

# The Voice of Britain

A research study  
conducted for the CRE  
by MORI



COMMISSION FOR RACIAL EQUALITY

Celebrating 25 years

Executive summary

# The Voice of Britain

## Britain Beyond Rhetoric

Headline findings from a Research Study  
Conducted for  
The Commission for Racial Equality by

MORI Social Research Institute



April-May 2002

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# Introduction & Background

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This report presents the summary findings of national research conducted by the MORI Social Research Institute on behalf of the Commission for Racial Equality. The research comprised two elements:

- A **nationally representative survey** of the British general public as well as a booster survey among Black Africans, Black Caribbeans, Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and Chinese;
- A qualitative study; 13 focus groups across Great Britain;

Full technical details on how the research was conducted are in the **Appendices**.

## Research Objectives

The aim of the research was to investigate feelings and opinions in contemporary Britain on race relations as well as exploring attitudes towards community, culture and identity. It is intended that the findings of this study will contribute to the ever-developing debates around diversity and cohesion in Britain in light of the disturbances in Oldham, Burnley and Bradford in the Summer of 2001 and the events of and after September 11<sup>th</sup>.

It is a truism, which is recognised by all but a few participants in the research, that Britain is, and will continue to be, a multicultural nation. As it is articulated in Ted Cante's recent report, *Community Cohesion*, "we are never going to turn the clock back to what was perceived to be a dominant or monoculturalist view of nationality." However, questions remain over how to make a multicultural nation a successful one in the future: Should minority populations integrate or assimilate? Should Government impose measures such as compulsory English tests or citizenship lessons on immigrants? Both the survey and the discussion groups explored these issues.

## Acknowledgements

MORI would like to thank Maureen Fraser, Alveena Malik, Seamus Taylor and Pam Smith of the Commission for Racial Equality for their help and support throughout the project.

## Publication of the Data

As with all our studies, findings from this research are subject to our standard Terms and Conditions of Contract. Any press release or publication of the findings for this survey requires the advance approval of MORI. Such approval will only be refused on the grounds of inaccuracy or misrepresentation.

# Key Messages

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The majority of the population (59% nationally and 67% among ethnic minority groups) agree that Britain has good relations between people of from different ethnic backgrounds. Diversity is also valued by most:

- 78% agree that it is important to respect the rights of minorities (nationally and 89% among ethnic minorities);
- And most British people feel that we should do more to learn about the different ethnic groups' cultures in Britain (57% agree versus 27% disagree).

However, both white and ethnic minority people believe in a clear sense of rights and responsibilities:

- 69% of the GB population and 51% of the ethnic minority groups think ethnic minorities need to demonstrate a real commitment before they can be considered British;
- Three-quarters of both white (77%) and ethnic minority communities (76%) believe immigrants who do not speak English should be made to learn it. However, in the focus groups, the idea of tests was rejected.
- Most support citizenship lessons (77% nationally and 58% among ethnic minorities);
- Most importantly, however, 86% of Britons disagree that you have to be white to be British.

People of all ethnicities massively over-estimate how many people in Britain are from an ethnic minority – most think one in five is, compared to only one person in twelve in reality. The proportion of the British population who are immigrants to this country is also hugely over-estimated.

Britain has come a long way in terms of race relations, but that there is no room for complacency. While race relations issues are not rated as important as “big” national issues such as health, crime and education, (which are shared priorities for all racial groups), race is considered a major issue on a national level. However, there is more that unites people than divides them: the research highlights a number of commonly shared values among all ethnic groups, such as the importance of community and what contributes to a successful community. The study shows a strong sense of local identification, which suggests that where one lives is often a more powerful determinant of issues than race. The discussion group work highlights that race is often used as shorthand for underlying issues around deprivation such as employment, education and access to scarce social resources, and these areas - along with race - need to be a priority for future focus.

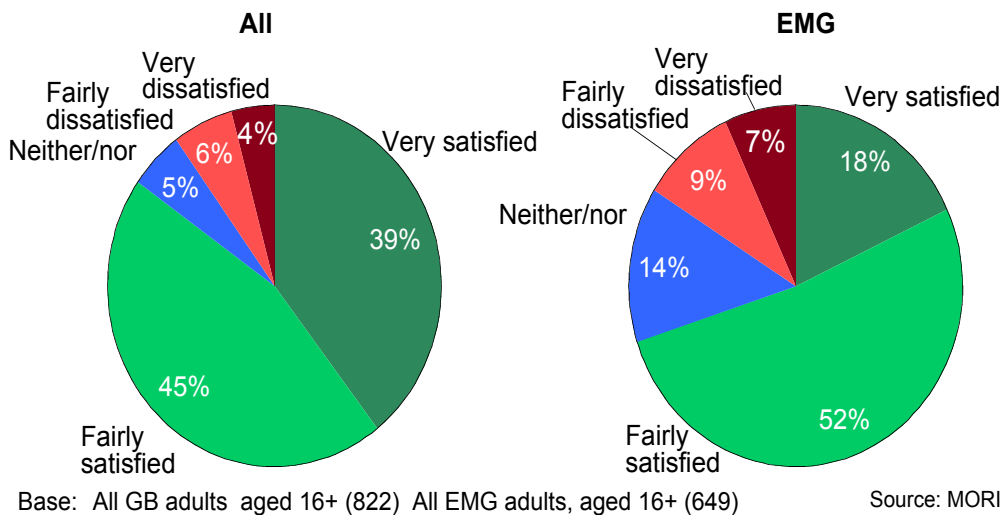
# Summary of Findings

## My local area

People of all ethnicities are generally positive about their local area and say they like living where they do. The survey shows that over four in five (84%) are satisfied with their local area as a place to live. This figure is lower among ethnic minority groups (EMGs), but they are still far more satisfied than dissatisfied: 70% versus 16%. Lower satisfaction levels may of course reflect the higher deprivation levels in areas where the EMG population is concentrated.

### Area Satisfaction

Q How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?  
By this area I mean 1 mile/15 minutes walk from your home.



## A shared view of Community

Among all ethnic groups, the majority (54%) thinks there is at least a fair amount of community spirit in their local area, although many find the word “community” very hard to define. Nonetheless, they are able to identify some important factors that make up a good community. These are illustrated in the diagram below.



Asked what brings communities together, friendly neighbours and people are highlighted as the most important factor by all ethnic groups, 68% for the nation as whole. Otherwise, a long-standing and stable population (39%), and good local schools (30%) are relatively more important to white citizens, while ethnic minorities are more likely to pick both a mix of different types of people (29%), but also people having the same cultural background (24%).

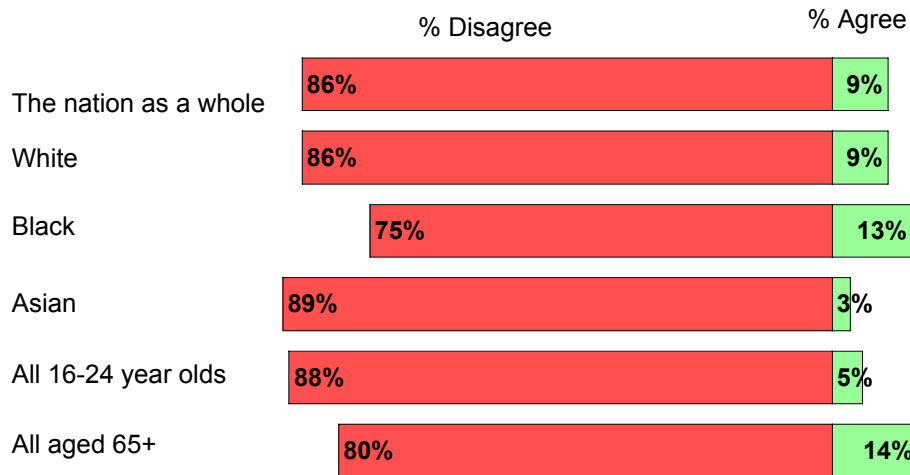
### We don't know what Britishness is

There is no homogenous sense of Britishness – both in the group discussions as well as in the survey, the concept of Britishness is difficult to define. When asked what comes to mind when thinking about the “British way of life” people highlight attitudes and behaviour (cultural diversity 9% and people being polite 6%) rather than demographic characteristics such as ethnicity. Over a quarter (28%) of the public are unable to give an answer and this figure rises to a third (33%) among ethnic minority communities.

However, being British is not about being white: 86% of the British public disagree that to be truly British you have to be white. This is fairly consistent among all sections of the population.

## British = White?

Q To be truly British you have to be White.



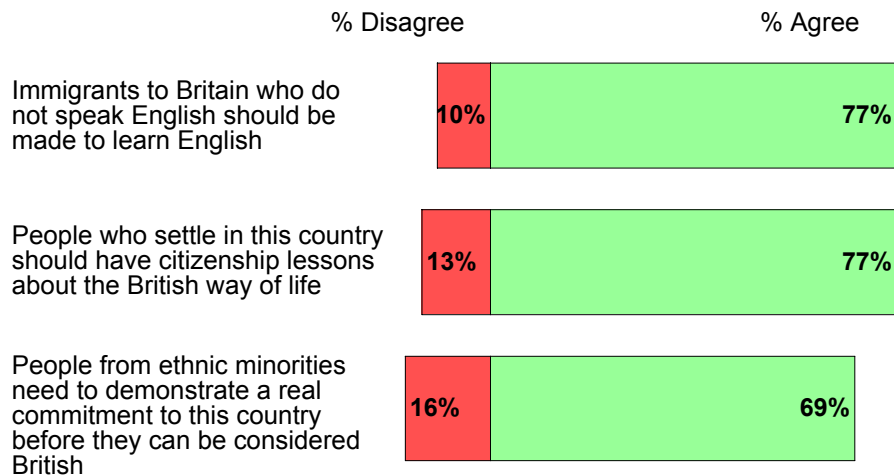
Base: All GB adults aged 16+ (822) All EMG adults, aged 16+ (649)

Source: MORI

There is support for “integrationist” policies such as English lessons and citizenship lessons among all ethnic groups (but not tests). In the discussion groups, people from ethnic minority backgrounds highlight that their support for these initiatives is on the grounds of practicality rather than endorsement of any political agenda.

## Integration

Q I am going to read a list of statements and I would like you to tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each...



Base: All GB adults, aged 16+ (822)

Source: MORI



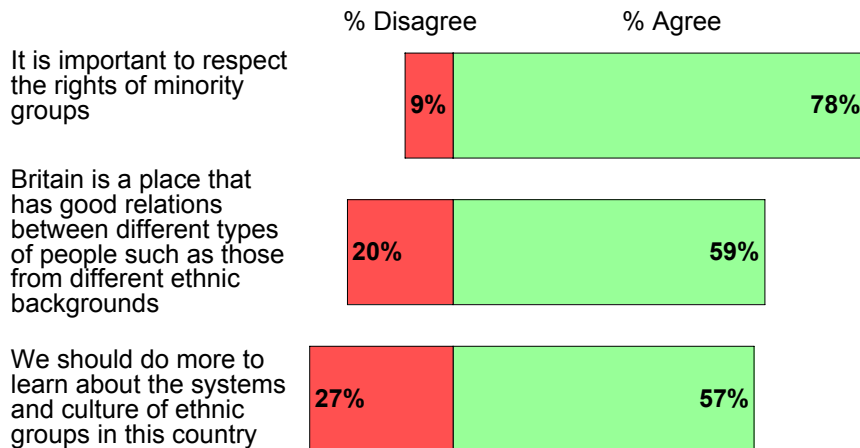
## Race Relations in Britain – a positive picture

The research shows that there is a common recognition that Britain is multicultural. The majority (59%) agree that Britain is a place that has good race relations between different types of people such as those from different ethnic minorities. This figure rises to 67% among ethnic minority groups.

There is also widespread respect for diversity, with four in five (78%) agreeing that it is important to respect the rights of minority groups and over half (57%) saying that we should do more to learn about the systems and culture of the ethnic groups in this country, although one in four disagree (27%).

### Race relations

Q I am now going to read out a list of statements and I would like you to tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each...



Base: All GB adults, aged 16+ (822)

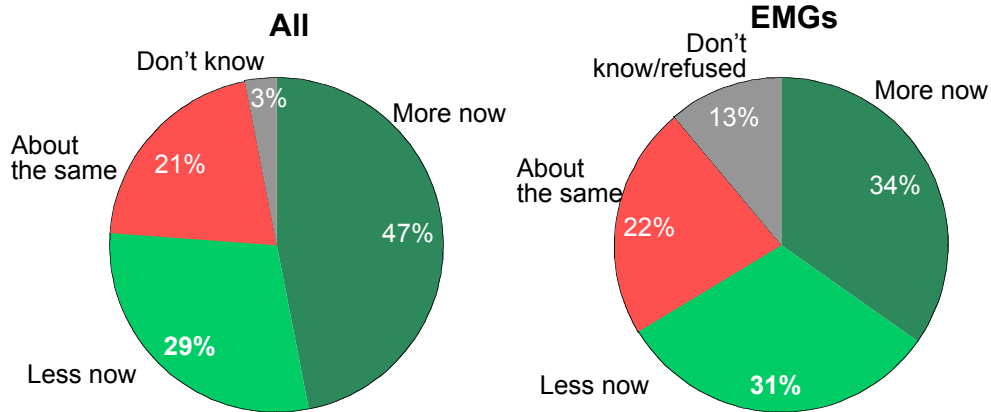
Source: MORI

Nonetheless, there are mixed messages about race relations in Britain today: 15% highlight this as a major issue facing the country, rising to 26% among ethnic minorities. However, when thinking about problems in their local area, poor race relations hardly feature, with only 5% saying this is a negative feature of their local area. This implies that media coverage rather than direct experience has a key role to play in informing how people view the issue. This is reinforced by the fact that those experiencing discrimination attribute it to ignorance and lack of understanding.

Nearly half the population (47%) think that there is generally more racial prejudice in Britain today than there was 10 years ago, but a similar proportion (49%) think it has improved or stayed the same. Among ethnic minority groups, who are most likely to experience racial prejudice, views are more positive, with only a third (34%) saying the situation is worse than 10 years ago. It must be remembered that this research was conducted at time when race relations are a prominent issue nationally as well as across Europe.

## More or less discrimination?

Q Do you think there is generally more, less or about the same amount of racial prejudice in Britain now than there was 10 years ago?



Base: All GB adults , aged 16+ (822) All EMG adults, aged 16+ (649)

Source: MORI

## Has the world really changed?

Most (55%) do not believe September 11<sup>th</sup> has had a negative impact on race relations in Britain. However, 27% of white and ethnic minority groups feel it has created a less tolerant society. An equal proportion of ethnic minority groups (26%) think that September 11<sup>th</sup> has improved race relations in the country (because of more attention to the issue?), and 13% of white people are also positive about its effects.

Similarly, around half the population (49%) thinks that the disturbances in Oldham and Bradford have had no effect on race relations in Britain, with three in ten (28%) who think it has damaged tolerance of other races. Younger people, on the other hand, are consistently more optimistic throughout the research on this issue: one in five 16-24 year olds (20%) think that the disturbances in the north have contributed to a more racially tolerant Britain compared with only one in eight (12%) among those over 65 years.

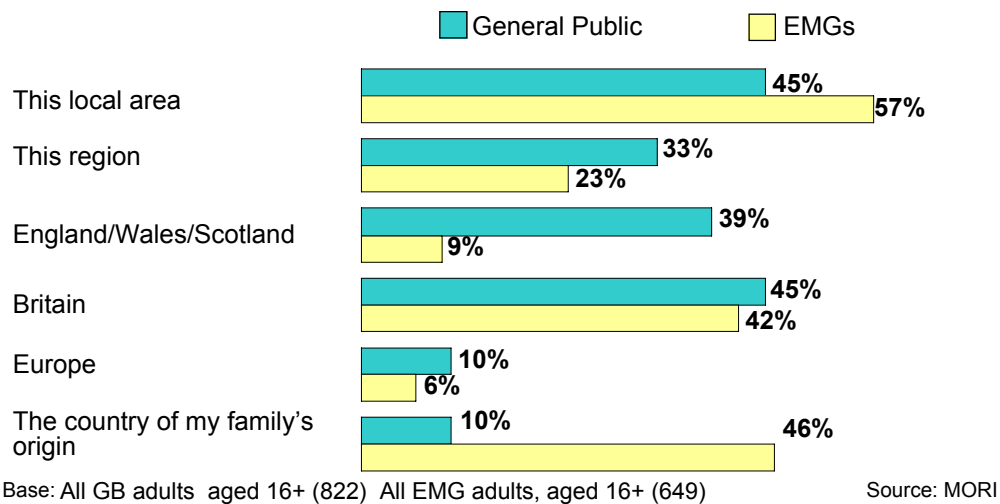
## Identity

People of all ethnicities are more comfortable identifying themselves with Britain than with England, Wales or Scotland. This is particularly the case among ethnic minority groups, of whom only one in ten (9%) identifies with the individual countries that make up Britain. This confirms earlier findings that all groups feel comfortable using the label “British”.

However, among all ethnic groups, the strongest identification is with their local area: almost half (47%) say they feel closest to their local area, rising to 57% among EMGs.

### Identity

Q On this card are a number of different areas or communities. Which two or three would you say you most identify with?



## Prejudice and Discrimination

Almost half the population (45%) say they know someone who is prejudiced against people from a different ethnic group to their own. This figure is 28% for ethnic minority groups.

Among all ethnicities, the most likely to be discriminated against are refugees and asylum seekers (60%). This figure has risen by 10 percentage points since May 2001.

Ignorance is the most frequently mentioned factor blamed for racial prejudice (32%) followed by a lack of understanding of different cultures (26%).

Among all ethnic groups, there is a feeling there are too many immigrants in Britain – 61% of the overall population agree with this statement as well as 46% of ethnic minority groups.

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# Appendices

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# Cluster Analysis

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The aim of this analysis was to see how and to what extent the British population naturally groups into segments, which share similar characteristics.

A Factor analysis which condensed the survey questions into nine manageable themes was carried out first. The nine themes to emerge are as follows:

1. Welcoming others;
2. Satisfaction with the Local Area;
3. Intolerance;
4. Importance of the Neighbourhood;
5. Awareness of British Identity;
6. Things are getting better (Optimism);
7. Locally Parochial (i.e. identifying more with their local area than with Britain or Europe);
8. Over-estimation of the number of ethnic minority people in Britain;
9. The area is a “Time Bomb”;

We then used clusters analysis, based on these themes, to segment the population. We identified seven specific groups and looked at the demographic profile of the seven segments from the analysis, to provide a visual picture of the sort of person which falls into each of these groups, and detailed profiles of these segments are given below.

It should be pointed out that none of these groups are totally exclusive. The key groupings are as follows:

Overall, analysis of the survey data suggests that we can group the population into seven different groups, in terms of their attitudes towards race, diversity, Britain and locality.

1. **“The Welcoming Mainstream”**. This relatively large group, which covers 23% of the population, tends to feel that more effort should be made on both sides for cross-understanding between the cultures of Britain and that of immigrant communities. They are the least concerned of all groups about the local area in which they live. This group includes mainly manual workers with few formal educational qualifications, who tend to rent, rather than own their homes, often from local authorities. This group is most common in the South – rather less so in the North.
2. **“Rule Britannia”**. This group (13% of the sample) is one of two groups we identified who appear to have lower levels of racial tolerance than the rest of the population. They place the least emphasis on promoting understanding between the cultures and have a strong tendency to over-estimate the proportion of EMG persons in the population. They are generally working class, have a high proportion of council renters and are the least likely to hold degrees, and also a high proportion of women.

3. **“British Identity”**. This is a relatively small, but specific group (7%), characterised by a strong sense of identity with Britishness and national icons (e.g. “fish and chips”, “cricket” and “Tony Blair”). This group includes many manual workers (with a low proportion holding degrees) living in the North, many owning their own home.
4. **“Outward Looking”**. This is a small group (9%) of relatively well-educated middle class people, many of whom are on high incomes, who much more strongly identify with Europe and areas beyond their own particular neighbourhood.
5. **“Own Fortress”**. This is our second group which are less tolerant than other groups. It covers 17% of the sample, and characteristically, they have a sense of pride about the locality in which they live, seeing it as peaceful and safe. Unlike the “Rule Britannia” group, this group is almost exclusively white (95%) and feel that immigrants should show a real commitment to Britain and understand the British way of life before settling in this country. Outside of their own neighbourhood, they feel that the country is getting a more unstable place in which to live and that racial prejudice is becoming more of a problem, such concerns further fuelled by recent events (e.g. September 11<sup>th</sup>). Demographically, they stand out as an older, middle class with a high proportion of owner-occupiers who have lived where they do for a long time (i.e. over 20 years). They are unlikely to welcome change and seek “comfort” within their own locality.
6. **“Neighbourhood Focus / Optimists”**. This group (17%) appears to have a fairly positive outlook that race relations are improving and that the country is betting a better place in which to live. They tend to be a younger, well-educated group in non-manual occupations, often on reasonable incomes.
7. **“Dissatisfied”**. This group (14% of the sample) are characterised by a dissatisfaction with the area in which they live, believing it to be unsafe, and they are concerned that issues associated with racial tension may be getting worse, particularly on the back of recent events. They are a young, fairly well-educated group which contains a relatively high proportion of ethnic minority communities (mainly Asians), and it might be possible that these are the group who feel that they are at most risk from racially-motivated attacks.

# Technical Note

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## The Survey

A nationally representative sample of 822 adults aged 16+, was interviewed face-to-face, in respondents' homes. The sampling frame consisted of 83 randomly selected Enumeration Districts (EDs) across sample points across Britain. EDs are the smallest sampling frame used in the collection of Census data. In addition, in order to ensure robust representation of ethnic minority groups (EMG), booster interviews were conducted over 134 sample points across Britain with 610 ethnic minority groups comprising 106 Black Caribbeans, 111 Black Africans, 105 Indians, 109 Pakistanis, 127 Bangladeshi and 52 Chinese.

The national sample data were weighted at analysis stage by age, gender, region, social class, work status, housing tenure and ethnicity. The booster sample data were weighted according to the proportions of EMGs in Britain, gender, age and work status. Where figures are quoted nationally, these are taken from the mainframe sample alone (i.e. 822). Figures for specific EMGs use the booster sample interviews plus interviews with EMGs in the mainframe sample.

As well as standard computer tabulations, the data were interpreted using factor and cluster analysis. In such a way, typologies based on attitudinal positions were established along with their demographic profiles.

## Presentation and Interpretation of Survey

### Data

It should be remembered at all times that a sample and not the entire population of Great British residents has been interviewed. In consequence, all results are subject to sampling tolerances, which means that not all differences are statistically significant; overall results for the national sample are accurate to approximately  $\pm 3$ .

Where percentages do not sum to 100, this may be due to computer rounding, the exclusion of "don't know" categories, or multiple answers. Throughout the volume an asterisk (\*) denotes any value of less than half a per cent but greater than zero.

Throughout the report, reference is made to "net" figures. This represents the balance of opinion on attitudinal questions, and provides a particularly useful means of comparing the results for a number of variables. In the case of a "net satisfaction" figure, this represents the percentage satisfied on a particular issue or service, less the percentage dissatisfied. For example, if a service records 40% satisfied and 25% dissatisfied, the "net satisfaction" figure is +15 points.

### Focus groups

The qualitative research, which consists of thirteen discussion groups, was designed to focus on the concepts of nationhood and the cohesion or otherwise of diverse communities living within Britain. However, it should be made

clear at the outset that the group discussions were not exclusively about "race". The discussions also explored people's thoughts about their neighbourhoods, and their quality of life in the local area, as well as Britain as a whole. Participants were not at first prompted with issues such as race and, with notable exceptions; ethnicity and race did not emerge spontaneously as "issues".

It should be noted that the qualitative stage was conducted before the success of Jean-Marie Le Pen in the first round of the French Presidential elections, and the consequent widespread media discussion of race-related issues.

### Use of focus groups

Thirteen discussion groups were conducted across Britain. No combination by locality, ethnicity, age, class and gender is possible that can be considered representative of Britain - the quantitative stage of this project is intended to provide this type of coverage. Instead, the choice of groups reflected, as far as it could, a range of different communities, which are seen to contrast with one another in terms of ethnicity, cohesion and outlook. The young white and Asian Oldham groups, for instance, were chosen in light of last year's disturbances.

The matrix below shows the make-up of each group:

Location	Ethnicity	Social class	Gender	Age
Birmingham	Asian	C2DE	Female	35-54
Oldham	White	DE	Male	Under 25
Oldham	Asian	DE	Male	Under 25
Staffordshire	White	ABC1	Mixed	35-54
Cardiff	Black	C2DE	Mixed	35-54
Cardiff	White	ABC1	Mixed	18-34
Kilburn	Irish	C2DE	Mixed	35-54
Hampstead	Mixed	ABC1	Mixed	35-54
Peckham	Afro-Caribbean	C1C2	Mixed	55+
Plymouth	White	C1C2	Mixed	55+
Plymouth	Black	C2DE	Mixed	18-34
Glasgow	White	C1C2	Mixed	35-54
Glasgow	Asian	C2DE	Mixed	18-34

The composition of the groups was designed in consultation with the Commission for Racial Equality.

### Recruitment

Participants were recruited face-to-face, in respondent's homes. The participants' ethnicity was determined using the standard 2001 Census question which provides respondents with a prompted list from which they select the category in which they – not the interviewer – feel best describes them.



Each discussion lasted up to two hours and was attended by between seven and ten participants. The groups were held at local venues and were conducted between 8<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> April 2002.

## Interpretation of the Qualitative Findings

Two of the key strengths of **qualitative research** are that it allows issues to be explored in detail and enables researchers to test the strength of people's opinion.

However, it needs to be remembered that qualitative research does not allow conclusions to be drawn about either the extent to which something is happening or percentages of residents who have certain attitudes and opinions. Qualitative research is designed to be **illustrative, rather than providing statistically representative data**.

It should also be remembered that throughout this report we record **perceptions, not facts**. Participants may hold views based on incorrect information; these perceptions are reported here. There is also sometimes a tendency for qualitative discussions to elicit critical views.

Throughout the report, use is made of verbatim comments from participants. Where this is the case, it is important to remember that the views expressed do not always represent the views of the groups as a whole, although normally the verbatim is representative of at least a significant minority.