ANTI-MUSLIM

HATE

CONCERNS AND EXPERIENCES

MWNUK
Muslim Women's Network UK

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Contents

1 Summary of key findings

73%
of Muslims
are very worried about safety

67%
of Muslims
said they had experienced hate incidents
(online and offline)

80%
of Muslims

who experience hate incidents, **do not report them**

Of the Muslims who have experienced hate crime:

- **24%** have experienced incidents **5 to 10 times**
- **82%** experienced hostility in **last 5 years**
- **19%** experienced hostility within the **previous 12 months**
- **18%** experienced hostility within in **one week of the riots**
- **84%** have experienced direct **verbal abuse**
- **52%** have experienced hostility **on the street**
- **26%** have experienced hostility on **public transport**
- **21%** have experienced hostility **while driving**
- **42%** have experienced **online** hostility

On addressing anti-Muslim hate / Islamophobia:

- **67%** of Muslims felt that the **Conservative government** made it worse
- **27%** of Muslims believe the **Labour government** will take strong action to address it
- **31%** of Muslims said they have **confidence** in the police

On terminology:

- **68%** preferred using the word **Islamophobia**
- **39%** preferred using the phrase **anti-Muslim hatred**

On Perpetrators

- **83%** said they were **white**
- **76%** said they were **male**

1 Introduction

2.1 Aims

This research seeks to understand concerns and experiences related to Islamophobia / anti-Muslim hate, both prior to and following the widespread riots that followed the Southport stabbings on 29 July, 2024. Given the adverse impact on Muslims, the voices and experiences of Muslims must be central in the efforts to combat hate crime and inform new hate crime plans and policies.

2.2 Objectives

The key objectives of the research were to:

- Examine how safe Muslims feel in both online and offline environments.
- Identify the specific nature and forms of anti-Muslim hate incidents.
- Investigate the locations, frequency, and timing of anti-Muslim hate incidents.
- Identify perpetrator profiles.
- Determine whether incidents of anti-Muslim hate were reported.
- Assess the level of trust in reporting services, including the police.
- Assess Muslim confidence in combating anti-Muslim hate.
- Collect suggestions on how to enhance the effectiveness and trustworthiness of reporting services.

2.3 Reasons for conducting the research

Riots following Southport incidents

On 29 July, 2024, a tragic mass stabbing occurred at a dance studio in Southport[1], Merseyside, where three young girls lost their lives, and several others sustained life-threatening injuries. The following day, a crowd, predominantly composed of white males, gathered outside a mosque in Southport, shouted Islamophobic slogans and vandalised the building, despite there being no connection between the mosque, the Muslim community, and the attack.[2]

Even after it was confirmed that the perpetrator was a 17-year-old male of Rwandan heritage, born in Wales[3] and not affiliated with Islam, riots erupted in other cities, leading to further violence. These riots included violent assaults, some involving stabbings, looting of shops, arson attacks on buildings, and the vandalism of homes, mosques, and police stations. Police officers were also attacked during these events. Additionally, social media was flooded with posts inciting violence against Muslims. Far-right extremists, including those associated with the English Defence League, appeared to have deliberately exploited the Southport tragedy as an opportunity to spread hatred against minority ethnic communities, particularly targeting refugees and Muslims.[4]

This wave of hatred left many Muslims shocked and traumatised. Muslim women, in particular, began reaching out to Muslim Women's Network UK (MWNUK), seeking a safe space to process the events. In response, MWNUK launched a survey to gather the experiences, concerns, and fears of Muslim men and women. The survey was also open to other minority ethnic groups who wished to share their concerns and experiences. By collecting demographic information, the survey allowed for the segmentation and analysis of responses from different groups.

MWNUK wants to ensure that up to date concerns and experiences of Muslims are considered, as the new Labour government develops its plans to tackle anti-Muslim hatred, including updating the government Hate Crime Plan (2016-2020)[5] which was last updated in 2016 and 2020. For example, Labour has pledged in its Manifesto[6] to reverse the Conservative Party's decision to downgrade the monitoring of anti-Muslim hate crime and order police to record anti-Muslim hate crime even when it does not reach the criminal threshold. Also, Labour has emphasised its intention to strengthen protections against multiple discrimination and root out inequalities which may occur in the workplace or when accessing services.

1. Culley, J., and Khalil, H., Southport stabbings - what we know about the attack, BBC News, 29 July 2024.
2. Sky News, Southport: Police officers injured in disorder outside mosque in wake of deadly stabbing attack, 31 July 2024.
3. Sandford, D., Sherlock, G., and Mullen, T., Teen,17, accused of Southport murders named, BBC News, 1 August 2024.
4. Sinmaz, E., Why are people rioting across England and how many are involved? Guardian, 6 August 2024
5. Home Office, Action against hate, the UK Government's plan for tackling hate crime, July 2016.
6. Labour Party, Labour Party's Manifesto 2024: Our plan to change Britain, 13 June 2024.

Lack of action to tackle hate crime

Another motivation for conducting the research was to emphasise that existing efforts to address hate crime are ineffective and that there is a noticeable lack of motivation to address it. We aim to use the research to strengthen the call for decisive action against hate crimes targeting Muslims.

Since the Home Office began collecting comparable data on hate crime in the year ending March 2013, hate crime has increased every year except in 2020/2021 [7], which saw a decrease. However, the figures were still higher when compared with data collected before 2019.

Annual police data for regions across England and Wales shows that where the perceived religion of the victim is recorded, Muslims are the most targeted faith group and make up between 42% to 50% of religious hate crime offences as highlighted below:

2022-2023
3,400
offences against Muslims
(**44%** of religious hate crime offences)

2021-2022
3,459
offences against Muslims
(**42%** of religious hate crime offences)

2020-2021
2,703
offences against Muslims
(**45%** of religious hate crime offences)

2019-2020
3,089
offences against Muslims
(**50%** of religious hate crime offences)

As hate incidents are under reported, the actual number of offences are likely to be much higher. Although, the number of offences against Muslims appear to have decreased in the year 2020-2021 compared to the previous year, this is likely to have been due to the Covid lockdown because the number of offences increased again from 2021 onwards. Therefore, the current levels in the year 2024-2025 (which are not yet available) are likely to be even higher.

7.   Home Office, Official Statistics, Hate crime, England and Wales, 2022 to 2023 second edition, 2 November 2023

Using official government statistics on hate crime in England and Wales, the tables below highlight the police forces with the highest number of reported hate crime offences motivated by race and religion in each region.

Police forces with the highest number of religiously aggravated hate crimes in each region (includes all religions)

Police Force	Region	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Avon and Somerset Police	South West	135	165	161
Essex Police	East of England	167	241	223
Greater Manchester Police	North West	750	1071	867
Leicestershire Police	East Midlands	207	202	333
Metropolitan Police	London	1,865	2,311	1,989
Northumbria	North East	225	236	213
South Wales	Wales	70	131	152
Thames Valley Police	South East	160	230	257
West Midlands Police	West Midlands	269	806	828
West Yorkshire Police	Yorkshire and the Humber	406	576	523

Police forces with the highest number of racially aggravated offences in each region

Police Force	Region	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Avon and Somerset Police	South West	2,537	3,046	2,789
Essex Police	East of England	2,675	3,141	2,971
Greater Manchester Police	North West	6,784	9,377	8,343
Leicestershire Police	East Midlands	2,096	2,371	2,289
Metropolitan Police	London	20,068	21,938	19,587
Northumbria	North East	1,981	2,291	2,298
South Wales	Wales	1,470	1,757	1,605
Thames Valley Police	South East	3,214	4,081	3,825
West Midlands Police	West Midlands	7,914	9,370	8,897
West Yorkshire Police	Yorkshire and the Humber	6,376	7,266	7,055

As mentioned previously, the data indicates that racially and religiously motivated hate crimes were lower in 2020/2021, likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns, which resulted in fewer people being outdoors during that year.

Through Freedom of Information requests to various police forces, the Muslim Women's Network UK sought data to determine the exact number of religiously motivated hate crimes where the victims were Muslim. The objective was to gain insight on ethnicity of perpetrators and to determine proportion of male and female Muslim victims. However, not all police forces responded, and the data that was provided varied significantly in quality and format, making analysis challenging.

Despite these limitations, the data provided consistently revealed that the perpetrators were predominantly white males, consistent with the survey findings. Additionally, in some regions, Muslim men made up over half of the victims, and in some cases, up to two-thirds. Given that Muslim women are especially vulnerable to anti-Muslim hate crimes, this data suggests that perhaps many incidents involving them may be going unreported. The survey findings also highlighted the issue of underreporting, particularly in relation to Muslim women.

2.4 Hate crime legislation

Hate crime laws empower judges to impose higher sentences on individuals convicted of hostility that is racially and religiously aggravated. However, hate crime laws in England and Wales are spread across four different Acts, namely – the Crime and Disorder Act 1998; the Sentencing Code; the Public Order Act 1986 and the Football (Offences) Act 1991. A review conducted by the Law Commission on the existing legislation on hate crime concluded that hate crime and hate speech laws are complicated involving multiple overlapping mechanisms, which are also inconsistent in their application to different protected characteristics. It therefore concluded that the offences contained in various hate crime provisions should be consolidated into a single Hate Crime Act to help make the law clearer. The Law Commission's report notes that this approach has been taken in Scotland with the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021.[8]

8. Law Commission, Hate Crime laws, Final Report, 2021.

2.5 Definitions and terminology

A hate crime is an act of physical or verbal hostility driven by prejudice against certain characteristics or perceived characteristics, such as race, religion, disability, sexuality, or transgender identity. While "hostility" is not specifically defined, it can encompass a wide range of behaviours, including physical assault, verbal abuse, threats, written or online abuse, property damage, and prolonged harassment or intimidation.

Prejudice against Muslims extends beyond hate crimes and takes many forms. It includes reducing Muslims to stereotypes that depict them as violent, oppressive, or backward. This prejudice also manifests in discriminatory actions that disadvantage or exclude individuals or groups based on their Muslim identity, affecting areas such as employment, education, housing, and access to public services. Additionally, it can involve policies, laws, or practices by governments or organisations that disproportionately target or disadvantage Muslims, often under the pretext of security or integration measures. This type of prejudice against Muslims is often described as Islamophobia.

Although the term **"Islamophobia"** has been around since the 1980s, it was popularised by the Runnymede Trust's 1997 report, **Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All.**

The report defined Islamophobia as "unfounded hostility towards Islam" and highlighted its broader societal effects, including discrimination against Muslims. However, at present, there is no widespread consensus upon a definition. Alternative definitions exist such as that proposed by the APPG on British Muslims and one used (but not formerly adopted) by UN officials. Additionally, the terms "anti-Muslim hate" or "anti-Muslim racism" are also used by Muslims and non-Muslims.

However, to effectively address hostility towards Muslims in all areas of life, a clear legal definition is necessary.

Runnymede definition of Islamophobia

Short version
Islamophobia is anti-Muslim racism.

Long version
Islamophobia is any distinction, exclusion, or restriction towards, or preference against, Muslims (or those perceived to be Muslims) that has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.

(Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All, 1997)

APPG on British Muslims definition of Islamophobia

Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness.

(Islamophobia Defined: the inquiry into a working definition of Islamophobia, 2018)

Islamophobia definition used by some UN Officials but not officially adopted

A fear, prejudice and hatred of Muslims or non-Muslim individuals that leads to provocation, hostility and intolerance by means of threatening,harassment, abuse, incitement and intimidation of Muslims and non-Muslims, both in the online and offline world. Motivated by institutional, ideological, political and religious hostility that transcends into structural and cultural racism which targets the symbols and markers of being a Muslim.

(This definition was recommended in: A Briefing Paper prepared For the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Preparation for the report to the 46th Session of Human Rights Council, November 2020)

3 Methodology

3.1 Research Methods

The research method involved an online survey consisting of 37 questions. Additionally, a literature review was conducted focusing on hate crime statistics in England and Wales.

3.2 Data Collection

The online survey was conducted over an eleven-day period from August 8th to 18th August 2024. It was promoted through the MWNUK's membership,other affiliated networks, and social media platforms. The questions were grouped into the following themes: hate crime incidents, reporting hate incidents, tackling anti-Muslim prejudice / hate and personal information about the respondents (i.e. ethnicity, religion, age, and location). The survey was conducted using Survey Monkey with restriction settings to prevent the survey from being taken more than once from the same device.

3.3 Data Analysis

Before the survey data could be interpreted, it was 'cleaned' to eliminate responses that were considered as inauthentic such as participants who completed the survey as an opportunity to leave offensive comments. A total of 226 responses were received of which 8 were removed. Of the remaining 218 respondents, 191 were from Muslims. The analysis of the data in this report is focused on those Muslim respondents. However, the response of the small group of non-Muslims respondents have been analysed and commented upon in some instances.

3.4 Limitations

The speed in which the survey was conducted to capture current experience of anti-Muslim hate crime may have influenced the sample size. As the data was collected shortly after the riots, the timings may have heightened emotions, potentially affecting the responses, as well as, the ability to feel able to respond to the survey at that particular time. Parelled with reliance on online recruitment through social media, including Instagram, Facebook, Linkedin and X to promote the survey may have excluded certain groups, such as those lacking English proficiency, low digital skills and those who do not have access to the internet. Additionally, because the survey was conducted by MWNUK, a charity with a focus on women's issues, it was more likely to engage with women. This was reflected in the fact that three quarters of the respondents were Muslim women.

3.5 Characteristics of the respondents

218 respondents

191 Muslim respondents

Sex of Muslim respondents

146 females
76.5%

44 males
23%

1 not known
0.5%
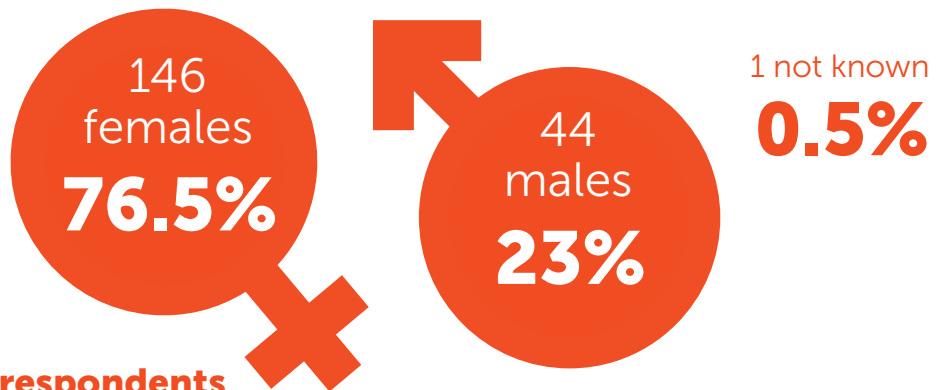
Ethnicity of Muslim respondents

Ethnicity	Number of Respondents	%
Arab	12	6.3%
Asian other	10	5.2%
Bangladeshi	20	10.5%
Indian	19	9.9%
Pakistani	103	53.9%
Black (Black African, Black African Caribbean, Black British)	7	3.7%
Mixed Ethnic	8	4.2%
White	7	3.7%
Other	3	1.6%
Not known	2	1.1%
Total	191	

Age of Muslim respondents

Age group	Number of Respondents	%
Under 16	1	0.5%
16-17	0	0%
18-24	19	9.9%
25-29	15	7.9%
30-39	40	20.9%
40-49	64	33.5%
50-59	34	17.8%
60-69	12	6.3%
70 and over	4	2.1%
Not known	2	1.1%
Total	**191**	

Location of Muslim respondents

Location	Number of Respondents	%
East of England	2	1.1%
East Midlands	11	5.8%
London	63	33%
North East	4	2.1%
Northern Ireland	0	0%
North West	22	11.5%
Scotland	2	1.1%
South East	16	8.4%
South West	4	2.1%
Yorkshire & Humber	22	11.5%
Wales	0	0%
West Midlands	44	23%
Not known	1	0.5%
Total	**191**	

Appearance related characteristics

Muslim women respondents (146):

Wear hijab	62%
Wear jibab	12%
Wear other traditional dress	21%
Wear niqab	2%
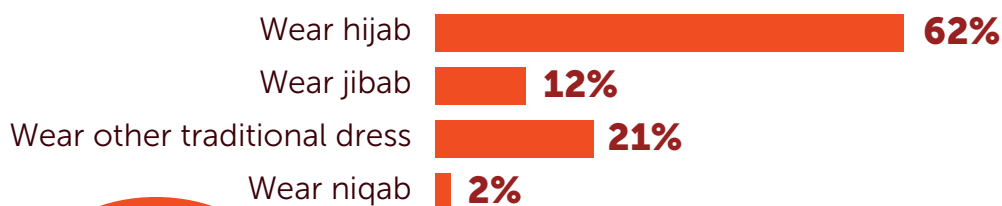
Muslim men respondents (44):

Wear throbe	23%
Wear traditional dress	23%
Wear a turban	5%
Have a beard	71%
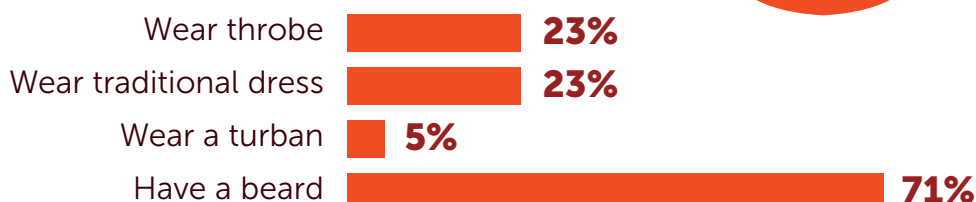
Note: traditional dress, thobes, turbans etc may not necessarily be worn at all times

4 Survey findings

4.1 Overview and characteristics of respondents

A total of 218 survey responses were received and **191 responses were from Muslims.** Among the 27 non-Muslim respondents, the majority (21 individuals) identified as belonging to a minority ethnic background, who can also be affected by anti-Muslim hate because they may be perceived as Muslim. The remaining six respondents, who identified as white, appeared to have participated in the survey due to concerns about their Muslim or minority ethnic family members or friends. The analysis primarily focuses on the responses from the 191 Muslim participants. While some comparisons are made between Muslim and non-Muslim responses, these comparisons are limited by the small sample size of the non-Muslim group.

As noted in the methodology chapter, some responses were removed prior to the analysis as a few individuals had used the survey as an opportunity to leave negative comments about Muslims.

Examples include:

"We need to stand up to this invasion."

"We need to look after our own."

"There is an Islamification of the UK."

Muslims are murderous savages and life is threatened by them all.

"Islam is a threat to the establishment."

"Islamism is being shoved down our throats."

"I can't stop laughing at the widespread riots."

"Muslims do not mind killing innocent people indiscriminately."

"Muslims cannot get to me online, I cannot easily be tracked."

"Yes, the 'protests' (not riots) have affected me. I am much happier."

" *British people have had* ENOUGH "

Indeed, the **majority of Respondents (76.5%) were Muslim women**. This could be attributed to the organisation's focus, which likely made it easier to reach women, but it may also reflect that women felt more concerned about their safety and were therefore more motivated to participate, particularly those who wear hijab (headscarf). Of the 146 Muslim women who responded, two thirds (62%) indicated that they wore the headscarf, 33% said they wear a jilbab and / or other traditional dress such as shalwar Kameez and only 2% wore a niqab (face veil).

The Muslim population is ethnically and racially diverse, and this diversity was reflected among the Respondents. The largest group was of Pakistani ethnicity, comprising just over half (54%) of the Respondents. The Respondents also represented a wide range of ages, from one individual under 16 to a few over 70. However, the vast majority were between 18 and 60 years old.

Most Respondents were from various regions across England, with no responses from Muslims in Northern Ireland or Wales and only two from Scotland. The largest number of survey participants came from London (33%), followed by the West Midlands (23%), Yorkshire and the Humber (11.5%), and the North West (11.5%). This distribution broadly aligns with the Muslim population spread in the 2021 census. However, the West Midlands was overrepresented, likely due to the location of the Muslim Women's Network UK in that region.

4.2 Impact of the riots following Southport stabbings

How safe do Muslims feel offline?

A description of what constitutes a hate crime was provided to the survey participants, who were then asked about their awareness of recognising such incidents. Most Muslims were familiar with the various forms of hostility that qualify as hate crimes, with 38% reporting they were very aware and 43% indicating they were fairly aware. However, there was greater awareness of what constitutes a hate crime amongst the non-Muslim group, with 67% who were very aware and 27% who were fairly aware.

81% 94%

**Muslims were
very aware or fairly aware
of recognising hate crimes**

**Non-Muslim group were
very aware / fairly aware of
recognising hate crimes**

However, there were concerns about the normalisation of microaggressions and negative language toward Muslims, making them difficult to challenge. It was felt that a legal definition of Islamophobia could help address this. Additionally, there were worries about the treatment of Muslims in the workplace and when accessing services—situations that were perceived as hate incidents but were not being recognised as such:

I've noticed this at work and in local shops and businesses.

> *What I've suffered over the years is sometimes subtle, sometimes blatant.*

Respondents were asked how worried they were about their safety and that of their families. Before the recent riots, only 17% were very worried, and 14% were fairly worried. However, following the riots, the **number of those very worried skyrocketed to 73%, with 14% still fairly worried, therefore 87% were worried overall.** When comparing the responses of Muslim women and men, as well as those of Muslim women who wore the hijab and those who did not, there was little difference. Concerns about safety also increased amongst the non-Muslim group, but was less pronounced i.e. 40% were very worried and 33% very worried after the riots (therefore 73% worried overall).

Two-thirds of the women surveyed reported wearing a headscarf. Among Muslim women, concerns for personal and family safety were high across the board, regardless of whether they wore the hijab. However, those who wore a headscarf had expressed greater anxiety about their safety before the riots compared to those who did not. Of the small number of Muslim men who took part, 71% said they had a beard and one quarter said that they do also wear traditional forms of dress such as thobes, which could visibly identify them as Muslim. They had similar concerns about their own and their family's safety. Many Respondents also believed that their skin colour was a significant factor in why they might be targeted.

% of Respondents who were fairly / very worried about offline safety

Before riots	31%
After riots	87%

Feelings of anxiety and vulnerability were commonly expressed. Many Respondents mentioned that they now check in on family and friends more frequently, particularly elderly parents and children. Some admitted they were too frightened to go out after witnessing images of the riots. Others reported altering their behaviours and lifestyles, such as avoiding public transport or local parks or changing the way they dressed (such as not wearing a black headscarf or taking it off). Several Respondents also shared that they no longer feel safe going out alone. One person said that as a result of threats, their workplace had to be closed which meant not being able to help vulnerable people who needed the service.

"Instead of a scarf, I have started to wear a hat"

"I don't leave the house without my husband"

"I won't take public transport now"

"I have not been out anywhere on my own since the riots started - not even to the shops.

"I don't feel safe going out for a walk by myself anymore."

"I have been avoiding taking the children out."

"I have a beard and I am afraid that I will be attacked."

"My daughter and I both wear hijab and I will not let her out on her own at all."

"I avoid going out late at night now"

"I've worked from home all week this week"

"We go out in groups now"

How safe do Muslims feel online?

Respondents were asked how worried they were about their online safety. Before the recent riots, only 12% were very worried and 13% were fairly worried. However, following the riots, **the number of those very worried increased to 36%, with 28% still fairly worried.** Although Muslims are more concerned about their safety online since the riots, they were more worried about safety in public spaces.

**% of Respondents who were fairly / very worried aboutonline safety**

Before riots	**25%**
After riots	**64%**

Many Muslims mentioned that they either didn't use social media often, had reduced their usage, or were very cautious, opting to use privacy settings and primarily interacting with people they knew. Several expressed concerns about the toxicity of social media, noting that they had encountered racist and Islamophobic comments. They were particularly worried that such comments remained on platforms even after being reported, fearing that this could lead to increased offline hatred. A few also mentioned that their organisation's social media and website had been targeted by racists, which they found alarming.
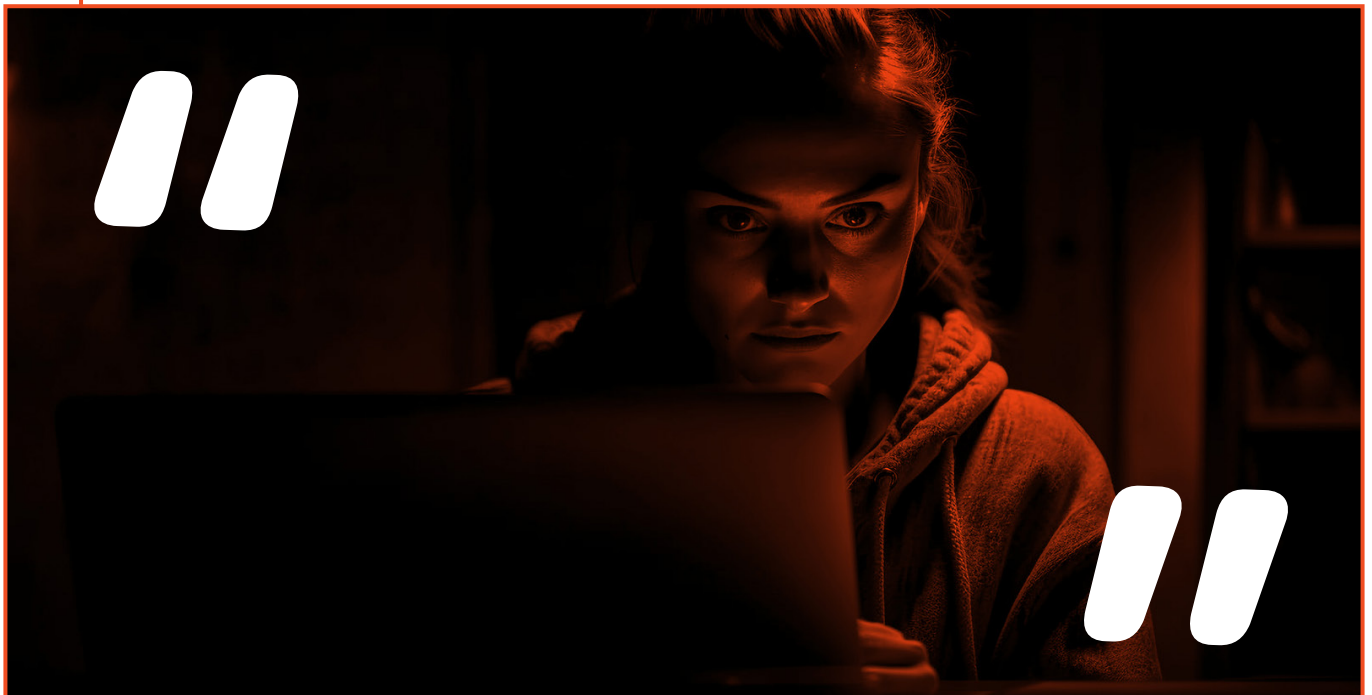
The emotional impact

The word **"anxiety"** was the most commonly mentioned in the survey's comments section, with respondents expressing that they no longer feel safe and feel the need to be more vigilant. Some shared that they felt traumatised, and this trauma was also affecting their children. Many commented that they were made to feel as though they don't belong, regardless of how long they had lived in the UK or even if they were born in the UK. For some, the situation brought back painful memories of racism from the 1970s and 1980s. They also expressed concerns about the future.

"I was shocked this is happening in the UK."

"It makes me feel like we don't belong."

"I feel 'othered' in my own country."

I feel alienated.

"It has caused a lot of anxiety, stress and overthinking."

"I feel shocked, afraid and traumatised."

"I feel restricted and do not feel safe."

I feel unsafe to practice my religion freely.

4.3 Responses to riots following Southport stabbings

Government response to the riots

There was commendation for the new Labour government, with respondents expressing relief that the previous administration was not responsible for addressing the riots. They appreciated the prompt identification, arrest, charging, prosecution, and sentencing of the perpetrators. However, some criticism was directed at the government for being slow to label the violence as anti-Muslim hate and Islamophobia. Respondents felt that a stronger condemnation of Islamophobia, on par with the stance taken against anti-Semitism, would have been more reassuring. There is now an expectation for the government to swiftly implement plans to proscribe the EDL (and / or affiliates) as a terrorist organisation, clamp down on online hate, address the root causes of the riots, and tackle negative attitudes towards Muslims.

"Instead of using the terms 'thuggery' and 'far-right,' the riots should have been called for what it is, acts of terrorism and done by white extremists."

"Pleased with the response but more needs to be done to target the online ring leaders spreading false information."

"I am glad the government acted swiftly to arrest and punish but we also need a long term plan to tackle hatred of Muslims."

Police response to the riots

The police were especially praised for their handling of the riots. Although Muslims expressed low confidence in the police regarding hate crime reporting (see section 4.8), many still commended their efforts. They acknowledged that police officers had been placed in danger by politicians and others who had incited the riots, and they expressed gratitude for the officers' bravery in risking their lives to protect the Muslim communities.

"Police are great. They have put themselves in danger whilst politicians have been stirring hate!"

"Police forces up and down the country worked tirelessly to keep people safe, despite being outnumbered, attacked and injured themselves."

"The police did an absolutely fantastic job and are a credit to our country."

Public response to the riots

Some respondents mentioned that their initial anxiety eased after seeing a strong surge of anti-racist sentiment from the general public. They felt reassured by the support shown by anti-racism protesters standing in solidarity with minority communities and Muslims. This display of unity, they noted, sent a powerful message to racists and instilled a sense of hope. However, some disappointment was expressed about employers and colleagues for not inquiring about the well-being of those who may have been affected by the riots. This concern was especially directed towards the NHS, which has a significant number of minority ethnic employees and who are likely to be at increased risk of racist and Islamophobic abuse.

4.4 Causes of the riots following Southport stabbings

Some respondents were not surprised by the riots but were shocked by how quickly they spread across cities. While they acknowledged the role of deliberate misinformation spread by some public figures on social media, and the platforms' failure to remove such content, most of the blame within the survey responses was directed at politicians, individuals with large social media followings, and mainstream media, rather than the rioters themselves. Frequently mentioned names in the survey responses included **Suella Braverman, Nigel Farage, Tommy Robinson, Katie Hopkins, Priti Patel, Lee Anderson, Boris Johnson**, and **Elon Musk**. There was concern amongst respondents who felt that these figures had, whether directly, indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, radicalised others and emboldened the far right through their platforms and positions over a number of years. Many respondents felt such individuals had, to varying degrees, normalised anti-Muslim hatred and empowered extremist views. **Robert Jenrick** was also criticised and accused of Islamophobia for suggesting that Muslims who shout 'Allahu Akbar' should be arrested.

Respondents noted that expressing racist and anti-Muslim views had become easier and feared it would likely worsen. They also pointed out that when anti-Muslim hate or Islamophobia was expressed, it often went unchallenged or was not confronted with sufficient urgency or strength by other politicians, leading to the perception that silence equalled complicity.

"Politicians have made Islamophobic statements and the drip feed has been building."

"Politicians and media have legitimised Islamophobia so this was bound to erupt at some point."

"I more so resent the politicians for stoking the flames and starting it all up."

"There is a rise in Islamophobia has been instigated by irresponsible media & some public figures and politicians."

"Anti-Muslim hatred being normalised by politicians and mainstream media."

"The riots did not come out of nowhere. They are the direct result of not calling out Anti-Muslim and Anti-immigrant racist views."

There was strong criticism of how the Palestine/Gaza marches were portrayed by some sections of the media and certain politicians as hate marches, with participants being vilified as extremists, despite the fact that the marches had been largely peaceful, aside from a few minor incidents. In contrast, there was notable silence from the same politicians when it came to addressing the actions of the far right, which had caused significant disruption to streets, looted, vandalised buildings and attacked innocent civilians and the police, putting immense pressure on our police services and NHS services.

4.5 Frequency of anti-Muslim hate experiences

Of those who had experienced hate incidents, **82% had experienced them within the last five years**. However, many had experienced them more recently as follows:

1 in 5	**18%**	had experienced hostility **within one week** of the riots
1 in 5	**21%**	had experienced hostility **within 3 months prior** to the riots
1 in 5	**19%**	had experienced hostility **within the previous 12 months**

It is deeply concerning that the majority of those who experienced hostility faced it multiple times. In fact, 84% reported more than one incident, whether online or offline. Alarmingly, **one in four had encountered hostility between 5 to 10 times,** and one in ten had experienced it more than ten times, highlighting the widespread prevalence of hate crimes.
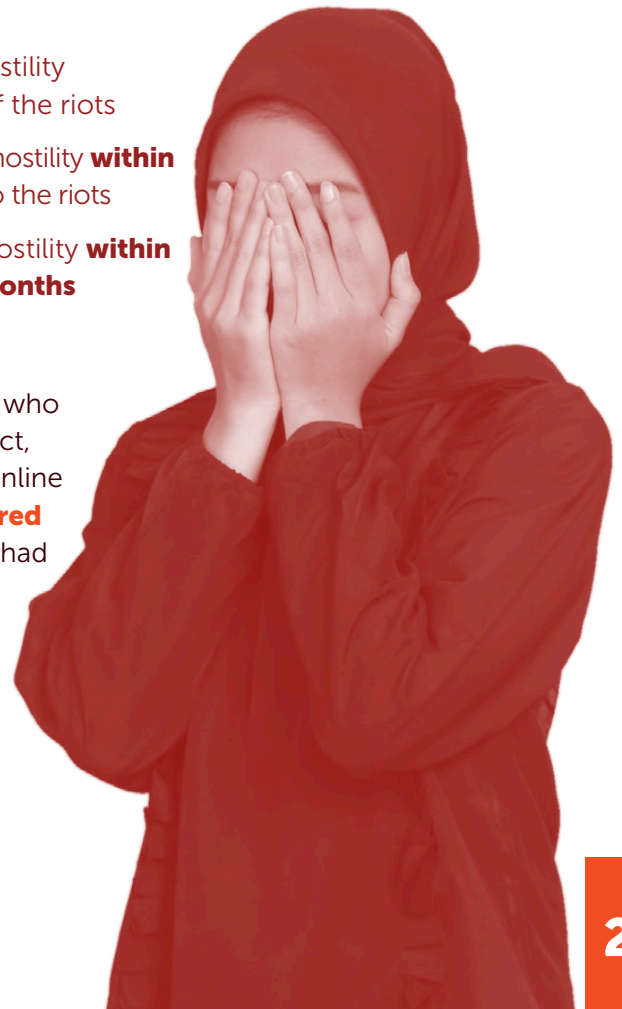
Frequency of experiences

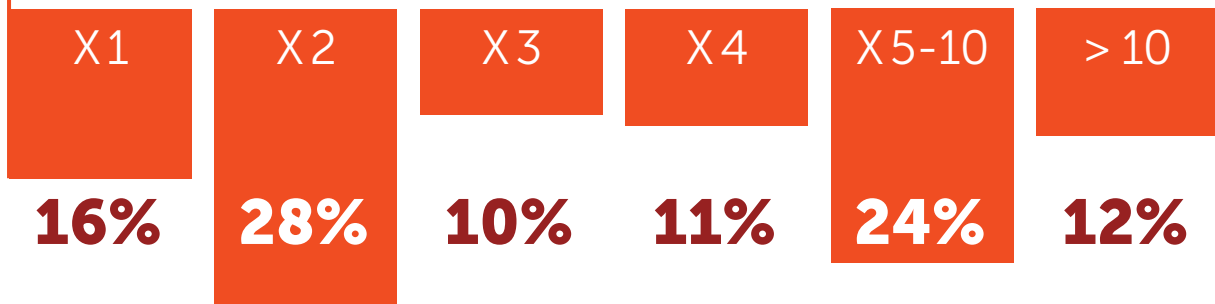| X 1	X 2	X 3	X 4	X 5-10	> 10
16%	**28%**	**10%**	**11%**	**24%**	**12%**

4.6 Anti-Muslim hate incident type and location

The survey asked about the types of hostility (if any) they had experienced (which they felt was a hate crime) in the previous five years including even more recently since the riots had taken place. The most likely form of hostility experienced was in person. Two thirds said they had experienced some form of hostility whether this was online or offline.

How many have experienced hate incidents?

No	**33%**
Yes	**67%**

Of the **67% of respondents who had experienced hate incidents**, many of these had experienced it both online and offline. A worrying finding was that they were most likely to experience verbal abuse directly in person than online: a staggering **84% had experienced in person verbal abuse directly**, 15% had experienced physical assault (such as objects being thrown, hijab being pulled and spitting) and 18% had property damaged. Concerning online abuse, 42% of respondents had experienced online hostility. It is important to note that the majority of repondents were Muslim women.

How hate incidents were experienced

verbal abuse in person	**84%**
social media	**42%**
property damage	**18%**
physical abuse	**15%**
phone / text	**13%**
letters / leaflets	**7%**
email	**7%**
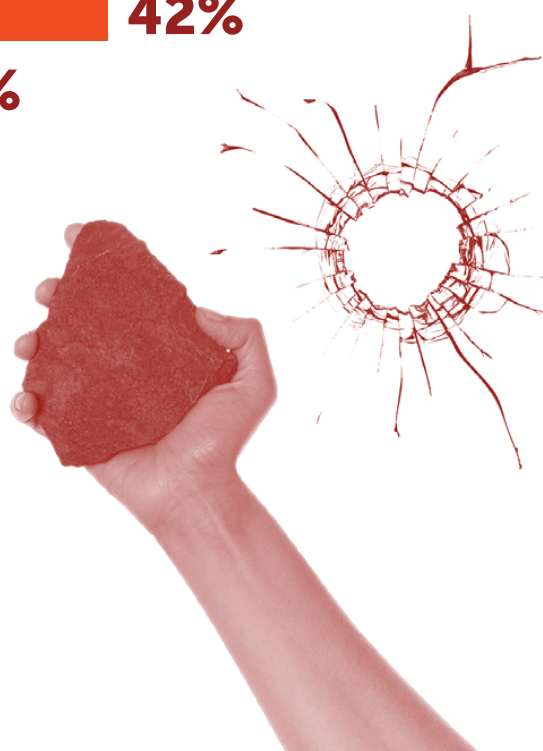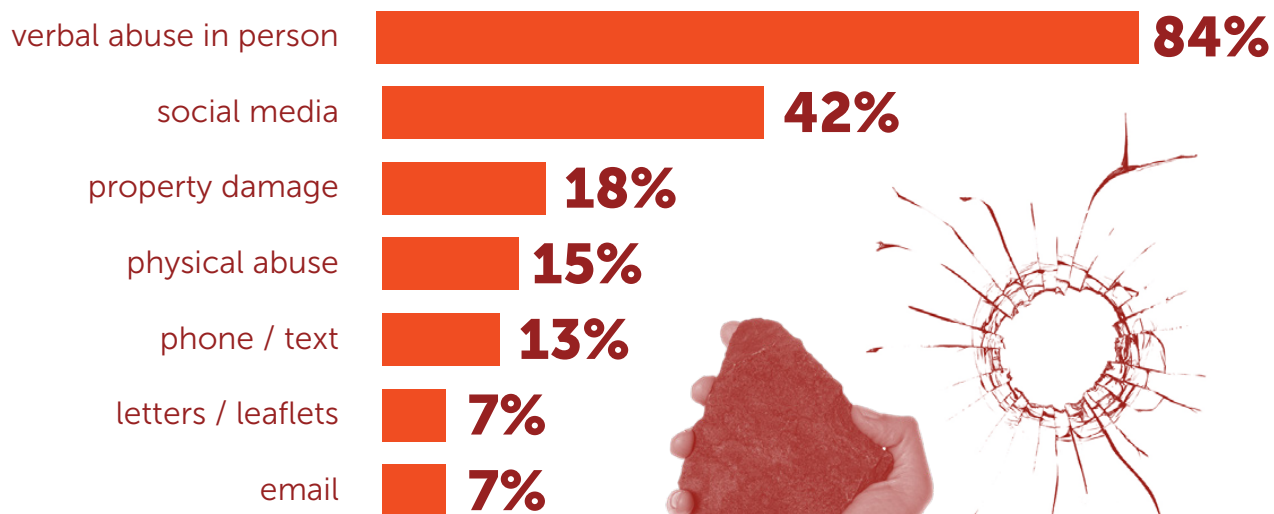
Respondents shared examples and descriptions of their experiences of hostility. Some of the victims said they had been left shaken and still felt triggered recalling the events.

The following themes emerged repeatedly:

- being called the 'P' word
- dog poo being put through doors
- windows smashed
- being rammed by shopping trolleys while in the supermarket
- eggs being thrown
- being sworn at, "black b*s**rd" etc.
- told to 'go back home'
- cars being damaged
- bins being emptied on driveways
- told to go back to Pakistan, Afghanistan, Palestine or Iraq
- being labelled as 'you people'
- bricks and stones being thrown
- prolonged stared on the public transport

- being subjected to road rage
- graffiti on houses and walls
- being called Osama bin laden
- being called a terrorist
- being spat at
- objects, food and drink being thrown on individuals
- being shown the middle finger
- told to take that cloth off your head'
- called 'You Muzzys'
- verbal taunting
- being pushed at train stations
- 'butt butt butt' sounds
- sausage rolls and beers cans left on drives
- throwing pig heads in the garden / doorstep

Particularly troubling were reports from women who experienced verbal abuse, threats, intimidation, and even physical assaults while accompanied by young children and family members with disabilities or pushing babies in prams or pushchairs. Some women also recounted being assaulted while pregnant, an experience that must be deeply frightening for both the women, their children and other vulnerable members of their family. Given the severity of these situations, committing hate crimes against pregnant women or when victims are with children or with those with disabilities, should be considered aggravating factors, warranting longer prison sentences. Women noted that these incidents often occurred so quickly that they didn't fully process what had happened until later.

Examples of abuse that occurred after the riots

"Was walking down the street with my 5 year old daughter a few days ago when a white man in a car shouted 'f**king ni**er' at me."

"Racists are great at throwing abuse when passing in cars because they almost instinctively know that no one is going to stop the car and confront them."

I have had someone say that I should take that off my head, been called a 'terrorist'. Have had someone in my local area write in capitals 'ISLAM OUT' right across the road to me, bearing in mind it is a private area, this was on the night of the Southport incident.

Other examples of abuse that had occurred prior to the riots

"I was 16 years old in a hijab travelling to school a few years ago when an old white man spat on me."

"I was spat at in the street and called a traitor (I'm a white Muslim) told to go back to my own country and called me names."

"A bunch of white thugs called us the P word told us to go back to our country and take that thing off our head (hijab)."

A white man verbally abused me and bought me to tears. I was shocked at how he abused me in front of my young children. I believe it was due to my hijab and my skin colour. This has traumatised me and I haven't visited a beach since.

"My husband was threatened with a knife after five minutes of racial verbal abuse and being told to go home to your country."

"Once I was walking down the streets with another hijabi friend of mine and a few teenagers were throwing rocks at us."

"I've been called several names when walking, cycling, parking or driving my car."

*"One man in a group of 4 or 5 young men said how he hated P*kis. I was within earshot. I could see they were all glancing at me. Felt very intimidating as I'm only 5ft 2in - there were a number of them and they were much taller and bulkier than me."*

"A leaflet was put through everyone's letter box with a picture of 3 ladies wearing full niqab. It said things like Muslims are taking over the country with slogans like being forced to celebrate Islamic festivals like Ramadan."

I had my hijab pulled while I was pregnant.

"I was pushed on to the road deliberately while there were oncoming cars."

I was leaving a cemetery and someone shouted go back to your own country from a car driving past."

Respondents were asked where they had experienced hostility that they considered a hate crime. While abuse was reported in various settings, the most common location was on the street- **52% said they had endured verbal and physical abuse while walking**. Abuse hurled from passing vans and cars was frequently mentioned, although this scenario wasn't specifically addressed in the survey, so the exact proportion couldn't be quantified. Some Respondents also noted being targeted by cyclists.
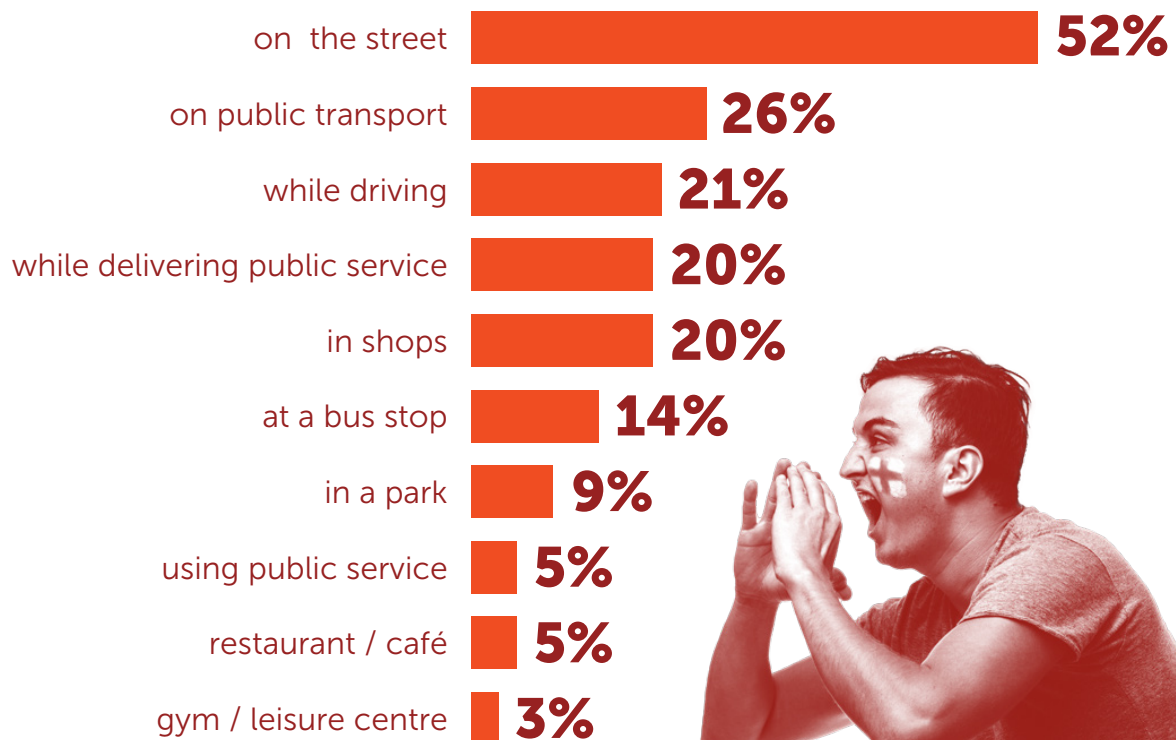
"Cars passing often shout obscenities and show showing fingers as they go past also shouting and calling me names."

"Was walking into town when two youths on bikes passed closely then stopped in front, rode back then screamed close into ear leaving me shaking."

"A guy drove past shouting for us to take our skirts off."

The second most common setting for abuse was public transport—**26% reported experiencing hostility on trains, buses, and the London Underground.** This was followed by **21% who had faced hostility and intimidation while driving**, which poses additional risks to both the victims and others. Around 20% had experienced incidents in shops or while performing public service jobs, with the NHS being particularly highlighted. Around 14% had experienced abuse while waiting at a bus stop.

Locations of hostility

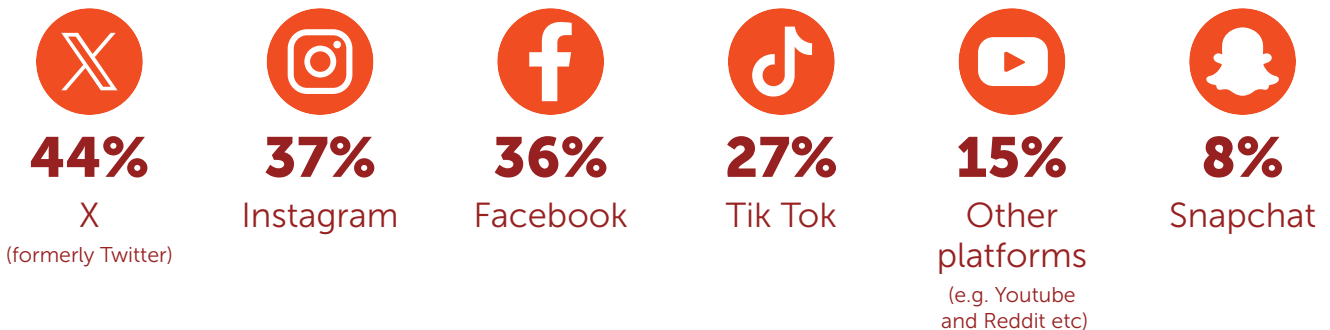| Location	%
on the street	52%
on public transport	26%
while driving	21%
while delivering public service	20%
in shops	20%
at a bus stop	14%
in a park	9%
using public service	5%
restaurant / café	5%
gym / leisure centre	3%

Incidents of hostility were also reported in various settings, including when using services, in the workplace, and in schools—areas that often receive less attention and may not be immediately recognised as anti-Muslim hate due to the context. Some mothers described how their children were bullied by teachers to the point of tears. Others recounted experiencing hostility from NHS receptionists, while NHS workers themselves spoke of the hostility they sometimes face from patients and colleagues. Those who filed complaints about their experiences expressed frustration that their concerns were not taken seriously.

"I work in the NHS. Unfortunately, racism is common place both within and outside of the organisation especially from patients. It is not always overt and so is more difficult to challenge. More needs to be done to protect NHS staff. We should not have to tolerate racism and those that are racist need to face the consequences of their actions."

"I had been working almost 20 years at a world class company where I suffered from racial abuse, harassment, being victimised. I suffered with depression once I returned and I was constructively dismissed. I took it to tribunal and was awarded damages and compensation."

More than half of respondents (53%) stated they had not experienced hostility on social media and some of these respondents said they were not even on social media. Some did not provide a response. However, of those who had experienced online hostility, (42%) it was experienced across social media platforms as follows, with the highest rates on X (formerly Twitter):

44%	37%	36%	27%	15%	8%
X (formerly Twitter)	Instagram	Facebook	Tik Tok	Other platforms (e.g. Youtube and Reddit etc)	Snapchat

4.7 Perpetrators of anti-Muslim hate incidents

Respondents were asked about who they perceived as the perpetrators of direct offline abuse. Among those who had experienced some form of abuse, about 50% identified their abusers as being in the 25 to 60 age group. Approximately 25% reported hostility from youth (16-24 years old), and 7% said the perpetrators were children. Although this number is small, the potential for their behaviour to escalate as they grow older underscores the importance of school-based interventions. There were also older perpetrators, with one in five identified as being 60 years or older. **The majority of the perpetrators were male (76%) and of white background (83%)**. However, 40% of respondents reported suffering abuse at the hands of women and 11% from individuals of other minority ethnic groups, which is a worrying finding. In summary, most perpetrators were white males, spanning all age ranges. Additionally, one in five respondents believed their abusers were associated with the far right. Some also mentioned colleagues as perpetrators (6%).

One-third of respondents reported being unsure of the perpetrator's sex when experiencing online abuse, compared to around 10% for offline abuse. This discrepancy is likely due to perpetrators hiding behind anonymous social media accounts. However, 55% of respondents identified their online abusers as male, while 28% said the abuse came from women. Most online perpetrators were identified as white (64%). Interestingly, 14% of respondents said their abusers were supporters of the Reform Party, and 24% associated them with far-right groups.

4.8 Reporting of anti-Muslim hate incidents

Not all hate incidents will amount to criminal offences according to the law. However, to accurately gauge the scale of anti-Muslim hate, it is essential that all incidents of hostility are reported to the police and/or hate crime reporting hubs and the data collated and analysed centrally. Among Respondents who had experienced offline hostility, 80% did not report these hate crime incidents at all. Only 16% reported them to the police, 5% to hate crime reporting hubs, and 8% to other helplines. This suggests that in-person hostility is largely going unreported, leading to a significant underestimation of current levels of anti-Muslim hatred. Consequently, policies may be inadequately informed, and the allocation of public funding towards hate crime hubs should be re-evaluated.

"I reported to the police British Transport Police as the crime occurred on London Underground but when I told the police I wanted to report it as a hate crime, but they said it was not applicable."

"I was so scared and shocked - was not able to report - feeling paralysis as I feel that I was not able to protect my children - we were abused on a public transport where everyone who witnessed the incident remained silence and just watched as if nothing happened."

"Didn't see the point. It wouldn't change anything and I would probably have to answer a million questions which I would rather not waste my time."

A major reason for not reporting hate incidents to the police is the lack of trust and confidence that the incidents will be taken seriously or any action taken. For instance, only 31% of Respondents expressed having some or a great deal of confidence in the police. Similarly, hate crime hubs were not widely trusted either, with only 34% of Respondents indicating they had some or a great deal of confidence in hate crime reporting services.

Other reasons provided in the comments section of the survey for not reporting hate crime to the police included:

- Being too shocked to report.
- Putting off reporting until later and then not following up.
- No evidence or witnesses – just the person's word about the hate crime.
- Feeling it was a low-level hate crime and not worth reporting.
- Incidents occur frequently, and feel reluctant to repeatedly contact the police, fearing they might become perceived as a nuisance.
- During a previous report, no action was taken.
- Believing that no action will be taken, even if the police take the matter seriously, due to a perceived lack of evidence or resources.
- Police minimising hate crime incidents, and not considering them as hate crimes.
- Not wanting to bother police due to their lack of resources to follow up.

As mentioned earlier 'drive by' perpetrators were mentioned often, who are least likely to be reported. 'Drive-by' perpetrators often act with the confidence that they won't be caught, and it's likely that they have engaged in similar activities multiple times. A strategy similar to the West Midlands Police initiative could be implemented, where a public portal allows citizens to report traffic offences online, including details like number plates and images of vehicles. If a specific driver or vehicle is repeatedly flagged for hate crime incidents, the police could then take appropriate action.

Regarding online abuse, victims were more likely to report incidents, but primarily to social media platforms. **Among those who experienced online abuse, 52% did not report it at all**, while 49% reported it to the relevant platform. However, many noted that little to no action was taken, as the posts were often not considered to violate platform rules or guidelines. As a result, abusive comments remained visible on these platforms for all to see, which in turn fed into the normalisation on prejudiced attitudes.

Other reasons mentioned for not reporting incidents to hate crime reporting hubs and services included:
- not being aware of them;
- meaningful data not being shared publicly except for sound bites;
- not seeing evidence of how data was used to influence policy and improve outcomes for Muslims; and
- reporting the incidents to other services.

Respondents provided examples of hate incidents being reported to organisations where they had occurred such as: to the gym owner, super market customer service, school, council, university or PALs for the NHS. It is also important to capture the incidents that are also reported elsewhere and an awareness raising campaign could help to encourage reporting by other organisations who receive complaints.

Actions that were recommended that could help to increase reporting of hate crime incidents included:

- More awareness of different services
- Being treated empathetically without judgement and reports taken seriously
- More information on what happens with the reports
- Awareness of the importance of reporting including importance of data collection

- Impact of outcomes being demonstrated by case studies
- Being able to speak to people who are representative
- Being able to speak to other Muslim women such as reporting via women's groups
- Having a reporting hate crime campaign to encourage reporting

4.9 Terminology describing anti-Muslim prejudice, bias and hostility

As discussed in the 'Introduction' there is no widespread consensus upon a definition of Islamophobia and some Muslims and non-Muslims use alternative terms such as "anti-Muslim hate" or "anti-Muslim racism" to describe the same issues. However, to effectively address hostility towards Muslims in all areas of life, a clear legal definition is necessary. To gauge which term is more popular, Respondents were therefore asked about which terms they preferred, and they were allowed to choose more than one term. The terms in order of favour are:

Islamophobia	Anti-Muslim hatred	Anti-Muslim racism	Anti-Muslim discrimination	Anti-Muslim prejudice
68%	39%	29%	29%	18%
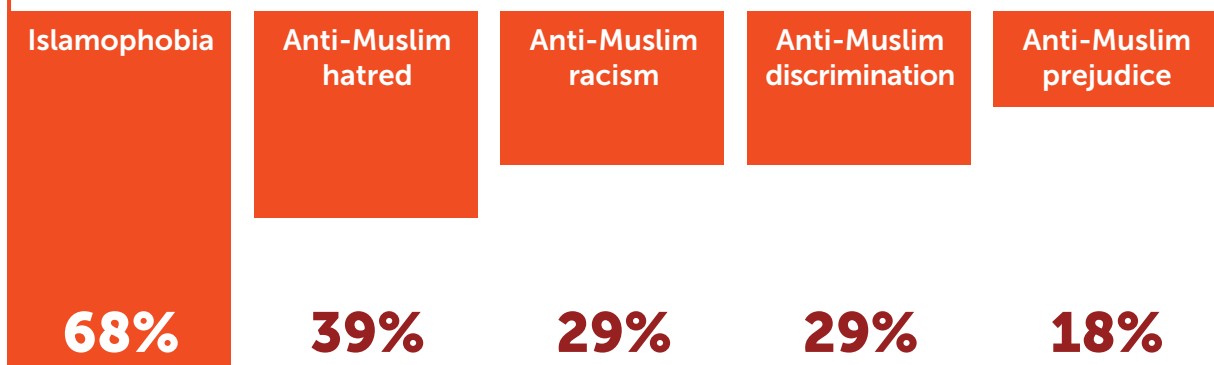
The most popular term was Islamophobia with two thirds of Muslims preferring to use it to describe anti-Muslim hostility. However, it was interesting to note that one third did not select it. Some concerns that were expressed included that the word (even though it is widely used) did not accurately describe the hostility towards Muslims i.e. people are not fearing Islam or Muslims but hating them and that it was linguistically incorrect.

Two in five Respondents favoured using "anti-Muslim hatred" and nearly one-third preferred the term "anti-Muslim racism." Some Respondents stated that they wanted anti-Muslim hate recognised as a form of racism because anti-Muslim discrimination had been racialised. They gave examples of being targeted because they were perceived as Muslim not because of an obvious marker of religious identity but other characteristics such as skin colour, beard or Arab heritage etc.

Whatever terminology is used, a robust legal definition is urgently needed to address the psychological, social, economic, and physical harm that is being caused to Muslims in every aspect of their lives because of prejudice. There was also a desire amongst some Respondents for the legally defined term to encompass internal anti-Muslim hate within communities, addressing hostility sometimes expressed towards other Muslims perceived as "less Muslim" due to differences in Islamic sect, such as Shia or Ahmadiyya Muslims, or because of choices like Muslim women not wearing the headscarf.

4.10 Trust and confidence in government to tackle anti-Muslim hate crime

Only 3% of Respondents said that the previous Conservative government took action to address Islamophobia or tackle anti-Muslim prejudice. **A staggering 67% felt the Conservative government of making Islamophobia or tackle anti-Muslim prejudice worse.**

Conservative politicians who were named in the survey responses, were perceived to have particularly made Islamophobia worse. Some even described them as ringleaders of those fuelling the far right. They accused some former and current Conservative MPs of actively using language and slogans that encourage a hostile environment for Muslims.

"The politicians constantly displaying Islamophobic actions and were not challenged by the party."

"Not just made Islamophobia worse, they generally gave the far right the thumbs up to do as they please."

"Very divisive languages was used on many occasion by members of the Conservative party during public speeches."

"They scapegoated migrants and made being Islamophobic became acceptable."

They could not care at all about Muslims even if they are British born."

"Let's be honest, the rioters used the Tory slogans for a reason."

While there was increased confidence in the new Labour Government's ability to address Islamophobia and anti-Muslim prejudice, it remained relatively low. **Only about one in four (27%) believed the government would take significant or strong action**. A similar percentage expected only minimal action, 18% thought no action would be taken at all, and 15% even feared the situation might worsen.

There was criticism that the Labour Party had not effectively addressed Islamophobia within its ranks and had failed to meaningfully engage with the Muslim community before coming to power. Additionally, there was concern over the party's silence on Islamophobic rhetoric, such as when Nigel Farage made comments on a Sky News programme. On the Sunday Morning with Trevor Phillips (26 May 2024), **Nigel Farage** had claimed that Muslims in Britain do not subscribe to British values and 46% support Hamas. Divisive language like this is not only polarising, but can also cause psychological and physical harm. Despite this, senior Labour politicians neither condemned these comments nor have they condemned similar Islamophobic remarks made by other politicians. Even when they have occasionally addressed such comments, their condemnation has often not been strong enough.

"There should be zero tolerance to Islamophobia and it addressed as robustly as other forms of hate crime."

"I am not optimistic about the Labour government's ability to tackle Islamophobia – it leaves me cautious."

"The Labour Party has previously done little to counter the Conservative rhetoric- often agreeing or remaining silent.

Kier Starmer has not engaged with the Muslim community in a meaningful way when he was in opposition so I have little hope.

"After the riots, the government was so reluctant to acknowledge or even speak about Islamophobia."

"Labour is too right wing and has purged sympathetic left wing voices."

The Respondents also sought to have concerns addressed that were highlighted in the Forde Report[9], which investigated bullying, racism, and sexism within the Labour Party. The report, authored by Martin Forde KC, a prominent Black lawyer, uncovered a hierarchy of racism within the party. Forde criticised Labour for not treating anti-Black racism and Islamophobia with the same seriousness as antisemitism. The Respondents urged the government to highlight the positive diversity and contributions that Muslims bring to the UK economy, while also acknowledging the impact that years of othering and dehumanisation have had on the Muslim community.

9. Forde, M., The Forde Report, July 2022.

4.11 Suggestions to combat societal negativity towards Muslims

When asked about ways to combat societal negativity towards Muslims, many Respondents pointed to the following:

- Holding media companies to account on how they cover stories related to Muslims, migrants and refugees
- Holding social media companies to account for the spread of misinformation and hatred
- More representation in the media particularly in decision-making positions
- More Muslim authentic and diverse characters in film and TV
- Educational curriculum highlighting the contribution of minority ethnic communities both historically and in today's society
- Political parties tackling racism and anti-Muslim prejudice within their own parties
- Holding politicians and other public figures to account for spreading hatred against minority groups

Respondents particularly emphasised the need for consistent language when discussing perpetrators of violence from different backgrounds and called for more positive coverage of Muslims and their contributions, starting with education in schools. Respondents also advocated for greater representation of Muslims in the media, particularly in editorial and decision-making roles. Additionally, they demanded stronger accountability for media outlets that publish false or defamatory content about Muslim communities or individuals, arguing that a small, easily overlooked apology is insufficient.

Have stringent punishments for reporters/papers/media channels who perpetrate and perpetualise racism in the media, e.g. if an article is deemed racist or inappropriate, the apology should be as large as the article itself, so an article that covers the entire front page of a paper that is investigated and deemed as racist and Islamophobic.
An apology should be offered that is on the same page and on the same scale, i.e. not in small print somewhere in the middle pages where you'd need a microscope to find the apology."

Respondents also expressed a desire for more Muslim characters in film and TV, where their Muslim identity is not the central focus but rather an incidental aspect of their character. They called for increased representation of Muslim male and female actors, noting a perceived scarcity in the industry and raising concerns that this lack of representation could be due to discrimination, which they felt should be addressed.

5 Conclusion and recommendations

5.1 Impact of anti-Muslim hate

Since the widespread riots following the stabbings in Southport, the threat of anti-Muslim hate has increased, causing significant psychological distress among Muslim communities. Muslims are deeply anxious and do not feel safe in public spaces or online regardless of whether they have a more visible Muslim identity. They also feared being attacked because of the colour of their skin. Hate incidents towards Muslim women may be motivated by a combination of racism, misogyny and Islamophobia. The heightened fear and anxiety is leading to changes in daily behaviour of many Muslims, particularly if they are accompanied by their children, such as avoiding certain areas, changing routines with some even withdrawing from public life. The fear of hate crimes is therefore restricting the rights and freedoms of Muslims in the UK.

Experiences of hate incidents (which are already significantly high) and the withdrawal from public life is likely to exacerbate feelings of alienation from broader society, affecting social integration and community cohesion. Muslim women in particular are more likely to be set back which is disheartening given the progress they have made in recent years. The fear of hate crimes may deter Muslim women from pursuing education or employment opportunities, which will perpetuate economic disadvantages and limit social mobility. Muslim women who are currently employed or seeking jobs may encounter challenges due to the increasing negativity and hostility towards Muslims. Colleagues and potential employers could be influenced by the widespread anti-Muslim rhetoric, potentially affecting their chances of being hired or promoted, or expose them to workplace bullying.

Negative experiences when accessing public services, like the NHS, may also become more common, leading to unequal access and worsening health outcomes. This is particularly concerning as Muslim communities already often face poor health outcomes, partly due to systemic discrimination and bias. Since the lockdown, there has been a noticeable rise in the number of Muslim women going for walks and participating in walking and cycling groups, leading to improvements in both physical and mental health. Unfortunately, concerns over safety may reverse this positive trend. Muslim women who experience domestic abuse may face increased restrictions on their freedom, with coercive control tightening under the guise of safety concerns. This could lead to monitoring of their movements, preventing them from going out alone, or only allowing them to go out with a chaperone. These issues will now be considered when supporting victims on the Muslim Women's Network Helpline.

5.2 Drivers of anti-Muslim hate

The causes of anti-Muslim hatred in the UK are diverse and complex. Negative portrayals of Muslims preceded the riots that have created an environment of fear. Anti-Muslim sentiments have been driven by certain politicians and public figures with large social media followings, who use their commentary on security, immigration, and integration in ways that demonise Muslims. For example, Muslims are frequently portrayed as threats to security and Western culture. The lack of understanding about Muslims and Islamic practices among the British public make these stereotypes more easily accepted.

The rise of the far-right, which has not been adequately addressed, is exploiting fears about Muslims and hence why the riots spread quickly in many other cities after Southport. Over the past decade, poverty in the UK has worsened, with increases in food bank use, more families living in temporary accommodation, a shortage of affordable housing, declining job security, and over stretched public services. While economic hardships have largely resulted from political decisions, minority groups such as Muslims and refugees are being scapegoated, a pattern also seen across Europe.

Social media and other media platforms also play a significant role in shaping public perceptions of Muslims by enabling the rapid spread of misinformation and anti-Muslim hate speech. For instance, misinformation falsely suggesting that the Southport murder was a Muslim asylum seeker was allowed to spread across the social media networks, which contributed to the disorder across the UK.

5.3 Addressing anti-Muslim hate

It seems that the legal institutions and government do not fully recognise or address anti-Muslim hate crimes, leaving Muslim communities feeling unprotected by the systems meant to safeguard them. This appears to be contributing to the under-reporting of hate incidents. It is crucial to consider the victim's perception of hostility when recording such incidents, even if the police later find insufficient evidence to charge offenders. The findings indicate that Muslims are aware of what constitutes a hate crime, but the police may be minimising their reported experiences of hostility, often failing to record these incidents as hate crimes. Decisions made by police officers may be influenced by their own negative biases toward Muslims.

To address this issue, it is crucial to legally define "hostility" in the context of hate crimes and, at the very least, provide clear guidance to police officers. Additionally, increasing public awareness about how hate incidents should be recorded is essential. Campaigns will also be necessary to encourage reporting, challenge negative attitudes towards Muslims and also tackle hostility towards Muslims in the workplace, on public transport and when accessing public services.

While the Labour government has acted decisively to punish the rioters, it must now recognise the emotional impact the riots have had on Muslim communities. The government must address the already high incidence of hate crimes, and confront the ongoing risk of further escalation of incidents. This must include evaluating the factors driving hate crime against Muslims, such as the influence of social media, politicians, public figures, and media companies, taking measures to address them including plans to tackle anti-Muslim prejudice within all political parties.

These measures will need to be accompanied by strengthened hate crime legislation (including considering proposals made by the Law Commission), and increased punishment levels for those who commit hate crimes against individuals who are accompanied by children or vulnerable adults. The current hate crime reporting mechanisms must be re-evaluated and steps taken to significantly increase reporting of hate crime incidents, especially by Muslim women. This should involve creating trusted spaces where they report incidents as well as police training for recording and handling hate crime.

Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson announced the launch of a review of the primary and secondary school curriculum to incorporate critical thinking and media literacy, helping children better identify misinformation and fake news. However, the curriculum should also cover the history of migration and highlight the positive contributions that minority communities have made, and continue to make, to Britain. Media, TV and film can play a role in also sharing positive stories about Muslims.

Given the heightened hostility faced by Muslims, likely at an all-time high, urgent action is needed to legally define Islamophobia or an alternative appropriate term. This will enable a more robust approach to addressing the psychological, social, economic, and physical harm inflicted on Muslims due to anti-Muslim prejudice in every aspect of their lives. Additionally, the appointment of an Anti-Muslim Racism/Islamophobia advisor should be considered, someone capable of working across government departments and with counterparts in other Western countries.

5.4 Summary of recommendations

To address anti-Muslim hatred in the UK, a long-term action plan will be needed that must involve political accountability, strengthened legislation, media responsibility, public education and community engagement / safety measures.

" Hate crime reporting and support "

- Improve training and guidance for police officers in recording and handling of hate crime incidents reported to them.

- Improve hate crime data collection by police forces so it is consistent across all police forces.

- Ensure hate crime data recorded by the police and hate crime reporting services is publicly available for greater awareness of hate crime trends and accountability.

- Implement initiatives to boost the reporting of hate crimes by raising awareness of available services, emphasising the importance of reporting, and developing projects that can help to capture details of hate crime perpetrators from vehicles, such as allowing online upload of vehicle information to identify repeat offenders.

- Review funding of government funded hate crime reporting services and if necessary re-allocate and or expand services so they are more accessible and embedded in Muslim communities, including services dedicated for Muslim women.

- Launch an awareness raising campaign to encourage Muslims to report incidents that they perceive as anti-Muslim hate.

- Improve emotional support for Muslims who have been victims of hate crime anti-Muslim prejudice regardless of where it has occurred (public, workplace or when accessing services).

" Strengthening policies "

- Consult with Muslim communities and update the Government Hate Crime Plan.

- Set up a coalition to bring together organisations that can help build a movement to tackle anti-Muslim prejudice, which can begin by reviving Working Group to Tackle Anti-Muslim Hate, which used to provide advice to the government.

- Launch campaigns to address anti-Muslim hatred on public transport, in the workplace, in educational institutions, and within service environments.

- Recognise anti-Muslim hatred against Muslim women as gender-based abuse.

- Appoint an advisor to work across government departments to address and combat anti-Muslim prejudice.

- Strengthen parliamentary codes of ethics for MPs and Peers to enhance accountability for those who may use their positions to incite racial and religious hatred.

- Revise the educational curriculum to include migration stories and Muslim contribution to British history and today's society including through marking of Muslim Heritage Month (www.muslimheritagemonth.org.uk) every March, an initiative introduced by the Muslim Women's Network UK.

- All political parties should enhance their policies to combat anti-Muslim prejudice within their ranks, which involves actively condemning it and taking swift action against individuals who perpetuate it.

- Take action to address the media companies' practice of publishing false and defamatory stories about Muslims and then issuing apologies in small print that are often less visible than the original articles.

- Improve Muslim diversity in TV, film, and media by boosting representation among journalists, editors, and actors, and by highlighting positive stories about Muslims.

" Strengthening legislation "

- Strengthen legislation so it more effectively addresses the stirring up of racial and religious hatred, which should include considering to proscribing the EDL (and / or affiliates) as a terrorist organisation.

- Strengthen legislation to more effectively hold social media companies to account for allowing the spread of misinformation and for failing to remove content that incites religious and racial hatred.

- Legally define Islamophobia or an alternative term that accurately reflects the broad spectrum of anti-Muslim prejudice and discrimination experienced by Muslims.

- Strengthen legislation to legally define hostility for hate crime incidents.

- Increase sentencing for hate crimes committed in the presence of children or other vulnerable adults and consider these as aggravating factors.

- Implement the Law Commission's recommendation to consolidate various hate crime provisions into a unified Hate Crime Act, clarifying the law and reforming the offence of inciting religious hatred. This must include broadening the definition to cover material that is both abusive and likely to incite hatred, and removing the requirement for material intended to incite hatred to be threatening.

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