebody else.
* **A sense of danger** – sexual violence can be truly frightening and the sense of danger can be enormous. It can throw into the air every preconception you ever had about feeling safe and in control.
* **Fear** – sexual violence can leave you terrified and fearful about a repeat incident.
* **Anger** - fear will likely be accompanied by feelings of rage, bitterness and hatred towards individual(s) who have committed the sexual violence. You may also feel hatred towards all people sharing the characteristics of the perpetrator(s).
* **Loss of trust** - you may become suspicious, struggling to trust even close friends and family. You may cut yourself off from support because you don’t think you can trust anybody.
* **Helplessness** – sexual violence can create a sense of vulnerability. For example, you may feel unsafe but not know what to do to feel safe again. You may feel unable to control or change the situation and utterly helpless to stop a future incident.
* **Anxiety** - a heightened sense of personal danger, vulnerability and powerlessness may be accompanied by feelings of anxiety. You might find that you can’t switch off from the idea of being the target of sexual violence. Feeling anxious all of the time, you might find it hard to concentrate and think creatively. The added stress of, for example, an exam, a coursework deadline or a presentation, may prove to be a situation that is simply too difficult for you to cope with. Anxiety may be accompanied by issues relating to depression, such as sleep disturbances and suicidal thoughts.

Sexual violence can impact on your behaviour in a number of ways**:**

* **Avoidance tactics** – feeling unable to escape being a target of sexual violence, you may adapt your behaviour to try to avoid victimisation or a repeat incident by, for example, avoiding certain areas or activities, deleting social media profiles or stopping use of social media all together.
* **Isolation –** avoidance tacticsmay impact on your studies and social life because you feel unable to travel to or attend university or go out, for example to a bar or restaurant. Quickly, you may lose touch with friends and you may become increasingly isolated. As you become more withdrawn and lose self-confidence, you may find it harder to maintain friendships.
* **Self-abusive coping strategies –** to manage your feelings, you may consume too much alcohol, abuse drugs, self-harm or develop an eating disorder.

It can be particularly confusing in the aftermath of sexual assault and rape. It is common to have difficulty understanding why your memory is activity in the way it is and why you behaved in the way you did.

**“Why do I have a patchy memory of what happened?”**

* You may find that your memory of the incident is patchy, hazy, fragmented and inconsistent. You may well have a fairly clear memory of the moments leading up to the incident but that you’re struggling to remember what happened when the assault actually took place.
* A useful metaphor is to describe your memory as a jigsaw puzzle. The pieces are scattered - it’s not clear where they go and how they’re all connected. Whilst some pieces are clear and vivid, others pieces are simply not there. Why is this so?
* Whilst the incident took place, your brain was in survival mode. It was searching for and focussing intently on things it thought were going to be pertinent to your survival – for example, a door handle, a passer-by or an escape route. These are the things that you can now remember clearly and vividly. You may well find that what you remember is sensory, for example, a smell, a sound, a colour or a feeling.
* In contrast, you remember less clearly the things your brain wasn’t paying attention to - those things that weren’t pertinent to your survival, such as the time or location. Normally, when we recall events that occurred in the past, our recollection of those events gets worse over time. In contrast, when people recall experiences of sexual assault their memory can actually get better over time.

**“Why didn’t I fight, shout or run away?”**

* Prior to the incident, you might have thought you would have acted differently – that you would have fought instead of freezing. This can be difficult to understand.
* It may help to look at your actions in terms of basic human survival instincts. As human-beings we are set up to constantly be on the look-out for danger. When we detect a threat, our brain goes into survival mode, meaning the instinctive, intuitive, habitual part of our brain (the right side of the brain) takes over.
* We initially freeze to assess the threat for a moment and prepare for a suitable response. If we recognise the threat from a previous experience, then the brain may select a response based on that previous experience. However, when we have never experienced the threat before, and we therefore have no reference point, freezing, rather than fighting or running away, is our brain’s way of looking after us and ensuring we survive the danger.
* Whilst the right side of the brain is determining a response, the left side of the brain in effect temporarily shuts down. The left side of the brain is associated with what we might perceive as logical decision-making: it’s the part of our brain that puts things in order and processes things to do with place and time.
* When the danger has gone away, the left side of the brain effectively re-boots and this is when we begin to try and make sense of what has happened.

**Harassment and Bullying**

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**Getting emergency help**

**“(I think) I’m at risk or others may be at risk”**

* If you are in immediate danger, seriously injured or in case of an emergency…

On campus: contact Security (0208 411 6200 or go to the 24hr security desk in the Quad).

Off campus: call the Police or call an ambulance (999 or 122 from a mobile)

Examples of an emergency would include if the incident is happening now, the perpetrator is nearby, somebody has been injured or there is a risk that somebody could get hurt. A non-emergency would be, for example, if the incident had already occurred and you want to make the Police aware of the issue.

**“I need urgent medical help”**

* If you need urgent medical help, go to Accident & Emergency (A&E) at your nearest hospital.
* If you are in immediate danger or seriously injured….
* On campus: (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm): call a First Aider (0208 411 6200 or go to the security desk in the Quad).
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**“I’m not at any further risk”**

* If an incident has just taken place go to place where you feel safe. If this isn’t possible and you are scared or fearful, call a friend to come to be with you, or, if on campus, call Security (0208 411 6200 or go to the 24hr security desk in the Quad).
* If you think you might be in shock, make sure you are somewhere warm and tell somebody so that they can keep an eye on you.
* If you do not feel at further risk and the situation is not an emergency but you wish to report the incident to the Police, call 101. See ‘Reporting’ for further information about the options available to you.

**Collecting and preserving evidence**

* Whether or not you want to report to the Police, the University or another agency right now, it can be useful to keep a record of the incident(s) in case you decide to take action at a later date, for example if the incident escalates.
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**Academic support**

* If your studies have been affected by your experience, you can speak to either your personal tutor or a tutor in your academic department, both of whom will be able to refer you to a Progression and Support Advisor.
* If, however, you would prefer not to speak to a member of your academic department, you can visit the Unihelp desk or call 020 8411 6060 or submit an [online](https://emea01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwgfp-prrw02.mdx.ac.uk%3A8001%2Fticket%2Fportalticketcreation.aspx&data=02%7C01%7C%7Ce8667a3358104888007408d616fbd306%7C38e37b88a3a148cf9f056537427fed24%7C0%7C0%7C636721668152960895&sdata=wdFP6lWBglaMyFw2evdgXzSnZjuWzTiOpPrxObVe9Xc%3D&reserved=0) query and ask to be referred directly to the Progression & Support team who will be able to guide and support you.
* One option is to submit [extenuating circumstances](https://emea01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Funihub.mdx.ac.uk%2Fstudy%2Fassessment%2Fextenuating-circumstances&data=02%7C01%7C%7Ce8667a3358104888007408d616fbd306%7C38e37b88a3a148cf9f056537427fed24%7C0%7C0%7C636721668152960895&sdata=i0H3r7BchRPbgfMR4TsuFQ%2BFo6rwrNa%2BYRgLFiCVU78%3D&reserved=0).  The Progression and Support team will be able to provide you with more information, advice and guidance on this process and help you to navigate the extensive support services available to you.

**Students’ Union**

* Middlesex University’s Students’ Union can provide independent advice and support on a range of issues. Further information about their services can be found on the Middlesex University webpages.

**Getting external support**

There are a range of organisations and services that offer free practical and emotional support.

* [**Ditch the label**](https://www.ditchthelabel.org/) – an international anti-bullying charity, providing digital online support and operating the largest bullying support community in the world with thousands of free support guides and resources.
* [**Victim Support**](http://victimsupport.org.uk/)- a national charity dedicated to helping anyone affected by crime – not just victims and witnesses, but friends, family and anyone else caught up in the aftermath.
* [**Stop Hate UK**](https://www.stophateuk.org/) - a national organisation working to challenge all forms of Hate Crime and discrimination, based on any aspect of an individual’s identity. They provide independent, confidential and accessible report and support for victims, witnesses and third parties.
* [**CATCH (Community Alliance to Combat Hate)**](https://www.catch-hatecrime.org.uk/) **- CATCH is a way for people who have experienced hate to get the maximum amount of help with a minimum amount of hassle. It is open to anyone experiencing hate in London.**
* [**Galop**](http://www.galop.org.uk/) - a national charity providing advice and support to members of the LGBT community.
* [**CST (The Community Security Trust)**](https://cst.org.uk/antisemitism/hate-crimes) - A charity that protects British Jews from antisemitism and related threats. CST provides a facility for reporting and accessing support.
* [**Tell MAMA**](https://tellmamauk.org/)- a national organisation which supports victims of anti-Muslim hate and is a public service which also measures and monitors anti-Muslim incidents.
* [**Inclusion London**](https://www.inclusionlondon.org.uk/) **- an organisation which promotes equality for London’s Deaf and Disabled people and includes an alliance of over 70 Deaf and Disabled organisations.**
* [**Dimensions**](http://www.dimensions-uk.org) **-** a **charity that supports people with learning difficulties, autism, challenging behaviour and complex needs.**
* [**The Traveller Movement**](https://travellermovement.org.uk/)- an organisation which promotes the inclusion of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers.

**Reporting**

* **5 Reasons Why You Should Report It**
* **Reporting to the Police**
* **Reporting to the University**
* **Reporting online abuse to the website or app**

**5 Reasons Why You Should Report It**

Sexual violence, harassment and bullying, hate crime and hate incidents are entirely unacceptable. Everyone has a right to live free from abuse. It is vital that victims have the confidence to report. If you have experienced, or think you have experienced abuse, report it to:

* Enable action to be taken in response to a specific incident and bring those responsible to justice. Don’t let them get away with it.
* Stop it from happening again or things getting worse. Leaving something to go unreported may mean that it escalates into something more damaging.
* Protect your community and others from coming to harm.
* Provide intelligence that can help to identify particular areas of concern where further strategies, resources and measures are needed to address these issues. Information about even apparently “minor” incidents can help build a picture of concerns which warrant further investigation.
* Send a powerful deterrent to other potential offenders.

**Reporting to the Police**

**“I want to report to the Police”**

* You can report an incident to the Police at any time. Call 999 (in an emergency) or 101 (non-emergency) or visit your local Police station (click [here](https://www.met.police.uk/contact/contact-us/find-a-police-station/) to find your nearest police station).
* You can call [Crimestoppers](https://crimestoppers-uk.org/) on 0800 555 111 or use their online form.
* You can report online via [True Vision](http://www.report.it.org.uk) or by downloading the Self Evident app.
* Call 0800 40 50 40 or text 61016 if the incident occurred on public transport.
* If you are worried about reporting in English, you can access the Language Line interpreting service when you dial 999. If you are deaf, deafened, hard of hearing or have a speech impairment, a text phone is available on 18001 101.
* You can specify how you want to be contacted and if being contacted would cause any difficulties for you. You may chose for the Police to contact or meet you at University – speak to a Safeguarding Officer who will be able to facilitate this for you.

**“I want to report to the Police anonymously”**

* [Crimestoppers](https://crimestoppers-uk.org/) or [True Vision](http://www.report.it.org.uk) allow you report to the Police an incident without having to provide your details.
* The police take hate crime very seriously and will record and investigate the incident even if you do not want to give your details. However, the Police investigation and their ability to prosecute the offender(s) will be limited if they are not able to contact you. The Police will not pass on your details without your consent.

**“I want to report the incident but I don’t want to talk to the Police”**

* Third party reporting is where information is passed onto the Police on your behalf. This is done without giving away any details which could identify you. The University and other agencies, such as [CST](https://cst.org.uk/antisemitism/hate-crimes), [Tell MAMA](https://tellmamauk.org/) and [Galop](http://www.galop.org.uk/) can all act as a third party reporter. They will always ask your permission before they pass on any information.

**“What happens if I report an incident to the Police?”**

* The Police will ask you to make a victim personal statement either at a Police station, the University, your home, or somewhere where you feel comfortable. Here, you would need to include the events of the incident in the order in which they happened, the names and a description of anyone involved, and any other relevant details.
* Your statement may later be used in court if the case goes to trial and therefore you should provide accurate information. This statement is a signed document and it is an offence to provide false information. Any subsequent action will depend on the nature of the incident and will depend on other factors such as evidence and witnesses.

**Reporting online abuse to the website or app**

Most apps and websites have built in reporting features, or an email to contact the administrators. Find out how to report an incident, as well as how to keep your privacy settings updated, how to use the untag and block and features on applications and websites you use:

Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/help/263149623790594>)

Twitter (<https://help.twitter.com/en/safety-and-security/report-abusive-behavior>)

Youtube ([https://www.youtube.com/yt/about/policies/#staying-safe](https://www.youtube.com/yt/about/policies/))

Google+ (<https://support.google.com/plus/answer/6320425?hl=en-GB>)

LinkedIn (<https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/146>)

Instagram (<https://help.instagram.com/165828726894770/>)

Tumblr (<https://www.tumblr.com/abuse>)

Flikr (<https://www.flickr.com/report_abuse.gne>)

Reddit (<https://reddit.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/205192745-What-does-the-report-button-do->)

Pintrest ([https://help.pinterest.com/en/articles/report-something-pinterest#Web](https://help.pinterest.com/en/articles/report-something-pinterest))

Snapchat (<https://support.snapchat.com/en-US/i-need-help>)

Whatsapp (<https://faq.whatsapp.com/en/general/21197244>)

**Reporting to the University**

If you chose to report an incident, whether this relates to another student, or a member of staff or someone outside of Middlesex University, you can do so via the Care for Concern procedure. This can be done by calling 0208 411 6200 and asking to speak to a Designated Safeguarding Officer; emailing [care&concern@mdx.ac.uk](mailto:care&concern@mdx.ac.uk), or; asking any member of staff to make a referral on your behalf.

**We will listen**

* We will make sure that we listen to you and ensure that you’re able to tell us whatever you want about what happened.
* We will not force you to tell us anything that you do not want to disclose to us.
* The University takes all incidents very seriously and is committed to protecting and supporting victims and holding students who commit misconduct to account.
* We want all students to have the confidence to come forward and report to the University, no matter how minor the offence may appear. Your report will be treated with dignity and respect.
* You may be asked detailed questions about the incident – that doesn’t mean we don’t believe you but may be required particularly if we need to establish enough evidence to pursue an allegation through the Student Conduct and Discipline rules.

**You will decide what happens next – including reporting to the Police**

* Where possible, we will ensure that you are able to decide what happens next. It is your decision whether you wish to report to the Police. Only in exceptional circumstances will the University report an alleged crime to the Police contrary to the wishes of the reporting student.
* Documents used by the University during its own investigation e.g. case notes, could be requested by the Police, as could members of staff involved in the investigation be asked to give evidence in Court. There will be very limited circumstances in which the University will disclose information about the incident to third parties.

**We will manage any allegation against another student under the Student Conduct and Discipline rules**

* The [Student Conduct and Discipline rules](https://www.mdx.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0022/424183/Student-Conduct-and-Discipline.pdf) sets out the types of unacceptable behaviours by which the University can discipline students. The allegation has to be proven on the balance of probabilities, the most serious action being permanent expulsion.
* In contrast to the university’s investigation, the criminal process (or Police investigation) deals with the allegation of a criminal act. The allegation has to be proven beyond reasonable doubt, the most serious outcome being imprisonment.

**We will support you**

* Our priority is your safety and the safety of others. We will take appropriate action to ensure all students and staff are kept safe.

**Making sense of what’s happened**

Harassment and bullying, whether in person or online, can have a negative impact on your physical, emotional and mental wellbeing, as well as impacting on your behaviour and many aspects of your life.

Harassment and bullying are likely to result in a range of emotions:

* **Fear** - you may fear and worry about a repeat incident.
* **Anxiety** - you might find that you can’t switch off from the idea of being harassed or bullied and thus you feel anxious all of the time. This may mean you find it hard to concentrate and think creatively. The added stress of, for example, an exam, a coursework deadline or a presentation, may prove to be a situation that is simply too difficult for you to cope with. Anxiety may be accompanied by issues relating to depression, such as sleep disturbances and suicidal thoughts.
* **Anger** - fear will likely be accompanied by feelings of rage, bitterness and hatred towards individual(s) harassing or bullying you.
* **Loss of trust** - you may become suspicious or worried about people who have not or are not harassing or bullying you and struggle to trust even close friends and family. You may cut yourself off from support because you don’t think you can trust anybody.
* **Helplessness** - harassment and bullying can create a sense of vulnerability. For example, you may feel unsafe but not know what to do to feel safe again. The ways in which harassment and bullying can materialise, starting off as small acts and escalating over time, may make you feel unable to control or change the situation and utterly helpless to stop the harassment or bullying.

Harassment and bullying can impact on your behaviour in a number of ways**:**

* **Avoidance tactics** – feeling unable to escape the harassment or bullying, you may adapt your behaviour to try to avoid victimisation or a repeat incident by, for example, not showing affection to a same-sex partner in a public place, not wearing hijab, avoiding certain areas or activities, deleting social media profiles or stopping use of social media all together.
* **Isolation –** avoidance tacticsmay impact on your studies and social life because you feel unable to travel to or attend university or go out, for example to a bar or restaurant. Quickly, you may lose touch with friends and you may become increasingly isolated. As you become more withdrawn and lose self-confidence, you may find it harder to maintain friendships.
* **Self-abusive coping strategies –** to manage your feelings, you may consume too much alcohol, abuse drugs, self-harm or develop an eating disorder.

**Don’t laugh it off as a joke!**

* For many, harassment and bullying, and in particular abuse which takes place online, is seen as just a part of being a young person. This belief highlights a huge disconnect between the true severity of the behaviour and the perceptions of many, including both perpetrators and victims, who consider the behaviour to be ‘banter’, ‘a laugh’ and something not to be taken ‘too seriously’.
* The normalisation of harassment and bullying behaviours may be more likely in certain activities or groups where there is a pack mentality (such as in some sports teams or groups of ‘lads’ which drink a lot of alcohol). There may be, for example, inappropriate touching and pressure to engage in a high frequency of sexual activity with different partners. You should never feel pressurised into doing anything that you do not want to do.
* What an individual or a group may perceive as ‘banter’ may well be sexist, misogynistic and homophobic. Such ‘jokes’ may serve to make others feel uncomfortable, threatened and deeply hurt. This bigotry, prejudice and lack of tolerance for difference is not acceptable and is certainly not a laughing matter.

**Hate Crime and Hate Incidents**

* **Getting emergency help**
* **Preserving evidence**
* **Accessing support**
* **Reporting**
* **Making sense of what’s happened**

**Getting emergency help**

**“(I think) I’m at risk or others may be at risk”**

* If you are in immediate danger, seriously injured or in case of an emergency…
* On campus: contact Security (0208 411 6200 or go to the 24hr security desk in the Quad).
* Off campus: call the Police or call an ambulance (999 or 122 from a mobile)

Examples of an emergency would include if the incident is happening now, the perpetrator is nearby, somebody has been injured or there is a risk that somebody could get hurt. A non-emergency would be, for example, if the incident had already occurred and you want to make the Police aware of the issue.

**“I need urgent medical help”**

* If you need urgent medical help, go to Accident & Emergency (A&E) at your nearest hospital.
* On campus: (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm): call a First Aider (0208 411 6200 or go to the security desk in the Quad).
* Off campus: call an ambulance (999 or 122 from a mobile). If you don’t require emergency treatment, you should not call for an ambulance.

**“I’m not at any further risk”**

* If an incident has just taken place go to a location where you feel safe. If this isn’t possible and you are scared or fearful, call a friend to come and be with you, or, if on campus, call Security (0208 411 6200 or go to the 24hr security desk in the Quad).
* If you think you might be in shock, make sure you are somewhere warm and tell somebody so that they can keep an eye on you.
* If you do not feel at further risk and the situation is not an emergency but you wish to report the incident to the Police, call 101. See ‘reporting’ for further information about the options available to you.
* Your safety and well-being is paramount. Make sure you’re safe and try to avoid unnecessary confrontation with the individual(s) who have committed the act(s) of hate.

**Collecting and preserving evidence**

* Whether or not you want to report to the Police, the University or another agency right now, it can be useful to keep a record of the incident(s) in case you decide to take action at a later date, for example if the incident escalates.
* If the abuse is ongoing, try to document it as it occurs so there is a complete picture with evidence of all incidents. Seemingly one-off or trivial occurrences can sometimes multiply over time into a pattern of behaviour that is an offence, such as stalking or harassment.
* Make a note of the date/time of the incident; any details about the perpetrator; what the abuse was, and; the impact it had on you.
* Even if you don’t want any further action to be taken at the moment, it’s important to keep a record in case you change your mind and want to report in the future, or if the incident escalates.

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Youtube ([https://www.youtube.com/yt/about/policies/#staying-safe](https://www.youtube.com/yt/about/policies/))

Google+ (<https://support.google.com/plus/answer/6320425?hl=en-GB>)

LinkedIn (<https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/146>)

Instagram (<https://help.instagram.com/165828726894770/>)

Tumblr (<https://www.tumblr.com/abuse>)

Flikr (<https://www.flickr.com/report_abuse.gne>)

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**Making sense of what’s happened**

Hate crime and hate incidents, whether in person or online, can have a negative impact on your physical, emotional and mental wellbeing, as well as impacting on your behaviour and the social aspects of your life.

Hate crime and hate incidents are likely to result in a range of emotions:

* **Confusion** - it can be confusing in the aftermath to understand why this has happened to you – remember the only confusing thing should be why anyone would have committed hate in the first place.
* **A sense of danger** - hate incidents can be truly frightening and the sense of danger can be enormous. It can throw into the air every preconception you ever had about feeling safe and in control.
* **Fear** - hate crime and incidents can leave you terrified and fearful about a repeat incident. Hate crime and hate incidents help to create an environment of fear by forcing other members in the community to be constantly alert to the possibility that it could happen to them. The act of hate may prompt retaliatory action, create community conflict and lead to further acts of hate.
* **Anger** - fear will likely be accompanied by feelings of rage, bitterness and hatred towards individual(s) who have committed the hate crime or hate incident. You may also feel hatred towards all people sharing the characteristics of the perpetrator(s).
* **Loss of trust** - you may become suspicious or worried about people who have committed the hate crime or hate incident, struggling to trust even close friends and family. You may cut yourself off from support because you don’t think you can trust anybody.
* **Helplessness** – hate crime and hate incidents can create a sense of vulnerability. For example, you may feel unsafe but not know what to do to feel safe again. You may feel unable to control or change the situation and utterly helpless to stop a future incident.
* **Anxiety** - a heightened sense of personal danger, vulnerability and powerlessness may be accompanied by feelings of anxiety. You might find that you can’t switch off from the idea of being the target of hate. Feeling anxious all of the time, you might find it hard to concentrate and think creatively. The added stress of, for example, an exam, a coursework deadline or a presentation, may prove to be a situation that is simply too difficult for you to cope with. Anxiety may be accompanied by issues relating to depression, such as sleep disturbances and suicidal thoughts.

Hate crime and hate incidents can impact on your behaviour in a number of ways**:**

* **Avoidance tactics** – feeling unable to escape being a target of hate, you may adapt your behaviour to try to avoid victimisation or a repeat incident by, for example, not showing affection to a same-sex partner in a public place, not wearing hijab, avoiding certain areas or activities, deleting social media profiles or stopping use of social media all together.
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* **Self-abusive coping strategies –** to manage your feelings, you may consume too much alcohol, abuse drugs, self-harm or develop an eating disorder.

**Defining the abuse**

**Sexual violence**

* What is sexual assault?
* What is rape?
* What is consent?
* Can you consent if you’re drunk or high?
* What is ‘drug rape’?
* What is ‘date rape’?
* Is sexual assault or/and rape possible in a marriage or a relationship?

**Harassment and bullying**

* What is sexual harassment?
* What is harassment?
* What is bullying?
* Examples of harassment and bullying
* When is harassment and bullying a crime?
* What is stalking?
* What is online harassment, cyberbullying and cyberstalking?
* What is revenge porn?

**Hate incidents and hate crimes**

* What is a hate incident?
* When is a hate incident also a hate crime?
* What is hate speech?
* When is hate speech also a crime?
* What is online hate?
* Examples of hate incidents

**Sexual violence**

* **What is sexual assault?** Sexual assault is a broad term that encompasses any sexual act inflicted against someone without their consent. It is a criminal offence. Sexual assault can happen to people of all genders and can be perpetrated by people of all gender.
* **What is rape?** Rape is legally defined in the UK as the penetration with a penis of the vagina, anus or mouth of another person without their consent. Sexual assault by penetration is the penetration of another person's vagina, mouth or anus with any part of the body other than the penis, or any object, without the person’s consent. It can carry the same prison sentence as rape.
* **What is consent?** Consent is an agreement reached without force, coercion or intimidation between persons. Non-consensual sexual activity occurs when consent is not reached or when somebody does not have the physical or mental capacity to give consent. Watch this [video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oQbei5JGiT8&t=13s) for a quick and straightforward explanation of consent.
* **Can you consent if you’re drunk or high?** If someone is incapacitated (for example, they can’t speak or move) through the (willing or unknown) consumption of alcohol or drugs, then they are unable to consent to sexual activity. Regardless of whether or not the individual willingly consumed alcohol or drugs, 100% of the responsibility for any act of sexual assault or rape lies with its perpetrator.
* **What is ‘drug rape’?** The term 'drug rape' is used to refer to rape or sexual assault that takes place after the perpetrator has administered a drug to the victim. The drug Rohypnol is sometimes referred to as the 'date rape drug' but other drugs, including prescription medication and most often alcohol, can be used to try and make someone vulnerable to a sexual attack.

Drug rape is most commonly associated with strangers or recent acquaintances. However, it is also an aspect of the sexual assault and rape of people in their own homes, for example through the forced misuse of tranquillisers and other prescribed medication.

People’s reactions to different drugs will vary: some might be unable to move or speak; some might have short- or long-term memory loss and; some might be stimulated sexually. The effects of drug rape and of being 'spiked' can be extremely frightening. Click [here](https://www.womenshealth.gov/a-z-topics/date-rape-drugs) for more information.

* **What is ‘date rape’?** The term ‘date rape’ is often used to describe sexual assault that occurs between two people who know each other, for example as acquaintances, friends or lovers, and/or two people who have been on a date or out socially together. 'Date rape' is not a legal term or specific offence. The term can be an unhelpful and misleading label because it infers that sexual assault or rape by a known perpetrator is “not as bad as” sexual assault by a stranger – this is not correct.
* **Is sexual assault or/and rape possible in marriage or a relationship?** Absolutely, yes. Everyone has the right to say “no” to sex, to withdraw or withhold their consent for any sexual act, on any occasion and under any circumstances, regardless of whether they've given consent to sex with that person in the past and regardless of whether they're married or in a relationship.

Staying in a relationship that involves or has involved sexual assault does not mean someone is “weak” or any less deserving of specialist support and justice than someone assaulted in any other kind of circumstance. There are many reasons why somebody might stay in an intimate relationship that is violent or abusive, including fear, shame and self-blame, concern for their children and hope that their partner's behaviour might change. For more information, click [here](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/abuse/domestic-violence/).

**Harassment and bullying**

* **What is sexual harassment?** Sexual harassment is any unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature that makes you feel distressed, intimidated or humiliated. It can take lots of different forms. It can include or be called sexualised bullying.

You don't need to have objected to a certain kind of behaviour in the past for it to be unwanted and constitute harassment.

Sexual harassment can include:

* someone making sexually degrading comments or gestures
* your body being stared or leered at
* being subjected to sexual jokes or propositions
* e-mails or text messages with sexual content
* physical behaviour, including unwelcome sexual advances and touching
* someone displaying sexually explicit pictures in your space or a shared space, like at work
* offers of rewards in return for sexual favours

Although sexual harassment can happen anywhere, it is common at workplace and likewise in an educational setting.

* **What is harassment?** As defined by the Equality Act 2010, harassment is “unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic” (age, gender reassignment, race, sex, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation) “which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the individual.” Significantly, you don’t need to possess a protected characteristic to be the victim of harassment. For example, you could be subjected to homophobic slurs, when you yourself are heterosexual.

Harassment may be a single act with enduring consequences or a repeated act or behaviour. It can be enacted even if the perpetrator did not intend to cause harm. There tends to be a power imbalance, for example, a senior person towards a junior person, and it tends to take place in a work setting. It can be perpetrated by an individual or group of people.

Harassment can also take place online. As technology develops, social network sites evolve, and online usage continues to enter every aspect of our lives, the line between on and off-line harassment become more and more merged. See ‘what is online harassment, cyberbullying and cyberstalking?’

* **What is bullying?** Unlike harassment, there is no legal definition of bullying. Nonetheless, it is a serious issue which has a serious impact on a person’s emotional and physical health and amounts to similar conduct as that of harassment. Bullying can be defined as “offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.”

Bullying may be a single act with enduring consequences or a repeated act or behaviour. It can be enacted even if the perpetrator did not intend to cause harm. Though it can be perpetrated by an individual or group of people, there is quite often a group element to bullying. Perpetrators of bullying seldom act alone but are instead usually supported by a group of assistants and reinforcers.

Bullying can also take place online. As technology develops, social network sites evolve, and online usage continues to enter every aspect of our lives, the lines between on and off-line bullying become more and more merged. See ‘what is online harassment, cyberbullying and cyberstalking?’

* **Examples of harassment and bullying**

Classifying behaviours as harassment and bullying is not always clean-cut. For some acts, the behaviour is subtle and on its own may not seem extreme. However, when this act is repeated many times, or is part of an array of acts of harm, the impact can be very severe. Quite often, harassment and bullying are not always recognisable and may occur without anyone but the victim and the perpetrator knowing about it. Examples include:

* Spreading rumours about someone
* Verbally insulting someone
* Unreasonably excluding someone or purposely preventing their participation e.g. a student from a group project or class-social group
* Criticising without justification
* Misusing a position of power e.g. a sports captain who doesn’t select a student for a team or a Resident Assistant who erroneously reports a student for noise disturbance
* Trolling (posting inflammatory or inappropriate messages or comments on the internet in order to upset and provoke responses from other internet users.

Harassment and bullying are often symptoms of wider societal beliefs rooted in prejudicial attitudes towards minority groups such as women, minority ethnic groups, LGBT+ community, people with disabilities.

* **When is harassment and bullying a crime?**

The terms ‘bullying’ and ‘harassment’ are often used interchangeably. Harassment, as defined by the Equality Act 2010, is a crime.

Bullying may also be considered a hate crime if it is “committed against someone because of their disability, gender-identity, race, religion or belief, or sexual orientation”. See ‘hate crime and hate incidents’.

Bullying can be defined as a legal offence under various acts designed to protect citizens from harassment, defamation or threatening behaviour. These acts include:

* **The Malicious Communications Act 1988**

It is an offence to send an electronic communication in any form that is indecent or grossly offensive, conveys a threat, or is false, with intent to cause distress or anxiety to the recipient.

* **The Communications Act 2003**

It is an offence to send messages using any public electronic communications network, such as Twitter or Facebook, which are grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character.

* **The Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015**

It is an offence to disclose private sexual images online or offline without the person’s consent with the effect of causing the person distress.

* **The Gender Recognition Act 2004**

It is an offence to disclose information received in an official capacity about a person’s gender identity or history if the person has, or is applying for, a Gender Recognition Certificate.

* **The Protection from Harassment Act 1997**

Contains a range of other offences including harassment, harassment when someone fears violence and stalking. Harassment is ‘oppressive and unreasonable’ behaviour that causes ‘alarm or distress’, including ‘repeated attempts to impose unwanted communications and contact upon a victim in a manner that could be expected to cause distress or fear in any reasonable person’.

* **Online abuse**

For information see the Crown Prosecution Services’ guidelines on prosecuting cases involving communications sent by social media here: [www.cps.gov.uk/consultations/social\_media\_consultation.pdf](http://www.cps.gov.uk/consultations/social_media_consultation.pdf). The government adopts the legal principle that what is illegal offline is also therefore illegal online.

* **What is stalking?** Stalking is characterised by repeated, persistent, unwanted communication intended to frighten, intimidate or harass someone. Stalking creates a level of fear for one’s own safety based on some form of fixation on the part of the perpetrator. Stalkers are most likely to target someone known to them: for example, there is often an intimate relationship between the victim and the perpetrator. Other potential groups of stalkers include, for example, acquaintances, colleagues/ex-colleagues and members of the family.

Stalking quite often takes place online. As technology develops, social network sites evolve, and online usage continues to enter every aspect of our lives, the line between on and off-line stalking become more and more merged. See ‘what is online harassment, cyberbullying and cyberstalking?’

* **What is online harassment, cyberbullying and cyberstalking?** Online harassment, cyberbullying (also referred to as cyberhate and cyberaggression), and cyberstalking are the use of information and communication technologies by an individual or group to repeatedly cause harm to another person.

Social media, in particular, in being a normalised and integrated part of everyday life, is becoming a more prominent vehicle of harassment, bullying and stalking. It also provides an outlet for hate crime.

Online harassment, cyberbullying and cyberstalking are increasingly used as part of an overall course of conduct of abusive behaviour: the abuse may occur solely in the digital realm or solely off-line. Alternatively, the abuse may form part of a wider campaign targeting individuals both on and off-line. Perpetrators may choose to harass, bully or stalk online for a number of reasons, such as the conception that it is not recognised as harassment, bullying or stalking, or a belief that reporting is less likely.

* **What is revenge porn?**

Revenge pornography is the disclosure of private sexual photographs and films without the consent of an individual who appears in the photograph or film with the intent to cause distress to the individual. These images are generally produced either consensually (for example by the victim in a private relationship) or non-consensually (for example by surveillance or hacking).

Individuals of all ages, sexuality and gender, can be a victim of revenge porn, but women are the most common victims. Perpetrators are largely motivated by the malicious intent to harm and humiliate the victim, who is often the perpetrator's previous romantic partner, with revenge pornography employed by the offender as reprisal for a romantic relationship finishing.

Revenge pornography is becoming more prominent with the growing popularity of sexting. Sexting refers to nude or semi-nude sexual or sexually suggestive images or videos sent and received through cell phones and social media apps. Sexting is an acceptable online activity when it takes place between consenting adults within adequate privacy settings, but problems arise when images sent are subsequently distributed online without consent of the creator. When these images are distributed without consent, then sexting becomes revenge pornography.

Not all acts of revenge pornography are committed for revenge purposes. Some acts of revenge pornography are enacted as a means of extortion, intimidation or for the pleasure of causing annoyance in others. All incidents of revenge pornography are now classed as a criminal offense in the UK.

Over the last few years the media has increasingly drawn attention to cases of revenge pornography, perhaps giving the impression that such behaviour is a new phenomenon. However, research has consistently shown that sexual violence, stalking and partner violence are often interconnected behaviours which are ultimately symptoms of the root structural problem of sexism and misogyny in society. Thus, many argue that revenge pornography is actually better understood as a digital extension of traditional sexual violence

**Hate crime and hate incidents**

* **What are hate incidents?**

Hate incidents are acts of violence or hostility directed against someone because of who they are or who someone else thinks they are. The term includes criminal offences (hate crimes) and non-criminal acts.

Hate incidents are associated with, for example: racism, faith and religious hatred, antisemitism, anti-Muslim / Islamophobia, hatred of refugees, discrimination against asylum seekers and Gypsy-Roma and Travelling communities, ageism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, biphobia, and violence against women).

They are acts motivated by hostility or prejudice against people on the basis of their disability, race, religion, transgender identity, sexual orientation, age, gender, alternative sub-culture (e.g. Goths, Emos, Punks and other similar groups), citizenship/immigration status, nationality or any other identifiable factor.

The perpetrator of a hate incident may well target an individual or group of people because of several characteristics e.g. a Muslim woman may face abuse because of her gender, faith and ethnic identity.

Hate incidents can be perpetrated by strangers, other students or people known to the recipient.

* **When is a hate incident also a hate crime?**

A hate incident is defined as a hate crime when it involves an offence which breaks the law.

An criminal offence can be a hate crime if it is carried out because of hostility or prejudice based on: disability, race, religion, transgender identity or sexual orientation. Incidents motivated by other personal characteristics may **not be classified as a hate crime** under law though the Police are still able to take action and prosecute.

There is a range of legislation that can apply to hate crime and incidents (Public Order Act 1986; Protection and Harassment Act 1997; Criminal Law Crime and Disorder Act 1998; Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006; The Equality Act 2010).

* **What is hate speech?**

Hate speech is any communication or expression which advocates, promotes, or incites hatred, discrimination or violence, against any individual or group, because of their sexual orientation, or gender identity. It can happen publicly (for example on public social media posts and comments, websites and forums) and privately (for example through social media, messaging apps, dating apps and emails).

**Examples of hate speech include:**

- threats to an individual or group

- online abuse and cyberbullying

- words, images and other communications that call for or glorify violence against a group

- encouraging others to commit hate crimes

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- trolling (posting offensive, upsetting or inflammatory comments online in an attempt to hurt and provoke a response)

- other communication, both on and off line, which could incite hatred towards a particular group or person.

* **When is hate speech a crime?**

Hate speech does not necessarily involve a crime being committed, but all of it can be harmful regardless of whether it is illegal or not.

Abusers often hide behind the idea that all they are doing is expressing an opinion or a belief. The reality is that no-one has the right to behave in a way that is abusive towards others. Though it is correct that Human Rights Act 1988 protects our rights, including the freedom of expression, this freedom carries with it a duty to respect other people’s rights. It states that everyone has the right to be protected from discrimination and violence. Thus, the freedom of expression does not cover speech and expression that incites violence, hatred or discrimination. Use of offensive language or expressing an offensive opinion or belief itself is not unlawful but when it causes alarm and distress, such as a threat of violence, it is against the law.

* **What is online hate?** Hate incidents and hate crime can also take place online. As technology develops, social network sites evolve, and online usage continues to enter every aspect of our lives, the line between on and off-line hate becomes more and more merged. The government adopts the legal principle that what is illegal offline is also therefore illegal online.

Online hate is the use of information and communication technologies by an individual or group to repeatedly cause harm to another person.

Social media, in particular, in being a normalised and integrated part of everyday life, is becoming a more prominent vehicle of hate crime. It also provides an outlet for harassment, bullying and stalking.

Online hate is increasingly used as part of an overall course of conduct of abusive behaviour: the abuse may occur solely in the digital realm or solely off-line. Alternatively, the abuse may form part of a wider campaign targeting individuals both on and off-line. For example, online hate speech may be a part of wider pattern of harassment and abuse that is happening in other areas of someone’s life, for example a neighbour that being targeting at their home and online.

Perpetrators may choose to commit acts of hate online for a number of reasons, such as the conception that it is not recognised as a hate crime, or belief that it will not be reported.

* **Examples of hate incidents**
* verbal abuse, name-calling, offensive jokes and abusive gestures;
* bullying, spreading rumours, gossiping;
* making malicious complaints, for example over parking, smells or noise;
* intimidation, sexual intimidation, harassment, threats of violence;
* physical attacks such as hitting, punching, pushing or spitting;
* hoax calls, abusive phone calls or text messaging;
* harassment, stalking and hate mail;
* online abuse and trolling, spreading hatred on social media;
* displaying or circulating discriminatory literature or posters;
* causing harm to someone’s property, such as their home, pet or car;
* deliberately isolating somebody, giving them ‘the cold shoulder’;
* vandalism of places of worship or offensive graffiti in public places;
* acts of terrorism;
* Trolling (posting inflammatory or inappropriate messages or comments on the internet in order to upset and provoke responses from other internet users).