



**“I’m continuously
on high alert”**

The impacts of hate-motivated acts on
people belonging to minorities



To the reader

The effects of hate-motivated acts, hate crimes and harassment on the victim are varied. Hate acts can have long-lasting effects not only on a person's general sense of safety and psychological health but also, on such things as their trust in authorities, on their working life and on their friendships. Hate acts can also cause fear in others, as the actions do not only target the individual but the entire group to which the victim belongs or is assumed to belong.

The purpose of this publication is to make visible the impacts that hate acts, hate speech and harassment have on people in different minority groups.

The publication is based on the following reports published by the Ministry of Justice: "Hoping for a Concrete Intervention': Follow-up Survey on Hate Speech and Harassment and Their Effects on Different Minority Groups" (2022) and "I often find myself thinking how I should be or where I shouldn't go' - Survey on hate speech and harassment and their influence on different minority groups" (2016). The latter survey was carried out in 2015.

The material in this publication focuses on people with disabilities, the Roma, the Sámi, foreign-language speakers, foreign nationals and people with immigrant backgrounds, LGBTIQ+ people and religious minority groups, as these groups were the subjects of the reports published in both 2022 and 2016. This allows comparison between two time periods.

The publication is intended to support anyone who, in the scope of their work, encounters people who have been subjected to hate acts, hate speech or harassment or who are at risk of being subjected to hate-motivated acts.

Key concepts

Hate-motivated act

Hate speech

Harassment

Hate-motivated act

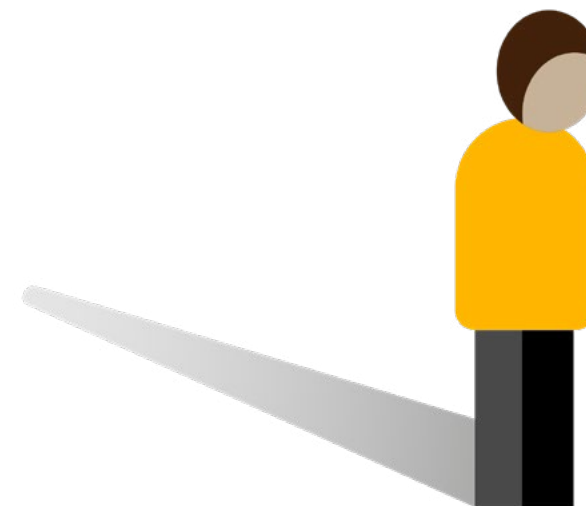
The victim of a hate-motivated act is not selected at random; instead, the victim is selected because of a personal or presumed personal characteristic, such as a presumed or actual ethnic or national background, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression or disability. Hate acts are motivated by prejudices or hostility, just as is the case with hate crimes and hate speech, but it is not known whether it fulfils the constituent elements of an offence.

Hate speech

Hate speech refers, for example, to expressions or speech used to spread, instigate, maintain or justify hatred against groups such as minorities. Hate speech is voiced in a public place, on the internet or in the media, for example. Some hate speech is punishable.

Harassment

Harassment is prohibited under the Equality Act and the Non-Discrimination Act. Harassment refers to actions such as speech, emails or gestures that are degrading, humiliating or offensive.



Read more about the concepts: [The crucial role of motive - Recognise prejudices behind hate-motivated acts. Ministry of Justice 2022.](#)

Impacts of hate acts

The effects of hate-motivated acts on the victim are diverse and often also long-lasting. Hate acts may have an impact on a victim's general sense of safety or psychological health, their use of social media, trust in the authorities, their working life or studying as well as on their friendships.

Victims of hate acts are not selected randomly. Instead, they are selected because of their personal characteristics or assumed personal characteristics. The harm caused by hate-motivated incidents is not only targeted at the individual but at the wider group of people to which the victim belongs or is assumed to belong. Hate acts are particularly damaging because an individual offence acts as a message to the entire group to which the offence impacts. This increases the victim's fear that they can also be selected as a victim repeatedly. The 2022 survey found that 70% of victims said that hate speech or harassment had influenced their general sense of security. In 2015, this share was 61%.

In addition, hate acts and hate speech have broader impacts on the foundation of a democratic society by influencing, for example, people's willingness to participate in societal discussion.

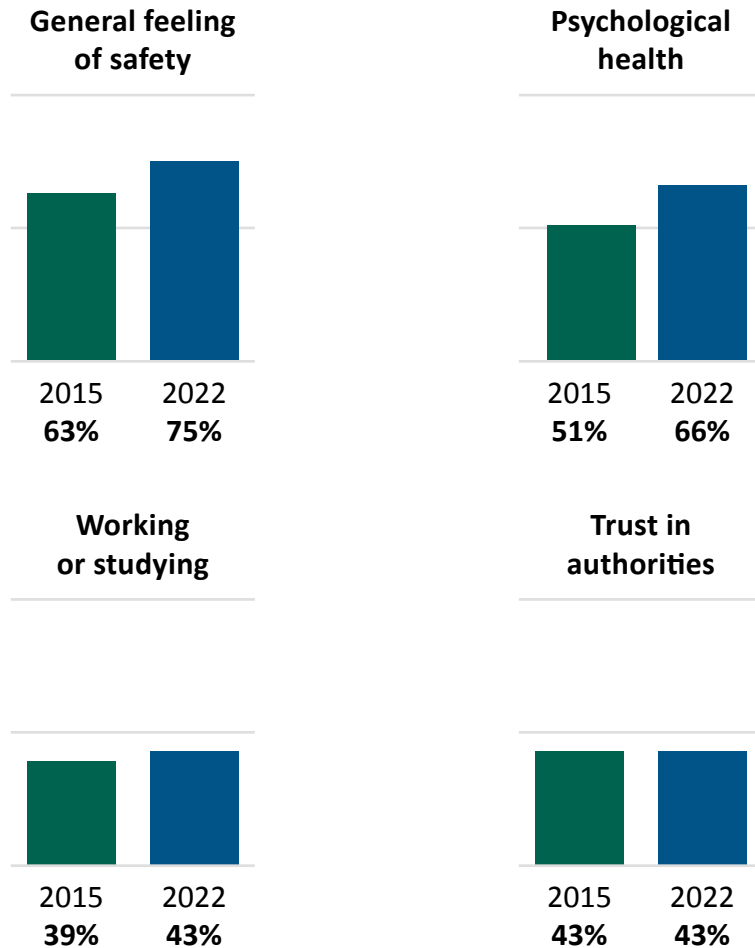
Impacts on psychological health were identified by 68% of respondents - in 2015 this figure was 52%.

Multiple discrimination

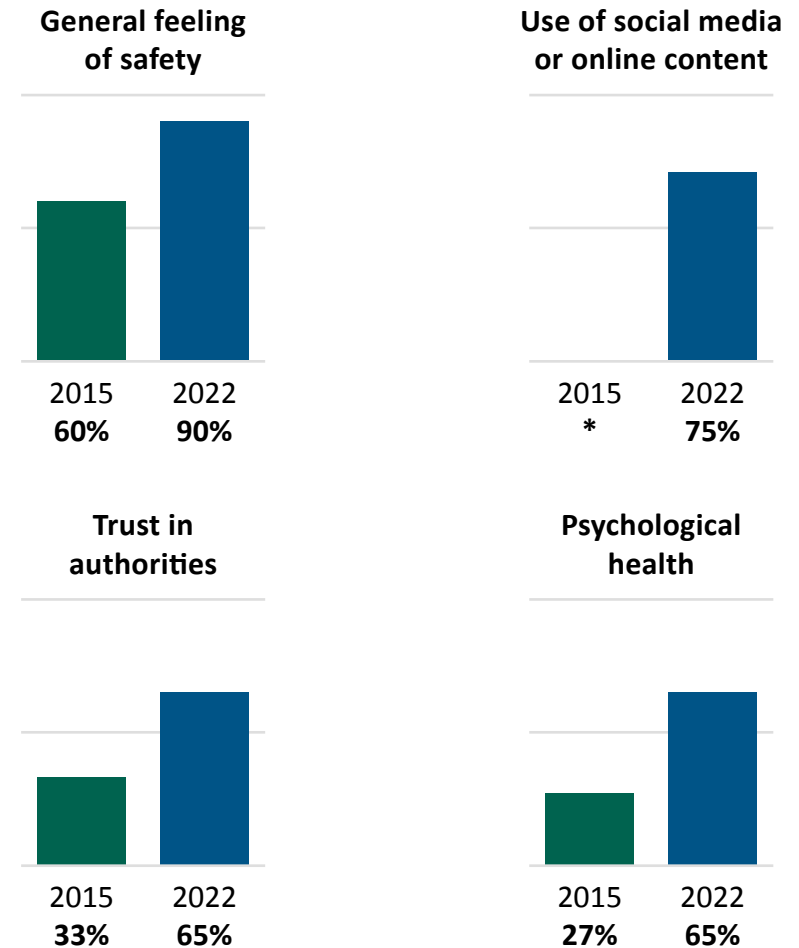
Multiple discrimination means experiencing discrimination for two or more grounds for discrimination. People belonging to more than one minority, especially a visible minority, are more likely to be subjected to harassment, hate speech and discrimination. Multiple discrimination can be not only long-lasting but also particularly stressful when experiences of discrimination for numerous reasons and different areas of one's life accumulate.

Which areas of your life have the hate speech or harassment you have experienced had an impact on?

Foreign-language speakers, foreign nationals or those with an immigrant background



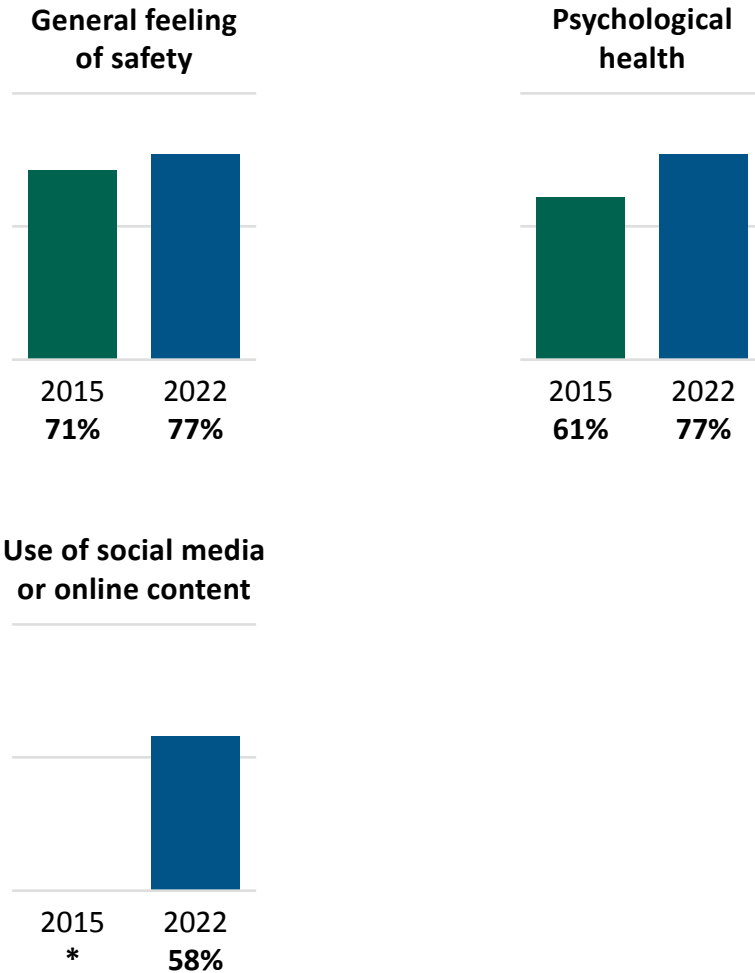
The Roma



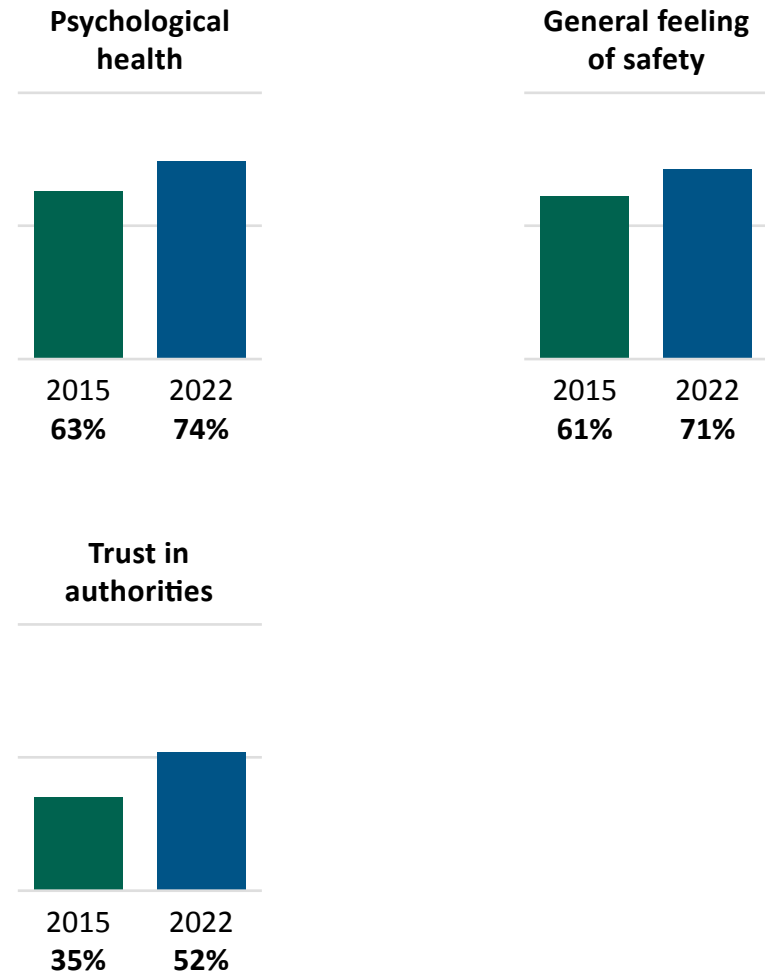
* This answer was not included as an alternative in the 2015 survey.

Which areas of your life have the hate speech or harassment you have experienced had an impact on?

LGBTIQ+ people



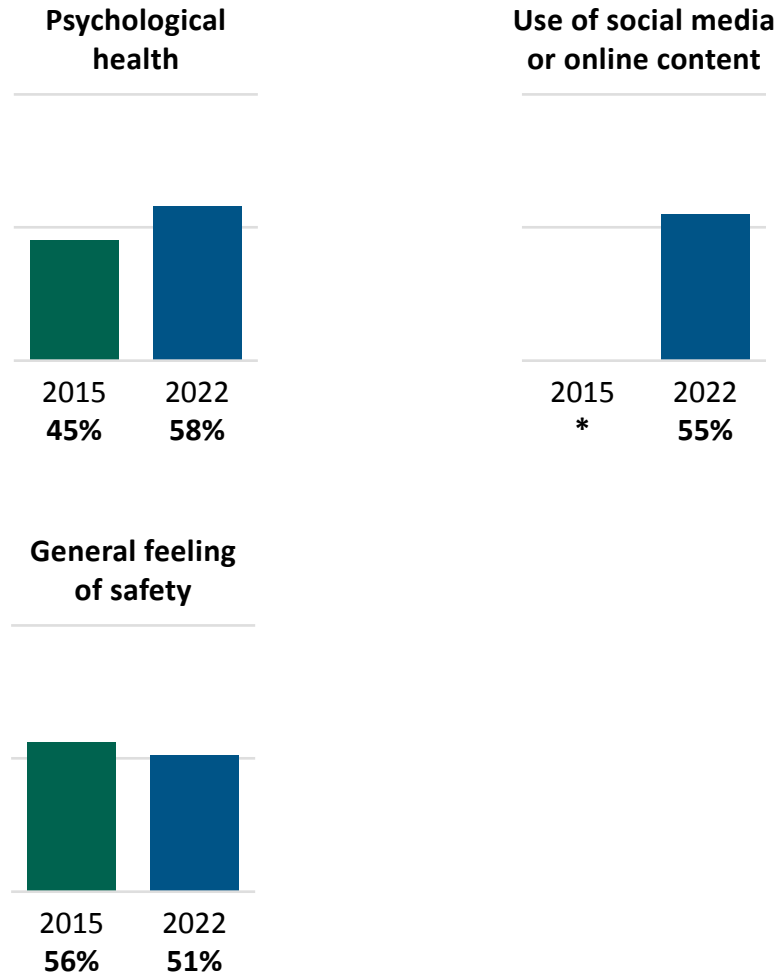
People with disabilities



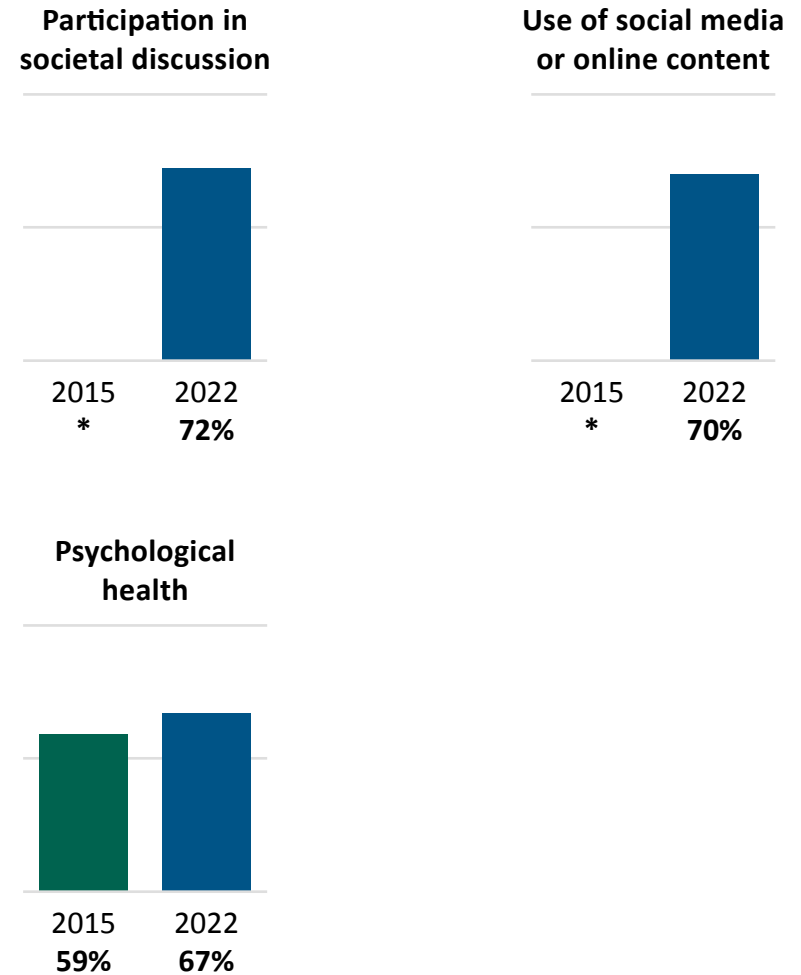
* This answer was not included as an alternative in the 2015 survey.

Which areas of your life have the hate speech or harassment you have experienced had an impact on?

■ Religious minority groups



■ The Sámi



* This answer was not included as an alternative in the 2015 survey.

Manifestation of harassment and hate speech

The most common form of hate speech or harassment was verbal insult, harassment or humiliation in both 2022 and 2015. The exception was LGBTIQ+ people, in which case the most common manifestation was gender-based verbal insults or slurs. Silencing or restricting participation in society is a more common form of harassment for the Sámi than for other minority groups.



What type of harassment or hate speech have you encountered?

People with disabilities

Verbal insult, harassment or humiliation

75% 2022

75% 2015

Name-calling

53% 2022

47% 2015

Being subjected to continuous negative comments

51% 2022

47% 2015

The Roma

Verbal insult, harassment or humiliation

77% 2022

87% 2015

Name-calling

73% 2022

93% 2015

Being subjected to continuous negative comments

64% 2022

53% 2015

What type of harassment or hate speech have you encountered?

The Sámi

Verbal insult, harassment or humiliation

74% 2022

38% 2015

Being subjected to continuous negative comments

54% 2022

39% 2015

Silencing or restricting social participation

54% 2022

26% 2015

Foreign-language speakers, foreign nationals or those with an immigrant background

Verbal insult, harassment or humiliation

67% 2022

74% 2015

Name-calling

47% 2022

61% 2015

Being subjected to continuous negative comments

43% 2022

44% 2015

LGBTIQ+ people

Gender-based verbal insults

78% 2022

75% 2015

Verbal insult, harassment or humiliation

71% 2022

70% 2015

Name-calling

63% 2022

67% 2015

Religious minority groups

Verbal insult, harassment or humiliation

75% 2022

73% 2015

Name-calling

53% 2022

67% 2015

Being subjected to continuous negative comments

50% 2022

61% 2015

Places where incidents occur

10 most common places where respondents have encountered hate speech or harassment

Hate-motivated acts can happen anywhere, including on the streets, online, at work, in cafés and in public transport. The most common places for hate speech or harassment are public places, such as streets, parking areas and parks, and Facebook.

When different online platforms are combined, the internet becomes the most common location for hate speech.



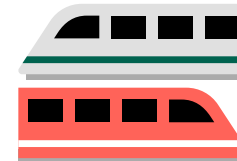
In the street, a parking area, park or other public place



On Facebook



At the workplace



On public transport



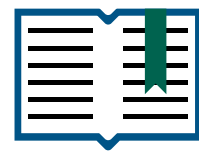
Elsewhere in a public space or building



At a café, restaurant or a bar



Elsewhere on social media



At school, an educational institution or university



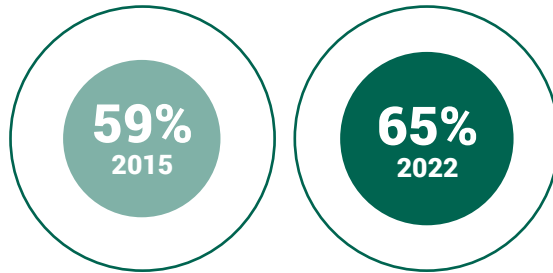
On Instagram



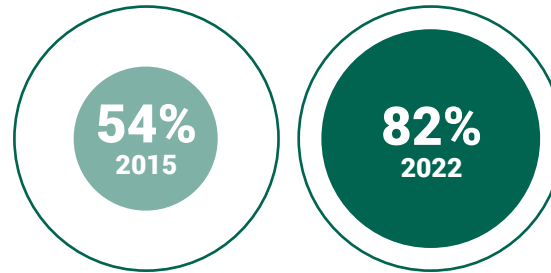
On a public forum

As a member of a minority group, I avoid certain places for fear that I might be subjected to harassment or hate speech

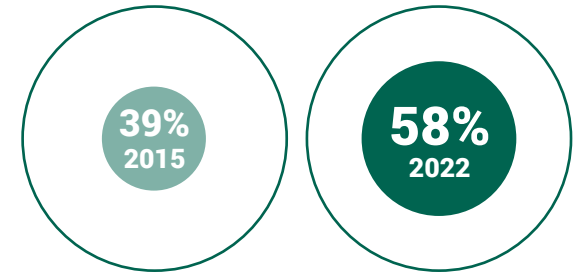
People with disabilities



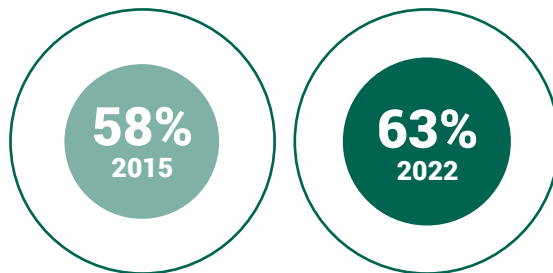
The Roma



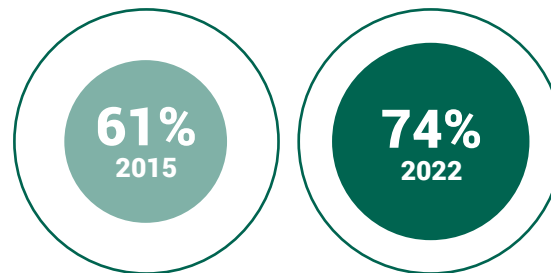
The Sámi



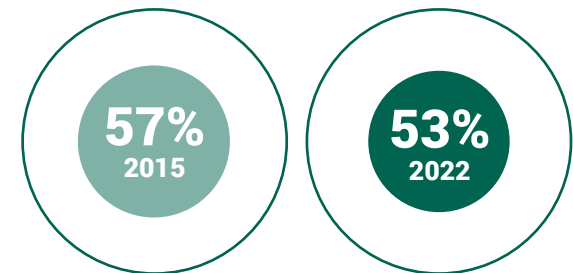
**Foreign-language speakers,
foreign nationals or those with
an immigrant background**



LGBTIQ+ people



**Religious
minority groups**



Reporting harassment and hate speech

According to the follow-up survey, 30% of respondents who have been subjected to hate speech or harassment during the last 12 months, had reported the incident. Although the percentage remains low, there is clear growth: in 2015, this figure was 21%.

Hate speech or harassment was reported most often by foreign-language speakers, foreign nationals or persons with an immigrant background (41%) and people with disabilities (40%).

LGBTIQ+ people (22%) and religious minorities (25%) were the least likely to report cases.

The most common reason for not reporting was that the victim did not believe that anything would be done about the incident.

People who have reported cases of hate speech or harassment



Young people report hate speech and harassment they experience less often than other age groups. 69% of 13-24 year-olds did not report cases to anyone.

What would have helped you report hate speech or harassment?

“Clear instructions and information on where hate speech or harassment can be reported in various situations.”

“A better understanding of one’s own rights and the definition of hate speech. A lower threshold for reporting, or information on the available support services.”

“The knowledge that justice sometimes sides with the Sámi.”

“The knowledge that discrimination would be tackled in a concrete manner and would not always be referred to as ‘one-off cases’.”

“Hearing about someone else’s positive experience and seeing that an authority takes action.”

“If discrimination was taken more seriously in schools, I would have been more confident that something would be done about the matter.”

Source: [“Hoping for a Concrete Intervention”: Follow-up Survey on Hate Speech and Harassment and Their Effects on Different Minority Groups. Ministry of Justice 2022.](#)

Recommendations for addressing and preventing hate speech and harassment

Active communication about hate speech and harassment and their impacts should be increased for a variety of target groups. Also, methods of intervention and reporting channels should be increased.

Victim support services should be further developed by creating reporting channels and clear operating instructions. For example, organisations must have a designated person, group or a party that supports people in taking the matter forward.

Each authority, employer and education provider has a duty to assess and actively promote non-discrimination in their own activities.

Equality should be promoted in workplaces and schools. Information on different minority groups should also be increased.

The protection of workers at risk of being subjected to harassment and hate speech must be ensured.

Non-discrimination competence should be increased in customer services and encounters both in public and commercial services.

Source: [“Hoping for a Concrete Intervention”: Follow-up Survey on Hate Speech and Harassment and Their Effects on Different Minority Groups. Ministry of Justice 2022.](#)

References

- ["Hoping for a Concrete Intervention": Follow-up Survey on Hate Speech and Harassment and Their Effects on Different Minority Groups. Ministry of Justice 2022. \(in Finnish\)](#)
- [Selvitys vihapuheesta ja häirinnästä ja niiden vaikutuksista eri vähemmistöryhmiin. Seurantakysely 2017. Owl Group 2018. \(in Finnish\)](#)
- ["I often find myself thinking how I should be or where I shouldn't go" - Survey on hate speech and harassment and their influence on different minority groups. Ministry of Justice 2016. \(in Finnish\)](#)
- [Policy brief 1/2018: Harassment is discrimination. Ministry of Justice 2018.](#)
- [Policy brief 2/2019: Multiple discrimination and the need to identify it better. Ministry of Justice 2019.](#)
- [The crucial role of motive - Recognise prejudices behind hate-motivated acts. Ministry of Justice 2022.](#)



MINISTRY OF JUSTICE
FINLAND



The Osaavat (Capable) project has received funding from the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014–2020).

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