

 For information

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Leading learning and skills

Learner Voice

Equality and Diversity –
What's that then?

June 2008

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Equality and Diversity

'The right to education is a universal human right set out by the United Nations. In the UK, that right is now seen as a right to an effective education. In other words, that doesn't just mean having an opportunity to go to school. It means that education and training providers should take account of learners' circumstances and needs in helping them to fulfil their potential. Under British anti-discrimination legislation, you also have the right not to be discriminated against when you are at school, college, university or any other place of learning or training.' *Equality and Human Rights Commission*

Who this booklet is for?

Welcome to this updated version of the popular booklet 'Equality and Diversity – what's that then?' We have tried to answer this question by talking to over 180 young people from 11 different groups across the North West of England, seeking out useful web based information and using the wealth of information provided in the previous booklet.¹

As learners, we hope this booklet will give you a better understanding of what Equality and Diversity means, including an understanding of your right to fair treatment whatever your background. The young people who participated in the workshops that inform the content of this booklet were unclear at first about what Equality and Diversity meant, but they saw themselves as being identified by a number of factors that included race, religion, class, ability, sexuality and their age. They welcomed the opportunity to talk about their views and experience and to contribute to something that could improve how young learners are perceived and treated.

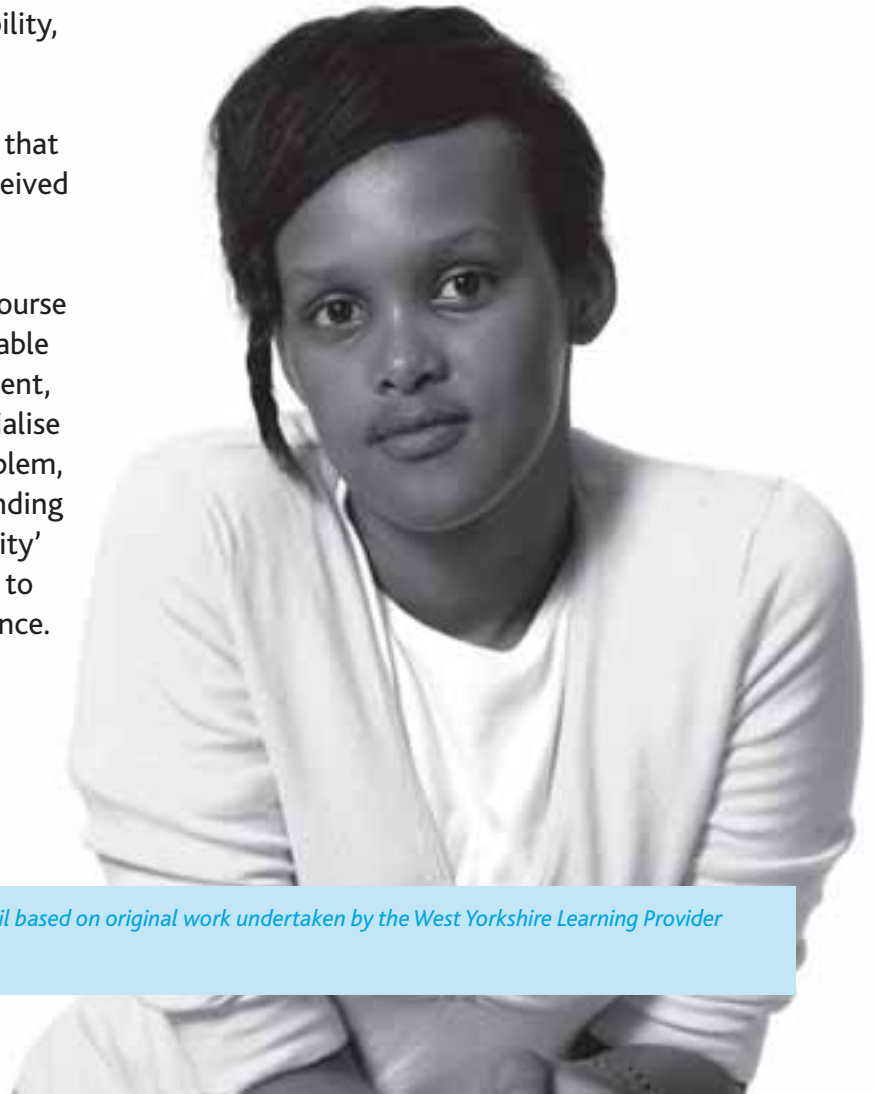
As learners, you want to choose the right course and do well at college. You will want to be able to learn in a pleasant, welcoming environment, be respected and supported, be able to socialise and make friends and, if you do have a problem, know who to go to for advice. An understanding of and commitment to 'Equality and Diversity' by colleges and learning providers will help to ensure you have a positive learning experience.

Note to learning providers, teachers and tutors

This booklet is aimed primarily at learners. However, it should prove a useful resource to staff at all levels both as a source of young people's views and up-to-date information on a range of issues which can inform learner involvement strategies. You can use the information, 'thinking points' and exercises to:

- raise awareness of Equality and Diversity issues with staff and learners,
- gain the views of learners about Equality and Diversity and
- use young people's views to inform staff training.

You will find the exercises at the end of the booklet.



Equality and Diversity

What does it mean to Young People?


Most of the young people we talked to were unclear about the meaning of Equality and Diversity, in fact one group felt it had nothing to do with them and their lives. However, they did generally have a strong commitment to ideals such as fairness, justice, respect, dignity, difference and equality. One young woman asked 'Why do we make this so complicated? Equality and Diversity is simply treating others in the way you want to be treated yourself!' And the young people were easily able to identify a range of issues that affected them both positively and negatively:



- Young people are marginalised because they are young people.
- Adults over or under-react without listening to young people and finding out what is going on.
- The environment sends out a message to young people about whether they are valued and welcomed. They need to feel safe, secure and welcome when entering a building – posters with positive messages, friendly receptionists, bright colours, good lighting and cleanliness all contribute to this.
- Young people should not be judged on how they look or dress.
- It is important to have policies in place that people know about and act on, such as complaints procedures, anti-bullying and harassment policies.
- ‘Labeling’ people can lead to bullying.
- There should be regular training for staff on Equality and Diversity. This should not just be about ‘coping’ with individual differences, but about how to ensure buildings and services are accessible, and being patient, polite and non-judgmental.
- Adults in authority sometimes let their own prejudices out when they are at work.
- Adults see young people as a ‘lump’, not as individuals.
- Many people thought society was generally unfair and wanted more done to help people, especially the homeless.
- Many young people thought the education system still had many inequalities, for example that it excludes people with different learning styles or with auditory or visual impairments and was often not accessible.
- Some young people felt unwelcome in some areas because of their race or sexuality and thought that everyone should feel safe and welcome in school and college.

Thinking Point

When you think about Equality and Diversity what comes into your mind? Really think about what the words mean to you. Do you feel they have any relevance to you?



‘What I really care about is that racist, sexist and social discrimination is not tolerated. Equal opportunities should be available people of all races, cultures, genders and sexualities so the best education is available to all who want it.’
(Young British Woman, 14 years) ²

‘Schools and Colleges should celebrate that I am a different and unique individual and I just want to get on with my life’
(White Lesbian, 17 years)

‘It’s about being respected and respecting people in return’
(Group of young Muslims)

²All descriptions of young people are ones they chose themselves

Definitions

We found that a lot of the words used to talk about equality and diversity don't always mean much to young people and we don't all have a clear understanding of what they mean. Here are definitions for some of the words most widely used when talking about equality and diversity.

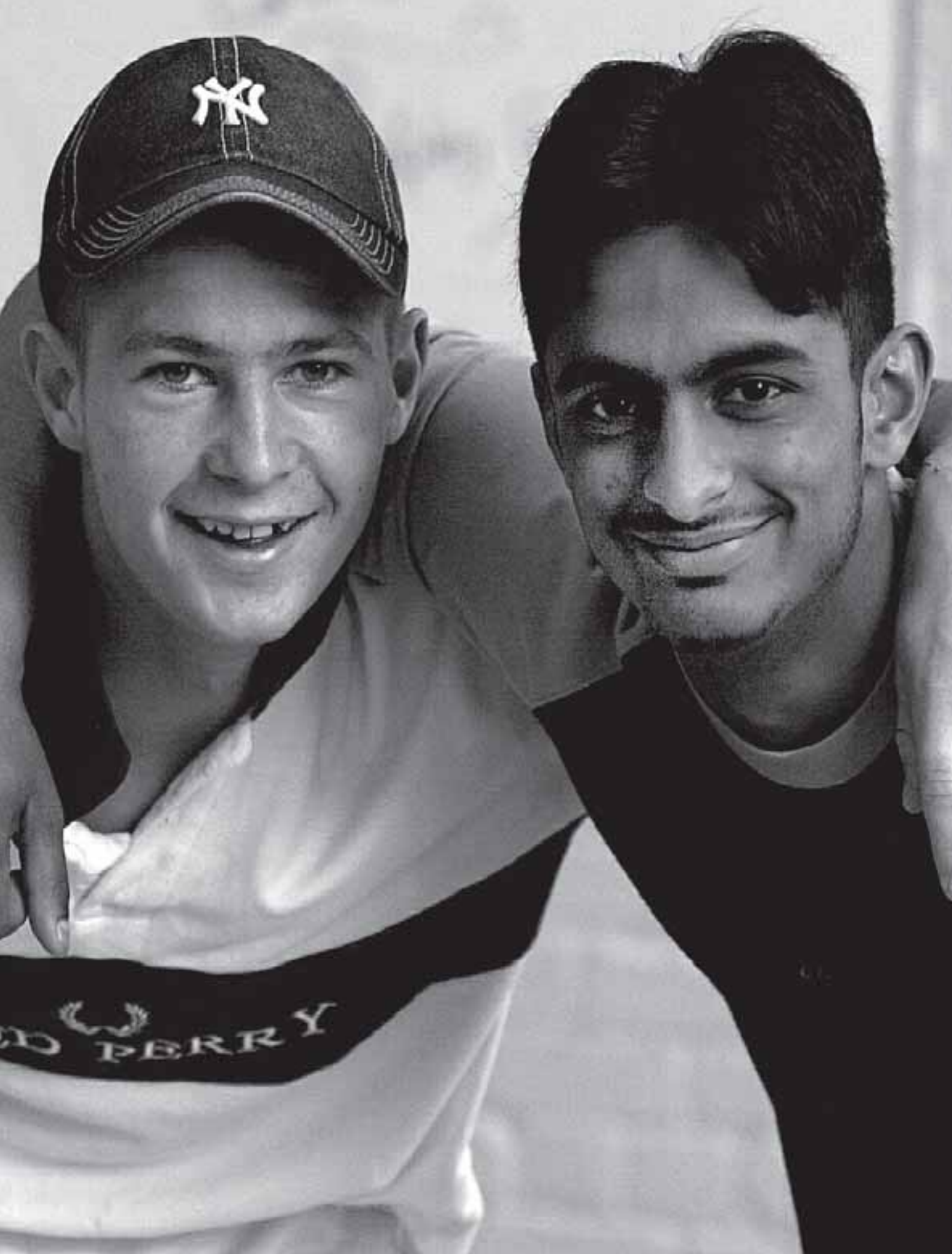
Equality of Opportunity

Since the 1960s committed individuals and organisations have campaigned to highlight the unequal way people are treated and resources are allocated to individuals in health, education, jobs, pay and employment. The resulting changes in the law have attempted to create what is known as 'a level playing field' in which people get access to resources based on their rights and

needs regardless of their race, culture, age, religion, colour, marital status, gender, sexuality or disability. How equal opportunities are applied is governed by law and overseen by organisations like the Equality and Human Rights Commission. The Commission 'champions equality and human rights for all, working to eliminate discrimination, reduce inequality, protect human rights and to build good relations, ensuring that everyone has a fair chance to participate in society.'

Young people we talked to thought that larger organisations like local authorities, the Police and Prison Services had good Equal Opportunities policies, but that this is not replicated in smaller organisations and therefore a lot needs to be done with these employers.







Equality

Equality is about treating people fairly and ensuring everyone is given a fair chance. Sometimes people think equality is about treating everyone the same. However, treating everyone in the same way can lead to indirect discrimination (see discrimination). Equality recognises that people have many different needs that have to be met in different ways, for example a disabled person who uses a wheelchair would be excluded from taking a job in a building that had no wheelchair access.

'People should not be judged by their looks, colour, religion or tastes'

(African Male 16 years)

Diversity

Diversity is about valuing difference between individuals and groups of people. Diversity welcomes these differences rather than trying to get rid of them. It is only where diversity is recognised and celebrated that there can be real equality.

'Everyone is different in their own way'

(Black Female, 15 years)



Discrimination

The dictionary definition of discrimination is 'to distinguish difference between, judge between.' Discrimination is about people being thought of as having different worth or value, being treated differently or given fewer opportunities because of their identities.

There are different types of discrimination:

- **Direct discrimination** – this happens when one person is treated less favourably than another person would be treated in the same circumstances e.g. refusal to give a learner a work placement because of their sex, race or disability.
- **Indirect discrimination** – this happens when a requirement is applied equally to everyone but has the effect of excluding one group of people more than another. For example, if your learning provider were to introduce a requirement that all learners had to be at least six feet tall, this would exclude more women than men from training. It would discriminate against women.
- **Institutional discrimination** – this happens when the way an organisation works or is structured leads to unequal access or unfair treatment. All organisations have a responsibility to examine the way they work to reduce the chances of this happening. For example if a college put on a course at a venue that could not be reached easily by public transport this would favour people with cars and discriminate against those who cannot drive and those who cannot afford a car.

- **Individual discrimination** – this occurs when an individual makes a decision which is based on prejudice against an individual because they are from another group. For example an individual may decide a British Asian applicant for a job will not speak English as well as a white candidate.
- **Victimisation** – this occurs when a person is singled out because they have used college or workplace complaints procedure or used the law to challenge treatment they have received. For example this could be if someone used the Sex, Race or Disability Discrimination Acts because they felt they have received unfair treatment just because of the gender or race they are or because of a disability they may have.

Thinking Point

Would you know who to speak to if you felt you had been discriminated against?



Identity

There are lots of ways the word identity is used but here identity is how people see and label themselves as members of particular groups or subgroups. This may be influenced by your race, gender, sexuality, religion and even by circumstances that have a big impact on your life such as whether you have a home, 'are looked after' or employed. You may identify yourself by the music you like, the places you go and where you have come from. Unfortunately people can be discriminated against, bullied and harassed because of their identity. Most of us do not have just one identity.

'The different aspects of our identity are a source of pride and strength. But they can also make us the target of prejudice on more than one level. For example, a Black gay man might experience homophobia from some parts of the Black community, racism from some parts of the gay community, and both racism and homophobia from everyone else. This is known as multiple-discrimination.' (Stonewall)

Thinking Point

Think about your own identity. How would you describe yourself if someone asked you?

What are the most important aspects of your identity to you?



The young people who contributed to the booklet described themselves in the following ways:

White European	British/American	Christian	Asian British/ Indian
White English	White British	Jewish	Geordie
Black Congolese	English	British Nigerian	Welsh
Somali	White	Heterosexual	German-British
Negro	Black	Catholic	English-Portuguese
Epileptic	Mixed Race	Disabled	Scouser
Diabetic	African	Jamaican	ADHD
Learning disabled	Afro-Caribbean	Black English	Atheist
Young carers	Polish	Lesbian	Agnostic
Partially deaf	Polish-English	Gay	Human being
Black English	English and Asian	Homeless	'Me'
Trans-gendered female	Asian	Bi-sexual	
White	Muslim	Able Body	

Harassment

The dictionary definition of harassment is 'to torment, worry.' Harassment is very difficult to define because it can take many forms. It can be directed at an individual or a group. It is the effect that it has on an individual that is important, not the intention of the harasser.

Whatever form the harassment takes it is unwelcome and unwanted and is both stressful and intimidating for the victim.

Harassment examples may include:

- Verbal abuse or taunting.
- Racist and/or sexist comments or jokes.
- Unwanted physical contact.
- Ignoring someone.
- Unfair allocation of work.
- Display or circulation of offensive materials/books etc.
- Intrusive questioning about ethnic origin.
- Unnecessary references to sex.

Bullying

Bullying is also a form of harassment and can mean many different things. These are some ways children and young people have described bullying:

- Being called names.
- Being teased.
- Being pushed or pulled about.
- Being hit or attacked.
- Having your bag and other possessions taken and thrown around.
- Having rumours spread about you.
- Being ignored and left out.

- Being forced to hand over money or possessions.
- Being attacked or teased or called names because of your religion or colour.
- Being attacked or teased or called names because of your sexuality.³

Britain is a multi-racial and multi-faith country and everyone has the right to have their culture and religion respected by others. Nobody has the right to call you names or to treat you badly because of your colour, race or religion. It's illegal and it can be stopped. You don't have to be a different colour to suffer racist bullying. You might have come from Romania or the former Yugoslavia.⁴

Thinking Point

Could you offer support to someone who is being bullied or harassed? What would you advise them to do? What other support might you give them?



³Source: Childline

⁴Source: BullyingUK

Areas of Equality

'We are all Human' (White English Female with a disability, 26 years)

Despite this, the experience of young people is that the way we identify ourselves or are identified by others has an impact on the treatment and opportunities we receive. Each of the following sections covers an area which can be both the way certain groups in society identify themselves or are identified by others, for example by their race or sexuality.

The young people we talked to wanted to be accepted for who they are both recognised and welcomed differences in others:

'People shouldn't get bullied just because they look different or like different things'
(White British Female, 12 years)

'People with a birthmark or any other physical difference are just as beautiful as anyone else'
(White Female, 13 years)

'I have the right to be what I want to be'
(White Male, 14 years)

'Everyone is different in their own way'
(Mixed Race Female, 15 years)

'We should respect each other for who we are'
(White Female with ADHD, 14 years)

The 'areas of equality' we set out in this section cover a range of groups and identities which can result in people being discriminated against, bullied and harassed. A number of them are covered by legislation that makes it illegal to discriminate on those grounds and places a duty on authorities to ensure that they promote equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination and harassment. You will find information about the legislation in the next section, 'Equality Legislation.'





Thinking Point

What are some of the ways you think you are expected to behave because you are male or female?



Do you think these expectations are fair to you and members of the opposite gender?

Gender

'It is against the law to treat someone unfairly because of her or his sex, or transgender status. The Sex Discrimination Act (SDA) and Equal Pay Act can protect you from being treated unfairly from day one in any aspect of your training or post-school education. You are protected from discrimination in careers advice, vocational training, further or higher education, recruitment, employment and pay.'⁵

So what is the difference between 'gender' and 'sex'?

Sex refers to your biological characteristics and is usually decided at birth. What is the first question people usually ask about a new baby? Gender is about your identity in terms of your sense of yourself as male or female and is determined socially through society's expectations of us, for example in how we dress and behave, or even which jobs and careers we choose.

Sex discrimination and harassment is often referred to as sexism. Although many people would argue that there are ways in which men suffer from sexism, there is clear evidence that it is women who suffer most. In Britain, 30,000 women a year lose their jobs because they are pregnant, two-thirds of low paid workers are female and women working full-time are paid 17% less than men on average.⁶ Women also form the overwhelming majority of victims of domestic abuse.

Many people believe that women have achieved equality with men, but this was not the experience of young women who spoke at a recent conference about working with girls and young women about their experience of being members of youth groups and forums:

'One of the main things that made me want to 'challenge the system' so to speak was not only the fact of male dominance but that so many young women have witnessed it for so long that they don't challenge it and some take a back seat and let the males take control.'

'On a national level my experience was that things were male dominated and the females were often found on the periphery.'

'Make women's rights straight equal!
(Young Indian Woman)

The Sex Discrimination and Equal Pay Act also protects people from being unfairly treated because of their transgender status. Transgender is a term applied to people who identify their gender as the opposite to their biological sex. Transsexuals are people who have had surgical and/or hormonal treatment to change their appearance to be in line with their gender identity.

⁵Source: Equality and Human Rights Commission

⁶Source: The Fawcett Society

Race

'The 1976 Race Relations Act is concerned with people's actions and the effects of their actions, not their opinions or beliefs. Racial discrimination is not the same as racial prejudice. It is not necessary to prove that the other person intended to discriminate against you: you only have to show that you received less favourable treatment as a result of what they did.

Under the Race Relations Act, it is unlawful for a person to discriminate on racial grounds against another person. The Act defines racial grounds as including race, colour, nationality, ethnicity or national origins.'

There are a number of definitions of race based on physical characteristics, such as skin colour, or based on common history, nationality or geographical distribution. When we think about race, we usually think about racism and racial discrimination.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, racism is '*a belief or ideology that all members of each racial group possess characteristics or abilities specific to that race, especially to distinguish it as being either superior or inferior to another racial group or racial groups.*'

'The term 'racial discrimination' shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.'⁷

We often think about race in terms of being black or white, even though both contain many different ethnic and cultural groups. As you may have noticed, the young people tended to describe themselves not only as white, black or Asian, but included their nationality and other details.

Whatever definitions we use, the young people were clear that racism was an issue for them and that it affected their opportunities, the way they were treated and how effectively racism was dealt with. Points they raised were:

- Ethnic background and environment affects your life choices and chances.
- Open racism is still not always challenged in schools and colleges – bullying still rules.
- Staff should be held to account if they pick on young people because of their race.
- There is a need for greater community cohesion and people from different races mixing it up more.
- Make friends on the basis of attitude and behaviour, not skin colour!

'We can be multicultural AND proud of our heritage' (Academic English White Male)

'If we don't get rid of prejudices and myths about the ethnic minorities that live here, the UK is not going to be the UK, and will not be as strong as it could be, and will not be a nice place for me to live in.... because this is my home too!'
(Asian British (Indian) Male, 17 years)

⁷Source: UN International Convention on the Elimination of All of Racial Discrimination, NEWYORK 7 March 1966



Thinking Point

Have you experienced or witnessed racist behaviour?



How did it make you feel?

What did you do, or what would you have liked to do about it?



Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) defines a disabled person as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

However, many people would argue that it is not the impairment that disables the person, but the environment and society's attitude to them.

The UK Council of Disabled People believes that 'the position of disabled people in society is a human and civil rights issue and that society must be changed to allow our full inclusion. We believe that our disability arises from society's negative treatment of us; it is not an inevitable consequence of our impairments. So equality is possible and can be achieved through removing the barriers to our social inclusion. This belief is called the Social Model of Disability, which was a belief developed by disabled people in the 1970s.'

Thinking Point

Think about some of the barriers that might exist for disabled people and the ways in which your college or workplace are trying to overcome them.



Public buildings and spaces usually have ramps, lifts, accessible toilets, signs in braille etc.

However, access to many places non-disabled people take for granted may be impossible for disabled people, especially wheelchair users. For example, many bars, pubs and restaurants have steps at the front and toilets up or downstairs; tables are close together, so it is difficult to manoeuvre and lighting is often poor. Young people thought that:

- Disabled people have an equal right to education.
- Disabled people are better served than they were, but there is still a lot to be done.
- Young people with hidden disabilities like epilepsy or diabetes felt judged and excluded if they revealed them to others.

'People with a birthmark or any other physical difference are just as beautiful as anyone else'
(White Female, 13 years)

'Get ramps and less stairs in schools so young people will be able to experience life with disabled kids' (Young Muslim woman)

Sexual Orientation

The Commission for Equality and Human Rights defines sexual orientation 'as the general attraction you feel towards people of one sex or another (or both). Most people are generally attracted to:

- people who are the same sex as them
- people who are the opposite sex to them, or
- people of both sexes.

Same-sex attraction is called homosexuality. Men and women who are homosexual are usually called either 'gay' (for men) or 'lesbian' (for women).

Opposite-sex attraction is called heterosexuality. People who are heterosexual are usually called 'straight.'

Both-sex attraction is called bisexuality. 'Bisexual', or occasionally just 'bi', are used to describe people who are attracted to both sexes.'

However, many people in the Lesbian and Gay community think that the word homosexual has very negative associations and that we should use lesbian, gay or bi to describe them.

Many people in Britain are subject to hatred and verbal and physical violence or live in fear because of their sexual orientation, even though there are more and more openly gay, lesbian and bi people in public life, including politicians, actors and sportsmen and women, and many more gay and lesbian characters in popular soaps and drama series. This hatred is usually referred to as homophobia.

A recent survey of 268 teachers by the Association of Teachers and Lecturers found that homophobic abuse is endemic in schools, with 'gay' now the most common put-down by pupils in the classroom. They also felt that a 'conspiracy of silence' in schools and colleges means homophobia is now seen as so normal that some teachers believe they risk disrupting classes – and making themselves a target of abuse – if they challenge students' behaviour.⁸

Thinking Point
Would you challenge someone if they used the word 'gay' to mean naff or rubbish?



Many of the young people we talked to had either witnessed or suffered from homophobia and thought that:

- There needs to be more openly gay staff to support young people.
- There should be proper punishments for staff and clients who are homophobic.
- Staff should be held to account if they pick on young people because of their sexuality.

'Schools and Colleges should celebrate that I am a different and unique individual and I just want to get on with my life'

(White Lesbian Female, 17 years)

⁸Source: *The Guardian* March 11 2008





Religion and Belief

Under human rights and anti-discrimination legislation, you have the right to hold your own religious beliefs or other philosophical beliefs similar to a religion. You also have the right to have no religion or belief.

Under British anti-discrimination and human rights legislation, you are also entitled to practise your religion or belief, express your views and get on with your day-to-day life without experiencing threats or discrimination.

An important current example of how people are suffering because of their religion is the well documented increase in racist abuse and attacks on Muslims since the 11 September 2001 attacks on New York and Washington and 7 July 2005 bombing in London. Muslims have experienced both an increase in hate crime against them, and increased police harassment.

This irrational fear and prejudice has been called 'Islamophobia' and has been further defined as 'the condemnation of the entirety of Islam and its history as extremist, denying the existence of a moderate Muslim majority, regarding Islam as a problem for the world, treating conflicts involving Muslims as necessarily their own fault, insisting that Muslims make changes to their religion, and inciting war against Islam as a whole.'⁹

Another example is anti-semitism, an irrational prejudice and hostility towards Jewish people because of their religion, culture and ethnicity. Anti-semitism has a long and shameful history in Europe, but the most well known and extreme expression of it was the holocaust, the term used to describe the genocide of approximately six million European Jews during World War II by the Nazi regime in Germany, led by Adolf Hitler. "Anne Frank is one of the most famous victims of the Holocaust. Her diary has inspired millions of people all over the world including Nelson Mandela and John F Kennedy.

Anne's story is that of an ordinary Jewish girl who died because of the hatred and persecution of one group of people by another."¹⁰

'Faith is OK as long as it is not rammed down my throat' (White Female, 18 years)

Thinking Point

How important are your faith and beliefs to you?



How much do you know about other people's faiths and how similar or different they are to your own?

⁹Source: www.islamophobia.org

¹⁰Source: *The Anne Frank Trust UK*

Social Class

Your 'social class' may be determined by how wealthy you or your family are, whether you or your parents are employed and what kind of work they do, where you live and your educational achievements. In Britain, we used to talk about the upper class (aristocrats and land owners), the middle class (professionals such as doctors and teachers) and the working class (skilled and unskilled manual workers), with the upper classes being the wealthiest and therefore having the most power. Although some of these distinctions have become blurred, many people in Britain live in relative poverty, which has a negative effect on access to education, health care, good housing and job opportunities. You may also experience harassment and discrimination because of the way you look – you may not be able to afford fashionable clothes, iPods etc.

'School uniform helps make us look the same'
(Polish Male, 16 years)

Although these things are not covered in legislation, the young people we talked to clearly identified that many people were excluded because of relative poverty. They felt strongly that people should be treated equally no matter how much money they have.

One group we talked to who came from poor backgrounds and had not done well at school felt so excluded that they thought 'equality and diversity' had nothing to offer them. Young prisoners felt they received tougher sentences because they were judged on how they looked i.e. wearing hoodies.

'The current system excludes many types of workers and learners resulting in social outcasts and an unskilled section of the workforce'
(Young male, 17 years)

Thinking Point

Is class an issue you think about? Is class just about wealth?



Age

Unlawful age discrimination happens when someone is treated unfavourably because of their age, without justification, or is harassed or victimised because of their age.

Thinking Point

Do you know any ways to influence the decisions that affect your life?



We often think of this in terms of discrimination against older people, but many of the young people we talked to felt that they were discriminated against simply because they were young people. Here are some of the points they raised:

- The young people had a great desire for improvement in policies that work to make things better for young people who feel marginalised.
- The young people felt exploited by having to get part time jobs whilst they were still at school or college.
- More facilities and opportunities for young people should be available and easily accessible to help them learn and develop skills to get on in life.
- There are a lot of young people in prisons with mental health problems who should not be there.
- Young carers felt misunderstood and judged by society and school.
- You have to be very strong to stand up and be different.

'Take us seriously – our opinions matter'
(Homeless White Male, 18 years)



So what can you do?

Most of the young people we talked to had witnessed or experienced bullying, harassment and discrimination because of their or others' identity or identities. So what can you do to help yourself and others? Here are a few basic ideas:

Know your rights! Hopefully this booklet will have given you information about laws that can protect you, but your college, training provider and employer should have anti-bullying or grievance procedures that you can look up. They would usually be in a student handbook, along with useful contacts.

Unless you feel personally threatened, you should show people who express views or use language which are racist, sexist or homophobic (for example) that you do not agree with them.

Offer support to someone who is being bullied or harassed. Encourage other friends to support them. Encourage them to report it, or report it yourself.

Keep a note of incidents – where it happened, who was involved, what happened. This is useful evidence if you decide to take the matter further.



Equality Quiz

Read the questions in the left hand side. Match up each question with the correct answer by writing the letter in these boxes.

Question		Answer	
A	What issues should be covered by an Equal Opportunities policy?		Unwanted, unacceptable and offensive behaviour imposed upon a person.
B	What is direct discrimination?		Follow the appropriate company procedure. This is usually called the Grievance Procedure.
C	What is indirect discrimination?		Being treated less favourable (not just differently) on the grounds of gender, marital status, colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origins.
D	What constitutes sexual/racial harassment?		A requirement for a job that is held by someone of a particular gender or race e.g. you can advertise for a female model to model women's clothes.
E	What is the definition of disability according to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995?		A commitment to equality, informed by legislation, linked closely to the organisation's goals, with measurable and achievable objectives. It should highlight responsibilities and identify means of arriving at and evaluating the set objectives.
F	If you were harassed at work, what procedure would you follow?		A physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
G	Name three areas of legislation currently enforced by government.		When a requirement or condition is applied to all persons but which has a disproportionate effect on persons of a particular group because of their inability to comply with the requirement/condition.
H	What is a genuine occupational qualification?		Sex Discrimination Act, Race Relations Act and Disability Discrimination Act.

Contacts

You may find the following organisations/ websites of use if you want to find out more about a particular issue or if you want to get help and support. Your college, youth service and Connexions service will be able to provide further information and someone to talk to.

General:

Equality and Human Rights

In October 2007 three equality commissions (Commission for Racial Equality CRE, Disability Rights Commission DRC and Equal Opportunity Commission EOC) merged to form the new Equality and Human Rights Commission. The Equality and Human Rights Commission champions equality and human rights for all, working to eliminate discrimination, reduce inequality, protect human rights and to build good relations, ensuring that everyone has a fair chance to participate in society. Their website is an excellent source of information about your rights, including sections about education and resources specifically for young people.

www.equalityhumanrights.com

Citizen's Advice Bureau

They offer free advice on all areas of equality of opportunity including, in some cases, support for individuals or organisations wishing to make a complaint about discrimination. They have a website, which gives basic information about many topics including equal rights and employment and training. This information is available at: www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Bullying:

BullyingUK

Help and advice for victims of bullying, they support young people and help them deal with bullying, www.bullying.co.uk

Childline

If you are a child or young person needing help please call the free 24-hour helpline on **0800 1111**. Lines can be busy but please keep trying and you will get through. If you are deaf or find using a regular phone difficult, try the textphone service which provides confidential support and advice via a textphone. You can call on **0800 400 222** and it's open from 9.30am to 9.30pm on weekdays and 9.30am to 8pm at weekends.

There is also a special helpline called The Line for any young person living away from home. This is the helpline for you if you live in a foster home or a children's home, if you're at boarding school or you've been in hospital for a long time. You can call The Line on **0800 88 44 44** from 3.30pm to 9.30pm on weekdays and 2pm to 8pm at weekends.

You can write to **ChildLine** and one of the counsellors will reply to your letter. You can write to: **ChildLine, Freepost NATN1111, London E1 6BR** – and you don't have to use a stamp. www.childline.org.uk

Looked After Young People:

Care Leavers Association

The Care Leavers' Association is a not-for-profit organisation, run by care leavers for care leavers. All individuals over the age of 18 with experience of being in care are entitled to full membership. We work for the benefit of all care leavers, of any age. www.careleavers.com

A National Voice

This is an organisation run by and for care experienced young people. Staff are also care experienced. Our main aim is to create positive changes to the Care System in England and provide a national platform to hear the voices of approx 60,000 children and young people who are Looked After www.anationalvoice.org

Human Rights:

The LIBERTY Guide to Human Rights
www.yourrights.org.uk

Disability:

Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities

Chapter House
18-20 Crucifix Lane, London
SE1 3JW
Tel: 0207 450 0620
www.skill.org.uk

Focus on Disability (relationships/
personal/sexual)
www.focusondisability.org.uk

UKDPC

The United Kingdom's Disabled People's Council (UKDPC) was set up by disabled people in 1981 to promote full equality and participation within society. They are an umbrella organisation that represents some 80 organisations run and controlled by disabled people.

www.bcodp.org.uk

The Dyslexia Institute

Park House, Wick Road, Egham, Surrey
TW20 0HH
Tel: 01784 222300
www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk

Epilepsy Action

New Anstey House, Gate Way Drive, Yeadon
Leeds, LS19 7XY
www.epilepsy.org.uk

The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) closed on 28 September 2007. Its responsibility for helping secure civil rights for disabled people has transferred to the new Equality and Human Rights Commission which opened for business in 1 October 2007.

UNICEF

UNICEF Youth Voice provides a platform for children and young people, who want to create a world fit for children. Youth Voice is a chance for children and young people to speak up for children who don't have the chance to speak up for themselves.

www.unicef.org.uk/youthvoice

Gender:

Women's Aid Federation and Rape Crisis

Centres offer practical help and support for women who have experienced violence, physical, emotional or sexual abuse.

www.womensaid.org.uk
www.rapecrisis.org.uk

The Fawcett Society

Fawcett campaigns for equality between women and men in the UK on pay, pensions, poverty, justice and politics. www.fawcettsociety.org.uk

Press for Change

Press for Change is a political lobbying and educational organisation, which campaigns to achieve equal civil rights and liberties for all trans people in the United Kingdom, through legislation and social change. www.pfc.org.uk

Race, Religion and Belief:**The Runnymede Trust**

Their mandate is to promote a successful multi-ethnic Britain. They act as a bridge-builder between various minority ethnic communities and policy-makers. They produce a range of resources about aspects of multi-ethnic Britain. www.runnymedetrust.org

The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB)

The Muslim Council of Britain is a national representative Muslim umbrella body with over 500 affiliated national, regional and local organisations, mosques, charities and schools. The MCB is pledged to work for the common good of society as a whole; encouraging individual Muslims and Muslim organisations to play a full and participatory role in public life. www.mcb.org.uk

The Anne Frank Trust UK

www.annefrank.org.uk

Ex-offenders:

Information on the law relating to ex-offenders is published in the leaflet 'Wiping the Slate Clean' published by the Home Office.

Apex Trust

National confidential helpline for help and advice on ex-offender employment issues
Tel: 0870 608 4567 www.apextrust.com

NACRO (National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders)

They can supply information about local projects and groups.
169 Clapham Road
London
SW9 0PU
Tel: 0207 582 6500 www.nacro.org.uk

UNLOCK (National Association of Reformed Offenders)

www.unlock.org.uk

Sexuality:**Stonewall Limited**

Equality and justice for lesbians, gay men and bi-sexuals
Tower Building
York Road
London, SE1 7NX
Tel: 0207 593 1850 www.stonewall.org.uk

Schools Out

Working towards equality in education for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people since 1974 www.schools-out.org.uk

Homelessness:

Shelter

Freephone helpline for those facing a housing emergency

Tel: 0808 800 4444 www.Shelter.org.uk

National Minimum Wage/Employment Matters:

Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform

www.berr.gov.uk

Refugees:

Refugee Action

Tel: 0207 654 7700 www.refugee-action.org.uk

Travellers:

Family, Friends and Travellers

Seeks to end racism and discrimination against Gypsies and Travellers, whatever their ethnicity, culture or background, whether settled or mobile, and to protect the right to pursue a nomadic way of life.

Community Base

113 Queens Road

Brighton

E. Sussex, BN1 3XG

Tel: 01273 234 777 www.gypsy-traveller.org

Children and Young People:

Child Poverty Action Group

www.cpag.org.uk

The Children's Legal Centre

Providing legal advice, information and representation for children and young people

Young Person Freephone: 0800 783 2187

Child Law Advice Line: 0845 1202948

www.childrenslegalcentre.com

Children's Right's Alliance England (CRAE)

This is the part of CRAE's site where children and young people can get information about children and young people's rights and how you can try to make change happen.

www.crae.org.uk/cms/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=200&Itemid=139

The National Youth Agency (NYA)

Information toolkit for young people

<http://www.youthinformation.com>

Youth Access is the national membership organisation for young people's information, advice, counselling and support services.

www.youthaccess.org.uk

United Kingdom Youth Parliament (UKYP)

The UK Youth Parliament (UKYP) enables young people to use their energy and passion to change the world for the better. Run by young people for young people, UKYP provides opportunities for 11-18-year-olds to use their voice in creative ways to bring about social change. www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk

The National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS)

NYAS is a UK charity providing children's rights and socio-legal services. They offer information, advice, advocacy and legal representation to children and young people up to the age of 25.

www.nyas.net

Equalities Workshop – Seeking Young Learners Voices

Versions of these exercises were used to gain the views of young people to inform the writing of this booklet. You may want to adapt them to use to consult with young people, or to get them to think about some of the issues.

Another useful LSC publication is the 'Developing a Learner Involvement Strategy.' A Handbook for the Further Education Sector, February 2007.



Timings for the exercises are not given as they will depend on the size of the group and the time available to you, the participants' age, ability and level of interest.

You can use the information in the booklet as a starting point for these exercises and others you may devise yourself. The 'Thinking Points' throughout the booklet can be used to stimulate discussion on a range of issues.

Exercises

WWW

Aim of Exercise: This is both a warm-up exercise and a way for the facilitators to explain the session and everyone to introduce themselves.

Process: The facilitator holds up card with **WWW** on it and explains that you are going to tell them;

- W**ho you (the facilitator) are
- W**hy you are there
- W**hat you are going to do in the session

And then you will pass the card around the group and ask each one to say;

- W**ho they are
- W**hether they go to school, college or work
- W**here they attend the above

You can only speak if you are holding the card.

Other points:

The facilitator can begin to assess who is more confident about speaking in front of others. You can adapt what the letters stand for to be more relevant to the group, e.g. they may all be from the one college, so it could be Where you live, What you like best about college.

Diversity

Aim of Exercise: To get young people thinking about the diversity of their own identity and that of others' **Suggested starting point:** 'Diversity' page 7, 'Identity' page 9.

Process:

Hand out sheets which have the 'identities' (or a selection of them) on page 9 in this booklet scattered around them. Explain that this how other young people have identified themselves and stress that most young people used more than one of these descriptions.

Ask them to circle the identities that apply to them and add anything that is not there.

If you are not doing this as an individual and confidential exercise, you could ask young people to identify others in group with shared identities.

Other points:

You must stress that they do not have to disclose anything about their identity they do not want others to know. You could start off by using yourself as an example.

You could use a sheet like this to get young people thinking about their identity and what they would like to change in college/society in general and/or as a record if you are consulting on these type of issues.

Again, you could complete it as an example to get things started.

Age	Gender	Ethnicity/Heritage	Other identity

This is me: I would describe myself as...

What I really care about when thinking about equality and diversity at college/work is:

If I had the power I would:

Because:

Better Buildings

Aim of Exercise: To get young people's views on what makes an environment welcoming.
Suggested starting point: 'Equality of Opportunity' page 4, 'Discrimination' page 7, 'Disability', page 17

Process:

In small groups of two or three, ask young people talk about what makes them feel most comfortable or uncomfortable when they walk into a public building such as school, college or place of work.

Ask each group to note down the three most important things.

Then ask them to think about a building they currently use. What changes would they like to make?

Ask them to note down three changes.

If you think they are confident enough, ask someone from each group to feed back their points to the full group, otherwise you can read them out.

Either note down the points or collect in the groups' notes. You may need to make links between their points and Equality and Diversity issues, for example positive images, access to the building.

Optional:

There could then be a full group discussion focusing on

- consensus on the three most important things.
- identifying how the factors they have identified make buildings more accessible generally and/or to specific groups.

Other points

You may want to focus on a specific building!

You could ask young people to write their points on post-it notes; they could stick them up under each heading on flipchart paper, grouping similar points, which you could then read out.

Agree/Disagree

Aim of Exercise: To explore young people's knowledge and/or opinions.

Starting points: Any of the information in the booklet.

Process:

Designate one end of a clear space as 'agree' and the other as 'disagree.'

One by one read out a list of statements and ask young people to go to the appropriate end of the room, or stand at an appropriate point in between.

Statements could include:

- There is a lot of homophobic bullying in schools
- All immigrants should learn English
- All colleges should have a crèche
- Schools should teach about all religions
- It is illegal to discriminate against someone because...

You can then ask why they agree/disagree so different views can be aired.

Other points:

This exercise can be about practical knowledge or opinions depending on what sort of questions you choose to ask.

It is important not to make assumptions about why young people may agree/disagree. For example, the idea of all immigrants being made to learn English may be intended as authoritarian, or out of concern for immigrants being able to access education, get a job etc.

If you use these exercises to consult with young people it is very important to be clear about how much influence their views will have and feed back to them the outcome of the consultation. Young people will understand about your and their limitations, but will be upset and angry if their expectations are raised unrealistically.

Acknowledgment

A BIG thank you to the young people and staff from the 11 groups visited across the North West including: -

- A support group for young people with experience of domestic violence/abuse – Voluntary Organisation (Accrington)
- A drop in after school session – Local Authority/Connexions (Congleton)
- A young offenders Institute – Prison Service (Wigan)
- A multi-agency, multi-ethnic group (Bolton)
- A lesbian and gay group (Manchester)
- A group of young people learning to speak up for themselves (Morecambe)
- A regional meeting of UKYP – Multi Agency (North West)
- An open youth work session – Local Authority/Connexions (Ellesmere Port & Chester)
- An informal session with Afro-Caribbean young people (Crewe)
- Homeless young people – Voluntary Organisation (YMCA)
- An impact / speak-out group – Local Authority (Warrington)

Over 180 young people took part in workshops that enabled them to express their views on equality and diversity. They ranged in age from 11 – 26 with the majority being 15 – 19 years old, 65% were young women and 35% were young men.

Young people welcomed the opportunity to express their views and hoped that they could help make a difference for other young people; *'You are really interested and have listened to us'* (Young prisoner)

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on the Learning and Skills Council website: www.lsc.gov.uk

Publication enquiries: 0870 900 6800

Publication reference LSC_P_NWR_080009