

# Argumentative Essay: Hate Crime

When is crime a hate crime? In the criminal world, there are numerous types of crime. In this assessment, I am going to explain what a hate crime is and whether a crime involving a personal hate element should increase the sentence time given to the offender. The most common reason for committing a crime is because the victim has something in their possession that motivates the offender to commit the crime. In terms of a hate crime, it's more of a personal, opinion-based attack on who the victim appears to be that motivates the offender to commit the crime. An example of a hate crime is a crime against a particular individual based on their race, religion, transgender identity, disability, or sexuality. Courts in England have the power to add more time to the offender's sentence if proven the offense was motivated by the reasons above.

Crime varies from different types of crime, here are the three hate crimes: verbal neglect, incitement to hatred, and physical neglect. When an individual acts threatening and aimed to stir up hate this is considered the offense of incitement to hatred. This could be in the form of words, videos, or pictures, online bullying, and includes personal information posted on websites. Physical assault is an offense so depending on the degree of the violence used the offender could be charged with bodily harm, common assault, or grievous bodily harm. Lastly, Verbal abuse, insults, or threats are somewhat common and harsh experiences for groups most targeted such as minority groups. Victims of verbal abuse are often unsure whether an offense has been committed, most victims do not realize they are victims in the eyes of the law. Some feel as if they were to report the incident; it may get brushed off as not important. Though, there are laws in order to protect people from verbal abuse.

Hate crimes create a climate of fear within communities resulting in people being more disconnected from one another. Over the years hate crimes have only increased with more people reporting them, this is seen in an article (GOV.UK) 'In 2018/19, there were 103,379 hate crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales, an increase of 10 percent compared with 2017/18 (94,121 offenses).' This shows this issue is not being sorted as similar offenses are reoccurring. Then in more recent years such as March 2020, there were '105,090 hate crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales, an increase of 8 percent compared with the year ending March 2019 (97,446 offenses). (GOV.UK).

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Are numbers increasing because there is no harsh punishment when it comes to hate crimes?

Meaning it is officially known that if you are found guilty of committing murder you are automatically looking at a harsh sentence as opposed to someone who has inflicted pain and hate on another because of the offender's beliefs or opinions. Therefore, committing a crime with a hate motivation should carry a sentence uplift because of the effects it can have on the victim. For example, if someone who is transgender is publicly attacked purely because the offender does not agree with transgender identity the victim may suffer with embarrassment, anxiety, depression, or paranoia.

Furthermore, the numbers of reports are large yet hate crimes are hugely under-reported in fear that no one will care, or no justice will be served. These reports are often inadequately dealt with by the authorities, statistics showed a majority of hate crimes were race hate crimes, but this is not anything new. A case from 1993 showed a boy Stephen Lawrence (18) murdered by four white males at a bus stop because of his race no justice was served until we saw very little improvement because in 2012 only two of four criminals were sentenced. (CBBC Newsround) A large number of people believe not enough is being done within the justice system as we see in the news today no one is seeing justice being served within black communities. 'around three-quarters of offenses (76%; 78,991 offenses) were race hate crimes.' (GOV.UK). A sentence uplift can result in criminals going to prison for a hate crime instead of a non-custodial sentence which could be a fine or community service.

On the other hand, some could argue that offenders should not be given longer prison sentences as it is not constructive in terms of punishment. An example of minor offenses within hate crime could be a person being punched by someone, who was beforehand shouting racial slurs to them. That is considered a minor hate offense. So, in a case like this, the offender could be ordered to complete some type of community service or attend a humanity course (rehabilitation courses) which is constructively educating people, instead of ordering the offender to serve imprisonment. Another point that could be considered is how many times this person has offended. Meaning someone that has reoccurring convictions and offenses, maybe a longer sentence would be reasonable because the criminal is proving short punishments e.g., 28-day house arrest, and rehabilitation courses, a short sentence is not improving anything.

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A hate incident is any act in which the victim is being discriminated against because of their, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion, or because they are transgender. Not all hate incidents will compare to criminal offenses e.g., more serious cases such as homicide, but it is equally important that these are reported and recorded by the police as records will show areas with high numbers of hate crimes. Prisons across England are overpopulated which shows that cases that are detrimental to society should be prioritized. Prison is not the solution to every criminal offense. Evidence of the hate aspect is not a requirement, it does not need to be a personal attack against you, being a witness believing what you witnessed is a hate crime is more than enough evidence.

In conclusion, I believe all hate crimes should be taken seriously and it is always important to report any type of incident even no matter how minor you think it is compared to the corruption that goes on in the world. This raises awareness to the rest of the world that hatred is a big issue within different communities. I also believe depending on how minor or serious the offense is this should depend on how harsh the punishment is. Meaning a minor incident equals productive punishment. I also think courts should push first-time offenders towards a more reforming program such as courses, and community service.