

Hate crime and violence against women and girls on London's public transport

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Key information

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Introduction

The London Assembly Police and Crime Committee is investigating incidents of hate crime and violence against women and girls on London's public transport. Violence against women and girls (VAWG) has been described as being at "epidemic levels", and incidents of hate crime on London's public transport have been rising year-on-year. The Mayor's Police and Crime Plan (PCP) has committed to establishing a dedicated Transport Hate Crime and VAWG Taskforce, including disability hate crime. As part of this investigation, the Committee will examine what the Taskforce needs to address and how it can play a meaningful role in improving public safety and confidence across the transport network.

Investigation aims and objectives (Terms of Reference)

- The effectiveness of current measures to prevent, report, and address hate crime and VAWG offences against passengers and staff on London's public transport network.
- How safe individuals with protected characteristics feel when travelling, whether they experience disproportionate levels of fear or risk, and to what extent TfL staff, British Transport Police (BTP) and the Met are responding to emergencies with urgency.
- What barriers there are to reporting hate crime and VAWG incidents, and the role that public awareness campaigns play in encouraging victims and witnesses to come forward.

Key issues

Hate crime

- Between **Jan-Aug 2024**, hate crime across the public transport network rose **27.8 per cent year-on-year** (from **1,551 to 1,982 offences**).
- In **Jan–Jun 2025**, reported hate crimes across the public transport network fell **8.3 per cent** (from **1,383 in 2024 to 1,268**) but remain **above pre-2023 levels**.
- Hate crime on London's public transport network spiked in late 2023 following the outbreak of the Israel-Gaza conflict, particularly in antisemitic and Islamophobic incidents.
- Borough-level data shows Westminster (135 offences), Camden (106), and Newham (75) as hotspots, collectively accounting for nearly a quarter of all reported hate crimes.
- London TravelWatch's *Out in London* report (2023) found that 66 per cent of LGBTQ+ Londoners reported victimisation on public transport in the past year, and 21 per cent said they had experienced hate crime while travelling.
- Disabled passengers also face high levels of abuse and discrimination: United Response's *Journey to Safety* report (2025) found that 76.3 per cent of respondents across England had experienced a disability-related incident on public transport, most commonly verbal abuse (61.6 per cent), discrimination (45.7 per cent) and threatening behaviour (42.1 per cent).

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) and sexual offences

- In the first half of 2025, 907 sexual offences were reported across TfL services, up from 879 in the same period the previous year, with the largest increase on buses.
- FOI data also shows longer-term upward trends: between 2022/23 and 2024/25, sexual offences against women and girls increased significantly on the Elizabeth line (+247.8 per cent in 2023/24 and +17.5 per cent in 2024/25), the Underground (745 in 2022/23 to 856 in 2024/25), and the bus network (+28.6 per cent in 2024/25 after a temporary dip).

Reporting and trust

- Hate crime, harassment and sexual offences are widely recognised as underreported.
- The Out in London report shows that 21 per cent of LGBTQ+ passengers experienced hate crime on transport, yet 84 per cent of these incidents were not reported. Nearly half of respondents said that seeing police officers did not help them feel safer on public transport.
- A University of Manchester analysis found that sexual harassment is massively underreported. While theft sees around 960 reports per month, sexual offences average just 116, but actual incidence estimates suggest closer to 683, indicating only 17 per cent are formally lodged.??????

Key questions

1. How should the Mayor's proposed Hate Crime and VAWG Taskforce operate, and what gaps will it fill in current responses?
2. How do people with protected characteristics experience crime, harassment and safety on London's public transport network, and to what extent do these experiences disproportionately affect their confidence to travel?
3. What are the main barriers preventing victims of hate crime or VAWG from reporting incidents on public transport?
4. What are the main challenges for TfL, the Met and British Transport Police in recognising, recording, and responding to hate crime and VAWG on the network, and how are these being addressed?
5. What interventions, including awareness campaigns, are in place to prevent hate crime and VAWG offences on public transport, and how effective have they been?
6. How effectively are the Met, BTP, and TfL working together to prevent and respond to hate crime and VAWG on the transport network, and are there gaps or overlaps in their roles?

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