

5:2 Glossary of Terms (Equalities Terminology)

African-Caribbean:

(as opposed to Afro-Caribbean) is much more widely used and accepted, especially in official and academic documents, to refer to Black people of Caribbean origin.

Young people born in Britain will probably simply refer to themselves as **Black**, **Black British** or even **Black Bristolian** where racial identity is relevant. It will therefore be appropriate to describe them by this term (rather than to describe them as African-Caribbean). However, increased interest among young Black people in their **African** cultural origins is resulting in a greater assertion of the African aspect of their identity, and the term **African-Caribbean** is now more widely used in some circles. Likewise, the term **African** is acceptable and may be used in self-identification, although many of those of African origin will refer to themselves in national terms as Nigerian, Ghanaian, etc. Bristol City Council policy is that **Black** is used with a capital **B** to identify it as a positive political term.

Afrikan:

Refers to people of African heritage across the Diaspora for example, African, Black British, African-Caribbean, and multiple heritage, where a parent is of African descent.

Anti-racist:

An approach adopted by those who directly challenge racism and provide alternative ideologies and structures to current practices which, consciously or unconsciously, are racist in effect.

Asylum Seeker:

A person who has fled from his or her home country in search of safety, and applied for political asylum in another country.

Black:

The term Black is a positive all-inclusive descriptor to describe people who are not white. The word is also a political term of solidarity. It refers to people of African, African-Caribbean, South Asian, South East Asian, Chinese and other minority ethnic people who share a common experience of discrimination in Britain on account of their colour or racial origin.

Black and minority ethnic (BME):

The term agreed locally as most acceptable to describe people who are not white British.

Coloured:

Whilst this term has been commonly used to refer to Black people in the past, it is now considered offensive and old fashioned. The term originated in colonial times and was used primarily by white people to describe Black people.

Community cohesion:

‘By community cohesion, we mean working towards a society in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities; a society in which the diversity of people’s backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued; a society in which similar life opportunities are available to all; and a society in which strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community.’ (Alan Johnson Secretary of State for Education and Skills Nov 2006)

Culture:

This defines certain customs or practices that are common to specific groups of people and constitutes a self-identification within the group. People of the same heritage, ethnicity group or religion usually share cultures.

Diversity:

The difference in values, attitudes, cultural perspective, beliefs, ethnic background, sexuality, skills, knowledge and life experiences of each individual in any group of people.

Equal opportunities:

The absence or removal of barriers to economic, social and political participation on the grounds of difference, for example due to a person’s gender, ethnicity, sexuality, age, disability etc.

Ethnic:

This term refers to cultural groups of various kinds. It is often wrongly used to refer to Black communities only; whereas all people have ethnicity hence white people are also parts of particular ethnic groups.

Ethnic Group:

‘A group of people who share common historical experiences, a cluster of cultural beliefs and practices, a broad collective consciousness of belonging together...’ (Phikhu Parekh)

Ethnic Minorities:

A term used in Britain to describe groups of people who are identified in terms of a common heritage or culture which is different to that of the majority within Britain.

Harassment:

Unwanted behaviour that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creates a degrading, humiliating, hostile, intimidating or offensive working environment. Harassment on grounds of race or ethnic or national origins is a specific unlawful act under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 (RRAA). Harassment on other grounds may involve less favourable treatment and may be unlawful direct discrimination.

Immigrant:

A person who leaves their country of origin voluntarily and enters the UK for a variety of reasons for example to work, study, join family.

Institutionalised Racism:

The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage Black and minority ethnic people.

Multiple heritage (Mixed heritage, mixed race):

The term half-caste is generally found offensive and should be avoided. The term multiple heritage describes persons born to parents who are from a mixture of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. However many young people concerned still prefer the term mixed race.

Prejudice:

This involves a judgement made, without sufficient knowledge of facts, which is stereotypical or discriminatory. Prejudice is when negative judgements are made about individuals or groups of people who are perceived to be inferior.

Race:

Categorisation of people defined by colour of skin and physical appearance, which was developed from a falsely scientific way of thinking. It has now become a social concept with no biological or scientific basis (essentially there is only one race which is the human race).

Race relations:

The relationships between people of different ethnic groups.

Racial Discrimination:

This refers to practices, which disadvantage or deny opportunity to those of a different heritage or culture. The Race Relations Act (1976) defines two types of racial discrimination:

- Direct discrimination involves a situation whereby a person is treated less favourably than another on racial grounds.
- Indirect discrimination is more difficult to identify and occurs when access is formally given to everybody but practices show that a smaller proportion of a particular group are unable to comply with requirements and this cannot be justified.

Racial group:

Racial groups are groups defined by racial characteristics i.e. race, colour, nationality (including citizenship) or ethnic or national origins. All racial groups are protected from unlawful racial discrimination under the Race Relations Act. Romany Gypsies, Irish Travellers, Jews and Sikhs have been explicitly recognised by the courts as constituting racial groups for the purposes of the Race Relations Act.

Racism:

Racism results from prejudiced attitudes based upon notions of racial superiority and inferiority. When combined with power this produces behaviour and institutional structures that discriminate against Black and ethnic minority groups.

Refugee:

A person who has a well-founded fear of persecution; or a person who is a victim or potential victim of persecution because of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or of a particular political opinion.

Stereotyping:

Refers to assumptions that a person's abilities, interests, characteristics and behaviour are determined by their sex, sexuality, marital status, 'race', religion, age, colour nationality etc.

Adapted from

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