

University of Sunderland

ICOS

A SURVEY FOR EASTERN EUROPEAN WOMEN

UNIVERSITY OF SUNDERLAND
WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ICOS

"I've been asked to return to my home country by one of my lecturers": An exploration of discrimination experienced by Eastern European women in Tyne and Wear

Preliminary findings from an online survey

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Our Team

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Eastern European Migrants in Tyne and Wear

POPULATION OF TYNE AND WEAR BORN OVERSEAS (THOUSANDS)

Region	Population (Thousands)
EU8	10,000
EU2	3,000
Other	75,000

The total population of Tyne and Wear is approx. 1,038,000

Around 10,000 residents of Tyne and Wear were born in EU8 countries (Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia or Slovenia), and around 3,000 were born in EU2 countries, i.e. Bulgaria or Romania.

The other 75,000 residents of Tyne and Wear who were born overseas will include people born in Eastern European countries outside of the EU (e.g. Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Albania, Moldova, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo or North Macedonia. (ONS, 2021)

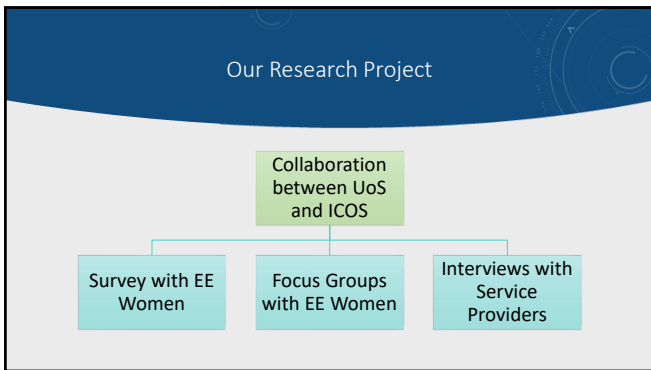
It is likely that women make up over half of these numbers (Guereño-Omil et al, 2019)

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Previous Research into EE Women Living in the UK

Previous research in this area has identified that, since the Brexit referendum in 2016, Eastern European migrants have experienced an increase in both objective and subjective vulnerability (Lahuerta & Iusmen, 2021), verbal abuse (Lumsden et al, 2019; Rzepnikowska, 2020), and psychological distress as a consequence of discrimination at work (Martynowska et al, 2020)

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Survey with EE Women Living in Tyne and Wear

Purpose - Understand two aspects of the lived experience of Eastern European women in Tyne and Wear, including:

1. Their experiences and concerns in relation to hate crime and discrimination
2. Their wider needs in relation to local services

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Survey Participants

- N=116 EE women living in regions across Tyne and Wear
- Aged 18 to 62 years (M=39 yrs)
- Majority Polish origin (67%)
- Over half of women hold Higher Education qualifications
- 49% employed FT and 16% employed PT

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Discrimination

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employer• Organisation or service provider• Health care provider• Housing provider/landlord• Education provider• Transport services• Public bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Age• Disability• Gender reassignment• Marriage and civil partnership• Pregnancy and maternity• Race• Religion or belief• Sex• Sexual orientation
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Discrimination Against EE Women Living in Tyne and Wear

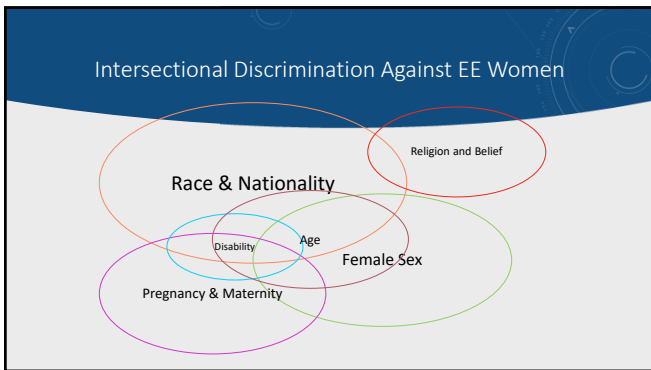
- 37% of EE women had been discriminated against at work
- 25% of EE women had been discriminated by a business, organisation or service provider
- 14% of EE women had been discriminated against by a health care provider
- 18% of EE women had been discriminated against by a housing provider/landlord
- 10% of EE women had been discriminated against by an education provider
- 10% of EE women had been discriminated against by a transport service
- 12% had been discriminated against by public bodies, i.e. government, LAs

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Quotes from EE Women on Experiences of Discrimination

I've been a student at [name of university] and I've been facing racist comments in private and in front of my classmates regarding my race and I've been asked to return to my home country by one of my lecturers.

I had a gas engineer come to my house to install a cooker. He proceeded to tell me he doesn't like foreigners in this country and when he left he asked me 'so, when are they kicking you out then?'

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Quotes from EE Women on Experiences of Discrimination

One happened during my working hours where I've been asked to go back to my country and then asked if I drink gypsy blood.

When I was 16/17 and still at school other students would often call me crazy Russian/Bulgarian and teachers would often hear this but never took it seriously.

I was asked at work 'how did you get this job? Because all the Romanian women I know are sex workers'

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Hate Crime

- Verbal abuse
- Intimidation, threats or harassment
- Physical assault
- Property Damage
- Disability
- Race
- Religion
- Sexual orientation
- Transgender identity

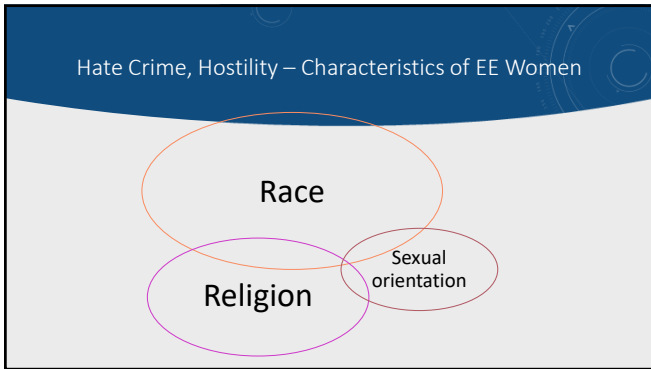
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Experiences of Hate Crime for EE Women Living in Tyne and Wear

- 46% of EE women had experienced verbal abuse
- 32% of EE women had experienced intimidation, threats or harassment
- 12% of EE women had been physically assaulted
- 19% of EE women had their property damaged

The largest proportion of these hate crimes against EE women were perpetrated in the last year, with a smaller proportion being perpetrated in the past week, fortnight and month.

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Quotes from EE Women on Hate Crime

Swastika sprayed on my wheelie bin and food thrown against walls/ garden.

Me and my family had to move houses due to harassment, racism and repeated hate crime offences.

My window got smashed and I was called "black cunt".

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Barriers to Accessing Services for EE Women

- 14% experienced barriers or challenges in registering with a GP Practice
- 4% have been refused health care, support services or other public services because they did not have the correct documentation
- 24% have experienced challenges communicating with healthcare staff and service providers because of language barriers
- 33% have experienced challenges in understanding information relating healthcare or other services due to language barriers
- 50% said there were not sufficient support services available in the forms of translation and interpretation when accessing health care, support services or other public services

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Quotes from EE Women on Barriers to Accessing Services

At the recommendation of my GP, I was invited for ultrasound scans. Two weeks after the consultation, I received a message from the hospital asking for payment for their services. Luckily, I was able to offer them proof that I am entitled to receive for free that type of medical consultation. In their message asking for payment, the hospital threatened me saying that, if I would not settle my debt, they would pass the information to the Home Office, according to the immigration rules.

I speak English well, so I often accompany my friends for doctors' visits because they don't offer translation services.

Not enough information in other languages, e.g. domestic abuse information only available in English

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Implications and Next Steps

- The University of Sunderland's own Inclusion, Diversity and Social Responsibility annual report 2020-21 (UoS, 2021) notes that 6.4% of our students come from the EU, but does not identify whether this group is classified as white or BAME in the report
- Writers including Fox et al (2015) and Rzepiniwiska (2020) identify that racism or xenophobia can be underestimated or hidden where the victims are 'white'
- We hope to prompt a conversation about how we might mitigate this experience for our students, both at university and in preparation for the workplace

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Questions or Thoughts?

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