

Religion and Belief-Related Hate Incidents in Higher Education

A research and evaluation report

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1. Introduction

This is a research and evaluation report, reporting on learning from Coventry University's project 'Tackling religion-based hate crime on the multi-faith campus', funded by the Office for Students (OfS) within its Catalyst initiative to tackle religion-based hate crime and support student safety and wellbeing.

The project had three main **aims**:

1. To better support students in understanding what religion-based hate crime is and encourage them to report and receive support;
2. To strengthen the existing reporting and case management mechanism to ensure it addresses religion-based hate crime affecting students;
3. To provide an exemplar for the HE sector via partnership with, and knowledge sharing through, national organisations working on HE equality policy (Advance HE) and with chaplains (the Church of England).

A monthly working group carried out the project's activities, with tasks assigned by expertise. Its members included two Students' Union (SU) elected sabbatical officers, an SU staff member, the Muslim chaplain, two harassment case managers, four academic research staff (three specialists in religion, one in gender-based harassment and a leader of the previous Catalyst projects), a PhD student research assistant and a project officer. The project reported three times a year to a steering committee of senior university managers, who oversaw this and Coventry University's previous Catalyst projects¹ and offered expert advice and guidance.

The **activities** undertaken to achieve the project's aims were:

- A. Employment of a new part-time case manager with expertise in religion and belief for the developing case management reporting system.

A case manager was employed one day per week for 18 months, working alongside the harassment and hate incidents case manager employed through Coventry University's previous Catalyst project. The religion case manager promoted religion-based hate incident reporting. This included:

- i. Handing out business cards at welcome week events
- ii. Working to build relationships with religion and belief-related student societies

- iii. Giving talks about religion and belief-related harassment to student rep meetings
- iv. Attending several social and discussion events run by chaplains at the university's Spirituality and Faith Centre
- v. Running a social event for the Holi festival and co-running an event for religious student societies in interfaith week
- vi. Attending/co-running other SU events: e.g. Black History Month
- vii. Running a stall at Hate Crime Awareness Week, welcome week (for several intakes of students), societies fair, housing fair and Interfaith Week
- viii. Contributing as a member of the project working group and the OfS network
- ix. Dealing with reports of hate incidents related to religion, referring students to appropriate channels for support or action (e.g. SU, chaplains, Student Services, police, faculties)

- B. Advertising the case management system to students of diverse religions and beliefs.

The activities that took place were:²

- Face-to-face promotion of the harassment reporting system by the religion case manager (sometimes alongside the other case manager and members of the project working group): at welcome week (induction) – see (i) above, ii via talks to religious and cultural societies, iii talks to student reps, at stalls in themed weeks
- A poster campaign – on plasma screens and in paper versions on noticeboards throughout university, including in student accommodation
- Flyers – including one in Mandarin, as Chinese students are the largest group of international students whose first language is not English
- Banners in the library and the main student building
- An SU newsletter article (including a link to a film introducing the religion case manager)
- A news story on the SU website
- Multiple Moodle announcements

- C. Research and evaluation.

This took the form of a 'baseline' survey early in the project of students' attitudes to, awareness of and experiences of religion and belief-related harassment and hate incidents,

1. Coventry University received funding for two previous projects to tackle sexual harassment, hate crime and online harassment from HEFCE and OfS's Catalyst scheme. These projects finished in 2018 and 2019.

2. See Appendix for examples of these.

and an end-of-project 'follow-up' survey a year later, to see whether and how students' views and experiences might have changed during the project's activities, and to what extent they had been aware of these activities. This report details the findings. The research also indirectly acted as a way of raising awareness among students of the issue of religion-related harassment.

D. Production of short guide to tackling religion-based hate incidents via case management reporting.

This is a 'how to' guide that other higher education providers can follow, enabling them to create case management reporting systems that work well for religion and belief.

E. Knowledge-sharing across the sector via work with Advance HE (formerly the Equality Challenge Unit) and the Church of England.

Through publication of the guide and its presentation at external events (at other Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and chaplaincy and religion and belief-related conferences and events), the project's learning is being shared locally and nationally.

This project operated within the overall framework of the wider OfS initiative, which set out, on local and national levels, to encourage and strengthen reporting of harassment and hate incidents related to religion, to facilitate strong on- and off-campus safeguarding and support and develop strategies to overcome barriers to reporting religiously motivated hate crime.

To download Coventry University's guide *Tackling Religion or Belief-Related Harassment and Hate Incidents: A guide for higher education providers*, visit <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/student-wellbeing-and-protection/resources-for-student-safety-and-wellbeing/coventry-university-3/>

2. Literature Review

According to the Home Office's *Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2018-19* report on police recorded crime, every year since 2012-13 has shown an increase in the 'motivating factors' of recorded crime on the ground of 'religion'.³ There is debate about how far these figures reflect an actual increase in such crimes and/or in the awareness and hence identification of this. But, at the least, recognition of the existence and significance of such crime as well as of the much wider phenomena of religion or belief-related harassment and hate incidents, is something that has come into wider social, legal and political focus.

Within the higher education (HE) sector, awareness of these issues has grown from the 1990s when awareness was relatively minimal. Of great importance to this was the passage into law of the *Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003* which applied not only to staff in HE, but also to students. The *Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006* then addressed the stirring up of religious hatred in wider public environments. In this context, in 2007 the Inter Faith Network for the UK published *Building Good Relations on Campus*. In 2010, previous legal measures, including that of the *Equality Act, 2006*, were consolidated into the *Equality Act 2010* which also included a 'positive duty' to foster good relations between people of various religions and beliefs.

For HE providers, the issues became further complicated because of government measures intended to prevent terrorism and violent extremism. In 2005, Universities UK (UUK) published guidance on dealing with hate crime and intolerance which argued that staff and students have the right to work, study and live without fear of intimidation, harassment and threatening or violent behaviour and also, positively, that tolerance and respect for diversity is a key ingredient in upholding the academic freedom that is vital in HE. Nevertheless, examples such as student political controversies around the academic boycott of Israel underline that the distinction between challenging viewpoints and hate speech can be difficult to draw in practice, with some arguing that such political debates have often utilised antisemitic tropes and thereby moved into expressions of hatred (e.g. Klaff 2010). However, groups such as Academics for Academic Freedom argue that institutions should be willing to listen to viewpoints that are not only challenging but could also be offensive. In 2010, UUK issued updated guidance on *Freedom of Speech on Campus: Rights and Responsibilities in UK Universities*.

Against this background, 2011 questionnaire survey data from research by Weller, Hooley and Moore (2011) undertaken for the former Equality Challenge Unit (now Advance HE) showed that 6.6% of staff and 6.1% of students were

reporting discrimination or harassment on the grounds of religion or belief, while less than 1% of staff and 1.7% of students had made a complaint about either discrimination or harassment. Some have argued that this was because these phenomena were not as widespread among HE providers as in the wider society, while others argued that individuals (and especially international students) have been reluctant to report incidents for fear of negative repercussions. Until around a decade ago, one difficulty was an overall lack of statistical information on religion or belief in HE, but this is now available, with the latest data being included in Advance HE's statistical report on equality in HE (2019: 200)

A 2011 indicative survey by the National Union of Students (2011) found that almost 3% of respondents had experienced a hate incident which they attributed to their religion or belief, and this was reinforced by the NUS' final published report (2012: 19). Of those respondents, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh students were most likely to have experienced such hate incidents, with the experience of Jewish students being further explored by Graham and Boyd (2011), and those of Muslim students by the NUS (2018: 18-20). In terms of the context for harassment and hate incidents, especially among the younger student population, it is important not to ignore the online environment, which was addressed in a report by Universities UK (2019b).

For practical measures to tackle harassment and hate incidents related to religion or belief, the University of Leicester offers useful online training (University of Leicester, Centre for Hate Studies 2020) and potential crimes in this area can be reported on-line to the police (www.report-it.org.uk). The wider suite of OfS Catalyst projects – and of which this project is a part – also has important practical learning (Advance HE 2019b) which has built upon things learned from earlier Catalyst projects addressing sexual harassment.

Learning from this existing work, it is important to bear in mind the intersectionality of harassment and hate on the grounds of religion or belief with that relating to other 'protected characteristics'. This is especially given that the majority of reported hate crimes with more than one 'motivating factor' involved both race and religion, and also in the light of the findings Equality and Human Rights Commission's (2019) enquiry into racial harassment in HE. The disturbing nature of these findings has shaken any complacency there may have been about racial harassment in the sector, while potentially opening it up to be more ready to look at evidence concerning harassment and hatred in relation to religion or belief, and interventions which may help to tackle it, of the kind presented and discussed in the rest of this report.

3. The numbers have risen from 1,572 in that year; to 2,264 in 2013-14; 3,293 in 2014-15; 4,400 in 2015-16; 5,949 in 2016-17; 8,339 in 2017-18; and 8,566 in 2018-19. (Home Office 2019)

3. Methods

Two surveys, each available online and on paper, were undertaken. The surveys aimed to recruit as many Coventry University students as were interested in participating, including distance learning students, across all of its campuses. The baseline survey aimed to understand Coventry University students' attitudes to, direct experiences of, and experiences of witnessing hate incidents related to religion or belief, irrespective of whether or not they are themselves religious or subscribe to a particular belief system. The follow-up survey aimed to assess the impact of the project, including of the religion and other harassment case manager's work, in raising the visibility of religion or belief hate crime and hate crime reporting.

Participants were recruited via online and offline methods. Online, the surveys were advertised via the university's online communication channels, including Moodle, SU social media accounts and plasma screens in university buildings (including in the large Coventry SU and student services building known as 'The Hub'). A simple message was used: 'Student survey on Religion, Belief and Hate Incidents – please share your views', followed by the survey link and QR code with full information. Offline, flyers advertising the surveys were distributed in building reception areas, promoted by the Muslim chaplain at Friday prayers and by Muslim and Christian chaplains in the Spirituality and Faith Centre, and at several stalls in the main SU and student services building.⁴

Paper copies were available for students who preferred to complete it offline, and a sealed post box for students to return paper surveys was available in the reception of the Spirituality and Faith Centre (staffed by a receptionist or chaplain).

Around half of the questions for the baseline survey were taken (a few adapted for a student audience) from the Leicester Hate Crime Survey conducted by Ipsos Mori and the University of Leicester, which provides a benchmark for hate crime research (Leicester Hate Crime Project 2014), while several questions are from the Chaplains on Campus project (Aune, Guest and Law 2019), and others were adapted from the Religion and Belief, Discrimination and Equality in England and Wales: Theory, Policy and Practice (2000-2010) project (Weller et al. 2013). The remaining questions were designed specifically for this project. The follow-up survey was shorter, with questions primarily focused on the impact of the project on students' attitudes and awareness of religion-related harassment and hate incidents.

Ethical approval was sought and received from Coventry University. The research team adhered to Coventry University's Data Protection and Principles and Standards of Conduct on the Governance of Applied Research Policies. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, to safeguard confidentiality. Participants were required to indicate that they consented to participating in this research by ticking three boxes: 1) 'I have read and understood the above information, 2) 'I agree to take part in this questionnaire survey' and 3) 'I confirm that I am aged 18 or over.'

The baseline survey received 612 usable responses and the follow-up survey received 286. 286 is a very small sample, and neither survey's findings can be regarded in formal terms as statistically representative of Coventry University students more widely. In order to attempt to trace whether the project's activities had had a measurable impact on individual students' attitudes, experiences or awareness, students who completed the survey were given the option of providing an email address, enabling them to be sent a link to the follow-up survey and thus to consider completing it. 183 of the original 612 respondents provided an email address, and of those 183, 27 also completed the follow-up survey. This number is too small for statistically reliable conclusions to be drawn, although, for reasons discussed further below, we believe that the results taken across the two surveys do have indicative value.

Strengths and challenges of the research/project

The project and research had many strengths. Key strengths included:

- A steering group of senior university managers ensured it was embedded within and prioritised by different parts of the university.
- Building on Coventry University's previous OfS Catalyst fund safeguarding projects ensured the project added to a very successful body of work.
- A working group consisted of members with interests and religion and belief expertise across different parts of the university. The excellent working relationship formed between SU staff and elected officers, academic researchers and chaplains will be fruitful beyond the project's duration.

4. See Appendix for examples.

Challenges included:

- Communication: the need to use multiple communication methods to ensure students and staff knew about harassment reporting and the survey research.
- Achieving student involvement in the project beyond survey participation.

Student demographics – survey respondents and Coventry University students

Were survey participants representative of Coventry University's student population?

The 612 responses to the baseline survey represent a very small proportion of Coventry's 34,267 students in the year 2018-19. Nevertheless, because the profile of survey respondents was similar to those of Coventry University

Group⁵ (hereafter, CU) students in the 2018-19 academic year (albeit with some over-representation of international/EU, black and minority ethnic (BME) and Muslim students), we believe that the results do have indicative, even if not formally statistical, value.⁶ In the baseline survey:

- International and EU students were over-represented. 29% of respondents were from overseas and 16.5% were from the EU (compared to 24% overseas & 10.5% EU in CU).
- Black and minority ethnic (hereafter, BME) respondents were slightly over-represented. 64% of respondents were BME (compared to 58% in CU).
- Female respondents were slightly over-represented. 51% of respondents were female (compared to 48% in CU).
- Students' religious affiliation was somewhat different, as the table below shows. Students were more likely to reveal their religion (only 7.5% declined to answer) than they did in the university's 2018-19 statistics, where 30.9% a third selected 'prefer not to say' or did not answer the question.

Coventry University students 2018-19		Our survey 2018-19	
Buddhist	1.5%	Buddhist	1.5%
Christian	21%	Christian	25%
Hindu	3%	Hindu	4.7%
Jewish	0.1%	Jewish	1%
Muslim	11.8%	Muslim	31%
Sikh	1.8%	Sikh	1.3%
Spiritual	0.5%	Spiritual – option not given	
Any other religion or belief	11.9%	Other	3.4%
No religion or belief	11.5%	None	24.5%
Did not respond/ prefer not to say	30.9%	Did not respond	7.5%

5. When the survey was conducted, Coventry University Group included Coventry University, Coventry (the largest part of the group), Coventry University London, CU Coventry, CU London, CU Scarborough and CU Online. Additionally, ONCAMPUS Coventry is part of Cambridge Education Group and provides international students with progression on to a range of Coventry University undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. 85.1% of survey respondents were studying at Coventry University, Coventry, with 6.1% from ONCAMPUS Coventry, 5.8% from CU Coventry, 1.2% from CU Online, and less than 1% each from CU London, CU Scarborough and Coventry University London.

6. The much higher numbers of Muslim students may result from the survey being publicised by the Muslim chaplain in the Spirituality and Faith Centre, and, as Section 5 suggests, by Muslim students encountering more religion-related harassment than other religious groups and wanting to tell the researchers about it.

Statistical analysis

When reporting on findings below, statistically significant differences in the responses of particular groups are highlighted. The demographics in the follow-up survey were similar to those in the baseline survey, adding validity to our comparisons of these two groups. Throughout the report, when reporting on statistical significance, the 0.05 significance level (p) is used (standard in social science research), which means that we can be 95% confident that findings have not occurred by chance.

The data reported in this report come from the 612 students who responded to the baseline survey and the 286 who answered the follow-up survey. Each student's response is given equal weight throughout the report. However, these responses are not representative of Coventry University students, so it is not possible to assume generalisability beyond this sample. International students, BME students and Muslim students responded in proportions that over-represent their numbers in the general student population. To attempt to gauge the impact this might have had on the survey results, the data were then weighted by religion. The weight given to each case reflected the actual student population. For example, Muslim students accounted for 33.6% of the responses in the baseline survey and this was adjusted down to 17% after weighting, which is the proportion of students in Coventry University revealing their religious affiliation who answered 'Muslim' when asked by the university. This was done for each religious group. Key results were then analysed to see how much they differed from the original (unweighted) data. To give some examples: the proportion of Coventry University students who answer yes to the question 'Since coming to Coventry University, have you been a victim of a religion-related hate incident/crime?' reduces from 6.5% to 5.7% after weighting. Answering the question 'To what extent do you agree that Coventry is a university where people from different religious or non-religious backgrounds and beliefs get on well together?' and asked to score from 1 to 10 (with 10 'strongly agree'), the proportion of students selecting 7 or above out of 10 rises slightly after weighting from 79% to 82%. Answering 'How much, if at all, is your quality of life affected by the fear of religion-related hate crime?' and given options from 1 = not at all to 10 = very, three quarters of students in our survey indicated that their quality of life is not significantly affected, scoring a 4 or below in the baseline survey. This increases to 81% after weighting. This leads to the conclusion that the survey results

are likely to reveal a slightly more negative picture than if they reflected the true proportions of religious groups in Coventry University. However, the differences we observed were small. Furthermore, it was not possible to survey the entire population of Coventry University students.

The next three sections report on attitudes to religion or belief-related harassment and hate incidents (Section 4), what students said about witnessing or experiencing religion-related harassment and hate incidents (Section 5) and students' awareness of the reporting system for harassment and hate incidents (Section 6). The chapters draw on findings from the baseline and follow-up surveys. Following these chapters, the Conclusion discusses these findings and ends with implications for the sector.

4. Findings Part One:

Attitudes to Religion-Related Hate Incidents

Aspects of the overall environment in terms of equity and unfair treatment can positively or negatively impact a setting in which hate incidents might either be discouraged or thrive. So although this was not the main focus of the project, it is important to note that the majority of students surveyed think Coventry University is an environment where people of diverse religion or belief backgrounds get on well together, and where treatment of individuals of different religions and beliefs is fair.

Asked (only in the baseline survey) ‘Do you feel that members of Coventry University experience unfair treatment because of their religion or belief in any of the following areas?’, relatively few students (1 in 10) thought CU staff or policies led to unfair treatment (answering ‘yes frequently’ or ‘yes occasionally’). More (1 in 5) thought that attitudes and behaviour of students, and external events or media reporting of them, led to unfair treatment (see Figure 4.2)

Asked ‘To what extent do you agree that Coventry is a university where people from different religious or non-religious backgrounds and beliefs get on well together?’ and given options from 1 = strongly disagree to 10 = strongly agree, in total across the two surveys 79% gave a score of 7 or above. For both the baseline and follow-up surveys, the average score was 8 out of 10 (see Figure 4.1).

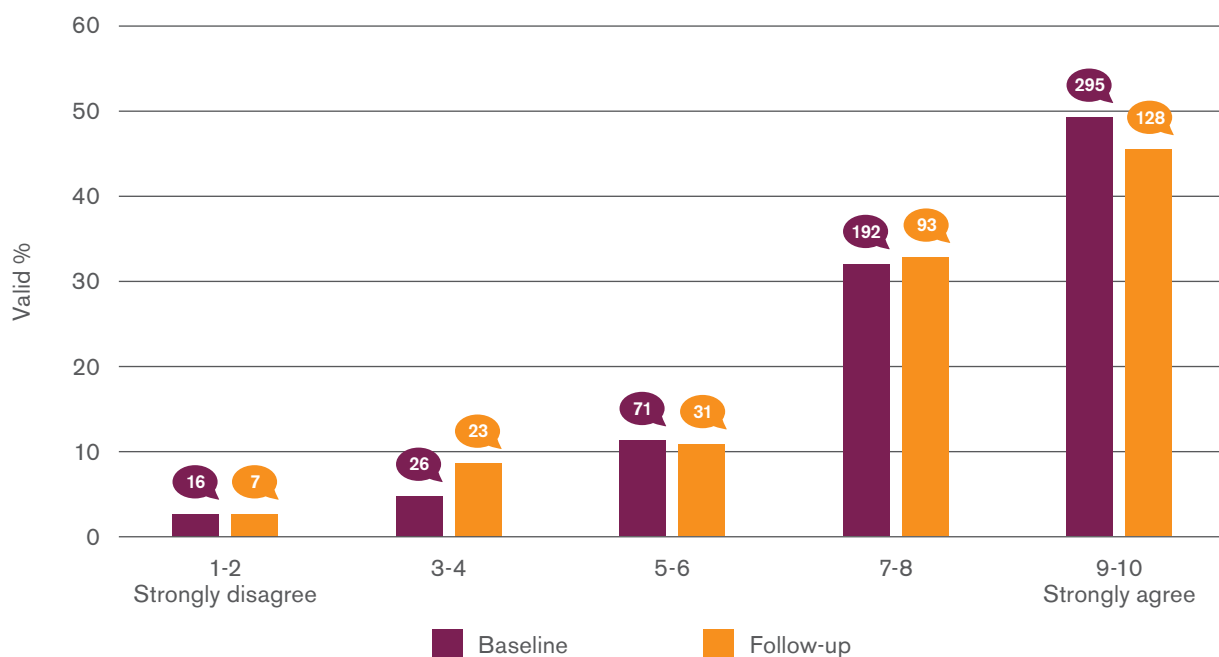


Figure 4.1: To what extent do students agree that Coventry is a university where people from different religious or non-religious backgrounds and beliefs get on well together?

7. On this and subsequent similar figures, the number in the speech bubble represents the number of students giving that response.

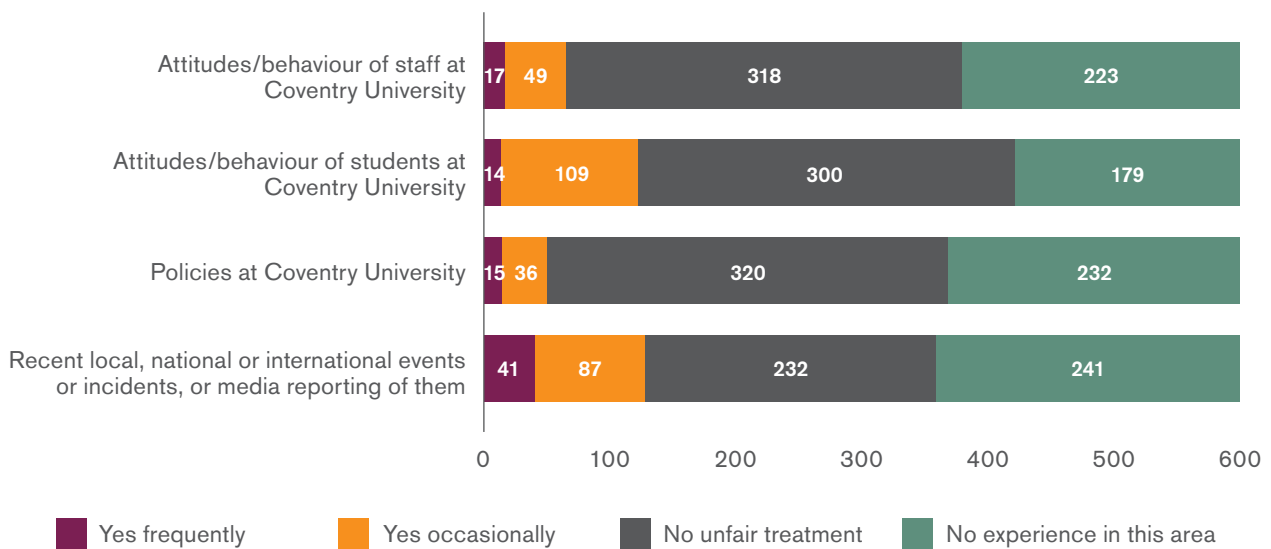


Figure 4.2: Do students feel that members of Coventry University experience unfair treatment because of their religion or belief?

Students were more likely to feel that students experience unfair treatment due to recent local national or international events or incidents, or media reporting of them, as they progressed through their courses⁸ (possibly because the longer they are present at university, the higher the chance of something negative happening) or if they described their sexual orientation as other than heterosexual⁹. The latter raises the question of intersectionality: are LGBTQ+ students more aware of harassment issues as they experience them due to their sexuality, or are they experiencing/witnessing more harassment related to religion too? This question is addressed in Section 6.

Students were requested to give an example of any of these categories if they ticked yes. Negative comments about policies included comments about Muslim prayer facilities' opening hours and timetabling comments, requesting more flexibility from lecturers to accommodate religious requests made by students (for example, changing seminar groups to avoid prayer times).

Negative comments about staff included staff behaving in ways that would seem to contravene equality and diversity policies. For example, students talked about lecturers mocking faith or mocking atheism. A couple said they believed their lecturers had racist views or were less helpful to international students than home students. A female Muslim student said her lecturer told her in front of the class to remove her head wrap.

Some student voices

'Many students on my course will frequently mock me through my religion – in their view they are being funny and it's 'banter'. However, to me it is racist and no laughing matter.'
(Muslim student)

'In my first year at Uni I was a member of the Jewish society. At a societies fair a member of STAFF approached our table and asked why we were trying to recruit people "didn't you lot kill Jesus?"'
(Jewish student)

'I'm an international student and an atheist who is a former Muslim and I occasionally get negatively judged by some Muslim students who are international.'
(Non-religious student)

'I feel like there's a lot of hostility towards people of Islamic faith in the media. There's also been protests based around this in the past like the EDL march that took place a couple of years ago.'
(Christian student)

8. 12.8% of first years, 27.1% of second years, 32.2% of third years.

9. 36.7% rather than 18.7% stating 'yes frequently' or 'yes occasionally'.

Negative comments about students related to students mocking faith. There were also negative comments about religious students being over-zealous or making homophobic or antisemitic comments. An incident involving antisemitic slogans on a student's T-shirt during a trip to a nightclub was mentioned by a few students. One student mentioned a physical assault perpetrated by a group of students

Finally, negative comments about external events concerned media portrayals of religious communities, especially of Muslims, political divisions related to Brexit, an EDL march in the city and social media misreporting of statistics related to religious groups.

Student confidence in identifying religion or belief-related harassment

When it came to religion and belief-related hate crimes/incidents in particular, students were generally confident in their ability to identify such incidents and largely reported that their quality of life was not affected by fear.

In the surveys, students were presented with Crown

Prosecution Service definitions of religion-related hate incidents and hate crime:

By 'religion-related hate crime' we mean 'any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a person's religion or perceived religion' (for example, an assault or damage to property which is motivated by hostility to someone's religion). A religion-related hate incident is 'any non-crime incident which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a person's religion or perceived religion' (Crown Prosecution Service definitions).

In the baseline and follow-up surveys, more than two-thirds of respondents¹⁰ were confident they could identify a religion-related hate incident, as defined above, if they encountered one (see Figure 4.3). Asked 'How confident are you that you could identify a religion-related hate incident/crime, as defined above, if you encountered one?' students were given options from 1 = not at all to 10 = very. The average score for both surveys was 7 out of 10, indicating a considerable degree of understanding of what a religion-related hate incident is.

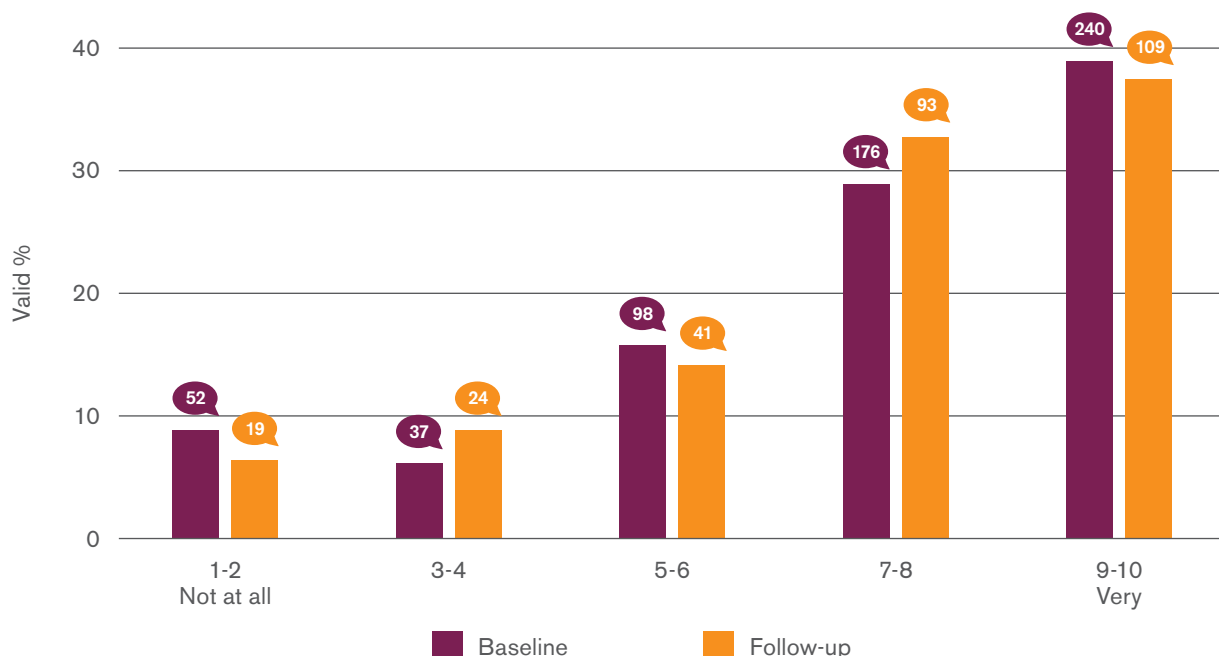


Figure 4.3: How confident are students that they could identify a religion-related hate incident/crime, as defined above, if they encountered one?

10. 618 of 889 students / 69% scored a 7 or above.

The baseline survey found that students' confidence in identifying religion-related hate crimes/incidents increased as they proceeded through their course. What is more, both surveys found that home students were more likely to feel confident than EU or International students. The survey results do not explain this difference, but it is possible that EU and international students may feel less confident about their knowledge and understanding of UK law.

Most students do not fear religion-related hate crime. Asked 'How much, if at all, is your quality of life affected by the fear of religion-related hate crime?' and given options from 1 = not at all to 10 = very, three quarters of students indicated that their quality of life is not significantly affected, scoring a 4 or below in the baseline survey. 6 in 10 scored a 4 or below in the follow-up survey (see Figure 4.4). Across both surveys, 52 students scored a 9 or a 10, indicating that this remains a significant problem for a minority of students (See Figure 4.4)

Muslim students were more likely to say their life was significantly affected by the fear of religion-related hate incidents than Christian students or those with 'no religion', as were female students (compared to males)¹¹ and BME students (compared to white students)¹². These findings reflect other research including, for example, that of Scott-Baumann et al.'s (2020-forthcoming) research on how Muslim students and Islam are represented on UK campuses, which identified a 'climate of fear' amongst Muslim students, which the authors attribute partly to a perception among Muslim students that they are being 'monitored' as a response to government concerns about terrorism.

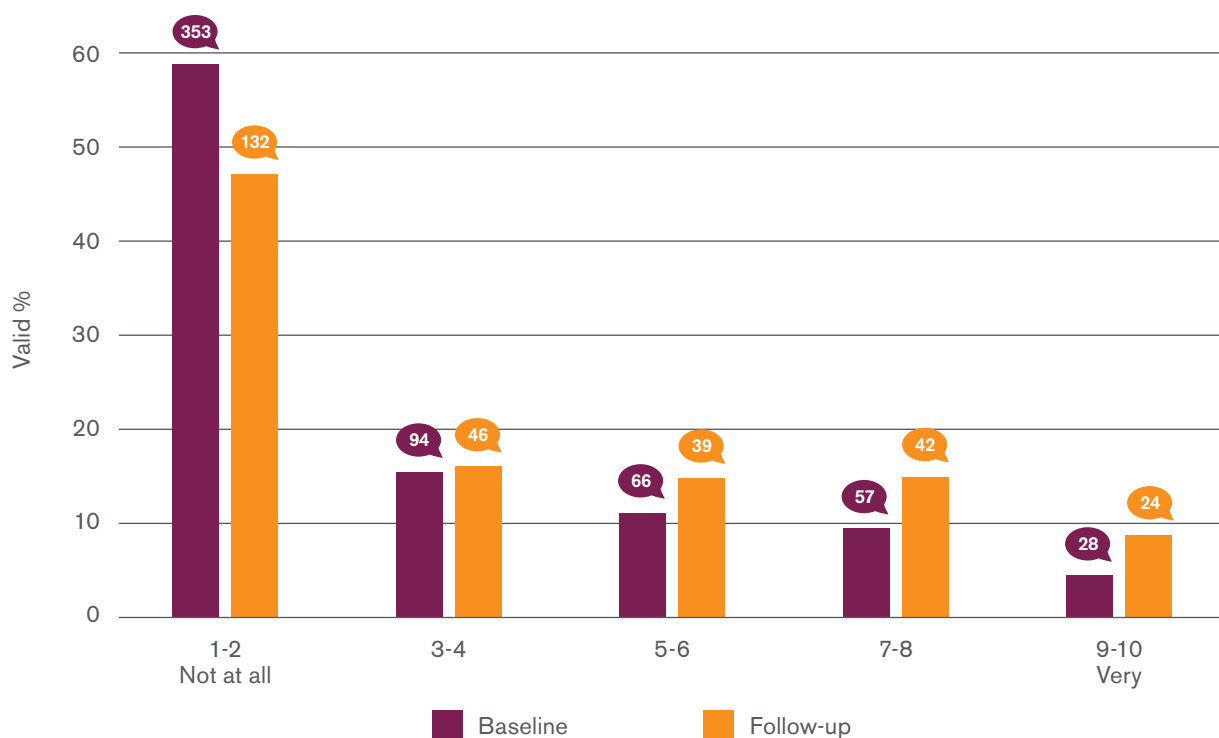


Figure 4.4: How much, if at all, is students' quality of life affected by the fear of religion-related hate incidents?

11. The percentage between female and male students scoring 7 or above almost doubles.

12. 92% of white students scored 1-4, compared to 66% of BME students. Conversely, only 3% of white students scored 7-10, compared to 19.2% of BME students.

The follow-up survey revealed a slight increase in proportions of students who report being fearful about religion and belief-related hate incidents. This might seem strange given the increase in support for students and the positive messages in our campaign explaining that the university will support anyone experiencing harassment. It is however possible that more students reported fear due to increased awareness of harassment as a phenomenon. If a problem such as harassment is never discussed, many will fail to notice it, ignore it or be wary of reporting it. But if it is the topic of messaging from the university, it is more likely that students will become aware that harassment is something they could become subjected to. They also become aware of means to report harassment and seek support. Increased fear, then, may not signify that there is more harassment. Increased fear may just mean that students are more aware of harassment being a phenomenon that exists in different social contexts, of which universities are one.

Students were asked which types of religion-related hate they were concerned about becoming a victim of and could tick as many as applied (see Figure 4.5).

While more than a quarter of students didn't specify any concerns, verbal abuse was students' most common concern, followed by harassment and violent crime. Elevated levels of concern about verbal abuse reflect the fact that verbal abuse was the most common type of hate crime or incident survey respondents experienced (the Leicester Hate Crime Project (2014: 16-17) found a similar thing). Cyber crime, perhaps surprisingly given the young student population of the survey, attracted the least concern. On average, students ticked two of the six categories and 8.7% (53 students) ticked all six.

For all types of crime except cyber crime, religious students were more concerned than non-religious students that they might become victims. Students who identified as religious (regardless of the religion) were more likely to be concerned about verbal abuse, harassment or violent crime than those who stated 'no religion' (although 25.3% of non-religious students were also concerned about violent crime). Muslim, Jewish and Sikh students were the most likely to be concerned about verbal abuse¹³.

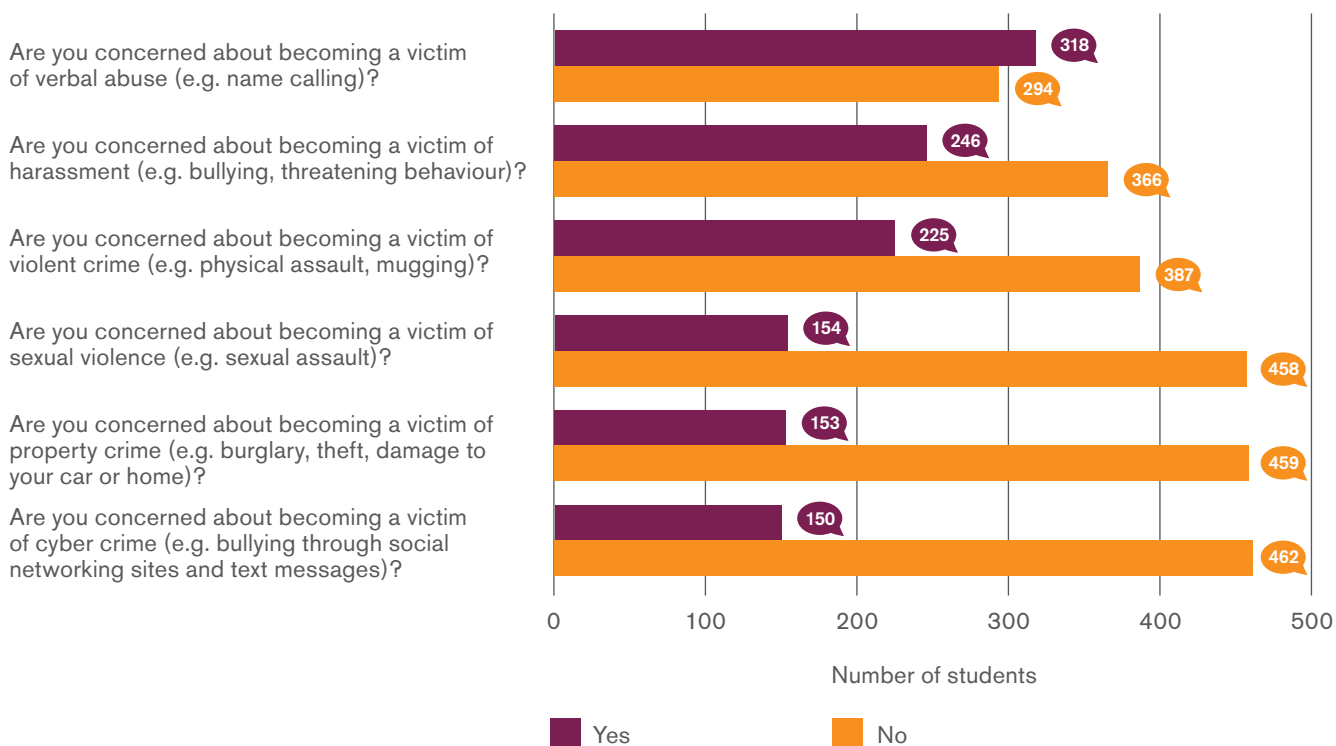


Figure 4.5: What types of religion-related hate incident are students most concerned about?

13. However, because the numbers of Sikh and Jewish students completing the survey are very small, in order to achieve a statistically significant result, students of religions other than Islam and Christianity had to be combined into a 'other religion' category. We can only reliably say that Muslim students are more likely to be concerned than Christian, other religious and non-religious students (in other words, the likely raised levels of concern amongst Jewish and Sikh students are counteracted by lower levels of concern amongst Buddhists and other religious students).

Students' ethnic group also proved significant: BME students, and especially Asian students, were almost twice as likely as white students to be concerned about all categories except cyber crime.¹⁴ When the BME categories are examined further, there are statistically significant distinctions between types of hate incident and ethnicity (see Table 4.1).

	Verbal abuse	Harassment	Property crime	Cyber crime	Violent crime	Sexual violence
Mostly likely to be concerned:	Black African + Caribbean	South Asian	Other Asian	Other Asian	South Asian	Other Asian
Followed by:	South Asian	Other Asian	South Asian	Mixed ethnicity	Other Asian	South Asian
Least likely:	White	White	White	White	White	Mixed ethnicity

Table 4.1: Relationships between type of hate incident and concern from BME students

Finally, female students were slightly more likely to be concerned about verbal abuse and harassment and much more likely to be concerned about sexual harassment than male students. Verbal abuse was a concern for all women regardless of religion (plus Muslim men). When it came to harassment, however, Muslim women are substantially the most concerned student group – this is consistent with previous research/data which indicates that Muslim women are more likely than Muslim men to be victims of hate, especially if the women are visibly Muslim due to their clothing (Allen 2015; Tell MAMA 2018).

Students were asked whether they had taken steps to feel safer and if so what they were. Twelve examples were given and students could tick as many as applied (see Figure 4.6).

14. Verbal abuse (63.6% compared to 37.9% of white students), harassment (48.7% compared to 28.1% of white students), property crime (31.3% compared to 14.8% of white students), violent crime (44.2% compared to 24.6% of white students) sexual violence (29.6% compared to 19.7% of white students).

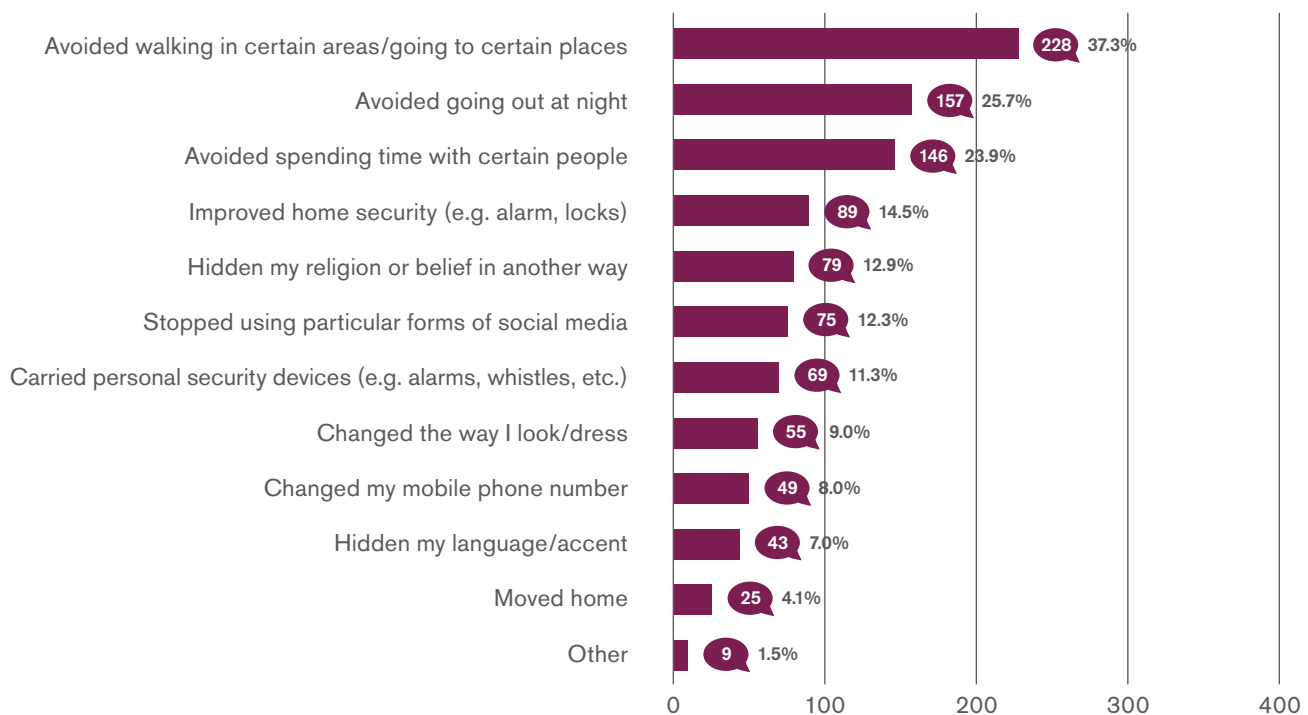


Figure 4.6: What steps do students take to feel safer?

42.3% of all students did not report taking any steps and on average students reported taking one or two steps. The most common were 'avoided walking in certain areas/going to certain places' (37%), 'avoided going out at night' (26%) and 'avoided spending time with certain people' (24%).

Female students were more likely to avoid walking in certain areas/going to certain places (46.4%) and much more likely to avoid going out at night (35.8%) and hide their religion or belief (16.9%) than male students. BME students were significantly more likely to avoid going out at night than white students.

5 tips for tackling religion or belief-related harassment: Students' views

Students were asked to suggest ways in which the problem of religion-based hate could be tackled, and asked to mention examples of good practice. Their responses were in two main groups: activities to respond to harassment if it occurred, and activities to prevent harassment occurring in the first place. Activities students recommend universities take to respond well to harassment were:

1. Having a good, accessible reporting system involving the university and, where appropriate, legal action being taken against perpetrators
 2. Providing counselling and mental health support to victims
- Activities students recommend universities take to prevent harassment were:
3. Promoting positive values such as equality and respect, supporting tolerance and freedom of expression but not tolerating expressions of religion-related hatred
 4. Having religious, interfaith and harassment-related awareness events and campaigns, to increase students' understanding of diverse religions and beliefs
 5. Creating educational opportunities, both formal (in lectures and seminars) and informal (optional workshops), for students to increase their knowledge about both religion and harassment, and enabling classroom activities to build peaceful relations between students of different backgrounds.

Most of the suggestions students made were of initiatives and practices that already happen, so the challenge for universities are, first, to raise awareness among students about the support that already exists, and, second, where activities are occasional or not widespread, to increase the number and frequency of such activities. For example, interfaith and religious awareness events occur, but these

are mostly attended by a small number of religious society members – might an event be held that is advertised more widely to students irrespective of religion? Or might lecturers who let students work in friendship groups switch to group-work activities where students are asked to work in diverse groups, enabling them to build relationships with those who are different from them?

		Student voices
Responding to harassment	Reporting system and university and/ or legal action against perpetrators	<p><i>'Police actually taking these acts as serious offences'</i></p> <p><i>'There should be a 0% tolerance policy'</i></p> <p><i>'By expelling or firing the member(s) of staff or student(s) involved'</i></p> <p><i>'More avenues to complain about the bullies'</i></p>
	Counselling and mental health support for victims	<p><i>'Maybe have open discussions or events to talk or discuss religions and social gatherings like meet and mingle for students. Have faith rooms in the campus where people can go freely and pray. Have counsellors in the campus students can approach to discuss mental health issues'</i></p> <p><i>'Anonymous chat for those affected to have someone to talk to while feeling safe'</i></p>
Preventing harassment	Promotion of positive values of equality and respect	<p><i>'There must be great respect among all. Tolerance is not enough, because tolerance can be a trigger for hatred / crime'</i></p> <p><i>'Somehow open the minds of people to difference'</i></p> <p><i>'Understanding each other's point of view first'</i></p>
	Religious, interfaith and harassment awareness events & campaigns	<p><i>'Make events where people with different religions can come and chat with each other'</i></p> <p><i>'Raising awareness about positive aspects of each religion and getting rid of stereotypes'</i></p> <p><i>'Invite members of different societies to joint events and interfaith events to help them build friendships rather than conflict'</i></p>
	Education in and beyond the classroom	<p><i>'Ensure integration within teaching and learning – making sure students of different backgrounds are encouraged to work together and get to know each other'</i></p> <p><i>'Providing interactive learning sessions for students to attend on religion and faith. Education is key to understanding and I believe reduces hate crime as a result.'</i></p>

Key findings from this Section:

- The majority of students surveyed think Coventry University is a place where people of diverse religious backgrounds get on well together, and where treatment of individuals of different religions and beliefs is fair.
- 2 in 3 students surveyed were confident they could identify a religion-related hate incident.
- 3 in 4 students surveyed indicated that their quality of life is not significantly affected by the fear of religion-related hate, though this remains a substantial and real problem for a small minority of students.
- Students' religion, gender and ethnic group were associated with increased concern about different forms of religion-related hate. Muslim, female and BME students had the greatest concerns.
- 4 in 10 students did not feel the need to take steps to feel safer, but of those that do, the most common steps were avoiding certain areas, avoiding going out at night and avoiding spending time with certain people.

5. Findings Part Two: Experiencing/Witnessing Religion-Related Hate Incidents

'A car drove past and they threw food (a sandwich) and a liquid at me, followed by anti-Muslim comments.' (Muslim student)

'While walking in the train station area, my friend was shouted at by three men. They were calling her a terrorist and demanding she go back to her own country.' (religion withheld)

'Someone made a negative comment about the Christian faith in a lecture to their friends that I overheard. This was not an isolated incident and I've had to bite my tongue in other classes.' (Christian student)

These statements are from students in the baseline survey, describing their most recent experience of a hate incident that they felt was motivated by their religion or belief. In our baseline and follow-up surveys we asked students about their experiences of hate incidents motivated by their (own or perceived) religion or belief. In the baseline survey we explored students' reported experiences in more depth through a range of questions that required them to reflect on the nature of the incident. This section analyses students' responses to both surveys, presenting more in-depth data from the baseline survey to provide an incisive analysis of student experiences of religion or belief harassment and hatred.

In both surveys we asked students about their perceptions of having been a victim of a religion-related hate incident. Figure 5.1 shows their responses to the question. The great majority of students in both the baseline and follow-up surveys said that they had not experienced a religion-related hate incident/crime – 92.6% and 84.6% respectively. This chimes well with the statement that began Section 4:

The majority of students surveyed think Coventry University is a place where people of diverse religious backgrounds get on well together, and where treatment of individuals of different religions and beliefs is fair.

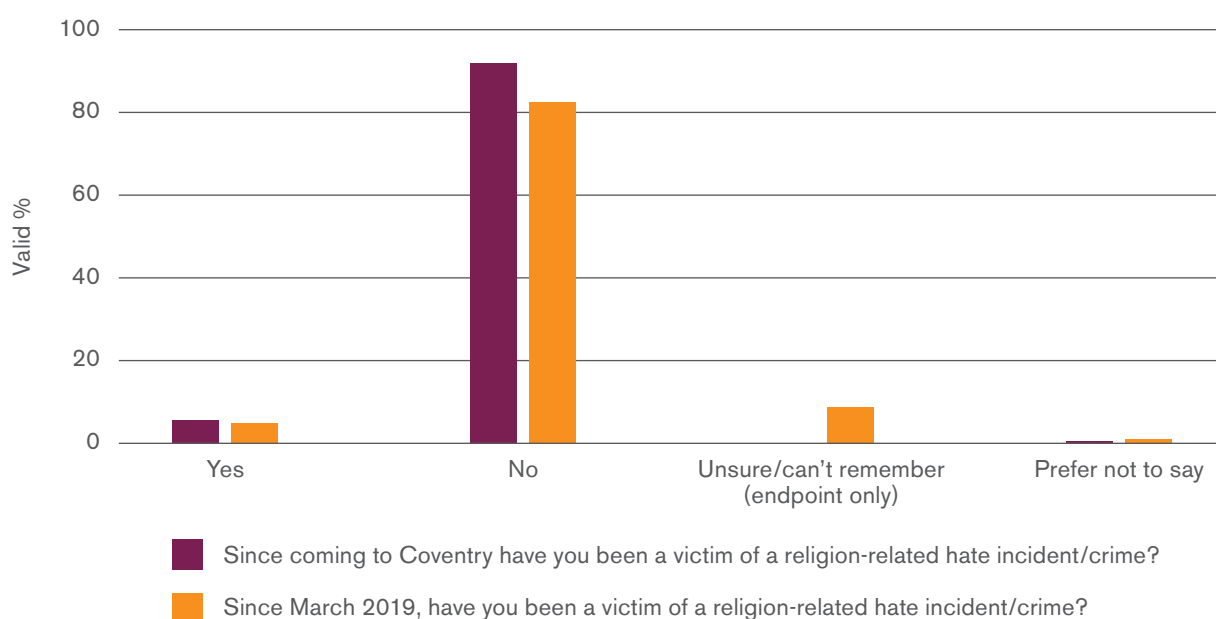


Figure 5.1: Since coming to Coventry University (baseline) or since March 2019 (follow-up), have you been a victim of a religion-related hate incident/crime?

However, a small number of students did report experiences that they perceived to be a hate incident motivated by their religion or belief. At baseline, 40 of the 612, or 6.5% of surveyed students, stated that they had personally experienced a religion-related hate incident/crime. In the follow-up surveys, 15 of the 286 or 5.2% of students who responded said that they had personally experienced a religion or belief hate incident.

Experiencing Religion or Belief-motivated Hate Incidents

The section will examine the nature and form of religion-related hatred and harassment. The sample of students who reported that they had experienced a religion-related hate incident is too small for accurate statistical testing, but the data suggests that the majority of the reported experiences of hate take place on or around the main Coventry University campus rather than at the other sites or online.¹⁵

Who experiences religion-motivated hate?

Male and female students seem to have been affected equally, although this must be read with caution due to the very small number of people who reported to us that

they had experienced a religion-related hate incident. In relation to ethnicity, 4 in 5 of religion-related hate incidents were experienced by BME students. In the baseline survey, students who stated they had experienced a hate incident described their religion or belief orientation as follows: 13.5% said that they were Christian, 56.8 said that they were Muslim, 8.1% said No religion 8.1% and 21.6% said Other. In the follow-up survey these figures were as follows: 21.4% said they were Christian, 64.3% said they were Muslim, 7.1% said No religion, and 7.1% said Other. It is important to note that students from all religion or belief groups, including Christian and non-religious students, report having experienced what they perceive to be a hate incident motivated by their religion or belief.

This last finding about who experiences hate crime was corroborated in student responses to a question in the baseline survey, where we asked students who reported being subjected to a religion-related hate incident to reflect on the nature of the incident. 38 students answered this question and they were asked to pick one option. Figure 5.2 shows that just under half of students experiencing a religion-related hate crime felt that it was motivated by Islamophobic or anti-Muslim attitudes, which might be expected given wider trends in academic literature around discrimination on the basis of religion or belief (di Stasio et al. 2019; Weller et al. 2013).

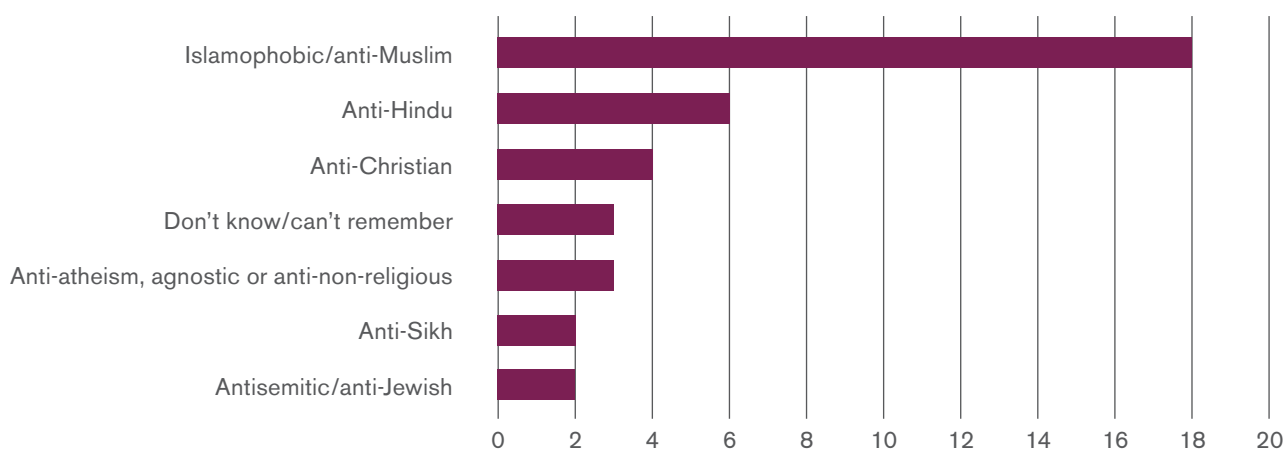


Figure 5.2: Thinking about your most recent experience of religion-related hate crime, what was it?

15. Coventry University's Coventry buildings are in the centre of the city, not on a campus removed from the rest of the city. 'On campus' is likely to be interpreted by students to include the streets around the university buildings. Further analysis shows that only around half of incidents classified by students as 'on campus' took place in a university building; the others were in the street or commercial venues nearby.

Students in the baseline survey were asked to reflect on their most recent experience of a religion-related hate incident and to consider the other reasons that may have led to their being targeted. As noted in Figure 5.3, students suggest that, in their opinion, the hate incident they experienced was motivated by their religion or belief and also possibly by a range of other identity characteristics including their ethnicity, dress and appearance, gender and social class. Three students said there were reasons other than the options provided in the survey, although the only other reason specified was an 'assumption of [being an] international student'. The quotation below describes one student's experience of encountering prejudicial attitudes towards international students:

Me and my friends were sitting in [university building] outside [coffee shop]. A lady came and sat next to us and casually started talking about random things. Once we were engaged with her she started saying that look at all these international students coming in our country destroying our language and culture. Then she specifically targeted Muslims. We got up from there and informed the people at the desk. They went after her but she left by then. (Muslim student)

Students had the option to choose more than one answer, and nearly half of the sample selected more than one option, which suggests the impact of intersectionality in how one is perceived, in determining experiences of hate, marginalisation and/or discrimination.

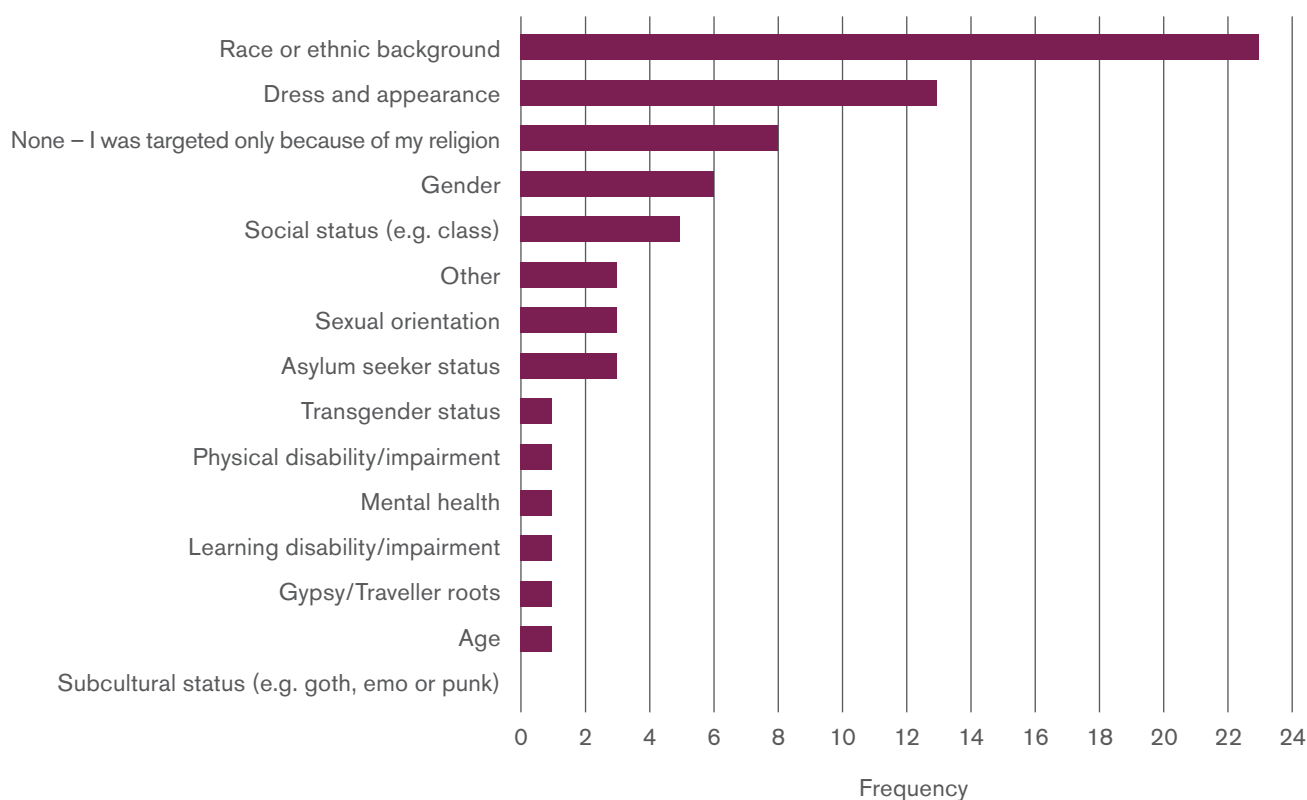


Figure 5.3: In addition to religion, do you think there was another reason why you were targeted? If so, please tick all that apply

The way students' different social identities and locations interact – known as 'intersectionality' (Crenshaw 1991) – is important in understanding reported experiences of religion or belief motivated hate, both in the general population and among students. Various aspects of their identity come to the fore in how students decide to describe the hate incident that occurred. These identities, closely linked to social inequalities, include gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation. Where religious identities overlap with other identities and/or equality strands, different forms of hate can intersect. The two quotations below are from students who describe their most recent experiences of religion or belief hate as also influenced by perceptions about sexuality and/or gender identity. These two quotations demonstrate how sexuality and religion coincide to produce different forms of hate.

A personal classmate, we are supposed to be friends and when I said I respected his choice of gender and supported him as soon as he found out I was Christian he has never stopped making insulting comments about it and being rude about it towards me. Also due to me

being straight as well he thinks I'm going to hate him so now he insults me being straight and makes me feel bad constantly despite me being supportive of lgbt. (Christian student)

Specific hatred towards LGBTQIA+ community using religion as excuse for their actions and hate speech/ bullying justifying it under freedom of speech to say horrible things. (non-religious student)

What forms does religion-related hate incident/crime take?

Both surveys asked students who had experienced a religion-related hate incident, to reveal how many times they believe they had experienced different types of crime. The survey provided options to choose in relation to the nature of the crime (Religion-related property crime; Religion-related sexual assault, violent crime; cyber crime; harassment and verbal abuse) and the frequency (regularly, occasionally, once or twice ever, never). Figures 5.4 and 5.5 provide an overview of their responses.

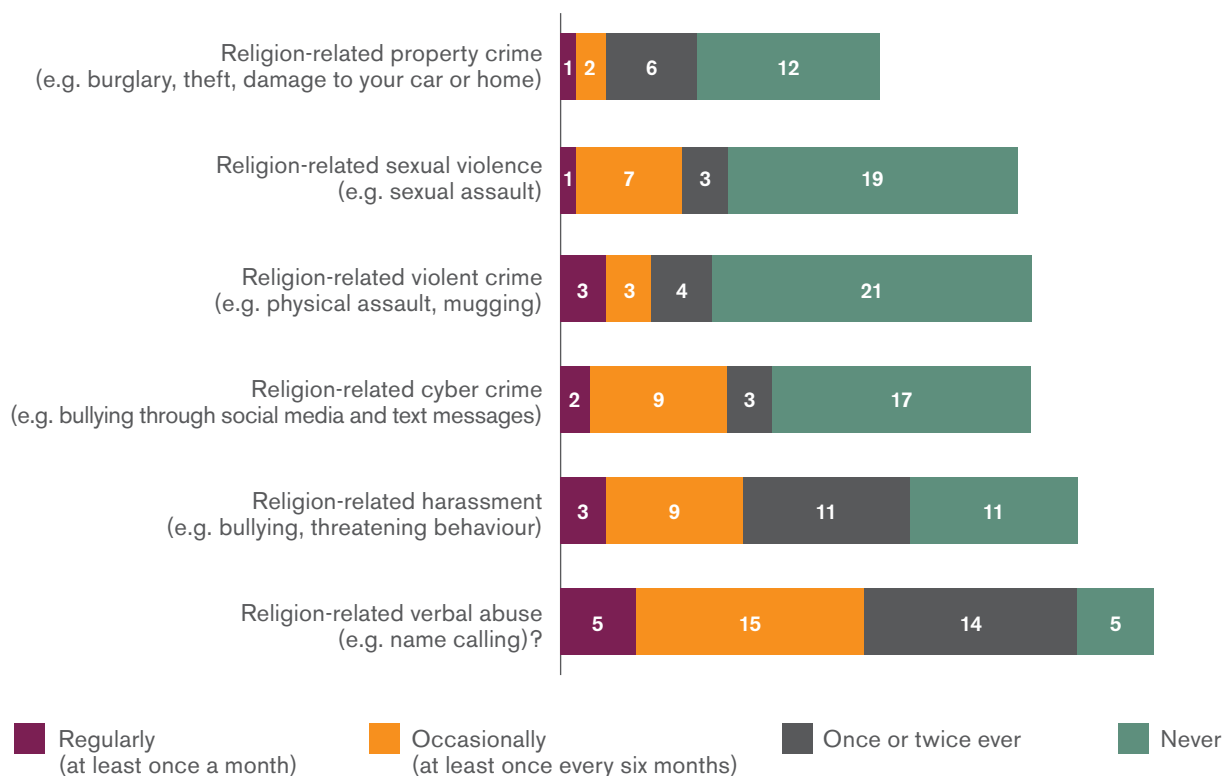


Figure 5.4: Since coming to Coventry University how often have you been a victim of the following types of religion-related hate incident/crime? (Baseline survey, 40 students)

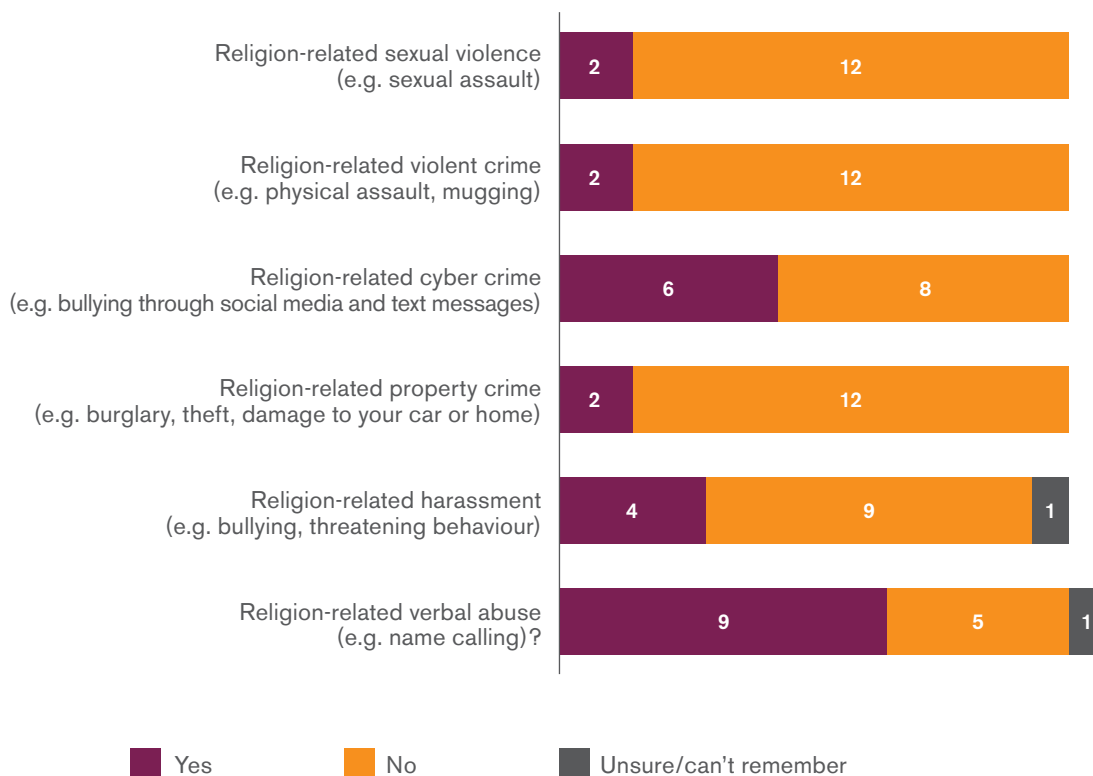


Figure 5.5: Since March 2019 have you been a victim of the following types of religion-related hate incident/crime? (Follow-up survey, 15 students)

Again, as the numbers of students experiencing hate incidents are small, it is not possible to make statistically valid comparisons. Nevertheless, the data suggests that religion-related harassment and verbal abuse are the most frequently occurring types of religion-related harassment or hatred to which students are subjected. The data also shows that some students may have experienced more than one incident.

When and where did the incident occur?

Students were asked when their most recent experience of religion-related hate had occurred. For the majority of students reporting a hate incident in our survey, the experience was recent, having occurred either within the last month (13 students) or between one and twelve months ago (18 students).

In the follow-up survey, and on average, more incidents were reported, although the numbers remain small.

As noted in tables 5.1 and 5.2 below, the incidents took place both on and off campus. In their written comments students suggest a number of spaces in and around the campus including names of buildings, just outside university buildings, during a lecture, just outside a classroom, outside prayer rooms etc. Off campus sites mentioned include shops, outside supermarkets, while travelling on public transport and in public places off campus such as parks and pubs. The data does not suggest any patterns of specific places where hate incidents occur.

Table 5.1: Baseline Survey: Where did the hate incident occur?

Type of Incident	On campus Number	Off campus Number
Verbal abuse	17	8
Harassment	8	5
Property crime	2	4
Cyber crime	2	2
Violent crime	2	2
Sexual assault	0	1
Other	1	0

Table 5.2: Follow-up survey: Where did the incident occur?

Type of incident	On campus Number	Off campus Number
Anti-Christian	2	1
Anti-Hindu	3	2
Islamophobic	12	6
Antisemitic	2	0
Anti-Sikh	1	1
Anti-atheism, agnosticism or anti-non-religious	2	1
Don't know/can't remember	0	3

Who is perceived as the perpetrator?

In the baseline survey we asked students about the perpetrator/s of the incident they told us about. Student responses to this question are noted in table 5.3. Individuals or pairs of people perpetrated the majority of incidents. Rarely were they perpetrated by groups of four or more people.

Table 5.3: How many perpetrators were involved?

No of perpetrators	Frequency
1	12
2	11
3	7
4	1
5	1
More than 5	1
Don't know/can't remember	3
Total	36

As noted in Figure 5.6 the majority of incidents were perpetrated by strangers, although perpetrators were also perceived as being other students, friends and members of university staff. The one 'other' response was 'boss'. When asked about the gender of perpetrators, 26 out of the 39 students who responded to this questions said they were male, 2 out of 39 said they were female, 4 out of 39 identified the gender of the perpetrator as 'other or non-binary', five indicated that the group was gender-mixed, and two did not know. Asked about how they perceived the ethnicity of the perpetrator, the majority of students described them as being white (Figure 5.7).

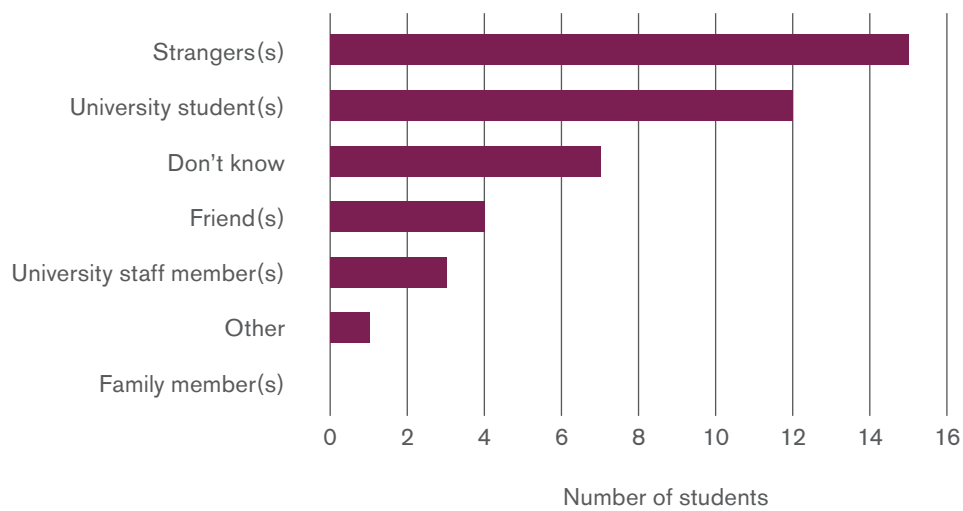


Figure 5.6: Who were the perpetrators?

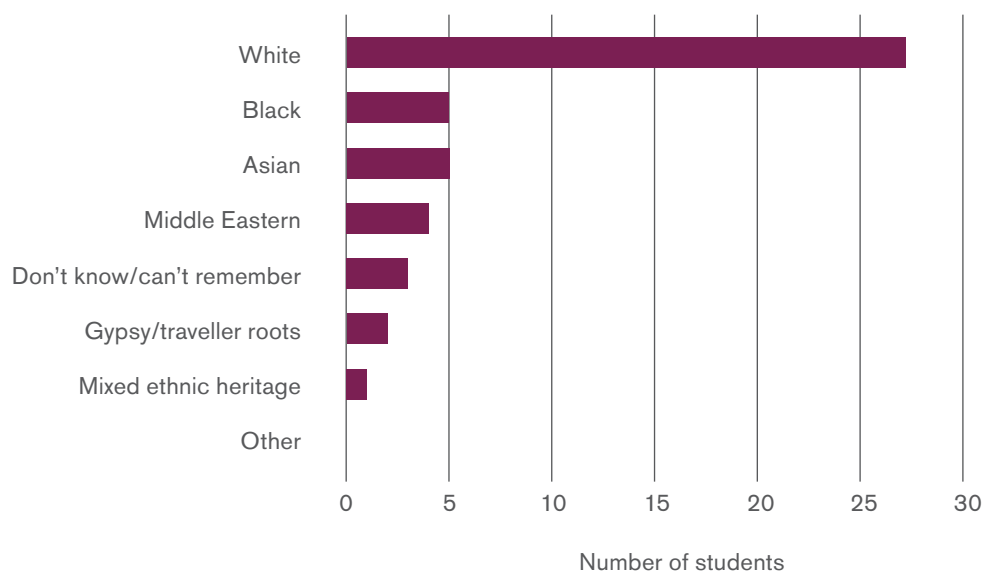


Figure 5.7: How would you describe the racial background of the offender(s)?

Impact of hate incidents on the student victim

Students were asked about the impact of the experience of religion related hate crime on their sense of mental and physical wellbeing. Figure 5.8 outlines their responses to this question.

The data in Figure 5.8 indicate that if a student had been

subjected to a religion-related hate incident, the incident tended to have a clear impact on the student's sense of well-being, their mental health and their engagement with campus life (studies, other students and staff). Two-thirds of students who had been subjected to a hate incident selected at least three of the above impact types. Figure 5.9 shows that the impact of the incident can be ongoing.

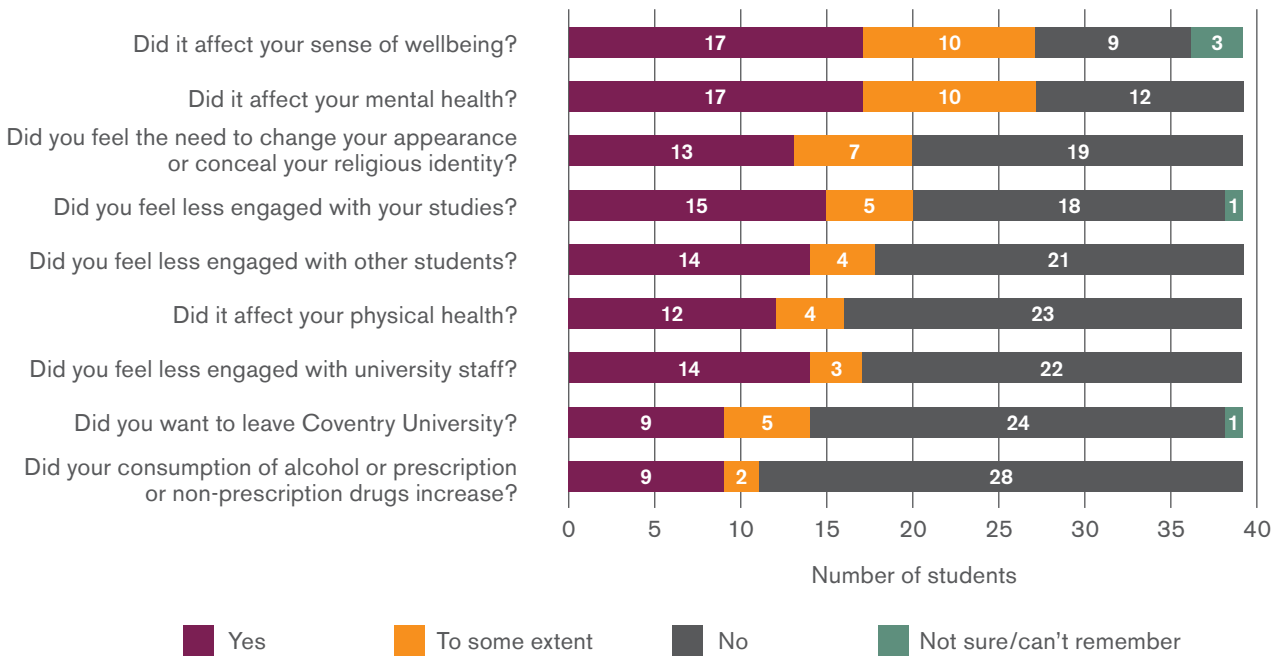


Figure 5.8: How did the experience affect you?

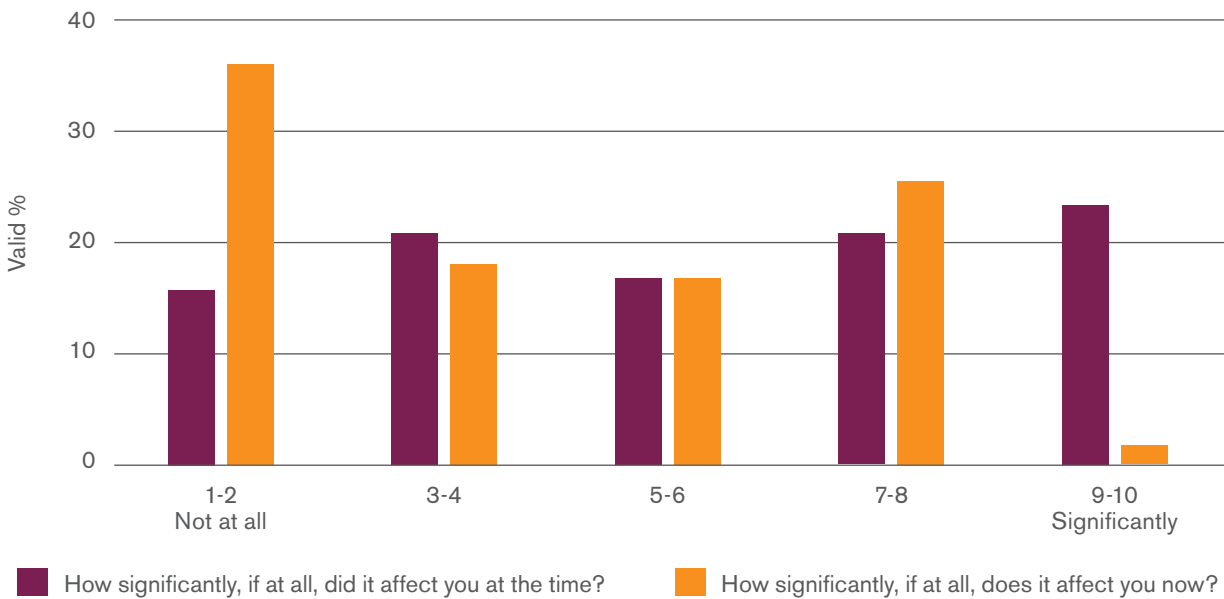


Figure 5.9: How significantly, if at all, did it affect you at the time? And how significantly, if at all, does it affect you now?

Reporting what was experienced to authorities

Religion or belief related hate incidents are, for the most part, not reported by students to the police or to the university. The follow-up survey showed a slight increase in reporting within the follow-up survey, however under-reporting or not reporting continues to be a problem. Each survey asked students 'how many incidents of religion-related hate crime have you reported?' (baseline survey: since coming to Coventry University and follow-up survey: since March 2019). Comparing the responses of students who answered this question, the number of students who said they did not report any incident drops slightly between the and follow-up surveys, although the numbers remain small. In the baseline survey 26 of the 40 students who said they had experienced an incident answered this question, of which 17 said they had reported no incident. In the follow-up survey, 13 of the 15 students who said they had experienced an incident answered this question, of which 8 said they had not reported any incident.

Both surveys asked students who had been subjected to religion-related harassment to whom or where they reported their experience. In the first survey, the majority of students who said they had experienced a religion or belief hate incident said that they did not report it. In the follow-up survey this increases as shown in Figure 5.10.

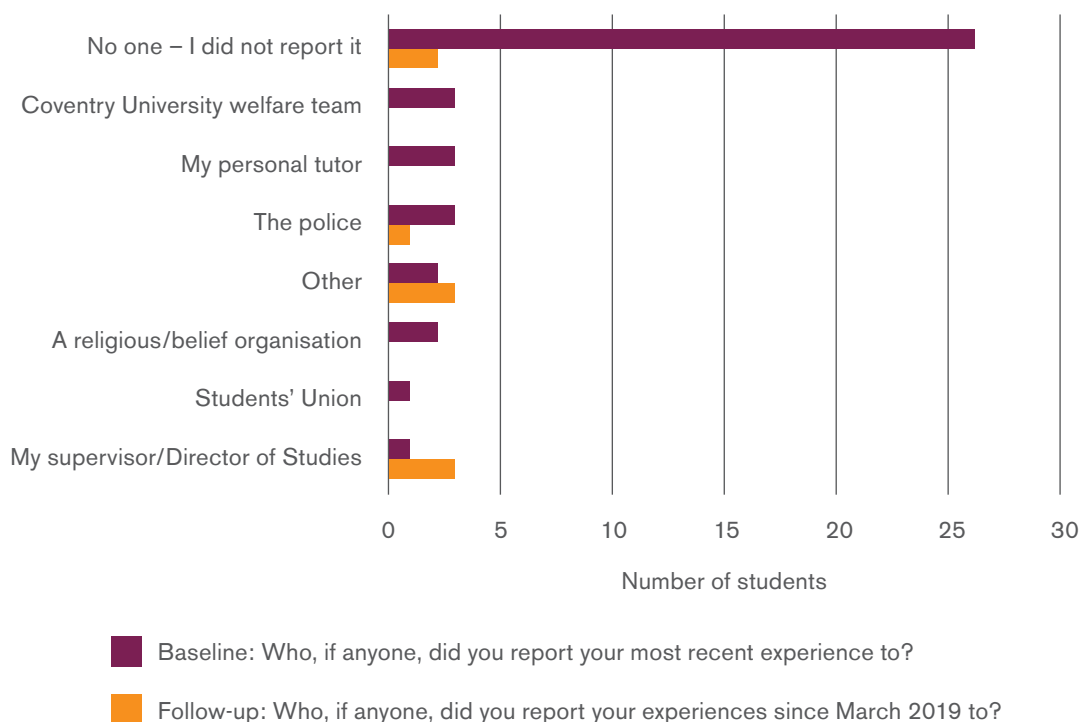


Figure 5.10: Where, or to whom, did you report your experience of religion-related hate crime?

Figure 5.11 shows students' reasons for not reporting hate incidents. For this question students could choose multiple answers/reasons for not reporting hate incidents. In the first survey, 32 students replied: 13 chose one response, 9 chose two, 5 chose three, 2 chose four and 3 chose five. In the follow-up survey 9 students responded to this question: 6 chose one response, 1 chose two, 1 chose three and 1 chose six. As noted in Figure 5.11 a number of students in the baseline survey felt that the incident would not be dealt with seriously by their chosen authority – the university or the police (21 out of 32 in the baseline survey and 2 out of 12 in the follow-up survey). It is also notable that some students said that they did not know to whom they should report the incident (6 out of 32 in the baseline survey and 1 out of 12 in the follow-up survey). The situation improved in the follow-up survey, with student responses seemingly indicating increased confidence in university authorities and the police as well as increased awareness of reporting procedures.

Students in the baseline and follow-up surveys were asked if any action was taken when they reported their experience. At baseline, three students said 'none' or 'nothing' (reported to a University senior manager, CU Welfare team and a religious organisation), one said 'still under investigation' (reported to SU) and one said 'The police are ignoring my emails and the only contact I had was last year on [date]. The police are still not making an effort to contact me or the other victims involved.' In the follow-up survey, one student simply said 'none' (this student reported their experience to Facebook). Finally, we asked students who reported their experience of hate crime whether or not they were satisfied with the outcome. In both surveys students were generally dissatisfied with the outcome. While the numbers of responses in this category are too small to draw definitive conclusions, these data suggest the need for continued outreach activity and university-led publicity around harassment reporting and equality and diversity, as well as a visible no-tolerance stance on hate crime.

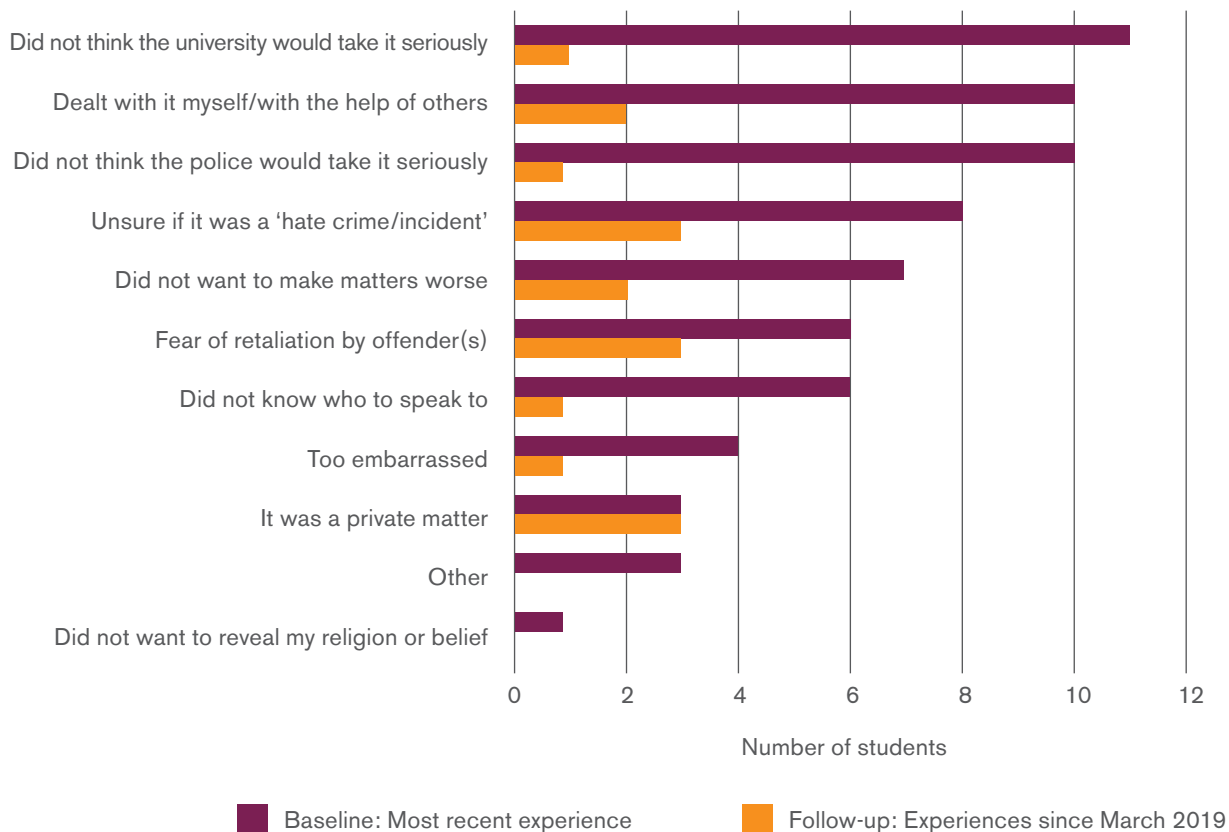


Figure 5.11: If you did not report the experience, why was this?

Witnessing a religion-related hate incident

A man on a bus thought the man (obviously a student) next to me was an illegal immigrant from ISIS or similar – even though the man next to me was a Sikh. He was yelling at him and I was in the middle. And making very rude comments regarding untrue statements. I do think he was under the influence of alcohol though. I didn't report it but I stepped in and told the man that it is not correct to voice opinions like that in public. I did notify the bus driver. (non-religious student)

Both baseline and follow-up surveys asked students about their experiences of *witnessing* (as opposed to experiencing) a religion or belief related hate crime or incident. Above a student describes a hate incident in which a Sikh student sitting next to her on a bus became a victim of verbal abuse. The student says she did not report it, but that she did alert the bus driver about the incident.

In both baseline and follow-up surveys we asked students about having witnessed a hate incident. As noted in Figure 5.12, in both surveys the majority said that they had not. Yet a significant proportion – 10.3% at baseline – said that they had witnessed a hate incident. When we asked students how many incidents they had witnessed, the majority (16 out of 25) of respondents said that they had witnessed one incident. Others reported having witnessed more than one incident.

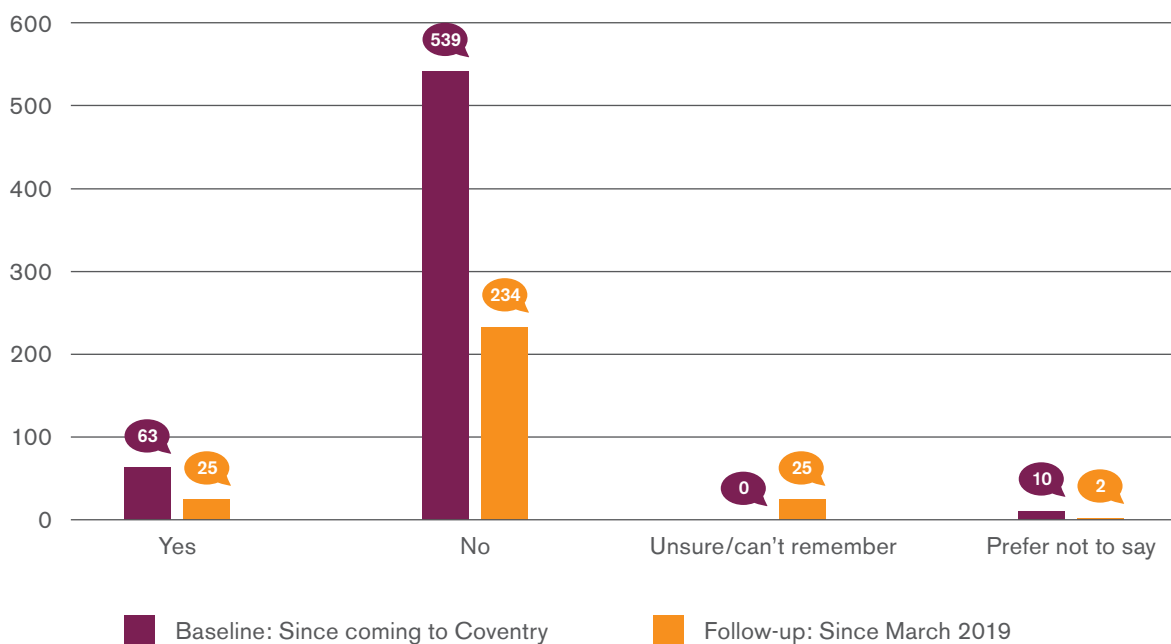


Figure 5.12: Have you witnessed a religion-related hate incident/crime happening to someone else?

The baseline survey asked about the nature of the hate incident that students had witnessed. Similar to trends in students' reported experiences of hate (discussed earlier in this section) verbal abuse and harassment were the most commonly occurring forms of hate witnessed by students (Figure 5.13). Two students responded 'other', and asked to expand on what they meant, their responses are as follows: 'A guy was trying to convince someone to go to their religious meet in a very intense way' and 'Belittling a faith, but not to a particular person'. Their write-in comments provide an interesting insight into students' perception of hate. It is impossible to know whether these incidents, if reported to police, would be recorded as constituting a religion-based hate incident, or whether these students understand 'hate incident' in an overly broad way, in the first instance interpreting any form of evangelism or faith-sharing as hate.

We also asked students about their perception of what 'kind' of hate incident they witnessed. Again, mirroring the trend captured in student experiences, although hate incidents against all religion or belief groups were witnessed, the majority of incidents (39 out of 63) were described as Islamophobic or anti-Muslim hate incidents (Figure 5.14).

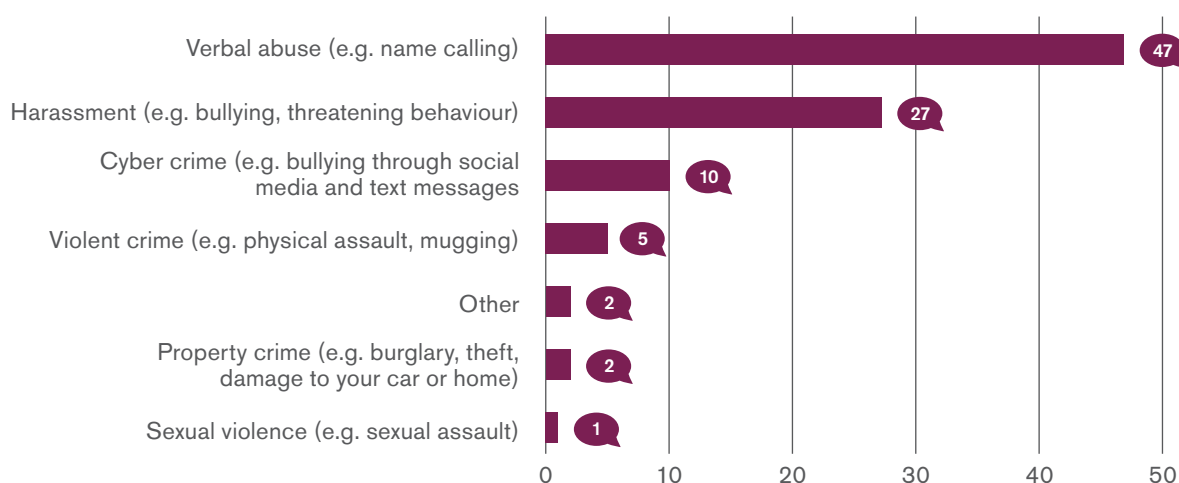


Figure 5.13: Thinking of the most recent incident you witnessed, what was this? (Baseline survey, 63 students)

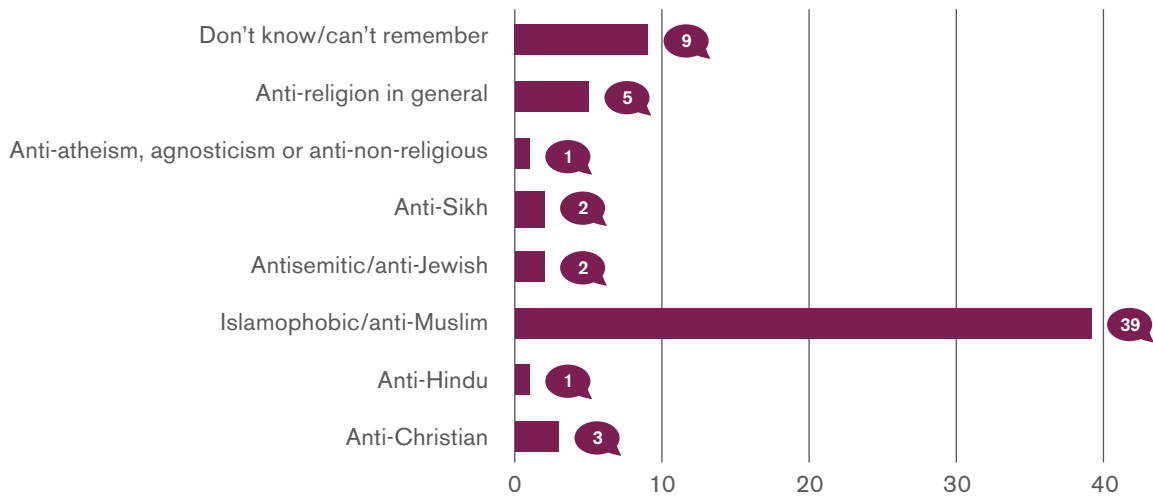


Figure 5.14: What kind of religion-related hate did you witness? (Baseline survey, 63 students)

Reporting what was witnessed (baseline and follow-up)

Finally, we asked students in both baseline and follow-up surveys whether or not they had reported what they had witnessed. In both surveys, most cases were not reported (Figure 5.15).

Similar to the previous discussion around reported experiences of hate incidents, students provided a number of reasons in the follow-up survey for not reporting, including considering the incident to be a personal matter, not being aware of who to report the incident too and not being sure whether or not what they had witnessed was a hate incident. When incidents were reported, this was to a variety of authorities including non-emergency police phone number, hate crime advisors, tutors, lecturers and on social media.

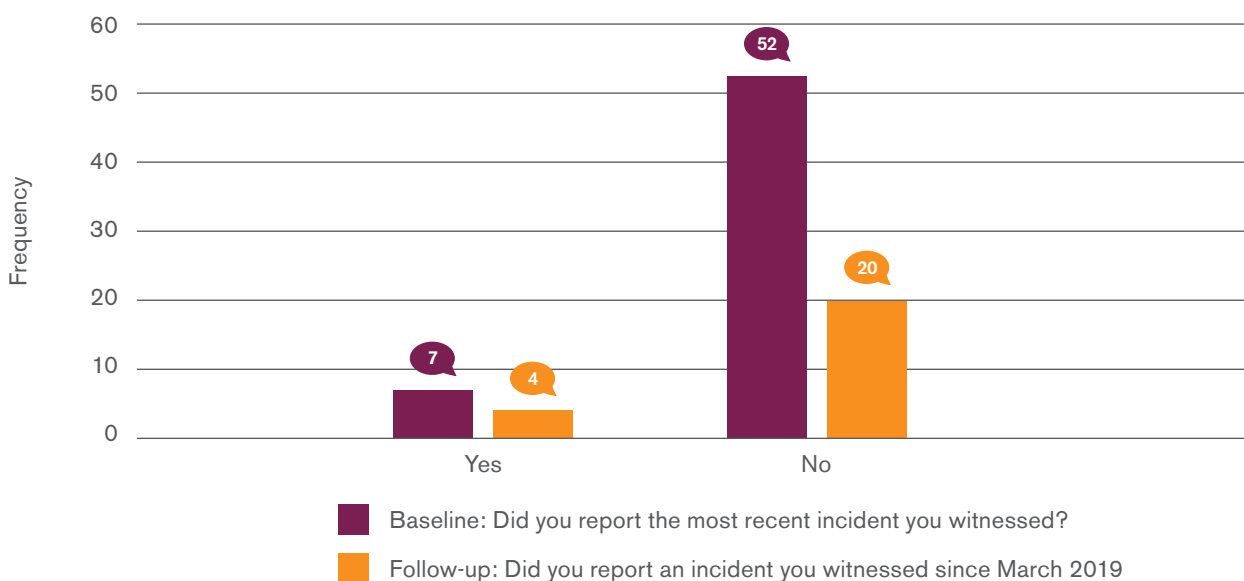


Figure 5.15 Did you report the incident that you witnessed?

Key findings from this Section:

- Religion or belief-related hate incidents are experienced or witnessed by a small minority of students: around 1 in 16 students who responded to our surveys.
- Students reporting that they had experienced a hate incident motivated by prejudice against their religion or belief came from all religious and non-religious backgrounds. However, the majority of students who reported experiencing a hate incident were Muslim.
- Hate incidents can have short- and long-term impacts on students' mental and physical well-being and their ability to engage with university life.
- Religion or belief-related hate incidents are often motivated by other aspects of an individual's identity, for example their ethnicity or sexuality. 4 out of 5 religion-related hate incident victims were from a black and minority ethnic background. Intersectionality is key to understanding hate incidents more fully.
- Religion or belief hatred affecting students is often not reported to the authorities, so universities need to ensure that students know who to report to and that any reports made will be taken seriously.

6. Findings Part Three: Awareness of the Reporting System

The project delivered a multimedia awareness campaign between June and November 2019 targeting the promotion of a) the online reporting link and b) the religion case manager (see Figure 6.1).



Figure 6.1: Methods involved in the reporting system awareness campaign

The visual aspect of the campaign included the distribution of material designed by the CU Marketing Studio (see Appendix): flyers, posters and plasma screen images were circulated across all campuses, and roller banners were displayed in two areas of the Coventry campus with high student footfall (the main Students' Union and student services building and the University's main Coventry Library). Following analysis of the student baseline survey, the flyers were translated into Chinese to meet the language needs of Chinese international students. Online, the project was promoted through Moodle and an article on the CUSU website (in which a video introducing the Religious Hate Crime Case Manager was embedded), which was subsequently shared in the 'all student' newsletter.

Finally, the campaign included 'in person' events, including induction talks given by the harassment case managers and stalls in the main Students' Union (SU) and student services buildings during Hate Crime Awareness Week and Interfaith Week. It is estimated that these 'in person' activities reached more than 1,000 students.

Students were asked in the follow-up survey if they had been made aware of religion-related hate incident reporting through each method (see Figure 6.2).

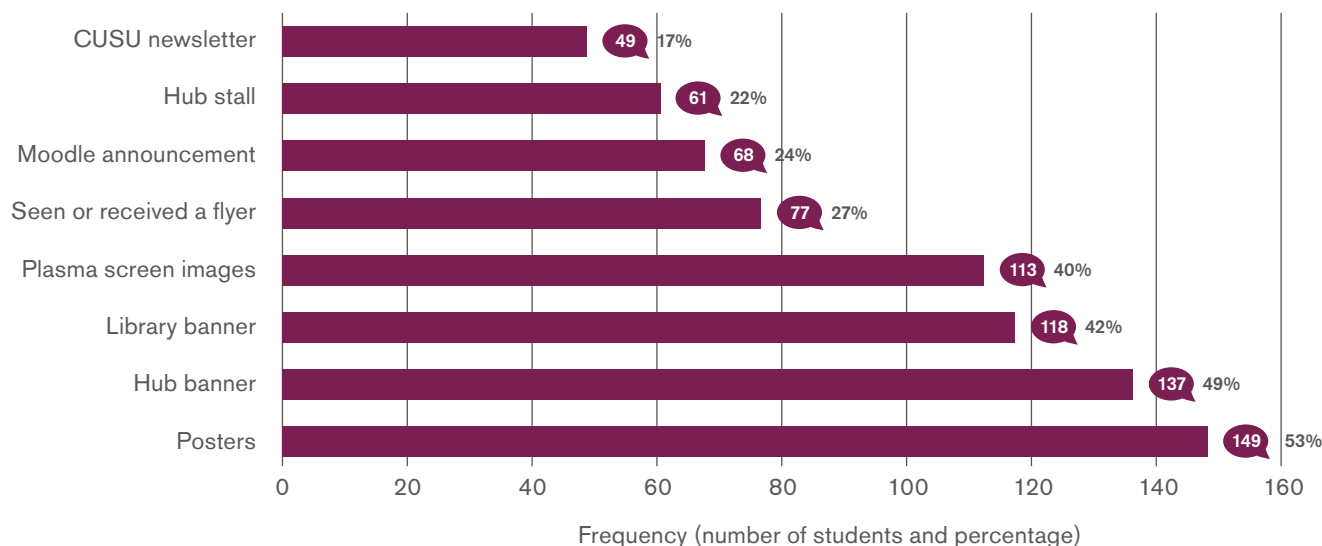


Figure 6.2: Number of students who have found out about religion-related hate incident reporting through different methods

Three quarters of students surveyed found out about hate incident reporting through at least one method and on average students were aware of three methods.

More than half of students surveyed reported finding out about hate incident reporting through the posters and almost half by seeing the banner in the SU and student services building. 4 in 10 saw the plasma screen images or the banner in the library, over a quarter had seen or received a flyer, 1 in 5 had seen a Moodle announcement or a stall in the Hub, and 17% had seen the CUSU newsletter.

Reflecting on the attitudes reported in Section 4, students were statistically more likely to agree (i.e. score at least 7 out of ten) that Coventry is a university where people from different religious or non-religious beliefs get on well together if they had been to a stall in the Hub, indicating the importance of personal contact to students' perceptions of the university's friendliness to religion.

Did the marketing campaign increase students' awareness of and likelihood of reporting hate incidents?

Students were asked in the follow-up survey if they were aware of three reporting mechanisms: the URL for the online reporting system, the harassment case manager and the religion case manager (see Figure 6.3).

Students were also asked if they had any comments on how they had been made aware of harassment reporting, and if they thought any of the methods were particularly effective. Most did not comment, but some praised the location of posters in toilets. Positive comments were generally made about the publicity, although one disliked the colours and another thought the size of the text mentioning the URL was too small. One non-religious student commented: 'When you are not a religion-related victim you don't actually pay attention to these posters or banner. If I were a witness on the other hand I would have tried to find more information about this.' More suggested undertaking additional targeted publicity, including face-to-face sessions with students, during induction and welcome week.

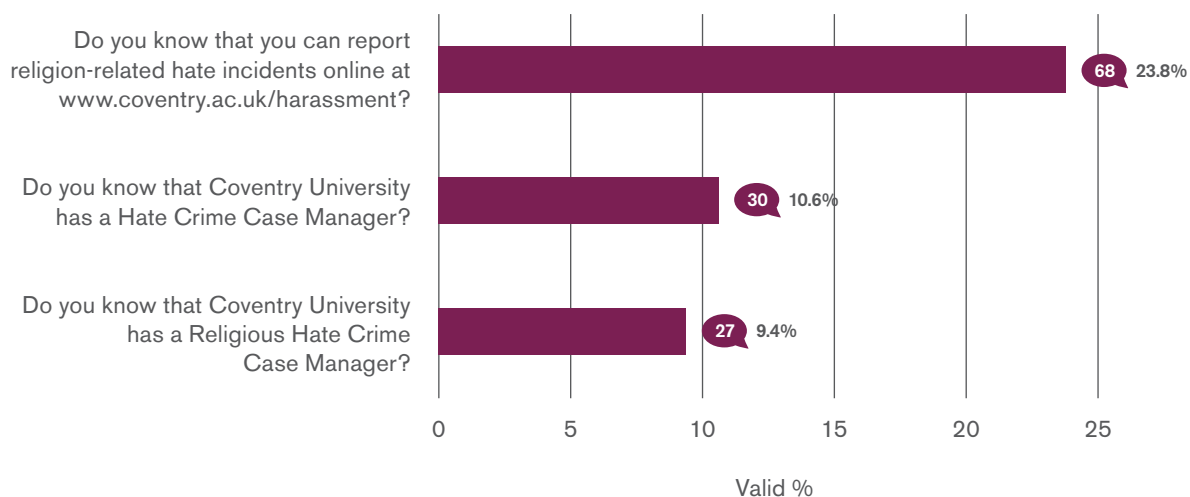


Figure 6.3: Students' awareness of reporting mechanisms

Of the 286 students surveyed, 68 were aware of the URL, 30 were aware of the harassment case manager and 27 were aware of the religion case manager. The low awareness of the case managers may be due to the fact that they worked one day per week only¹⁶, so were much less visible than a full-time member of staff would be.

There is a positive relationship between students' quality of life being affected by the fear of religion-related hate crime and being aware of the harassment case manager, suggesting that those whose lives are being affected by fear may be reaching out to her. What is more, in the baseline survey analysis, international students and students who describe their sexual orientation as other than heterosexual were more likely than home or heterosexual students to be aware of the religion case manager. This suggests that marginalised students are generally more aware of university support services. This finding echoes Aune, Guest and Law's study of

students' engagement with university chaplains, which found that the students who engaged most with chaplains tended to be more marginalised students (international, LGBT and BME students) (Aune, Guest and Law 2019: 102).

The project's marketing campaign appeared to increase awareness of reporting mechanisms. All campaign methods were found to raise awareness of the reporting mechanisms, but statistically speaking, students were more likely to know of the online harassment URL if they had engaged with all but two aspects of the campaign, more likely to know of the harassment case manager if they had engaged in all but three aspects and more likely to know of the religion case manager if they had engaged in all but four aspects of the awareness campaign methods (see Table 6.1).

16. The harassment case manager was employed full time only from September 2019, just two months before the follow-up survey was undertaken.

	Awareness of online reporting URL	Awareness of harassment case manager	Awareness of religion case manager
Posters	✓		
Hub banner	✓	✓	✓
Library banner			✓
Plasma screen images	✓		
Seen or received a flyer	✓	✓	
Moodle announcement	✓	✓	✓
Hub stall		✓	
CUSU newsletter	✓	✓	✓

Table 6.1: Relationships between marketing campaign and awareness of reporting mechanisms

The CUSU website article that was shared in the newsletter was the most effective method for raising awareness of all three reporting mechanisms, despite it reportedly being the least 'seen'. Conversely, the most 'seen' method, the posters, was the second least effective method for promoting the online reporting URL. The main difference between the two methods is that the article had dedicated space for text, photos and a YouTube video.

Awareness of the harassment case manager was promoted effectively through the Hub Stall, at which she was present and handing out flyers. Equally, the banners were an effective means of promoting the religion case manager's role; including her email address as part of the banner design counteracted the lack of visibility associated with the limitations of a 7 hours per week role.

In sum, different campaign methods are effective in different ways, indicating a need for multiple strategies to communicate messaging successfully and reach the optimum number of students. The awareness campaign seems to have been successful in encouraging students to report a religion-related hate incident if they witnessed one in the future. Asked in the follow-up survey, 'If you were to witness a religion-related hate incident/crime during your time at Coventry University, would you report it?' almost three quarters of students said they would report (see Figure 6.4).

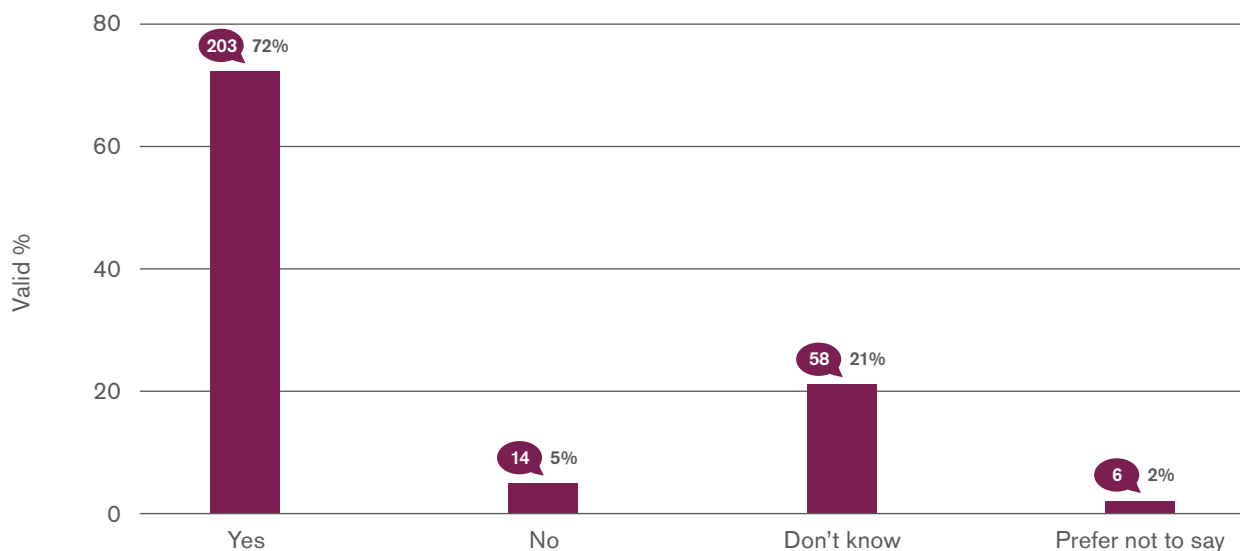


Figure 6.4: Percentage and number of students who would report witnessing a religion-related hate incident (follow-up survey)

When the 'prefer not to say' responses are excluded, students were more likely to say they would report witnessing a religion-related hate incident if they had seen the stall in the Hub, had seen the posters, had seen the plasma screen images or had seen at least one awareness campaign method in general. While not statistically significant, a higher percentage of students stated they would report a religion-related hate incident if they had been made aware via every other marketing method.

Students were also asked in the baseline and follow-up surveys to whom, where or how they would report the religion-related hate incident they had witnessed. 433 baseline and 251 follow-up responses were coded into seven categories (see Figure 6.5).

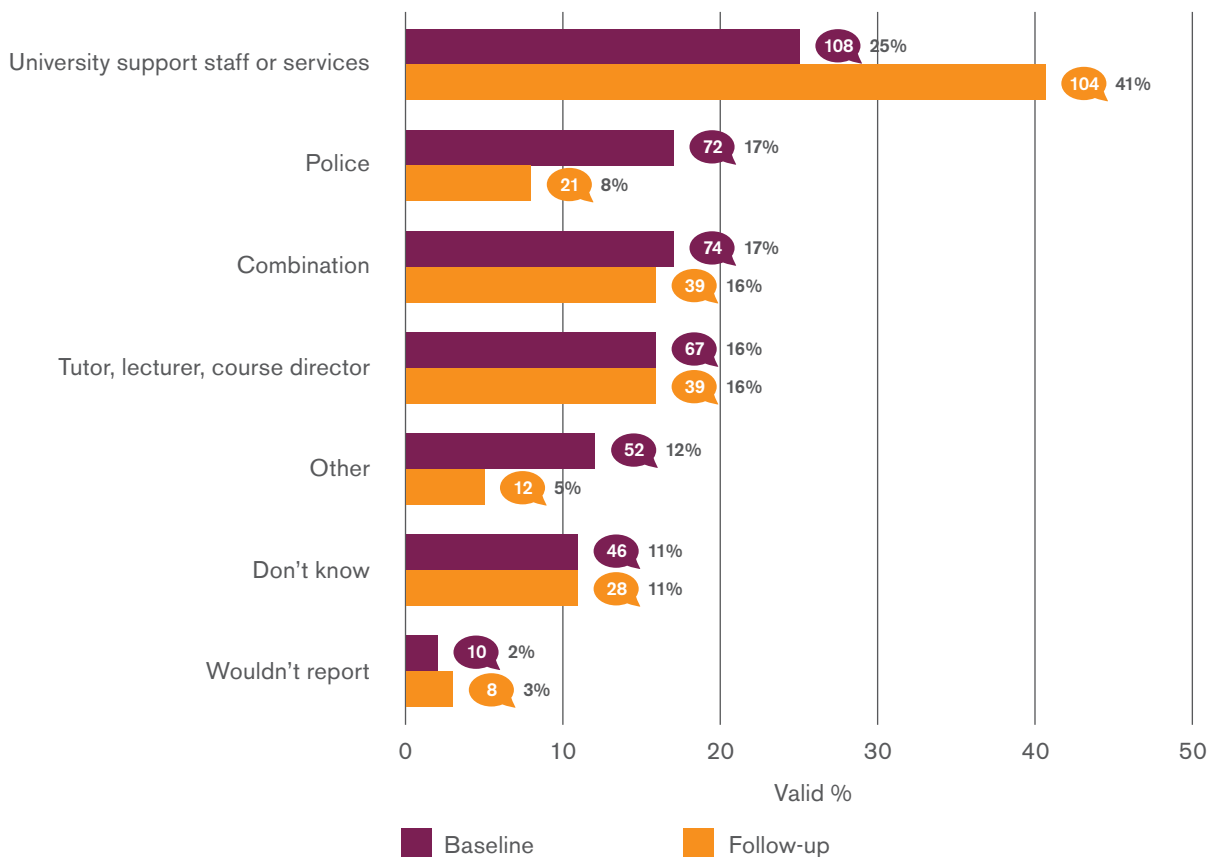


Figure 6.5: *If students were to witness a religion-related hate incident/crime during their time at Coventry University, to whom, where or how would they report it?*

After the awareness campaign had taken place more students gave a response categorised under 'university support services' (which encompassed the online reporting system and case managers) and fewer students said that they would report to the police.

In the follow-up survey there were also more instances of students specifying the online reporting system or the religion case manager as their preferred reporting mechanism, supported by the finding that students who are aware of one or more case manager are more likely to report to support services¹⁷. The awareness campaign was alluded to in one case where a student's response was coded as 'don't know': 'I do not know but I always see posters everywhere about it so it will not be hard to go and check the right place to report'. Reflecting on the effectiveness of the marketing

methods, the poster campaign is found to have a positive association with reporting in general. In other words, students who saw the poster were generally likely to say they would report a hate incident, although they were less aware of individual mechanisms (online reporting URL and case managers) in particular.

Finally, asked, 'How confident are you that the hate crime/ incident you reported would be dealt with appropriately?' and given options from 1 = not at all to 10 = very, in both surveys almost half of students surveyed reported confidence that religion-related hate will be dealt with appropriately, scoring a 7 or above (see Figure 6.5). Students are more confident about reporting to the university than to the police.

17. The percentage of students stating university support staff/services rises from 38.2% to 65.5% if they are aware of either or both case managers, and only one student surveyed who is aware of either did not know where they would report.

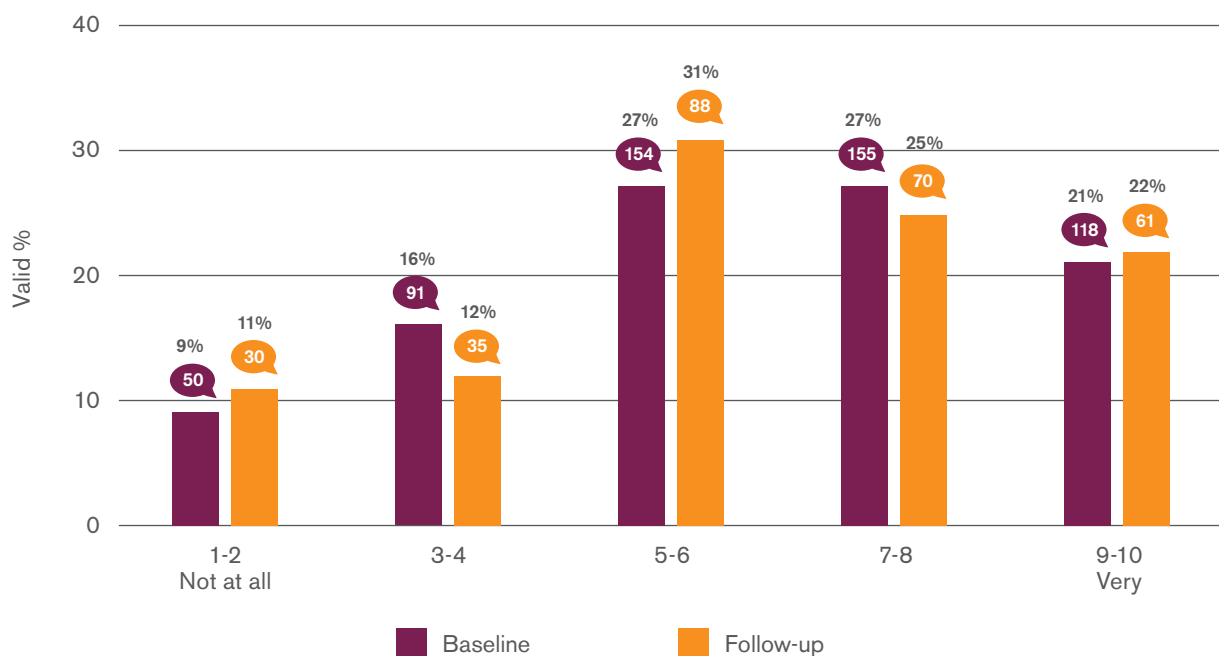


Figure 6.6: How confident are students that the religion-related hate incident they reported will be dealt with appropriately?

Of the 417 students who answered this question in the baseline survey, students who would report to their tutor/lecturer/course director, and those who would report to the university support staff/services were much more likely to be confident that the incident would be taken seriously (scoring a 7 or above) than those who would report to the police (43% for tutor, 63% for support services, 25% for police).

Once the awareness campaign had taken place and students were asked this question again, students who had seen the plasma screen images¹⁸ and the CUSU newsletter¹⁹ were more likely to be confident that the incident would be dealt with appropriately (scoring a 7 or above) than those who had not. What is more, students were significantly more likely to feel confident about reporting (scoring a 9 or above), if they were aware of the case managers (the harassment case manager²⁰, the religion case manager²¹ or at least one of them²¹).

18. 40.4% compared to 29.9% who had not seen the plasma screen images.
 19. 59.2% compared to 43.5% who had not seen the CUSU newsletter.
 20. 43.3% compared to 19% who were not aware of the harassment case manager.
 21. 44.4% compared to 19.1% who were not aware of the religion case manager.
 22. 42.4% compared to 18.9% who were not aware of at least one case manager.

Key findings from this Section:

- Multiple awareness campaign methods are required to effectively promote hate incident reporting mechanisms.
- The poster campaign was effective at building confidence to report, but less effective in communicating the ways in which to do this.
- The CUSU website article and newsletter was seen by the fewest number of students but was the most effective in communicating the different reporting mechanisms.
- The majority of students reported confidence that they will report witnessing religion-related hate incidents and were more likely to do this if they had seen the awareness campaign.
- Students who had seen the awareness campaign were more likely to report to university support services.
- Students are more confident in the university than in the police in dealing with religion-related hate incidents. Confidence in the university significantly increased for those who were aware of the case managers or other aspects of the awareness campaign.

7. Conclusion

In 2005, Universities UK (UUK) provided guidance to universities on dealing with hate crime and intolerance including in relation to religion or belief (Universities UK 2005). The guidance states that tolerance and respect for diversity is a key ingredient in upholding the academic freedom characteristic of higher education. Research commissioned by the Equality Challenge Unit (now Advance HE) found that 6% of students felt discriminated against or harassed because of their religion or belief. Of those respondents, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh students were most likely to have experienced harassment (Weller, Hooley and Moore 2011).

Focussing on an incisive analysis of students' views and experiences at Coventry University, this project aimed to improve understandings of religion-based harassment and hate within higher education settings and to strengthen existing reporting and case management mechanisms. In doing so it produced an accessible 'how to' guide which is being disseminated throughout the sector.²³ This report is another output from the project and is based on the findings of two surveys. A baseline survey examined Coventry University students' attitudes to, direct experiences of, and experiences of witnessing hate incidents related to religion or belief. A follow-up survey assessed the impact of the project interventions in raising the visibility of religion or belief hate incidents and harassment reporting within Coventry University.

It is hoped that this report will enable users of the project's written guide and others in the sector to gain a more in-depth and evidence-based understanding of the key issues, challenges and opportunities of working to address religion and belief-related harassment.

The majority of students who responded to our survey felt that Coventry University is a place where people of diverse religious backgrounds get on well together, and where treatment of individuals of different religions and beliefs is fair. The majority of students surveyed were also confident they could identify a religion-related hate incident and stated that their quality of life was not significantly affected by the fear of religion-related hate. Mirroring experiences across HE, religion or belief-related hate incidents are experienced or witnessed by a minority of students: around 1 in 16 of students who responded to our surveys. However, students

who had experienced a hate incident stated that this affects their mental and physical well-being and their ability to engage with university life. Therefore, although a small minority experience religious or belief hate, the implications for these students have a real impact.

Our data and previous research shows how harassment and hate on the grounds of religion or belief intersect with that relating to other 'protected characteristics'. From our surveys, it was clear that other identity characteristics – including students' religion, gender and ethnic group – were associated with increased concern about different forms of religion-related hate. Muslim, female and BME students had the greatest concerns. Where students had experienced a religion or belief-related hate incident, they said that these were often motivated by other aspects of their identity, for example their ethnicity or sexuality. 4 out of 5 religion-related hate incident victims were from a black or minority ethnic background.

Students we surveyed appeared to place more confidence in the university than in the police to deal with religion-related hate incidents. It is therefore important for universities to have robust, accessible and visible provision to address with all forms of hate including religion or belief hate. According to the 2012 report by the NUS *No place for Hate*, religion or belief hate incidents are not often reported to the authorities. Indeed it states that,

Underreporting is thus one of the main obstacles to understanding and confronting hate crime through policy-making and other means. The report insists that universities need to ensure that students know who to report to and that any reports made will be taken seriously. (National Union of Students 2012: 30)

In this research project we developed and implemented a programme of outreach, implementation and dissemination initiatives aimed at enhancing students' awareness of the nature of religion or belief hate and mechanisms to report hate incidents. Our campaign concertedly positioned Coventry University as a place that is diverse, inclusive and respectful of students from all religion or belief backgrounds. The outward student-facing communications conveyed to students a commitment from the university to take any hate

23. Available at <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/student-wellbeing-and-protection/resources-for-student-safety-and-wellbeing/coventry-university-3/>

incident seriously. Internally this project team worked with university leadership, Students' Union and welfare services to strengthen the provision for religion or belief hate to be reported and dealt with effectively. Our campaign included:

- Visual elements – posters, plasma screen images, roller banners
- Online aspects – articles in student newsletters and a video
- In-person events – induction talks given by the hate crime and religious hate crime case managers and stalls in the main Students' Union and student services during Hate Crime Awareness Week and Interfaith Week

From the evaluation of our campaign, it was evident that our poster campaign was effective at building confidence to report, but less effective in communicating the ways in which to do this. Students were more likely to report a religion or belief hate incident if they had seen the awareness campaign. Also, students who had seen the awareness campaign were more likely to report to university support services. Finally, confidence in the university significantly increased for those who were aware of the case managers or other aspects of the awareness campaign. We conclude that multiple awareness campaign methods are required to effectively promote different hate incident reporting mechanisms.

Within the UK HE sector, from a policy perspective there is a clear and indeed necessary drive towards inclusivity and equality. Yet students, especially from particular religious groups, continue to experience hate, and for them it remains a substantial and real problem. Although focussed on reported experiences within Coventry University, the discussions in this report on religion or belief hate incidents provide an exemplar for experiences across the higher education sector in the UK. By being clear and reflective of lived realities of religion or belief hate and by evaluating *our* solutions, Coventry University hopes to lead the way in improving provision related to awareness of religion or belief hate crime, reporting of incidents and student well-being.

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9. Appendix:

Activities and Images used to Promote the Project and Harassment Reporting



SADIE CHANA
Religious Hate Crime Case Manager
Support and signposting for students

Sadie.Chana@coventry.ac.uk
www.coventry.ac.uk/ctpsr

Research Centre
Trust, Peace and
Social Relations

Coventry
University

**Tackling hate crime
on campus.**

Research Centre
Trust, Peace and
Social Relations

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University



- ▲ **Business card** for religious hate crime case manager and a **social event** for Holi festival in the Spirituality and Faith Centre, Coventry University



Religion, Belief and Hate incidents

by Ali Bushnell - Monday, 19 November 2018, 3:34 PM

Student Survey on Religion, Belief and Hate Incidents - please share your views

A team from the Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations and Students' Union is leading a project to discover how best to safeguard students from religion-related hate crime, funded by the Office for Students.

The team needs to hear from as many Coventry University students as possible about what they think about religion-related hate incidents and whether they've ever witnessed or experienced religion-related hatred.

To complete the survey go to: <https://coventry.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/religionandhate>



Student Survey on Religion, Belief and Hate Incidents

Please share your views!

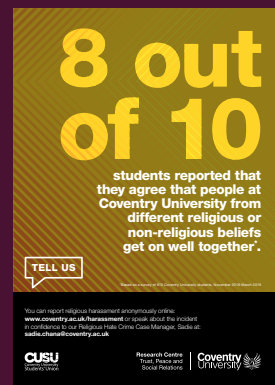
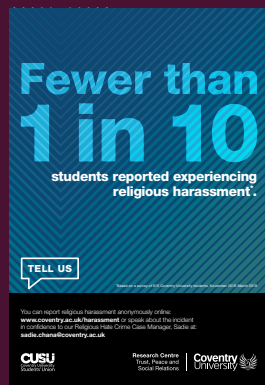
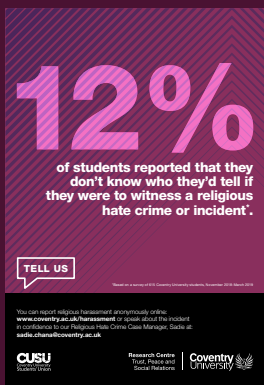
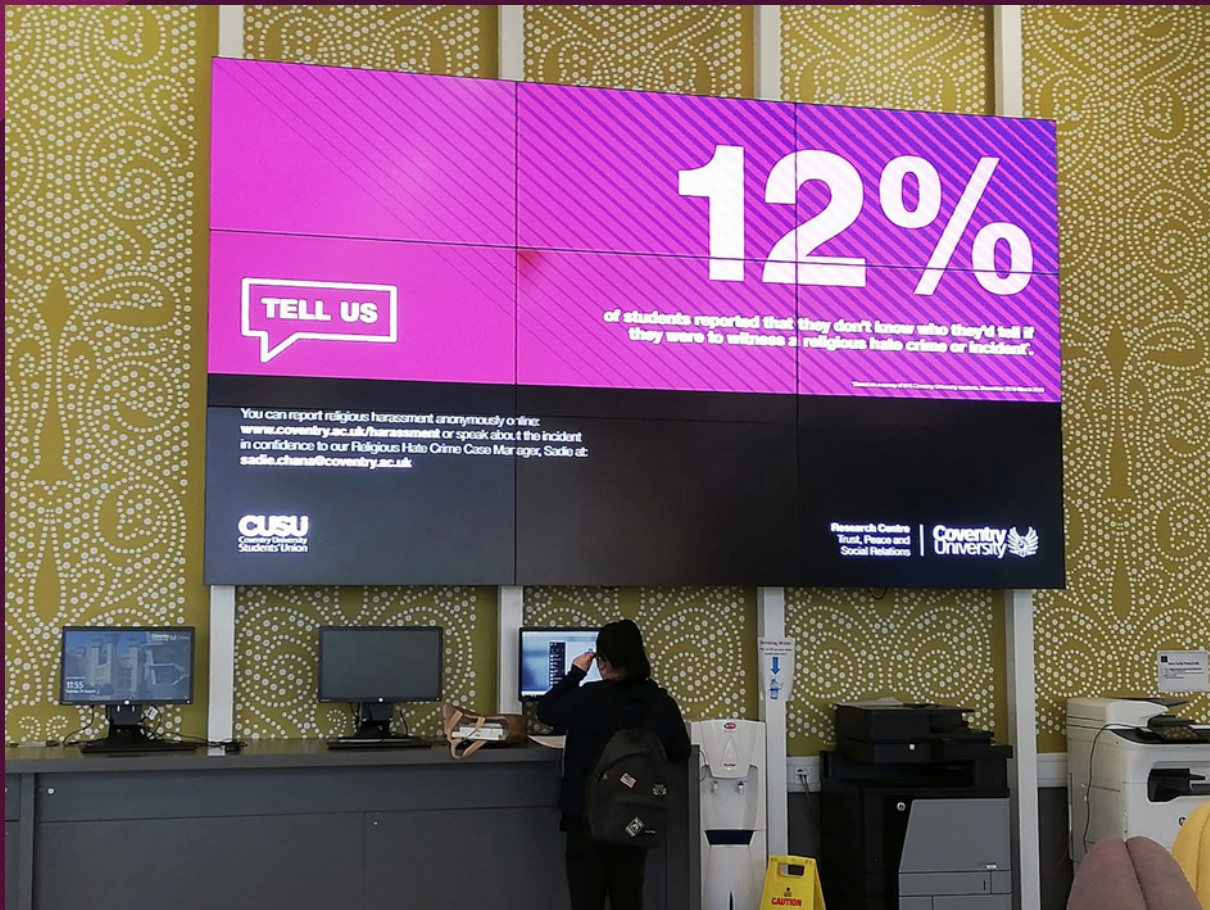
<https://coventry.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/religionandhate>



Research Centre
Trust, Peace and
Social Relations



- ▲ Moodle announcement promoting the baseline survey and baseline survey promotion at a stall in the 'Hub'



▲ Plasma screen image and posters promoting student reporting

12%

的学生反映当他们目击宗教仇恨犯罪或事件时不知道应该告诉谁*。

告诉我们

*基于一份2018年三月到2019年十一月间对615位考文垂大学学生的问卷调查

你可以在线匿名报告宗教骚扰：www.coventry.ac.uk/harassment 或者在不用担心公开身份的条件下向我们的宗教仇恨事件负责人Sadie反映：
Sadie.Chana@coventry.ac.uk

CUSU
Coventry University
Students' Union

Research Centre
Trust, Peace and
Social Relations

Coventry
University

12%

of students reported that they don't know who they'd tell if they were to witness a religious hate crime or incident*

TELL US

* Based on a survey of 615 Coventry University students, November 2018 – March 2019

You can report religious harassment anonymously online:
www.coventry.ac.uk/harassment or speak about the incident in confidence to our Religious Hate Crime Case Manager, Sadie at: Sadie.Chana@coventry.ac.uk

CUSU
Coventry University
Students' Union

Research Centre
Trust, Peace and
Social Relations

Coventry
University

▲ Double-sided English/Chinese flyer promoting student reporting



▲ **Roller banner** promoting student reporting in the 'Hub'



▲ **Roller banner** promoting student reporting in the main Coventry University library



National Hate Crime Awareness Week 12th – 19th October 2019

Blessed Pepple
09 Oct 2019

To mark National Hate Crime Awareness Week we want to let you know that if you have experienced or witnessed harassment because of your **race, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, faith or any other reason** you can report it online at: www.coventry.ac.uk/harassment.

Harassment can take many forms, including hostility and intimidation, or violence towards you or your property. Please don't be put off by the word 'report'. You can submit anonymously, log it or request to meet with a Case Manager.

Sadie Chana is our Case Manager who specialises in religion-related harassment. Coventry University a friendly place – in our recent student survey 8 out of 10 students reported that they agree that people from different religious or non-religious beliefs get on well together and fewer than 1 in 10 students reported experiencing religious harassment. However, Sadie is here if you need anything.



We want to ensure you are getting the support you need to enjoy university life to its fullest. We need your help to identify recent, historic, on and off campus incidents. This information will help us to target campaigns and actions effectively and combat harassment and hate.

Come and meet Sadie or Amber in the Hub. They'll be downstairs every afternoon between

1pm and 3pm on 15th – 18th October.

You can also search 'Bystander' on Moodle to take a module on how you can safely be an active bystander and ambassador for your fellow students to combat hate on campus.

▲ **CUSU website article** that was subsequently shared in an 'all students' newsletter



STUDENT SURVEY
 Religion, belief and hate incidents on campus
<https://coventry.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/religionandhate2019>
 Takes 5-10 minutes to complete. Closes 15th December 2019.



CUSU
Coventry University Students' Union

Research Centre
Trust, Peace and
Social Relations

Coventry University

▲ A stall during welcome week promoting student reporting and an image shared on social media to promote the follow-up survey