

GREC Briefing Paper

Aberdeen City Prejudice Incidents & Hate Crime, 2019

Hate Crimes are criminal acts motivated by malice or ill will towards communities or people with specific characteristics, including **race, ethnicity or nationality; sexual orientation; religion or belief; disability; and transgender identity**. According to Police Scotland, hate crimes target **marginalised** and **vulnerable** people, so are considered more serious than the same crimes committed without an element of prejudice.¹ For the same reason, hate crimes are often under-reported – for an already-marginalised person, receiving abuse may seem normal or inevitable.

Hate incidents are not serious enough to be considered crimes,² but figures on these are not included in this report. **Prejudice incidents** are another step down in severity; these are usually recorded by schools, housing associations, etc. Regardless of severity, all incidents motivated by prejudice contribute to a social environment of division, hostility and fear.

¹ tinyurl.com/police-scotland-hatecrime

² tinyurl.com/citizens-advice-hatecrime

Hate crimes and incidents can be reported to the Police, or to Third Party Reporting (TPR) Centres, usually charities, where victims may already know the staff and feel more comfortable talking about their experience.

Since 2015, GREC has been working with local councils and Police Scotland to produce annual statistics on hate crime and prejudice incidents in North East Scotland.

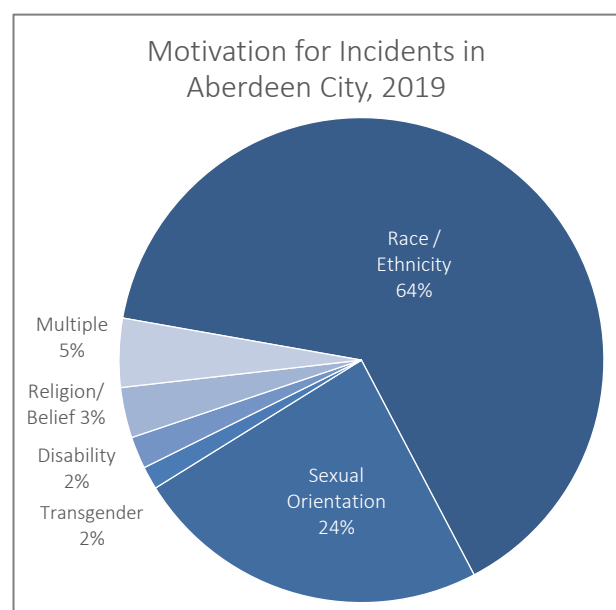
As shown in the table below, in 2019, **485** hate crimes or prejudice incidents were reported in Grampian. The rest of this paper will focus on the **302** incidents which took place in Aberdeen City.

Year	Grampian Total	Aberdeen City	Aberdeen shire	Moray
2019	485	302	100	65
2018	420	248	88	84
2017	457	306	87	63
2016	396	255	82	57
2015	425	312	68	45

Motivation for Incident

Racism was the predominant motivator for hate crimes and prejudice, relating to 211 incidents. This was followed by sexual orientation, relating to 78 incidents. 11 incidents related to religion or belief, 7 to disability, 5 to transgender identity, and 15 to multiple characteristics, most commonly including race/ethnicity or sexual orientation.

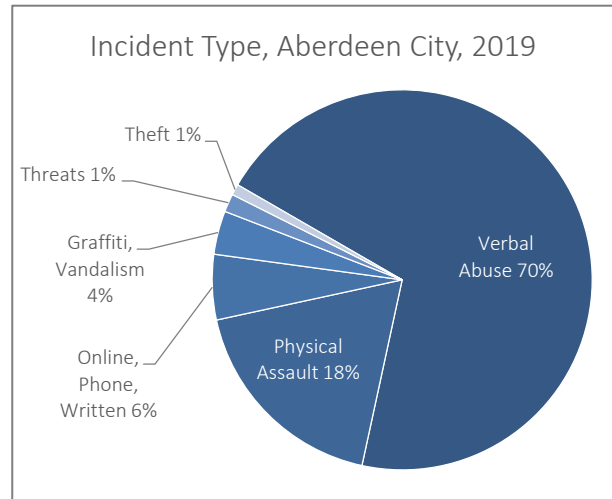
These figures demonstrate the continued prevalence of racism and homophobia compared with prejudice against other characteristics. The latter have remained fairly constant since 2015, while racist incidents have fluctuated between approximately 180 and 220 per year, and homophobic incidents increased steadily.



Type of Incident

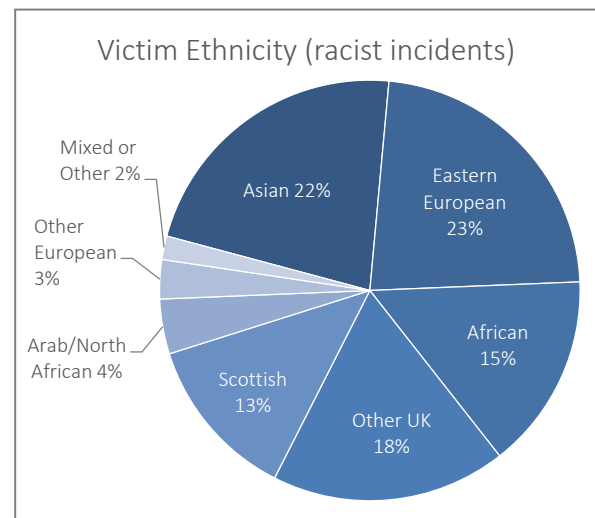
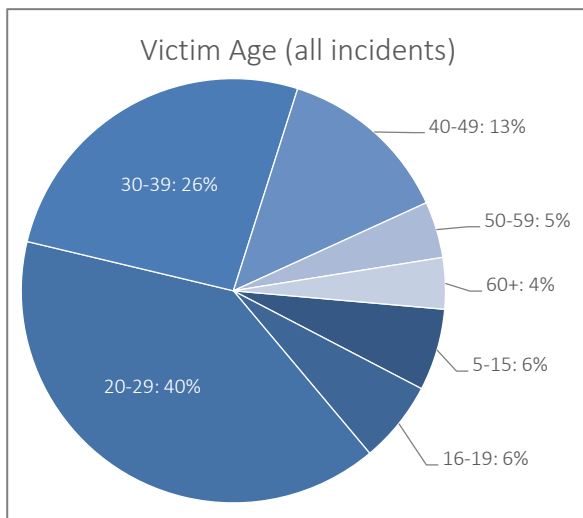
Verbal abuse was the most common type of incident, with 227 recorded in 2019. There were 59 physical assaults, including assaults with an element of verbal abuse or sexual assault. While indirect forms of abuse like graffiti and vandalism appear to be low, these often go unreported.

The majority of incidents online or on social media were reported by young people and/or by staff at schools, and these mostly related to homophobic or transphobic bullying. However, in common with incidents more broadly, most incidents in schools involved racist verbal abuse.



Victim Characteristics

Where known/recorded, victims were female in around a third of incidents (98), and male in two-thirds (204). In 50 incidents, the victim was a police officer or staff member. Where known/recorded, victims' ages for all incidents and ethnicities for racist incidents are shown here. For UK ethnicities, it was usually not noted whether victims were European British or other British ethnicities.



Note: 'Asian' above includes British/Scottish Asian, and 'African' includes British/Scottish African.

Perpetrator Characteristics

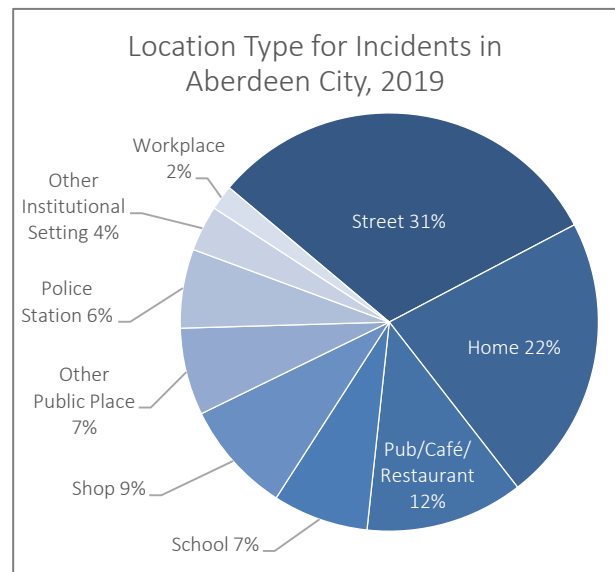
Where known/recorded, 80% of perpetrators were male (231) and 20% female (60). The age distribution for perpetrators was similar to that of victims, and between 70-80% targeted people in similar age ranges or older. Where known/recorded, the perpetrator's nationality was Scottish in 143 incidents; English, 'British' or other UK in 23 incidents; from other European countries in 13 incidents; and from outwith Europe in 4 incidents. For all but two of the incidents with ethnic minority perpetrators, racism was the motivator, and the victim was almost always a person from a different ethnic minority.

Location Type

Where known/recorded, incidents took place in the types of locations indicated here. Incidents most frequently took place on the street, in people's homes, or in public places like shops, pubs or playgrounds.

A significant number also took place in schools and institutional settings such as hospitals, courts and council offices – though it is worth noting that incidents are much more likely to be reported in institutional settings. 19 incidents were recorded in police stations, in which all victims were police officers or staff.

'Other public places' include sports facilities, playgrounds and public transport; some locations were simply recorded as 'public place.'



Location of Incidents

The table and map below show the number of incidents for each of Aberdeen's 5-digit postcode areas (e.g. excluding the final two letters in each postcode).

Union Street

The highest number of incidents took place in the city centre, around Union Street – postcodes AB116 and AB101, with 74 incidents in total. The majority were on the street (32), or in licensed premises (22), for example pubs and nightclubs.

Unsurprisingly, more than three-quarters of these occurred after 10pm on Friday and Saturday nights, or weeknights after bank holidays. The remainder of incidents took place in schools (5), homes (2), or public places like shops, cafés, council buildings or the bus station (11).

Deprived Areas

Beyond the city centre, the areas with the most incidents correlate strongly with the most deprived neighbourhoods on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), especially on measures of crime, poor housing, unemployment and low income. It's no coincidence that these are also areas with higher concentrations of ethnic minorities (see How Fair is North East Scotland?).

High Reporting Rates

It is worth noting that in some areas, incidents are frequently associated with a few key locations: schools, police stations, football grounds, etc. These sites often have policies and procedures to discourage hate speech and antisocial behaviour, which can lead to higher reporting rates than 'spontaneous' reports from victims or bystanders.

For example, at first glance, it appears that the Kittybrewster/Sunnybank /Powis area (AB243) is a hotspot for hate crime and prejudice incidents; 36 incidents were recorded there. However, half of these (18) took place at the Kittybrewster police station, and were targeted at officers. The other 18 followed similar patterns to the rest of the city, being concentrated in deprived neighbourhoods.

Similarly, of the 32 incidents in AB167 (Northfield/Cummings Park), half (16) were associated with or reported by schools. The rest took place on the street or in pubs (5) or in people's homes (11).

This is not to downplay the importance of consistent reporting – only to note that some geographic areas may appear worse because of higher reporting rates.

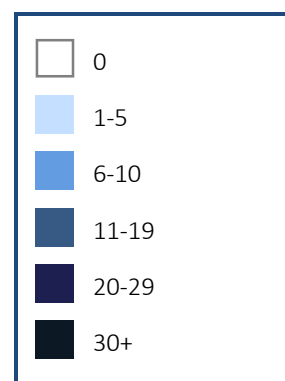
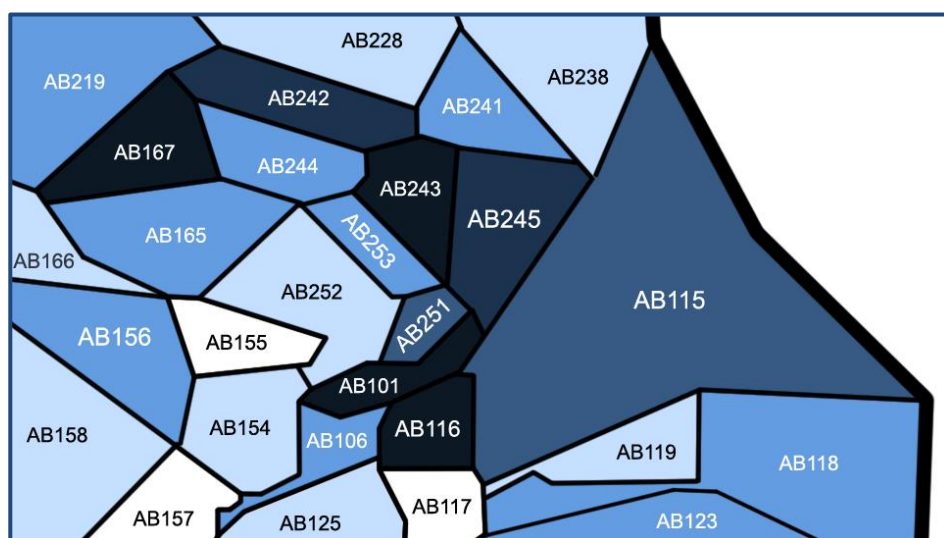
Number of Incidents by Postcode Area

Areas not listed did not report any hate crimes or prejudice incidents in 2019.

Postcode	Approximate Area	Incidents
AB101	Union St and areas north	30
AB106	Holburn St, Broomhill, Mannofield	6
AB107	Garthdee, Ruthrieston	3
AB115	End of Union St to the Beach (south)	14
AB116	Union St and areas south	44
AB118	Torry	8
AB119	Torry	2
AB123	Tullos	6
AB124	Portlethen	4
AB125	Kincorth	3
AB154	Rubislaw, Midstocket	2
AB156	Summerhill, Woodend	7
AB158	Hazlehead area	3
AB159	Cults	1

Postcode	Approximate Area	Incidents
AB165	Cornhill, Cairncry Rd area	9
AB166	Mastrick, Sheddocksley	5
AB167	Northfield, Cummings Park *16 in schools	32*
AB217	Dyce	3
AB219	Bucksburn	9
AB228	Bridge of Don	2
AB238	Bridge of Don	1
AB241	Seaton	7
AB242	Tillydrone, Hayton, Woodside	16
AB243	Kittybrewster, Sunnybank, Powis *18 in police station	36*
AB244	Woodside, Hilton	6
AB245	King St and east to the Beach (north) *4 in football stadium	22*
AB251	George St and Hutcheon St area	19
AB252	Rosemount, ARI area	3
AB253	Berryden, Froghall, Westburn	8

Map of Incidents by Postcode Area (highest numbers of incidents)



Map of Incidents by Postcode Area (full city)

