

# Stop Hate UK Helpline Areas: Coronavirus Update and Advice

## Introduction

Sadly, at a time when community cohesion is needed more than ever, we continue to see instances of Hate Crimes and Hate Incidents that threaten the safety of everyone in the community.

Stop Hate UK is currently taking part in weekly briefings, organised by the National Police Chief's Council (COVID-19 Hate Crime Gold Group). The meetings include representatives from all the UK police forces and the National Community Tension Team, in addition to the CPS and key Government departments.

So, if you have any issues, concerns or information you would like fed into the group then please let us know. We have outlined the key issues that are emerging nationally and we will update the information when new issues arise.

## Targeting of Asian community

Nationally, we are seeing a rise in the number of Hate Crimes and Hate Incidents targeted at members of the Asian community and, in particular, members of the Chinese community (or those mistaken for members of the Chinese community).

A number of these attacks have referenced Donald Trump's use of the term "Chinese Virus" and these attacks have included Police Officers and Nurses abused whilst on duty. It is essential that victims know they have the support of us all and to report the incidents.

We also believe that there is a significant level of under reporting of this form of Race Hate, so please encourage those who are victims, to use the Stop Hate UK Helpline, to report incidents or crimes if they do not wish to inform the police. Our advice is totally confidential and we will only report the matter further with the callers' permission.

In addition, we have seen online campaigns targeting shops run by members of the Asian community, accusing them of profiteering from the current crisis. Whilst communities will be concerned, where they perceive shopkeepers are inflating prices unreasonably, there is evidence that Asian shopkeepers are becoming victims of coordinated campaigns orchestrated by the far right. If you believe such a campaign is an opportunistic move, motivated by prejudice, please do inform the Stop Hate UK helpline.

## It's a TRIVIAL matter in a time of crisis

We are hearing of an increasing number of reports that victims of Hate Crimes and Hate Incidents are not reporting them because of the current crisis. Therefore, we need to emphasise to communities that, in the current climate, it is more important than ever to report instances of Hate.

Community cohesion is our greatest weapon against the virus and perpetrators of Hate Crimes and Incidents are more likely to progress to more serious offending unless challenged.

If individuals are reluctant or unsure about calling the police please encourage them to call the Stop Hate UK helpline.

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## Muslim communities

A number of extremist groups and individuals are using the current crisis to promote their own anti-Muslim agenda. The tactics range from outrageous conspiracy theories, about the source of the virus (which also target the Jewish community) through to allegations of Muslim families failing to abide by social distancing guidelines.

Nationally, a number of incidents have been played out to this agenda, including a recent Muslim funeral in the West Midlands, which was attended by a local MP who openly flouted social distancing guidelines. It is however important to note that this was an isolated incident.

We are also seeing disgraceful online abuse, targeted at Muslim healthcare professionals who have lost their lives working on the front line. It is anticipated that such issues may arise again during Ramadan. All forms of anti-Muslim Hate, either online or in the community, need to be reported to the police or the Stop Hate UK helpline.

## Fake news

We already know that those who seek to spread hatred have a history of spreading false/fake news; in particular, the use of historic footage being used out of context. For example, there are instances where historic footage of Asian family gatherings are being used to suggest contemporary events that flout social distancing.

Stop Hate UK have “trusted flagger” status with a number of social media companies, coupled with a strong track record in removing inappropriate material. A call to the Stop Hate UK helpline can access this service.

## Disability groups

Sadly, there have been online attacks on members of the disabled community. Many of these attacks have been prompted by individuals, with learning disabilities who do not understand current social distancing guidance. We are currently awaiting guidance and training materials from the Learning Disability Charity Dimensions.

It is essential, in the current crisis, that everyone feels safe online and, for those with disabilities, that need is even greater. If people feel picked upon or attacked, online or offline, they should report the matter to the police or the Stop Hate UK Helpline.

## Traveller issues

There are concerns being aired online regarding Travellers returning to traditional unauthorised sites during the summer.

Intelligence suggests that most groups are unlikely to move (Appleby Horse Fair and other events have been cancelled) and, as such, the NPCC have published some guidance on the issue - <https://bit.ly/2KhHWiw>

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## LGBT community

There have been instances where members of the LGBTQ community are being “blamed” for the spread of COVID 19. These range from religious extremists - “it is Gods punishment” - to the bizarre - “you spread AIDS and now you are spreading a virus”. All such abuse should be reported to the police or the Stop Hate UK helpline.

## Zoombombing

During the Covid-19 crisis, many communities are coming together using apps like Zoom. The platform has also been used to hold religious ceremonies, including funerals.

“Zoombombing” (which is common in America) refers to uninvited individuals joining the group with offensive/racist language and messages of hatred. We have a number of recorded instances in the UK, including Jewish services and University lectures being targeted. Guidance to prevent this can be found here : <https://www.adl.org/blog/how-to-prevent-zoombombing>

Advice from the police and the CPS indicates that it is unlikely that a successful prosecution could be brought against an individual that perpetrates such an act.

## What can be done?

When information, either local or national is available, we will ensure that it is shared. However, please feed any information you have using the Stop Hate UK helpline, if it relates to a specific incident, directly to [talk@stophateuk.org](mailto:talk@stophateuk.org)

Stop Hate UK also has the capacity to run online training sessions for any local group that wants more information during the current crisis, so please do contact us [info@stophateuk.org](mailto:info@stophateuk.org)

## How to contact us

 [@stophateuk](https://twitter.com/stophateuk)  [stop.hate.uk](https://www.facebook.com/stop.hate.uk)

 [linkedin.com/company/stophateuk](https://www.linkedin.com/company/stophateuk)  [stop\\_hate\\_uk](https://www.instagram.com/stop_hate_uk)

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