

2021

Hate Crime Profile

Safer Merton

Working Together To Keep Merton Safe & Sound

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1. Aims of the profile – the specification

In order to ensure that Safer Merton was able to meet the needs of the partnership the following specification was drafted, circulated for comment and finalised. This specification underpins the whole of our work



Title	Hate Crime Profile
Details	Refreshed hate crime strategy
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Hate Crime Profile

Aim

- To describe the extent of hate crime in the London borough of Merton and identify gaps in our knowledge and understanding of this problem.

Purposes

- To inform members of the SSE board and practitioners working on the borough
- To update the profile written in July 2020
- Provide evidence to support new projects and funding bids

Data Period Covered and Data Limitations

- The analysis used data from the publicly available MPS hate dashboard for the financial year 2020/21 to provide an annual perspective and data from the MPS internal CRIS system to look at the most recent trends.
- The profile will be a “best known” picture of hate crime on the borough, based on available data
- This profile does NOT look at Domestic Violence offences as these are addressed in a separate profile.
- Hate crime flags are applied to recorded crime reports or crime incidents in line with the definition shown on the following page. It is possible for more than one flag to be applied to a single report. This can lead to some confusion when dealing with hate crime statistics as not every reported incident may justify a crime report being created. Unless otherwise stated the statistics used in this report relate to recorded crime reports

Hate Crime Definition and the National Picture

A hate crime is defined on the MOPAC web site as “any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a personal characteristic; specifically, actual or perceived race, religion/faith, sexual orientation, disability and transgender identity”

MPS Hate Crime aligns with the former Home Office (APACS) guidance and is a measure identifying offences that satisfy **both** of the following criteria:

1. The offence is a notifiable offence
2. A feature code identifying a hate crime has been added to the crime report. The feature codes identifying hate crime types are:
 - Religious hate flags FH, (Faith Hate); RS & RT (Anti-Semitic); IS (Islamophobic)
 - Racist Hate Flags RI (Racial Incident)
 - Homophobic Hate Crime HO
 - Transgender Hate Crime HT
 - Disability Hate Crime VH

The flag should be applied to any incident that is perceived to be a hate crime by the victim or any other person, or any offence where the offender demonstrates hostility based on the victim’s membership of one or more of these groups.

A hate crime dashboard is maintained by the Metropolitan Police
<https://www.met.police.uk/sd/stats-and-data/met/hate-crime-dashboard/>

A revamped MOPAC Hate Crime Dashboard has been launched last year and can be found at: -

<https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/mayors-office-policing-and-crime-mopac/data-and-statistics/hate-crime-dashboard>

The interactive maps can be filtered by borough and hate crime strand

The five monitored strands are:

- Race;
- Religion/faith;
- Sexual orientation; (Homophobic)
- Disability;
- Gender-identity (Transgender)

Domestic Violence is considered a sixth stand of hate crime but because of the much larger volumes of incidents and crime it is reported separately

Hate crime recording history

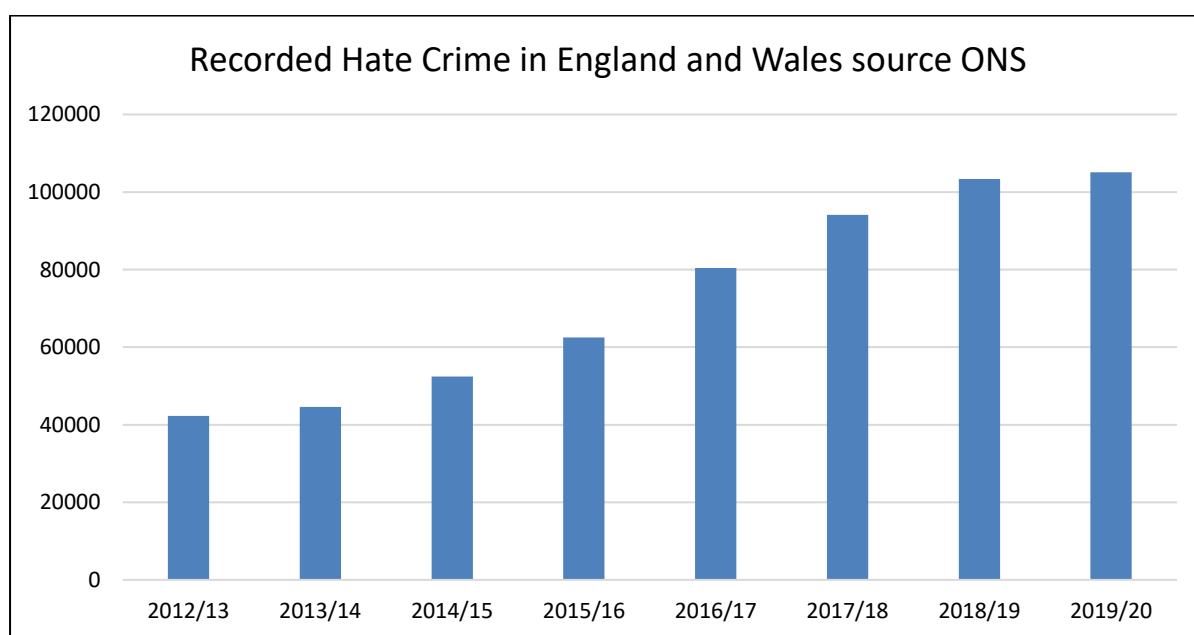
There has been a steady increase in reported hate crime since 2012. Action taken by police forces to improve their compliance with the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) led to improved recording of hate crime. Other causal factors for the rise are a greater public awareness and media attention on hate crime, and an improved confidence of victims to come forward.

Some Police forces are trialling flagging some incidents as Misogyny hate crime. This is defined as "incidents against women that are motivated by the attitude of men towards women and includes behaviour targeted at women by men simply because they are women". Whilst many types of incident considered under this definition are substantive offences in their own right such as public order or sexual offences, others such as using sexually explicit language are not. In March 2020 a private members bill the Hate Crime (Misogyny) Bill 2019-21 had its first reading in the House of Commons. The Bill is intended to make motivation by misogyny an aggravating factor in criminal sentencing; to require police forces to record hate crimes motivated by misogyny; and for connected purposes. The Bill failed to complete its passage through Parliament before the end of the parliamentary session in May 2021 and did not now progress.¹

However, an amendment to the Domestic Abuse bill which was passed by Parliament this April will require police to collect data on crimes apparently motivated by hostility towards women from the autumn.²

National Data

Hate crimes are a subset of notifiable crimes that are recorded by the police. As can be seen in the table below in England and Wales total hate crime rose by 8% in 2019/20 compared to the previous year whereas in 2018-19 the year on year increase was 10%. Figures for 2020/21 will not be published until October 2021.



Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2018-to-2020>

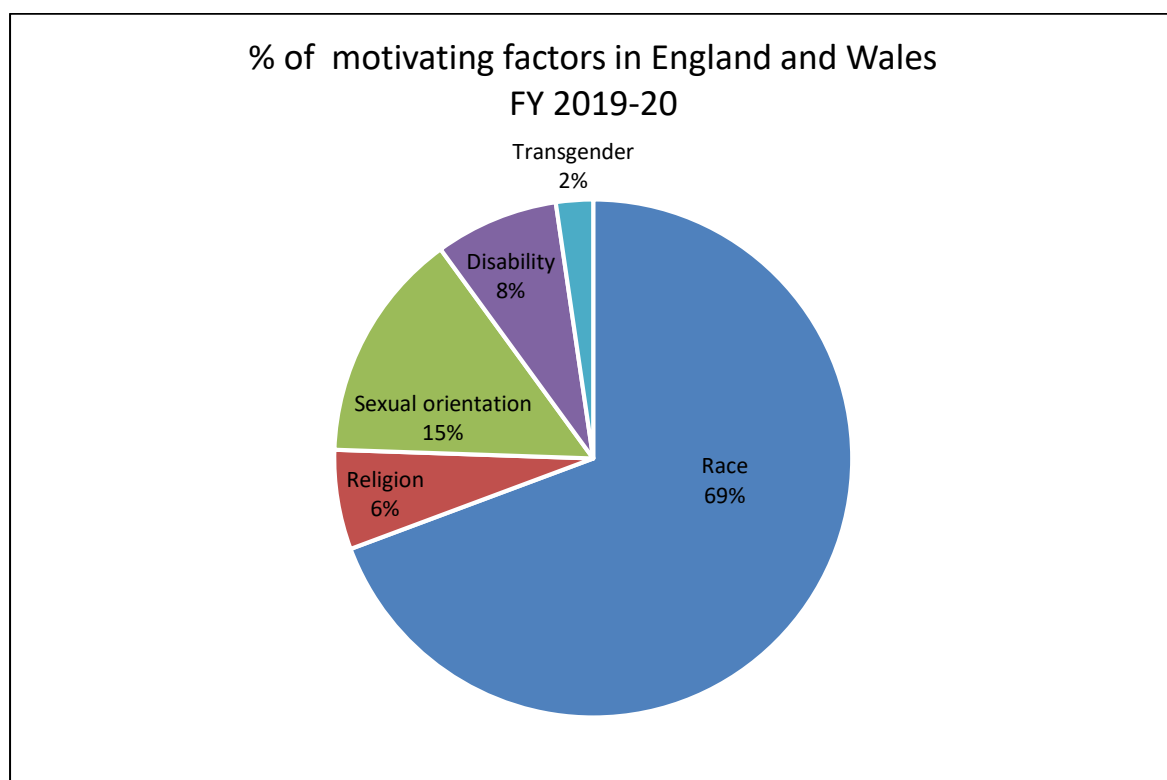
¹ [Hate Crime \(Misogyny\) Bill - Parliamentary Bills - UK Parliament](#)

² <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-56435550>

Types of Hate Crime

In England and Wales in 2019/20, around 53% of all hate crime offences were classified as public order and 38% as violence against the person. In the last report these proportions were 54% and 36% respectively.

In terms of the five strands of hate crime the majority of Flags (69%) relate to race hate; 15% relate to sexual orientation and the remainder are made up of the other three strands. Note some offences may be assigned more than one hate flag hence the number of motivating factors is 4% higher (109,736) than the number of offences.



Influencing factors

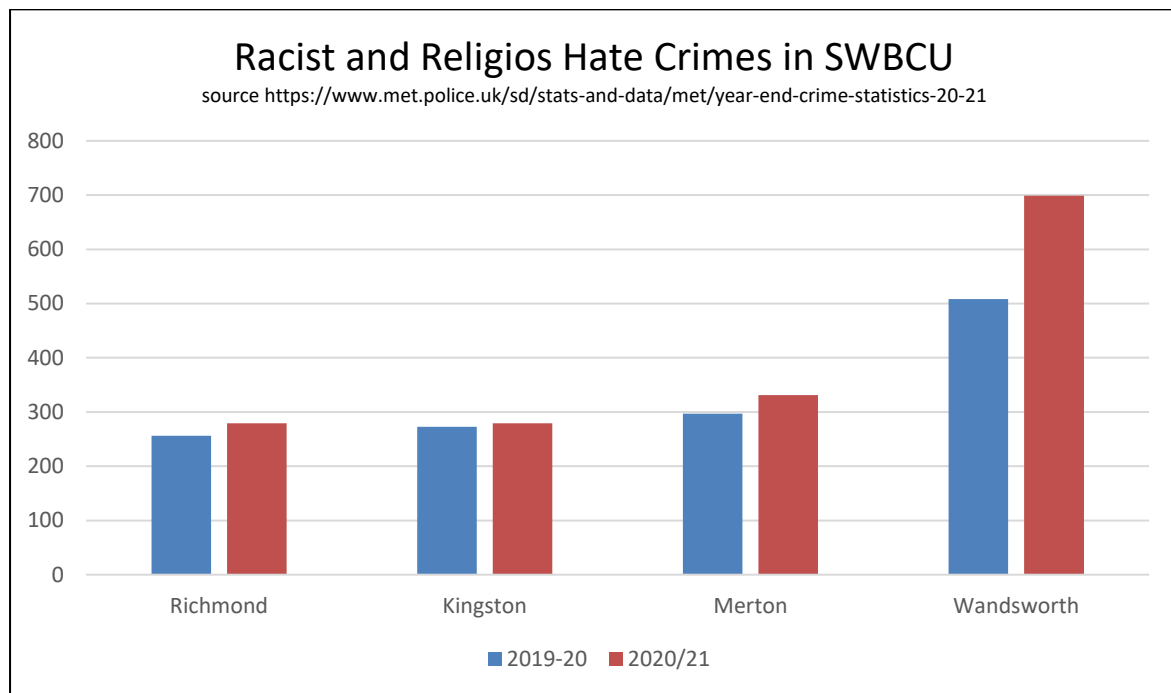
Following the last Merton hate crime report the various pandemic related lockdowns reduced movements of much of the population thus reducing interactions between people and this led to some falls in hate offences. In late May 2020 the death of George Floyd triggered the Black Lives Matter Campaign. June 2020 saw a spike in Racist hate crime reports in Merton and the MPS. It is not clear whether increased offending or increased willingness to report caused the increase which fell back to more expected levels later in the year. National figures are not available but are likely to echo that trend.

MPS Overview

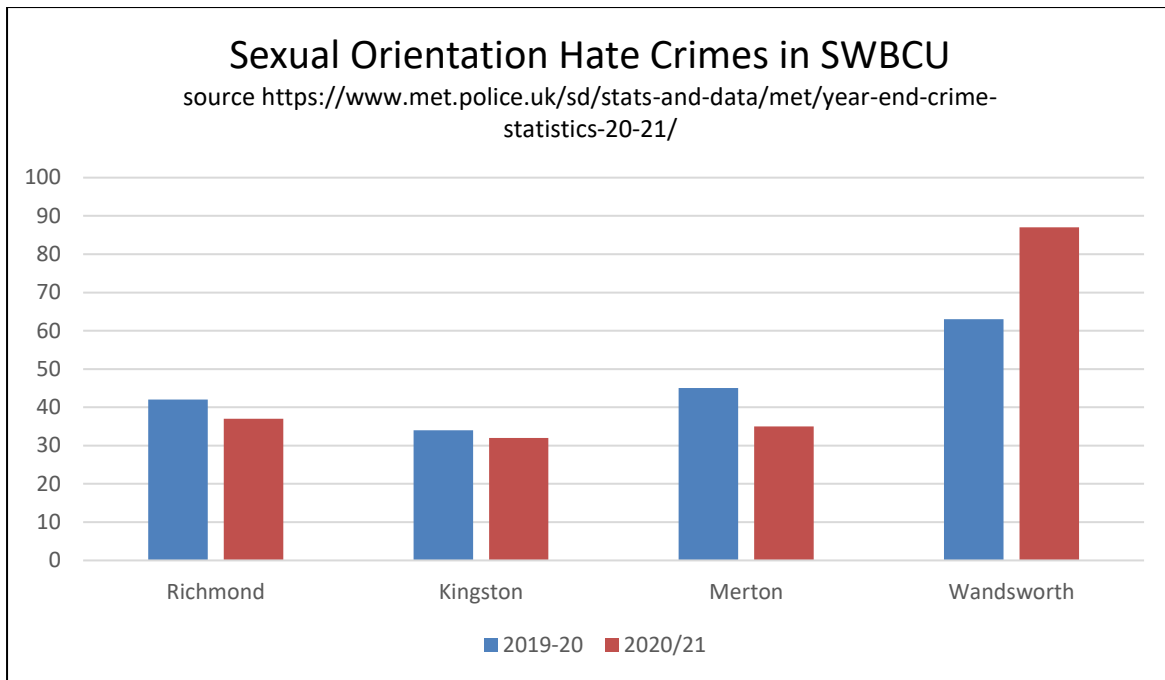
Across the MPS for the financial year 2020-21 the overall number of hate offences increased by 10% to nearly 25,000 reports primarily as a result of increased racist offences for the reasons outlined above. Faith and homophobic hate crimes saw year on year falls.

BCU comparison

All boroughs in the South West Basic Command Unit (SWBCU) saw increases in Racist and Religious Hate crimes in 2020-21 compared to last year. In percentage terms, Wandsworth had by far the largest increase with 38%. Richmond at 2% had the smallest increase with Kingston 9% and Merton by 11%. The figure for the BCU as a whole was a 19% increase compared to a 10% increase in the last report.



In respect of Sexual orientation hate crime, the picture was more mixed with Richmond and Merton seeing decreases whilst Kingston and Wandsworth increased. The largest change was in Wandsworth



Disability hate crimes across the SWBCU amounted to 55 offences compared to 34 in the last financial year. Merton had the largest number of offences at 22 up from 10 in 2019-20.

Transgender crimes across the SWBCU amounted to 17 offences unchanged from 17 in the last financial year.

The Merton Picture

Merton's Hate Crime Strategy Group continue to meet on a quarterly basis and over the past year have been working to develop a hate crime Third Party Reporting Scheme. This encourages victims who do not feel comfortable reporting direct to the police to come forward and make a report via a third party organisation. Community organisations such as Inner Strength Network, Police Family Association, BAME Voice and Merton CIL are taking part in the scheme, with recent additions to Third Party Reporting Centres including AFC Wimbledon and Tooting and Mitcham FC.

Data from the MPS hate crime dashboard shows that Hate Crime in Merton has increased by 9% in the last financial year compared to 2019-20. In the last report the increase was also 9%. The percentage swings for some of the strands are large because the base numbers are well below 100. For the MPS as a whole the rise was 16% compared to 12% in the last report.

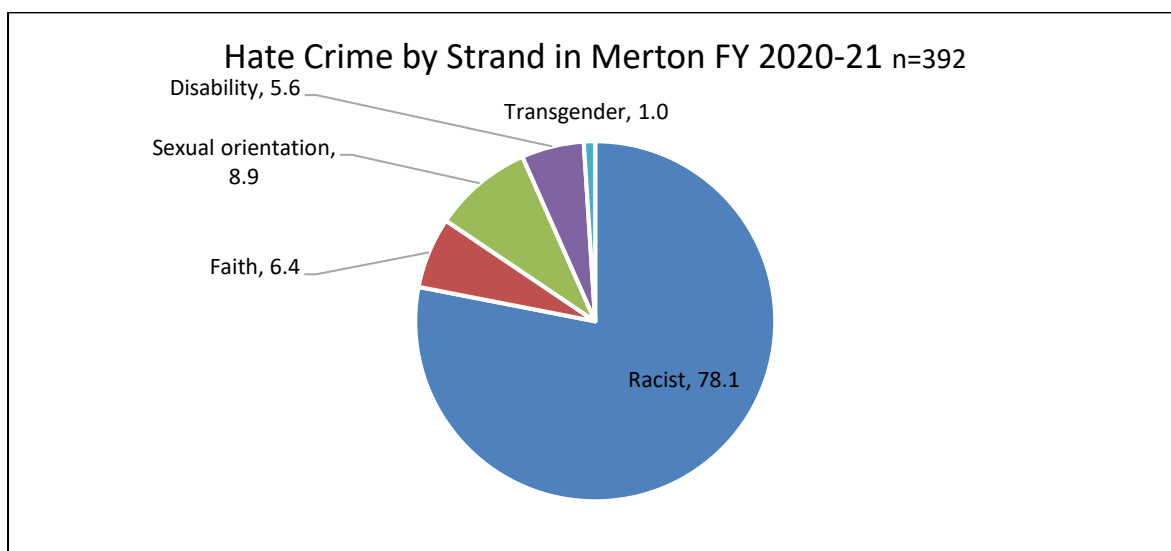
Merton	2019-20	2020-21	% change
Racist	275	306	11
Faith	23	25	9
Sexual orientation	45	35	-22
Disability	11	22	100

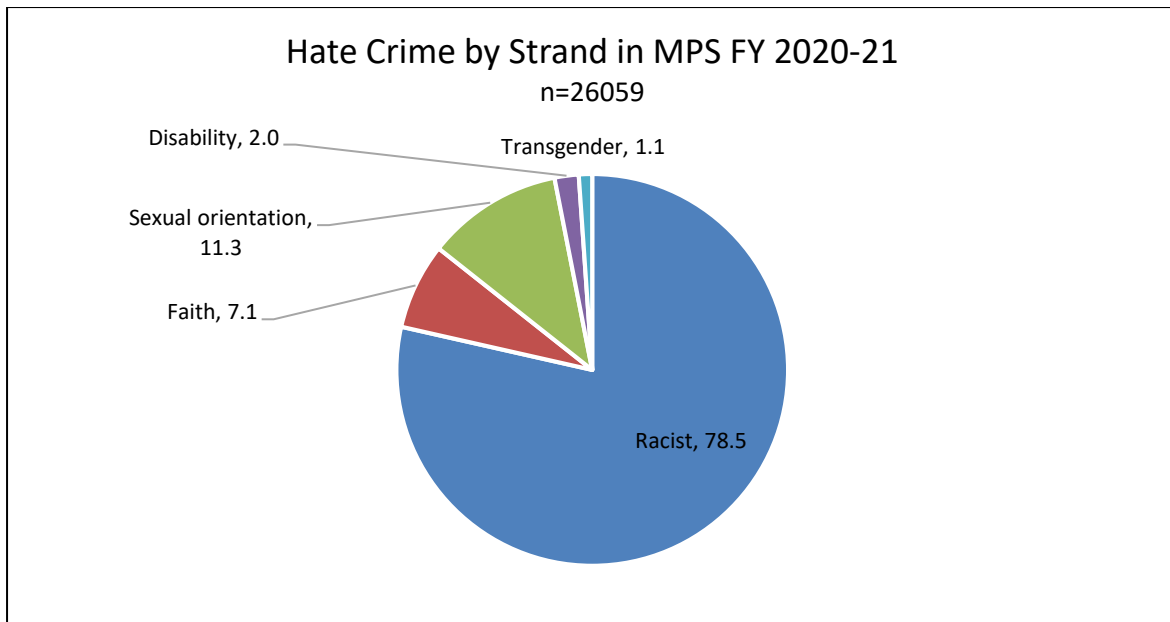
Transgender	5	4	-20
TOTAL	359	392	9

MPS	2019-20	2020/21	% change
Racist	16547	20466	24
Faith	2172	1854	-15
Sexual orientation	3009	2933	-3
Disability	475	519	9
Transgender	288	287	0
TOTAL	22491	26059	16

Proportion of the differing strands of hate crime

For the FY2020/21 the relative proportions of the hate crime strands in Merton broadly mirrors the breakdown across the MPS with nearly 80% of reports under the racist strand. This probably reflects the more diverse nature of London's population compared to England and Wales as a whole where the figure was under 70% in 2019/20. (National figure for 2020/21 are not yet available.) In the longer term the proportion of homophobic hate crime is increasing. The National figure for 2019/20 was 14% of the total compared to 7% in 2017/18.





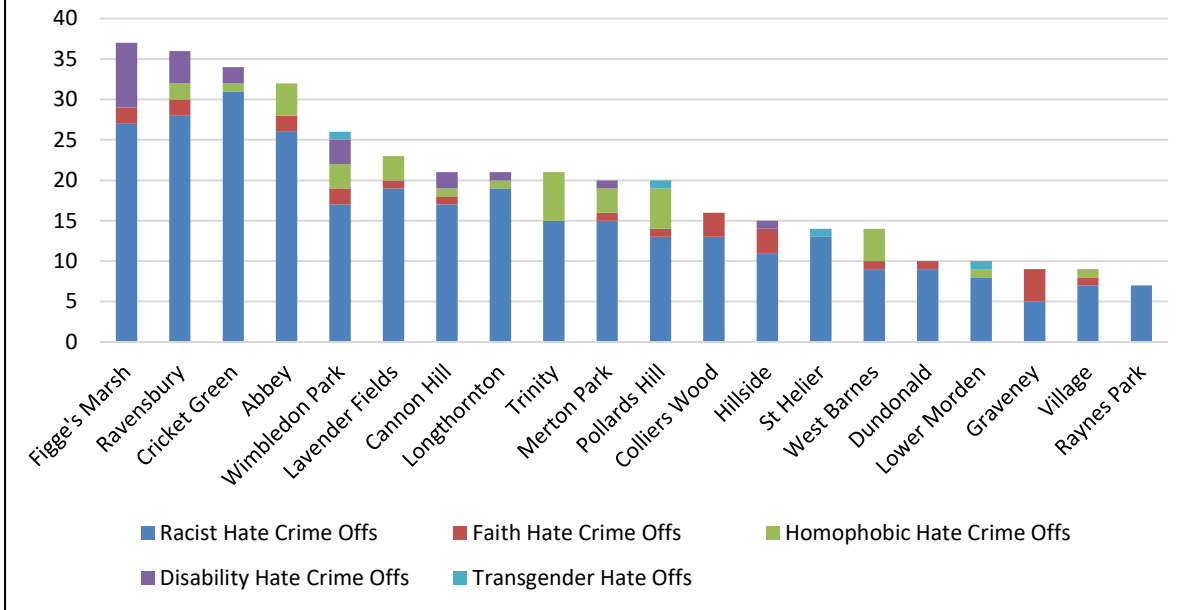
Violent Hate Crime

Whilst the majority of all hate crimes in Merton was classified as Violence against the Person (VAP) only 6% percent of the total (22 reports) was sub classified as violence with injury. The majority of VAP reports are categorised as “harassment” which was included in the range of VAP offences from 2015.

Wards with the most Hate crime reports

In the data set provided by Metstats2 for FY 2020-21, the individual wards in Merton were identified. The breakdown by ward is shown in the table below. Compared to last year Figge’s Marsh continued to have the highest number of reports. Trinity second last year fell to ninth. St. Helier went from third to fourteenth. Ravensbury and Cricket Green jumped from sixth and seventh to second and third this year whilst Abbey remained in fourth.

Merton Hate Crime Fy 2020-21 by ward n=395



Victim Profile

Repeat victims

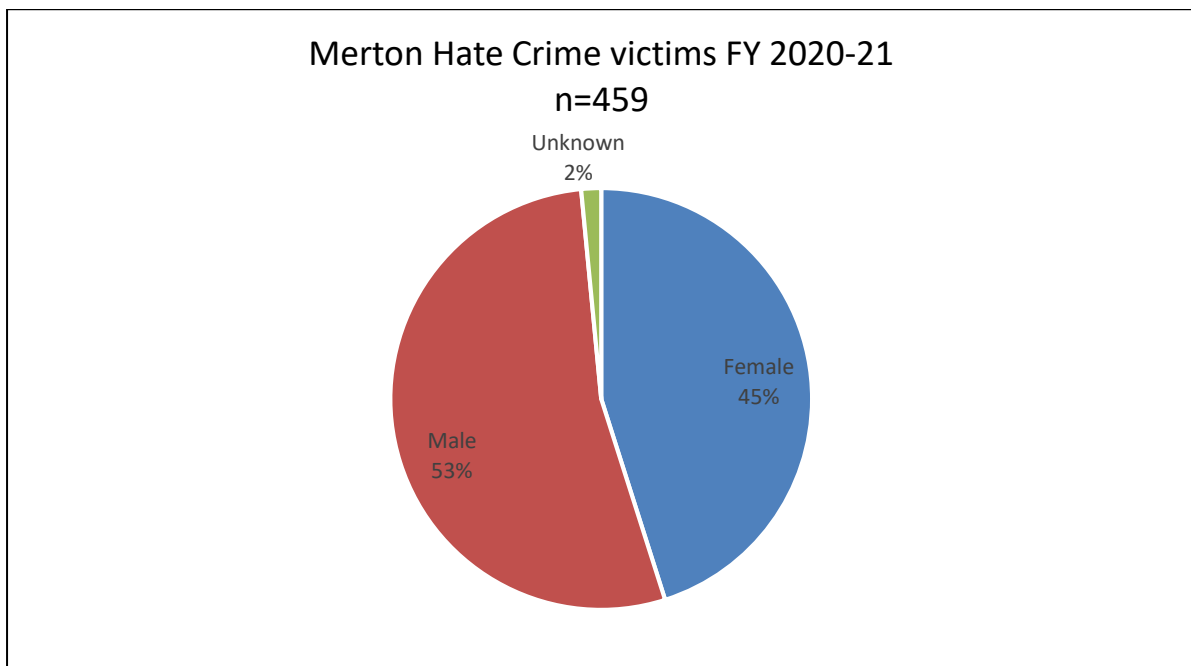
The main MPS safeguarding dashboard which recorded the level of the level of repeat victims of Hate crime has been decommissioned.

Victim profile methodology

A search was constructed on the Cris enquiries system to attempt to return information on the victims and suspects of hate crime during the period under review. Note the number of victims is larger than the number of reports and the number of suspects is lower than the number of reports. The search returned data on 95% of the relevant crime reports. The disparity in the data results from a.) the complex structure of the data b.) An element of key fields not being completed in the records and c.) The skill of the author in constructing the search terms. Whilst not definitive the data sample is sufficient to produce a good overview of these groups. For this reason percentages rather than figures are shown.

Victim gender

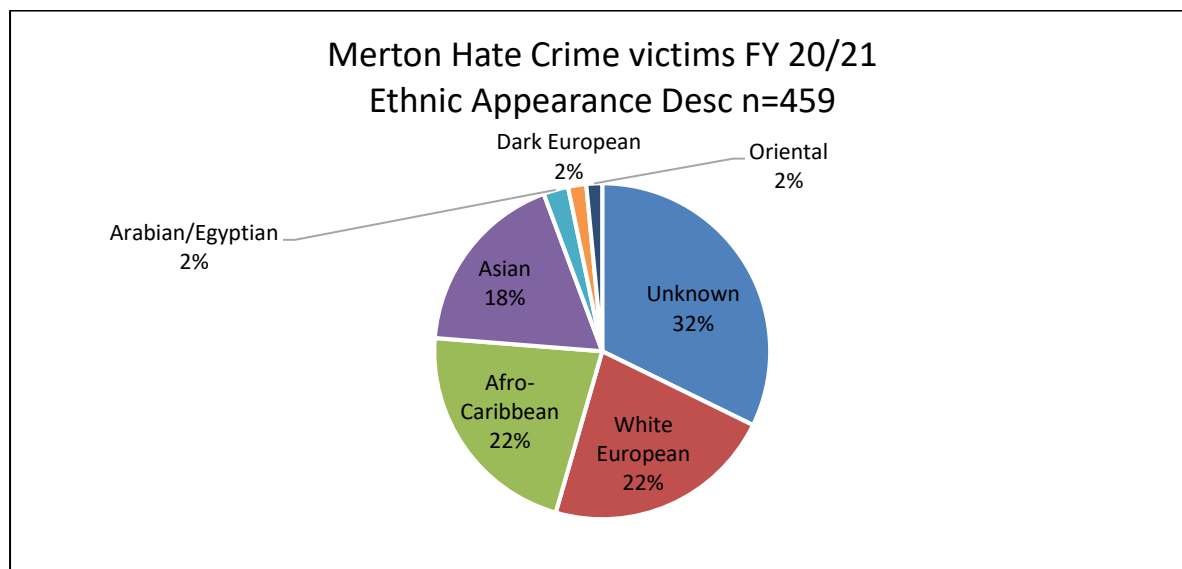
The gender split of all hate crime victims shown in the pie chart below. There has been little change in this figure since last year with no one gender being especially victimised.



Victim Ethnicity

NB. The MPS crime recording system continues to use just 6 identity codes to describe ethnicity. ³

The ethnic breakdown of victims of racist hate crimes shows 46% from a BAME group. This is 6% lower compared to the previous profile. The percentage of Unknown victim ethnicity rose by 12% to 32%. It is not clear if this is a recording practices issue which could be addressed. The percentage of Oriental victims was unchanged at 2% suggesting there was little impact on this group as a result of the covid 19 pandemic.



Victim Age

More than half the victims of hate crime in Merton were aged between 26-45 whilst 15% were aged under 25.

Suspect⁴ profile

Given the large number of suspects who are not positively identified or subsequently proceeded against for hate crime in Merton some of the findings shown below cannot necessarily be said to represent the offending community as a whole.

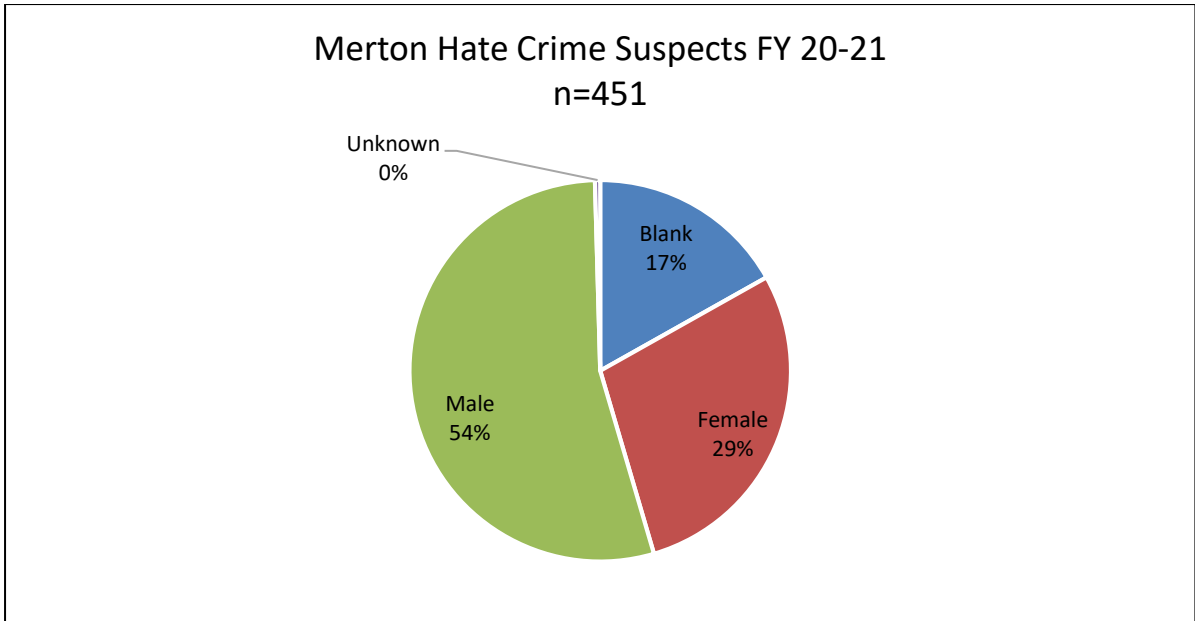
The MOPAC Hate crime dashboard⁵ previously provided an age/ethnicity breakdown for perpetrators⁶ however due to the ongoing lockdown these figures have not been updated for the 2019-20 financial year and the previous breakdown removed.

³ 0-Unknown 1 WHITE – NORTH EUROPEAN, 2 WHITE – SOUTH EUROPEAN, 3 BLACK, 4 ASIAN, 5 CHINESE, JAPANESE, OR OTHER SOUTH EAST ASIAN, 6 ARABIC OR NORTH AFRICAN

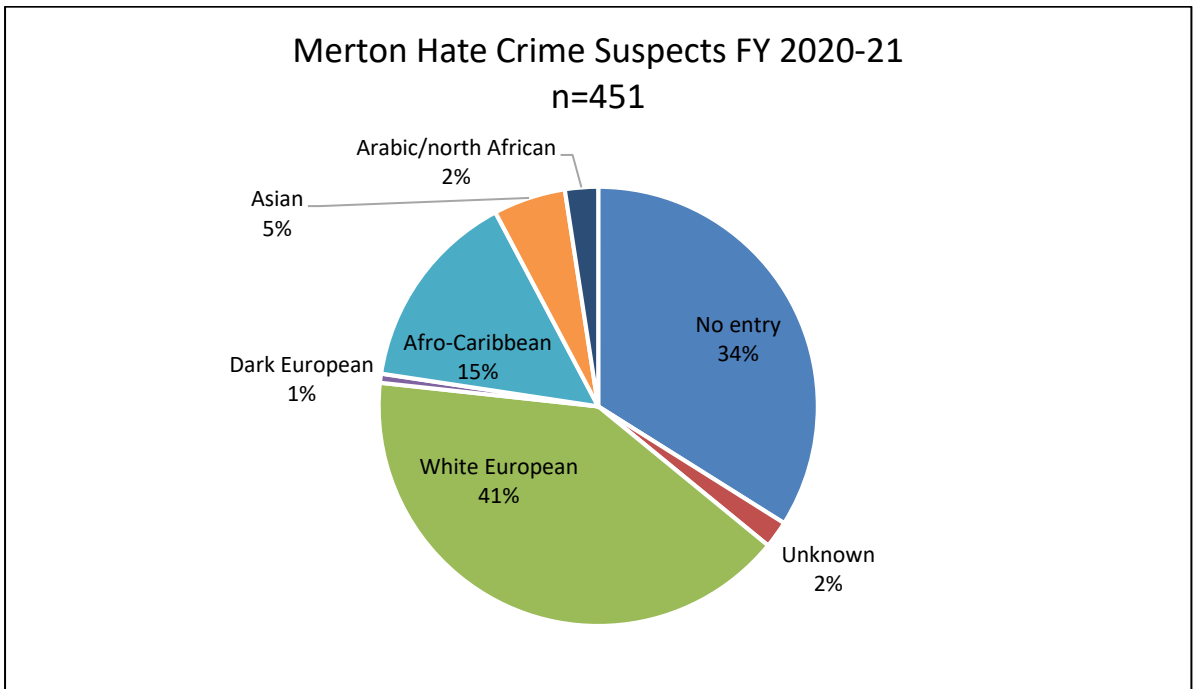
⁴ The term Suspect has been used there rather than Perpetrator as the police data detailed those named as suspects of an offence rather than those convicted of an offence

⁵ <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/mayors-office-policing-and-crime-mopac/data-and-statistics/hate-crime-dashboard>

⁶ The term perpetrator in this case means a person against whom proceedings were commenced.



Whilst the victim population was fairly evenly split there was a clear majority of male suspects.



White people made up the largest element of the suspect cohort however there was no entry in a third of the records retrieved.

Motivations for hate crime

Whilst no form of hate crime should be condoned or excused it is worthy to consider the differing situations in which they occur. Whilst some are spontaneous acts of verbal or physical assault born out of prejudice, many result from disagreements between parties over a non hate issue such as parking or anti social behaviour. The situation then escalates resulting in a hate crime taking place.

It is impossible to judge whether the initial confrontation would have occurred if both parties had been of similar backgrounds. It is therefore hard to quantify with any certainty which are purely Hate motivated offences and which are Hate aggravated offences. However the perception is that there are more hate aggravated offences.

Where verbal abuse occurs there is a tendency for some to use whatever the eye perceives to influence their choice of language whether that be skin colour, headscarf, body shape or use of spectacles. This name-calling is an abusive way of expressing a person's anger to denigrate or control the other party.

The numbers of hate crime reports which result in people being proceeded with is low. The main reasons for this low figure are:-

- In many instances the victim and suspect are unknown to each other
- There may be no physical interaction between the parties and hence no forensic opportunities
- The incident occurs in a public place where there is no CCTV coverage
- No third party witnesses come forward.

Resultingly there are few practical lines of enquiry for police to pursue.

Sanctions and Court Outcomes

A successful outcome in any criminal offence as measured by the police is referred to as a Sanctioned Detection (SDet)⁷

The sanction detection (SDet) rate is calculated by using the following formula: $SDet\ Rate = \frac{\text{Number of SDets recorded in a particular period} \times 100}{\text{Number of offences recorded in the same period}}$

The SDet rate for Hate crime across the MPS has increased for overall hate crime, from 12% to 14% for the 12 months to March 2021. The figure for Merton borough fell from 12% to 10%

⁷ A sanction detection occurs when (1) a notifiable offence (crime) has been committed and recorded; (2) a suspect has been identified and is aware of the detection; (3) the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) evidential test is satisfied; (4) the victim has been informed that the offence has been detected, and; (5) the suspect has been charged, reported for summons, or cautioned, been issued with a penalty notice for disorder or the offence has been taken into consideration when an offender is sentenced.

Key Judgement statements

National figures are several months behind those available at force and borough level and were showing the increasing trend of Hate Crime reporting flattening out. The picture in the MPS for the last financial year showed a 10% increase but the impact from the George Floyd murder / black lives matter campaign was a clear influence. Merton saw an increase on par with the MPS as a whole. The rise in offences in Wandsworth has put the SWBCU above the MPS average . (National figures are likely to be published in October).

In Merton the sanctioned detection rates for Hate Crime fell by 2% whilst the MPS as a whole rose by 2%.

Without reading the details of individual reports it is not straightforward to identify if many hate crime flagged offences were motivated by hatred or aggravated by it. Anecdotally more are aggravated in nature.

The top wards for reported hate crime in Merton are in the socio-economically challenged wards of Figge's Marsh and Cricket Green. Trinity in Wimbledon town centre and St Helier ward both fell down the rankings in terms of total hate crimes

Over half of all victims are aged between 26-45.

Recommendations

- To refresh and revisit the profile on an annual basis to support both the hate crime strategy and the strategic assessment process.
- To use the findings of this report to shape the activities of Hate Crime Awareness Week.
- To continue to monitor the hate crime detection rate for Merton for any changes.
- To target engagement on countering Hate crime in wards with the highest volumes of offences.
- Review disability hate crimes to see if any one disability is particularly victimised.
- To look at ways to improve completion of victim/suspect details on hate crime reports in terms of gender/ethnicity.