

# Tackling Hate Crime on public transport

March 24, 2021



Don't Ignore It. Report it: [www.accessibletravel.scot/hate-crime](http://www.accessibletravel.scot/hate-crime)

# Hate Crime Charter



**Hate crime is when you are targeted because of who you are or who someone thinks you are. This could be because of your disability, race, religion, sexual orientation or transgender identity.**

A new Hate Crime Charter for transport has been launched in Scotland.

Transport Scotland together with Disability Equality Scotland, SEStran, People First, Police Scotland and British Transport Police have launched the charter – aimed at tackling hate crime on Scotland’s public transport network.

The purpose of the Charter is to encourage transport providers, members of the public and other services to support a zero-tolerance approach to hate crime and encourage people to report incidents.

This builds on a pilot initiative that Stagecoach, First Bus and ScotRail operated in December 2019 and January 2020. Initial results demonstrated an increased awareness amongst transport staff who felt better equipped to recognise and report hate crime that they encountered.

Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity Michael Matheson said: “I fully support the launch of the national Hate Crime Charter for public transport. I commend the work of Disability Equality Scotland and partners for promoting this zero-tolerance approach.

“We want Scotland to have a transport network that is safe for everyone to use and this Charter will help

to raise awareness of hate crime, in all its forms, and remind everyone that it will not be tolerated.”

Disability Equality Scotland’s Operations Manager Emma Scott said: “Our public consultations indicated that people would rather travel on a service that shows its commitment to tackling hate crime, than not. This Charter provides clear and common standards for challenging hate crime, encouraging reporting with the overall aim of prevention of hate crime incidents on the public transport network. We’re delighted so many transport partners are engaged in this process which will help everyone feel comfortable and safe to travel in Scotland.”

Barry Boffy, Head of Inclusion & Diversity at the British Transport Police said: “We’re proud to stand alongside Transport Scotland and all of the partner agencies who have come together to develop this Hate Crime Charter. The launch of this Charter is further evidence of our shared commitment to ensuring public transport that meets the needs of all passengers and staff – and is an environment free from hate and intolerance. At British Transport Police, we firmly believe that everyone should be treated with dignity and respect and have the confidence to work or travel on public transport free from fear, harassment, intimidation or persecution.

“This Charter is a pledge to not only those who live and work in Scotland, but all those who choose to visit this incredibly diverse and vibrant part of the UK. We Stand Together with you.”

Assistant Chief Constable Gary Ritchie at Police Scotland said: “There is never a justifiable reason to target another person, and hate crime is a despicable offence, and one which I hope is increasingly viewed with a zero tolerance approach in our communities.

“Hate crime is an historically under-reported issue, and we can only establish the true scale of this type of offence if people give us the opportunity to address the incidents they’ve experienced. I very much hope this charter this will encourage anyone who’s been a victim – or a witness – to hate crime, either on our transport network or elsewhere, to report it by calling 101, or 999 in an emergency, or through our third party reporting partners, who are listed on the Police Scotland website.”

Keith Lynch, Chairperson at People First (Scotland) said: “Hate crime on public transport has a significant and damaging impact on the lives of many people with learning disabilities. We hope that the Hate Crime Charter will send a message that it is not okay to abuse people with a learning disability on public transport and that transport providers will not tolerate this kind of behaviour. We also hope that it will help change attitudes among the general public and other passengers and encourage them to report hate crime when they witness it.”

Jim Grieve, SEStran Partnership Director said: “SEStran welcomes the launch of the Hate Crime Charter, because everyone should feel safe to use public transport. The Charter sends a strong message that we do not tolerate hate crime on public transport, or indeed in any walk of life, and encourages everyone to report such incidents. Together we can achieve a more inclusive transport system.”

Douglas Robertson, Managing Director, Stagecoach East Scotland said: “We are delighted to be involved in the Hate Crime Charter and believe it is a positive step in tackling hate crime. We do not condone any behaviour of this manner, on or off our services and will continue to work with partners to ensure all our

customers and staff are treated fairly and with respect. We look forward to seeing how this progresses over the coming months.”

Alex Hynes, Managing Director, Scotland’s Railway said: “Everyone has the right to travel safely. Hate crime has no place in society and certainly not on Scotland’s Railway.

“It is a cowardly and disgraceful way of targeting someone on the grounds of their disability, race, religion or sexual orientation.

“ScotRail is proud to be one of the first transport providers to sign up to the Hate Crime Charter and we will do all we can to help eliminate this despicable offence.”

Graeme Macfarlan, Commercial Director for Scotland, FirstBus said: “All passengers have the right to travel on our services without being targeted simply for who they are, and our drivers are trained and equipped to deal with any potential on-board situations. The Hate Crime Charter gives a clear message to passengers that operators won’t tolerate any form of inappropriate behaviour. We’re therefore proud to be involved in the charter and its objectives to increase confidence among public transport users alongside the support that it charter offers everyone.”

*Photo credit: Transport Scotland*