

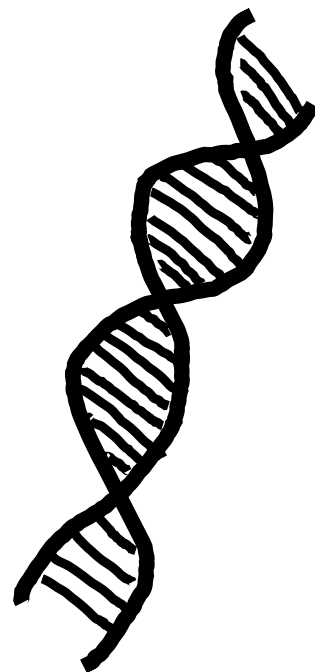
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



1. What is Race?

Historically, there was a belief that human beings could be separated into different categories or groups that were called 'races'. It was believed that these separate 'races', who may have shared some common physical features such as skin colour, hair type and facial features, also shared similar and particular skills, characteristics and abilities. Racist systems and laws, and people with racist attitudes have used this idea to label certain 'races' as fundamentally different and inferior. This has led to persecution, oppression and in extreme cases, genocide.

Through the discovery of genetics, and advances in scientific knowledge, it is now very clear that there is just one species to which we all belong and that people of all skin colours and appearances have the same potential. The physical differences between people around the world are external, not internal, and are caused by the adaptation of people to different environments over time.

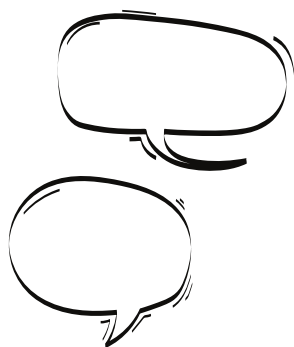


There are only a very small number of genes that control the code of our physical appearance and they are not in any way connected to genes that provide the code for other characteristics. In fact, two people from different 'races' can be genetically more similar than individuals from the same. Source: Genetic Similarities Within and Between Human Populations, US National Library of Medicine (2007).

There is only one race - The Human Race!

2. What about "banter" between friends, isn't that okay?

No! Using someone's skin colour, religion, culture or nationality as an insult can have a deep effect. It implies that it is negative to be of that background and attacks something which is a big part of that person's identity. It is not just an attack on the individual, but on other members of their family, community or group. Former professional footballer Leroy Rosenior decided to call his autobiography 'It's Only Banter' as every form of racism he suffered was dismissed as banter. Allowing 'jokes' or 'banter' creates a society where that behaviour is deemed acceptable and paves the way for ridicule, name calling, exclusion and eventually more serious forms of racism such as violence.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



3. What is the role of the media in racism?

The way the media reports issues plays a huge role in our understanding and perception of the world. For example, a recent study (Guardian: 2018) found that, on average terrorist attacks committed by Muslim extremists received 357% more media attention than terrorist attacks committed by any other group. Unfortunately, we must remember that profit will always be the primary motivation of the media and stories that shock or appal us will sell better than nuanced articles which cover a range of perspectives. It is extremely important that we question information we see in the mainstream media and do our own research around issues, making sure that we do not let harmful myths change or influence our world view.



4. Why do people link Islam and terrorism?

Many young people and adults are fearful of Muslim extremists because of the high profile of incidents such as 9/11 and the bombing at Arianna Grande's concert in Manchester (22nd May 2017). However, there are approximately 1.8 billion Muslims in the world and only a very tiny percentage have ever been involved in any terrorist activity. Worryingly many people are being attacked and blamed for the actions of this very small number of extremists, simply because they share a faith, nationality or skin colour.

It is not fair for society to choose which aspect of someone's identity matters the most and to judge their whole being based on the groups they belong to. Being a Muslim is only one part of a person's identity and it may not be the most important part. Within a group of people who share one characteristic, for example the religion of Islam, there is a massive amount of diversity! It is so important that we question information we see in the mainstream media about Muslim people and look for alternative evidence to back up our opinions.

Archaeological evidence suggests that Muslims have lived in the UK since 760AD and there have been large Muslim communities here for the past 300 years.

We wouldn't judge all white people on the actions of the attacker in Christchurch, New Zealand (15th March 2019) who committed an appalling terrorist attack, so why would we with any other group?



5. Do asylum seekers come here to take advantage of the benefits system?

There is often a perception that asylum seekers want to come to the UK to take advantage or exploit our benefits systems, however this is not the case! Asylum seekers do not come to the UK to claim benefits. Most know nothing about welfare benefits before they arrive and have no expectation that they would receive financial support. Almost all asylum seekers are not allowed to work and are forced to rely on state support - this can be as little as £5 a day to live on. Most asylum seekers are living in poverty and experience poor health and hunger. Many families are not able to pay for the basics such as clothing, powdered milk and nappies.



6. Do immigrants contribute positively to the UK?

Yes! Migrants fill skills gaps and take on jobs that UK employers can't fill. They bring diversity to the workforce which has been shown to improve productivity.

Britain has an aging population, but most migrants are young and fit and contribute much more to the economy than they take out. Did you know?

According to the UN, an estimated 4.9 million British born people have emigrated and now live abroad (2015).

7. Do the majority of jobs go to immigrants? Can they skip the housing queue?

The answer to both questions is no. The Office of National Statistics (2016) says that while the numbers of EU workers in Britain has risen by 700,000 since 2013, they are outnumbered by the extra one million Britons who have entered employment in the same period (2013-2016). The number of British citizens working in the UK labour force is now at the near-record level of 28 million. That compares with 3 million foreign nationals.

The housing situation in Britain is more complex. There are two different types of rented accommodation: Those which are provided by the Local Authority - social housing, and those which are let by private landlords. The majority of new immigrants are not eligible for social housing at all. However, some immigrants (mainly those from the European Union who are in employment), cannot join social housing queue. Those waiting for social housing in Britain are allocated points depending on their situation and according to need, so for example somebody who is escaping domestic violence with a child would be given a high number of points.

Often migrants live in difficult-to-let former local authority properties that have been sold to private landlords, and local authorities occasionally use unused social housing to temporarily house asylum seekers. This may make it appear to the local community that these people are jumping the queue; however, this is not the truth.

Over 90% of those in social housing are UK born. Source: Social housing allocation and immigrant communities EHRC (2009)

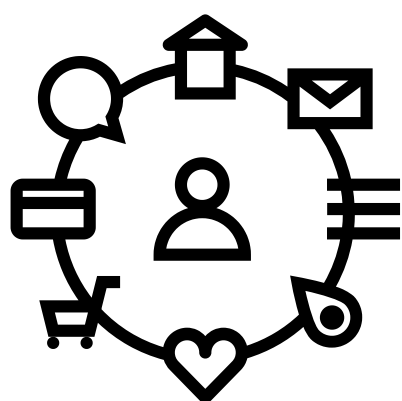
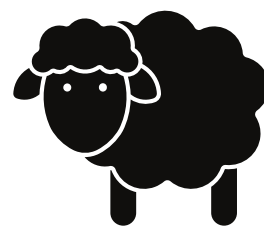


8. Acceptable terminology is constantly changing – what’s the point? How much harm can a word do?

It can be difficult to keep up to date with language, which is constantly evolving. However, the evolution of language and terminology, which comes when we involve people in a discussion about how they would like to be identified, can only be a good thing. Nobody can argue that the evolution of charity ‘The Spastic Society’ to ‘Scope’ was a waste of time. It isn’t particularly difficult to change the words we use, and we know words can be extremely harmful to both individuals but also can shape society’s perception of certain groups. As Chris Gaine said “How can it not be right to watch what we say and avoid offence, or to address people and describe them in terms that they find acceptable?” (2005).

9. Isn’t this just another example of political correctness ‘gone mad’?

The myth of the ‘PC Brigade’ was created by the media based on articles which were exaggerated or, even worse, entirely fictional. You have probably heard that Christmas is going to be cancelled because it offends Muslims or that schools can’t sing Ba Ba Black Sheep anymore because it is racist. Both stories are untrue but have been repeated so many times that many believe them. **Show Racism the Red Card** regularly visit schools who needlessly sing about multicultural or rainbow sheep in order to avoid offence. These myths can be both distracting and extremely harmful, creating resentment between communities for no reason at all.



10. Isn’t it best to ignore our differences and just treat everybody the ‘same’?

We often hear people proudly claim that they “don’t see colour” and whilst this is mostly well intentioned it simply means someone is ignoring the problem of racism, not helping to solve it. We must acknowledge difference to be able to acknowledge the support that different individuals may need. If we ignore someone’s skin colour for example, we are ignoring the experiences that will have made them who they are.