

Glossary of Equality and Diversity Terms

We have produced this glossary of terms to encourage a common understanding and use of terminology relating to equality, diversity, and inclusion. Many of the terms are used within our [EDI Policy](#).

We have researched and gathered definitions from several sources, but recognise that language and terms change; please contact us if you notice any terms that need to be updated, or if you have any other comments regarding this glossary.

Ableism

Ableism is prejudice against and/or unfavourable treatment of people with disabilities based on the belief that people without disabilities

Age and ageism

Age is one of the nine protected characteristics included within the Equality Act 2010. Generally speaking, it is unlawful to discriminate against anyone because of age, although there are exceptions when goods and services and other things can be prioritised for specific age groups, such as providing care services or concessionary travel discounts to older people.

Ageism can be defined as any attitude, action or institutional structure, which through its actions ends up making people subordinate because of their age (sees them as inferior, less, less important, less able...). Age discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably because of their age and particularly affects young and older people.

Ally

A person who is not a member of a marginalized or disadvantaged group but who expresses or gives support to that group.

Alternative formats

This refers to when information is produced in other or additional methods so as to make it easier to read and understand/ easier to access the information, and often means producing information in other languages either in written word or spoken word, in British Sign language, in an easy read version for people with a learning disability, or perhaps in a larger size to meet the needs of someone with reduced or loss of vision.

Producing information in alternative formats can form an example of a reasonable adjustment for disabled people, or as positive action to tackle race inequality.

More information about the available alternative formats are available on the Council's website at:

Anti-Semitism

Anti-Semitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of anti-Semitism are directed towards Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/ or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.

Autism

Autism is a lifelong condition which affects how a person communicates with and relates to other people. It also affects how they make sense of the world around them. Everyone with autism is different.

- Some people with autism can find it hard to tell people how they feel and what they need.
- Some find it hard to make new friends.
- Some can find it hard to understand what other people think and how they feel

Bisexual

Bisexual is the term which refers to a man or a woman who is emotionally and sexually attracted to people of both sexes.

Black and Minority Ethnic

Whilst there is no single word or phrase which fully covers all members of minority ethnic groups in Britain, the term black and minority ethnic is often used to summarise all of the groups which fall under this category. This phrase has replaced earlier examples which are no longer seen as appropriate. When people refer to themselves as black or Black this usually mean they are from an African-Caribbean and Asian origin to show a shared experience of discrimination and exploitation (in Britain and abroad).

People who are both white and black increasingly refer to themselves as dual heritage rather than using the term mixed race, which is the term which was used in the last census in 2011.

Bullying

Bullying can be defined as offensive behaviour which violates a person's dignity, or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment, or which humiliates or undermines an individual or group. Bullying can take various forms, from name calling, sarcasm, teasing, and unwanted criticism, to threats of violence or actual physical violence. Such behaviour can be vindictive, cruel or malicious.

Bullying can cause stress and employers may fail in their duty to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of employees, if they do not take steps to prevent it or respond to it effectively.

Carers

Carers are people who, without payment, provide help and support to a partner, child, relative, friend or neighbour who could not manage without this help. This could be due to age, physical or mental illness, learning disability, addiction or disability. The carer may be an adult, child or young person.

Civil partnership

Same sex couples can legally undergo a marriage or civil partnership. If they form a civil partnership, they have the legal status of civil partner. This brings with it a range of legal rights and equal treatment for things such as tax, benefits, pensions, parenting responsibilities etc.

Deaf

Whilst most people use the word deaf to mean loss of hearing it can also be used with a capital D to refer to the Deaf community, those with hearing loss who use British Sign Language as their first language.

Disability and the Social Model of Disability

Disability has a legal definition within the Equality Act 2010. For the purposes of our Policy we have adopted what is known as the Social Model of Disability and accordingly a broader meaning of disability:

“Disability is the disadvantage or restriction of activity arising out of how society regards people who have a disability, failing to make adjustments to enable disabled people to enjoy full and free access to all aspects of society and the environment. Disability is not caused by an individual's impairment but by the way society fails to meet their needs.”

Disabled people

We will use the term Disabled people and not phrases such as “The disabled” as this recognises people as individuals.

Direct Discrimination

Direct discrimination is where a person is treated less favourably on the grounds of a protected characteristic. For example, recruiting a male applicant for a job rather than a more qualified woman because of irrational, prejudicial or stereotypical views, or not accepting a disabled person on to a course because it is assumed they would not be able to meet the required course standards due to their disability, would constitute direct disability.

Diversity

Diversity means the different backgrounds and beliefs of people we serve or work with. Diversity recognises that everyone is different in a variety of visible and non-visible ways, and that those differences are to be recognised, respected and valued. They may include, but are not limited to, differences protected by equalities law known as protected characteristics.

Equal opportunities

Equal opportunities, or equality of opportunity, may be defined as ensuring that everyone is entitled to freedom from discrimination, where individuals have an equal opportunity to fulfil their potential. The term Equal Opportunities has mostly been replaced by Equality and Diversity in recent years.

Equal pay

Equal pay is generally used to refer to the provisions of the Equal Pay Act 1970 which requires men and women to be paid the same where they are employed on like work, work rated as equivalent under a valid pay evaluation scheme, or work of equal value, unless the pay difference can be objectively justified. In order to comply with equal pay legislation it is recommended that employers have a job evaluation scheme in place and that they carry out an equal pay audit to highlight and rectify any disparities.

Ethnicity, Race and National origin

Views of what constitutes ethnicity, race and national origin generally include a common understanding of culture and a shared history. Ethnicity and race are seen as something fluid and socially influenced. Culture (one of the key components) is increasingly seen as constantly developing and reproducing our ethnic identities.

Equality

Equality is about eliminating disadvantage, discrimination, deprivation and treating people fairly. Equity is where groups have parity.

Gaslighting

First popularized in the 1944 movie Gas Light, it means a deliberate attempt to undermine a victim's sense of reality or sanity. In a work context, it usually means behaviours that undermine the success, self-confidence, self-esteem or wellbeing of the target. For people in underrepresented or less powerful groups, it is more likely to occur, with more severe and harmful cumulative effects. Tactics can include withholding (critical information, meeting invitations, silent treatment), isolation (exclusion, causing conflict with co-workers), and discrediting (consistently shooting down the target's ideas, ignoring or taking credit for them).

Gender

This is the sex-role identity used by humans to emphasise the difference between females and males. The words "gender" and "sex" are often used to mean the same thing, but sex relates specifically to the biological and physical characteristics which make a person male or female at birth, whereas gender refers to the behaviour and experiences associated with members of that sex. Gender stereotypes lead to sexism.

Gender identity

The gender to which you feel you belong.

Gender Nonconforming or Gender Non-binary

A way of identifying and/or expressing oneself outside the binary gender categories of male/masculine and female/feminine.

Gender re-assignment

This is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 and relates to when a person changes from one gender to another, with or without medical treatment. The term Trans or Transgender is often used when referring to people who are or who have undergone gender re-assignment.

Harassment

Harassment is behaviour which is unwanted, uninvited, and which fails to respect the individual. Harassment can happen in and around the workplace, in communities, and has a harmful effect and creates negative feelings. It is

left to the person experiencing the harassment to determine if the treatment is offensive and unacceptable. Harassment is often subtle and long term, and can include a wide range of behaviours including unwelcome comments; offensive material and graffiti; verbal insults, threats or obscene behaviour; malicious complaints; being ignored; overlooking or shunning particular employees; unwanted physical contact; and offensive jokes; bullying; unjustified or unconstructive criticism; and violence.

Heterosexual

Heterosexual is the term which refers to a man or woman who is emotionally and sexually attracted to people of the opposite sex.

Heterosexism

Heterosexism is the assumption that every individual is heterosexual. This has been institutionalised in the family, as well as culture and the law.

Homophobia

Homophobia describes the aggressive or fearful feelings and behaviour directed at lesbians, gay men and bisexual men and women. This can range from jokes, graffiti, insults and threats, discrimination, to physical threats and violence.

Impairment

We use the word impairment to describe the grounds on which people are disabled.

Intersex

Intersex people are individuals born with anatomy and physiology that differs from contemporary ideas of what constitutes "normal" male and female. Genitalia may be ambiguous, but can often appear totally male or totally female. Often, but not always, people choose to present as either male or female.

Islamophobia

Islamophobia is a form of irrational hatred or fear of people who follow Islam. It is often replicated as discrimination, harassment, abuse or hate crime towards people of Asian and Arabian origin, sometimes this will include people who do not follow Islam.

Lesbians and gay men

Lesbian and gay are terms which most lesbians and gay men prefer rather than homosexual. Lesbians often prefer the term “lesbian” rather than gay woman because it reflects their separate identities and experiences.

LGB, LGBT and LGBTQ

This is used as the collective term for people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or who consider their identity to be subject to homophobia, transphobia or Heterosexism.

Microaggression

A comment or action that unconsciously or unintentionally expresses or reveals a prejudiced attitude toward a member of a marginalized group, such as a racial minority. These small, common occurrences include insults, slights, stereotyping, undermining, devaluing, delegitimizing, overlooking or excluding someone. Over time, microaggressions can isolate and alienate those on the receiving end, and affect their health and wellbeing.

Microaffirmation

A microaffirmation is a small gesture of inclusion, caring or kindness. They include listening, providing comfort and support, being an ally and explicitly valuing the contributions and presence of all. It is particularly helpful for those with greater power or seniority to “model” affirming behavior.

Neurodiversity

When neurological differences are recognized and respected as are any other kind of human differences or variations. These differences can include Dyspraxia, Dyslexia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Dyscalculia, Autistic Spectrum, and Tourette Syndrome.

Positive Action

Positive action is where there has been discrimination in the past, so we target our resources to work with people to overcome discrimination. It can be used in service delivery and employment and training. It is often used to address inequality and to address under-representation or remove barriers to equality.

Prejudice

An unfavourable opinion or feeling, formed beforehand or without knowledge or awareness, based on partial knowledge or selective use of knowledge. It is also unreasonable feelings, opinions or attitudes, especially hostile ones.

Pronouns

Words to refer to a person after initially using their name. Gendered pronouns include she and he, her and him, hers and his, and herself and himself.

"Preferred gender pronouns" (or PGPs) are the pronouns that people ask others to use in reference to themselves. They may be plural gender-neutral pronouns such as they, them, their(s). Or, they may be ze (rather than she or he) or hir (rather

Protected Characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 has defined 9 protected characteristics:

Age; disability; gender; gender re-assignment; marriage or civil partnership; race; religion or belief including non-belief; pregnancy and maternity; and sexual orientation.

It is unlawful under this act to discriminate on grounds of someone's protected characteristic status, or because they are associated with someone who has such a status.

Race equality

Race equality is equality based on ethnicity, race and national origin.

Racism

Racism is the negative behaviour towards people because of their ethnicity, race or national origin. It often takes the form of discrimination in key areas of society. Following the case of Stephen Lawrence the MacPherson Report identified something now referred to as Institutional Racism, which is where the structures, policies and procedures of an organisation have the effect of discrimination against people because of the ethnicity, race or national origin. Legislation was enacted following the enquiry to make institutionalised Racism unlawful through the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and introducing a duty on the public sector to actively promote race equality. This duty has been extended to other protected characteristics by the Equality Act 2010.

Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable adjustments are adjustments which can be made for disabled people, pregnant women, and people undergoing gender re-assignment, to assist them at work or in relation to the consumption or access to goods and services.

The law places a requirement on service providers and employers to make reasonable adjustments. Traditionally and most commonly this is for Disabled

people by making changes to an environment, workplace, working arrangements, to aid communications and access, or by altering policies and processes to make services and employment more accessible and easier to gain. Reasonable adjustments depend on a range of things, the individual, the employer or service provider's capacity to make such adjustments, and the context for the needed adjustment.

Religion and belief, including non-belief

For equality law purposes, the Equality Act 2010 provides a definition of religion and belief, including non-belief. Generally speaking, we mean a belief in a god or gods or teachings which manifest themselves in a personal or institutional system grounded in such a belief or philosophy or worship.

Sex

The term sex (as in women and men are different sexes) refers to the biological differences between men and women.

Sexism

Sexism is discrimination based on sex. Traditionally such discrimination has operated against women by limiting employment and other opportunities, or by restricting rights such as voting rights.

Sexual orientation

Sexual orientation is a combination of emotional, romantic, sexual or affectionate attraction to another person. In other words it is about who you are attracted to, fall in love with and want to live your life with.

So called honour-based abuse

So called honour-based abuse, including 'honour killings', is a type of abuse that is carried out in communities that have strong perceptions of 'honour' and 'shame'.

Individuals may be seen to bring shame onto the family if they behave, or it is rumoured that they have behaved, in a way which the family or community disapproves of, this can result in so called honour-based violence. This may include having a 'non-arranged' relationship, having a relationship with someone of a different faith, dressing inappropriately, refusing an arranged marriage, leaving a marriage or being gay.

The concept of honour and shame leads families to perpetrate so called honour-based abuse such as keeping victims locked in the house, sending them abroad, forced marriage, assaults and ultimately murdering them –

which is called honour killing. Speaking out against so called honour-based abuse is extremely difficult as the perpetrators are more often than not the victim's extended family and loved ones, who they do not wish to feel the force of the law.

Stereotyping

This refers to having a fixed mental impression about particular groups of people. Stereotypes have developed whereby large groups of people are labelled as having the same limited, usually negative, characteristics. Even though most of the people in the group are nothing like the stereotype, the characteristics of a tiny minority are used to maintain the stereotype.

Time to change

Time to change is a national anti-stigma campaign in relation to mental illness. It aims to improve awareness and understanding of how common mental illness is and promote ways in which organisations can help by talking about mental health.

Transgender

An umbrella term for people whose gender identity/ or gender expression differs from their birth sex. The term may include, not is not limited to, transsexual people and others who see themselves as not clearly fitting into male or female identities. Transgender people may or may not choose to alter their bodies hormonally and/ or surgically.

Transsexual

A person who feels a consistent and overwhelming desire to transition and fulfil their life as a member of the opposite sex. Someone in this position will have the medical condition gender dysphoria. This term should only be used as an adjective: individuals should be referred to as transsexual people not as transsexuals.

Travellers, Gypsies and Roma

Travellers, Gypsies and Roma (Eastern European Roma) often face prejudice and discrimination and that anti-racist strategies must tackle the needs and experiences of these communities.

Unconscious bias

Unconscious biases are social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form outside their own conscious awareness. It is important that we try to recognise these biases and actively challenge them.

Young

The definition of young changes over time and depending on the context or service responsibilities, so it could mean children of school age and younger, or people under 25, for example.

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