

Hate Speech Legislation is the UK

Public Order Act 1986, Part 111, s. 17, 23

'It is an offence to incite hatred against a group of persons defined by reference to colour, race, nationality (including citizenship) or ethnic or national origins.'

'A person who uses threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour or displays any written material which is threatening, abusive or insulting, is guilty of an offence...'

'A person who publishes or distributes written material which is threatening, abusive or insulting is guilty of an offence...'

'A person who distributes, or shows or plays, a recording of visual images or sounds which are threatening, abusive or insulting is guilty of an offence...'

'If a programme involving threatening, abusive or insulting visual images or sounds is included in a programme service, each of the persons mentioned in subsection (2) is guilty of an offence...'

'A person who has in his possession written material which is threatening, abusive or insulting, or a recording of visual images or sounds which are threatening, abusive or insulting.....is guilty of an offence if he intends racial hatred to be stirred up, or having regard to all the circumstances, racial hatred is likely to be stirred up....'

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1986/64/part/III/data.pdf>

Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006 Part 3A, s. 29

Amended the Public Order Act 1986 by making provision for hatred against 'persons defined by reference to religious belief or lack of religious belief'.

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/1/pdfs/ukpga_20060001_en.pdf

Communications Act 2003, s. 127

'A person is guilty of an offence if he (a) sends by means of a public electronic communications network a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character...'

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/21/section/127?view=plain_downloaded

Malicious Communications Act 1988 (amended 2001)

Internet trolls who post offensive messages on Twitter can be arrested and charged under the Malicious Communications Act 1988.

There is no requirement for the message to necessarily reach the recipient it must merely have been sent, delivered or transmitted.

Those found guilty of sending malicious communications face a maximum of six months imprisonment or a £5000 fine.

Offence of sending letters etc. with intent to cause distress or anxiety.

(1) Any person who sends to another person
(a) a letter, electronic communication or article of any description which conveys
(i) a message which is indecent or grossly offensive
(ii) a threat; or
(iii) information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender; or
(b) any article or electronic communication which is, in whole or part, of an indecent or grossly offensive nature
Is guilty of an offence if his purpose, or one of his purposes, in sending it is that it should, so far as falling within paragraph (a) or (b) above, cause distress or anxiety to the recipient or to any other person to whom he intends that it or its contents or nature should be communicated.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/27>

Protection from Harassment Act 1997

Addresses behaviour, including online, which is repeated and unwanted and which causes the victim alarm or distress.

1 Prohibition of harassment.

(1) A person must not pursue a course of conduct
(a) which amounts to harassment of another, and
(b) which he knows or ought to know amounts to harassment of the other.
(2) For the purposes of this section, the person whose course of conduct is in question ought to know that it amounts to harassment of another if a reasonable person in possession of the same information would think the course of conduct amounted to harassment of the other.

4 Putting people in fear of violence

(1) A person whose course of conduct causes another to fear, on at least two occasions, that violence will be used against him is guilty of an offence if he knows or ought to know that his course of conduct will cause the other so to fear on each of those occasions.
(2) For the purposes of this section, the person whose course of conduct is in question ought to know that it will cause another to fear that violence will be used against him on any occasion if a reasonable person in possession of the same information would think the course of conduct would cause the other so to fear on that occasion.

The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (Part 11 of Schedule 9) amended the Act to include stalking which can be linked with racial or religious hatred. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (Section 32) also provides for two racially or religiously aggravated offences.