



## Racial Justice Glossary of Terms

### The Law Society

There are a significant number of words, phrases and acronyms that appear when talking about race and ethnicity which often change depending on the context of the conversation. Language is continuously evolving. It's important to understand the meaning behind the terms we use to address people and to keep updated and be willing to refresh our language, so we use appropriate and respectful terms.

It's also imperative to remember that individuals will have their own preferences as to how they would describe themselves, and how they would wish to be described. Identity is extremely personal.

You should listen, educate yourself, learn and politely ask about preferences if in doubt. (<https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/topics/ethnic-minority-lawyers/a-guide-to-race-and-ethnicity-terminology-and-language>)

**Allyship:** means consistently acting to support people from marginalised and under-represented groups and working to build a more inclusive working environment. It is where a person in a position of privilege and power works in solidarity with a marginalized group to bring about tangible change.

**Asian:** is a term that has been used to describe people of various origins from Asia, most commonly but not exclusively South Asia.

**BAME and BME:** These acronyms have been used to refer to people of non-white ethnicities who are minoritised in the UK.

Note that these statistical categories do not tend to include white minority ethnic groups, but they do include those who identify as having a mixed ethnicity. Both 'BAME' (Black, Asian and minority ethnic) and 'BME' (Black and minority ethnic) are often used when making comparisons with the white population in the UK and reflect a common way of gathering and

collating statistics, for example, by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and in company diversity monitoring.

'BAME' became more frequently used than 'BME' to recognise the significant and distinct Asian population in the UK. It should be noted too that the 'Asian' category used by the ONS includes South Asian ethnicities (for example, Indian, Bangladeshi and Pakistani) and East Asian ethnicities (for example, Chinese).

Use of the term 'BAME' has been increasingly criticised. More recently, UK broadcasters (the BBC, ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5) have committed to avoid using the acronym wherever possible.

The controversy and unease with the term 'BAME' largely stems from the grouping together of diverse ethnicities, and the implication that it reflects a singular or homogenous ethnic identity. However, it may be appropriate in some contexts still to use such broad categories, for example, when you are making statistical comparisons between white and the Black, Asian and minority ethnic populations. It's better to write them in full at first use, as research has found many also do not understand what they stand for.

You should also use capitals and avoid writing 'Bame', which implies it's a distinct word or identity, or pronouncing it as a word. The population of the UK has become much more ethnically diverse, and the range of differing experiences and identities has grown. There is a real need to acknowledge this and improve our understanding of the experiences of different racial or ethnic groups rather than lumping them all together. Data collection and statistical analysis (sample size permitting) should seek to move beyond simplistic comparisons wherever possible.

Terms such as '**BAME**' or '**BME**' should not be used as a replacement for directly addressing a specific racial or ethnic group or individual when that is who we are speaking about. They are not adjectives and do not describe an individual identity. For example, avoid saying: 'He's a BAME solicitor.' Where possible be specific and say, 'he's a Black solicitor' or 'she's an Asian solicitor'.

**Bigotry:** is a more intensive form of prejudice and carries the negative side of prejudgment. The bigot is usually conscious of their feelings, nurtures them, and is often defined by them.

**Black:** a term that has been, and still is, used to describe some or all the people of African, Caribbean, South Asian and other Asian origin, and often also to describe people of mixed heritage.

**Blind:** the term is used to describe someone with a visual impairment, but also as an abusive term for sighted people.

**Bullying:** a persistent, deliberate attempt to hurt or humiliate someone

**Coloured:** an offensive/unacceptable term. This was a colonial term used to emphasise difference and unequal status. It is often still used by people who mistakenly believe it is 'less harsh' than the term 'Black'. It also has links with the apartheid system in South Africa, in relation to people of mixed heritage.

**Colourism and Texturism:** Racial phenotypicality bias is one lasting racist practice that originated during African enslavement and colonisation periods in the Caribbean and Americas. This form of bias operates by favouring and praising Eurocentric phenotypes (such as light skin and straight hair) compared to afro-centric phenotypes (such as dark skin and afro-textured hair). Colourism and texturism are two primary forms of phenotype biases that are specifically related to skin and hair. These two phenotypes are deemed as primary because they are highly salient and often used as markers of one's racial identity.

**Crippled:** now an offensive/unacceptable term which is considered a term of abuse. Historically, it was used to describe physical disability but is now best avoided.

**Culture:** a term used to designate shared experiences or common characteristics in a group such as language, religious conventions, political systems, economic systems, kinship systems, incest prohibitions, family structures etc. It is problematic as it is sometimes used as a fixed 'statement of fact', when in fact culture is something that shifts constantly.

**Disabled person/people:** there is much debate about which terms are most acceptable to people. Some people prefer to be described as a 'person with disabilities', because it places the person ahead of disability. Some prefer to describe themselves as a disabled person, emphasising that it is not their impairment that disables them, but inaccessible environments and other people's attitudes. Currently, the balance of

preference is towards person with disability/people with disabilities, but this may change from time to time. It is always best to listen to how people describe themselves and use their preferred terminology wherever possible.

**Discrimination:** discrimination in the Church of England is treating people unfairly or differently because of their religion or beliefs. This can include direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment, and victimization.

**Direct discrimination:** Treating someone unfairly or less favourably because of their religion or beliefs.

**Indirect discrimination:** Putting in place rules or arrangements that apply to everyone but put someone with a protected characteristic at an unfair disadvantage.

**Harassment:** Unwanted, unreciprocated, and/or uninvited comments, looks, actions, suggestions, or physical contact that is offensive and might threaten someone's job security.

**Victimization:** Singling out an individual for harsh treatment, or unfair action/sanction.

**Diversity:** encompasses all attributes and characteristics of an individual. Diversity is the mix of people in an organisation. Diversity includes factors such as age, gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation. It also includes social and cultural background, education, attitudes, personalities and thinking styles. Diversity is a gift from our creator God and anything which causes us to overlook, devalue, or dismiss that gift is a sin.

**Ethnicity:** is broader than race and has usually been used to refer to long shared cultural experiences, religious practices, traditions, ancestry, language, dialect or national origins (for example, African-Caribbean, Indian, Irish).

Ethnicity can be seen as a more positive identity than one forged from the shared negative experiences of racism.

**Equality Act Definitions:** In the Equality Act 2010, the protected characteristic of 'race' is defined as including colour, ethnic or national origin, or nationality. There is some overlap with the characteristic of

religion or belief too, with Jews and Sikhs considered to be ethnic groups under the act, although Muslims are not considered an ethnic group but a religious group only under the act's definitions.

### **Ethnic Minority, Minority Ethnic or Minoritised Ethnic**

These terms usually refer to racial and ethnic groups that are in a minority in the population.

In the UK, they usually cover all ethnic groups except White British. For example, they include white minority ethnic groups such as Polish or Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller. 'Minority ethnic' is sometimes preferred over 'ethnic minority'.

Use of 'minority ethnic' was proposed to help counter the use of the term 'ethnic' when referring to people who are not White British. Some felt that by not putting 'ethnic' first, 'minority ethnic' better recognised the fact that everyone has an ethnicity including White British people.

**'Minoritised ethnic'** (or the similar term 'racially minoritised') has been recommended more recently as it recognises that individuals have been minoritised through social processes of power and domination rather than just existing in distinct statistical minorities. It also better reflects the fact that ethnic groups that are minorities in the UK are majorities in the global population.

You should take care when using umbrella terms such as these. Users should be aware of the negative consequences of grouping all minoritised individuals together in this way, especially when there is significant diversity between them. Always consider use of these terms carefully and be sure and prepared to clarify which races and/or ethnicities you are actually speaking about.

**Equity:** is about providing resources based on need, while equality is about treating everyone the same. Both are important for fairness, but they can lead to different outcomes. Equity recognizes that people have different circumstances, provides resources and support based on need, considers the specific needs of individuals or groups and can include special accommodations or differential treatment.

**Equality:** means giving everyone the same resources or opportunities, regardless of need or circumstances, assumes that everyone starts at the

same place and faces the same challenges. May result in unfairness for some people.

**GMH/UKME:** *Global Majority Heritage/UK Minoritised Ethnic:* Within the Church of England, the acronym UKME has been adopted as recognition that in the UK there are people from a minority ethnic background, but only because they are in the UK. Equally, the term *Global Majority Heritage* (GMH) is a reminder that minorities in the UK are often from a majority world culture, e.g. those from Africa and India. In addition, migrants from Hong Kong although from a majority Chinese heritage, are automatically classified as 'minority ethnic' in the UK.

**Handicapped:** an offensive/unacceptable term that implies mental defectiveness, permanent incapacity, dependency and barriers to progress. This cap-in-hand image is seen as implying that disabled people need to find charity to support their wellbeing.

**Immigrant:** an acceptable or offensive/unacceptable term depending on whether it is used in the correct context to refer to people who have just moved to a new country from elsewhere. People from many different minority ethnic groups have been settled in the UK for long periods, and most were born here. It is incorrect to refer to these people as immigrants.

**Inclusion:** means welcoming and affirming all people, regardless of their differences. This includes people with disabilities, people of different ethnicities, and people of different sexual orientations. It's about creating an environment that ensures everyone feels valued and welcomed. Diversity is having a seat at the table, inclusion is having a voice, and belonging is having that voice be heard. A **sense of belonging** is not the same as 'fitting in', instead it's when one feels safe and valued because what makes one different is embraced.

**Integration X Assimilation:** In the context of a church, "integration" means actively incorporating new members into the existing community while allowing them to retain their unique identities, whereas "assimilation" implies a more forceful process in which newcomers are expected to fully adopt the established church culture, potentially losing some of their own identity and gifts. Essentially, integration aims for inclusion while assimilation can sometimes feel like absorption.

### ***Key differences:***

**Cultural preservation:** Integration encourages new members to contribute their own cultural elements to the church community, while assimilation often prioritizes conforming to the dominant culture within the church.

**Level of change required:** Integration may involve some adjustments for new members to fit in, but assimilation often requires a more significant shift in beliefs and practices to align with the existing church norms.

**Focus on diversity:** Integration actively seeks to create a diverse and inclusive environment, whereas assimilation might inadvertently minimize the expression of diverse perspectives.

### **Example scenarios:**

**Integration:** A church actively reaches out to people from different backgrounds, inviting them to share their cultural traditions during worship services and incorporating their perspectives into church decision-making.

**Assimilation:** A church might focus on converting new members to strictly follow their established traditions and practices, potentially downplaying the importance of maintaining their cultural heritage.

**Microaggressions:** are everyday slights, indignities and putdowns directed generally to people of colour by unintentional individuals who are unaware they are engaging in a demeaning action. *Sue Wing PhD Professor of Psychology and Education.*

**Misogynoir:** Misogynoir is a term referring to the combination of anti-Black racism and misogyny directed towards Black women. It shows how sexism and racism manifest in Black women's lives to create intersecting forms of oppression.

**Mixed race:** currently the term preferred by most people of mixed parentage, whilst others/although some prefer to be identified by their parents' nationality, e.g. Anglo-Nigerian. Some people object to these terms, preferring **mixed heritage**. It is useful to listen to how people describe themselves and use that terminology with them.

**Negro, Caucasian, Negroid, Oriental:** these words are becoming redundant in our language. They are terms relating to discredited theories of racial origin. It's worth considering the need for the Church to take a restorative approach and to speak or write in a way that is not simply 'not racist' but is actively 'anti-racist'. Language can uphold systems of white supremacy or encourage breaking it down or questioning it.

**Non-White:** presumes that White is the norm with any deviation being considered not 'normal'. Use Black/Asian instead.

**People of Colour:** This is primarily used in the USA and has not been fully adopted within the UK although it has become more popular. Some perceive it as a more positive term than 'BAME' or 'BME'. However, others see it as similarly problematic, in that it groups together people of great ethnic diversity and different shared experiences and identities.

**Positive action:** is lawful action that seeks to overcome or minimise the disadvantages that people who share a protected characteristic have experienced, or to meet their different needs. An example would be providing mentoring to encourage staff from under-represented groups (who might be qualified but lacking confidence) to apply for promotion.

**Positive discrimination:** it is unlawful to discriminate in favour of someone solely on the grounds of their age, race, ethnicity, religion or belief, gender or disability. Exceptions to this rule come under the Equality Act as Occupational Requirements, eg a women's support worker in a halfway house for abused women.

There is also an exception in that it is possible to discriminate in favour of a disabled person/person with disabilities in two circumstances:

1. as an employer, where two candidates are equally appointable
2. when providing services (such as theatre seats, or transport) where it may be necessary to treat a disabled person/person with disabilities more favourably if it is the only way possible for them to access that service.

**Privilege:** is an advantage or benefit that can be earned, inherited, or conveyed by societal norms. Some people have more privilege than others. For example, the conventions and habits of a society often reflect the preferences of a majority population, whilst disadvantaging minorities.

**Race:** is a categorisation that is based on physical attributes or traits, assigning people to a specific race simply by having similar appearances or skin colour (for example, Black or White). The categorisation is rooted in White supremacy and efforts to prove biological superiority and maintain dominance over others.

It is now widely accepted that 'race' is a social construct. However, having been racialised and shared common experiences of racism, racial identity is important to many and can be a basis for collective organising and support for racially minoritised individuals.

**Racism:** The Church of England defines racism as any behaviour or incident that is perceived to be motivated by racial prejudice or hostility. This can include bullying or intimidation, verbal abuse, insults, racist jokes, sharing racially offensive comments or exclusion material, exclusion from normal conversation or activities, malicious complaints, verbal or physical threats or attacks. Racism is a complex issue that involves prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against someone of a different race. It can also describe a condition in society in which a dominant racial group benefits from the oppression of others.

**Racial profiling:** in the UK is when police target people based on their race or ethnicity, rather than on evidence or individual suspicion. It can include stop-and-searches, surveillance, and arrests.

**Anti-racism:** Anti-racism is an active commitment to working against racial injustice and discrimination. It's making conscious and thoughtful decisions regarding your own behaviours and how they negatively influence and impact your own biases and actions. You do not have to be completely free of racism or bias to be anti-racist. Part of the role of an anti-racist person is self-reflection and self-improvement. An anti-racist is different from a non-racist due to the active nature of the position. To be anti-racist is to be an active part of the solution, whereas a non-racist is a bystander of the problem.

**Covert Racism:** Unlike overt racism, which manifests itself openly through explicit acts of discrimination, covert racism is often difficult to spot, as it hides away within societal structures, behaviours and attitudes. This perpetuates inequality through systemic biases and disparities. Because it is so subtle, covert racism enables perpetrators to deny any responsibility of it, resulting in continuous damage and maintaining the unconscious biases of individuals, communities and institutions.

**Institutional Racism:** refers to discrimination or unequal treatment based on membership of a particular ethnic group (typically one that is a minority or marginalized), arising from systems, policies, structures, processes, or expectations that have become established within an institution or organization.

**Systemic racism:** occurs when one racial group misuses its power, privilege or discriminatory attitudes to exclude, oppress or exploit another racial group.

**Reparations:** Beyond a concern with financial compensation and redress schemes for historical abuses, reparations can be understood from the point of view of justice and the opportunity to transform the relationship between victim-survivors of historical abuse. Beyond the monetary and material dimensions, the symbolic and communicative dimensions form a critical part of reparations as a response to historical-structural injustice.

**Transformative justice:** Its goal is to overcome racism and to achieve healing, reconciliation and the re-establishment ("to put things right") of people's relationships, with a particular focus on justice to racially and ethnically oppressed peoples.

**Just Repair:** 'Just Repair' goes beyond a 'legalistic' approach that calculates damages and awards lump sums or annuities. These payments technically fulfil the international obligation to protect the recognised right to reparation enjoyed by all victims of human rights violations. This approach accommodates the multilayered justice aims held by victims, especially in light of the great diversity of human rights violations they suffer in addition to the variance in demographic characteristics like gender, class, age and location, among other factors.

*(See Laplante, Lisa J., 'Just Repair' (4 February 2015), 48 Cornell Int'l L. J. 513 (2015), New England Law | Boston Research Paper No. 14-10.)*

**Scapegoating:** is the act or practice of assigning blame or failure to persons or groups instead of placing it directly on the person(s) to whom the blame or failure belongs.

**Stereotyping:** is attributing characteristics to a group simplistically and uncritically. Often, there is the assumption that those characteristics are rooted in significant biological differences.

**Ubuntu:** Ubuntu, meaning 'humanity' in some Southern African (Bantu) languages, such as Zulu, describes a set of closely African-origin value systems that emphasise the interconnectedness of individuals with their surrounding societal and physical worlds. 'Ubuntu' is sometimes translated as 'I am because we are' (also 'I am because you are'). It also has a philosophical dimension in Xhosa (*Bantu language spoken by millions in South Africa and Zimbabwe*) meaning 'the belief in a universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity.

**Unconscious bias:** is a term used in the Church of England to describe automatic, involuntary judgments that can be based on stereotypes and personal experiences. It can affect how people are treated in the workplace and in the church. Unconscious bias is also known as implicit bias. It's a systematic thinking error that happens outside of conscious awareness and control. It can be triggered by a person's background, cultural environment, and personal experiences. It can be based on many factors, including race, gender, age, disability, and sexual orientation.

Unconscious bias can lead to unfair treatment and inequality. It can impact recruitment, promotion, and appraisals. It can undermine the desire to act justly and fairly towards others. Building a personal awareness of our own biases can help us to stop and think, and be curious, rather than make assumptions about the people we interact with.

**White Privilege:** This term refers to the advantages that White people have within society, solely based on their race. This can manifest in a vast variety of ways. Some examples include:

- you can easily find products which match your skin tone and hair type.
- your history is a part of the curriculum.
- you generally have a positive relationship with the police.

The term does not discount the challenges White people have faced, or currently face, but describes the reality that, although White people and people of all races can have similar negative and disadvantageous experiences, White people will not suffer the biases of race in addition.

### **Intercultural & Multicultural Churches**

**Intercultural Communities** are those in which members value and respect all cultures. Their communication focuses on mutually exchanged ideas, cultural norms, and the willingness to develop deep relationships.

**Cultural Integration:** An intercultural church strongly emphasises cultural integration. It seeks to create an environment where people from diverse cultural backgrounds interact, worship, and serve together, fostering mutual understanding and appreciation.

**Breaking Down Barriers:** The focus of an intercultural church is to break down cultural barriers and promote unity among its members. Cultural differences are acknowledged and respected, but there is an intentional effort to bridge those differences through shared experiences.

**Shared Leadership:** Intercultural churches often promote shared leadership among members from different cultural backgrounds. This may include having leaders and ministers from various ethnicities and cultures.

**Intercultural Worship:** In an intercultural church, worship services and other church activities are intentionally designed to incorporate elements from multiple cultures, creating a more inclusive and diverse worship experience.

**Cross-Cultural Relationships:** Intercultural churches actively encourage cross-cultural relationships within and outside formal church activities. This can lead to deeper friendships and a sense of community that transcends cultural boundaries.

**Conflict Resolution:** Since cultural diversity can sometimes lead to misunderstandings or conflicts, intercultural churches often have mechanisms in place to address and resolve issues related to cultural differences.

In an intercultural community, no one is left unchanged because everyone learns from one another and grows together. An intercultural worshipping community, are a diverse, cultural, ethnic, and geographic group of believers from different religious (Christian) heritages who exchange ideas, develop deep relationships, learn from each other, and growing together as a family of God.

**Multicultural Church:** Multicultural and intercultural churches are both terms used to describe churches that seek to embrace and engage with cultural diversity, but they have slightly different emphases and approaches:

**Diverse Congregation:** A multicultural church is characterised by having a diverse congregation that includes people from various racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.

**Parallel Cultures:** In a multicultural church, different cultural groups within the congregation may coexist somewhat independently. Each cultural group may have services, ministries, or programmes catering to its specific cultural needs and preferences.

**Celebration of Diversity:** Multicultural churches often celebrate and value the diversity of cultures represented in their congregation. They may have events or services that highlight and honour various cultural traditions.

**Cultural Expression:** While multicultural churches acknowledge cultural diversity, they may not always encourage the active integration of cultures. People from different backgrounds may worship separately or engage primarily within their cultural groups.

In summary, the main difference between multicultural and intercultural churches is their approach to cultural diversity. Multicultural churches embrace diversity while allowing cultural groups to coexist somewhat independently. In contrast, intercultural churches prioritise cultural integration to create a more unified and inclusive community where people from diverse backgrounds actively engage with each other and their cultures. Both approaches have their strengths and challenges, and the choice between them often depends on the specific goals and vision of the church leadership and congregation.

### **Tips**

- Consider which racial or ethnic groups you're talking about and ensure the terms you're using accurately reflect them.
- Avoid using umbrella terms unnecessarily and remember they do not refer to a singular homogenous ethnic group.
- Always explain acronyms in full in any writing, particularly at first use, and avoid pronouncing or writing as words.
- Seek more detailed data and insights wherever possible so you can better recognise, understand and reflect the experiences of different minoritised ethnic groups.
  - Accept and acknowledge that ethnicity is an integral part of a person's identity and treat it as such; avoid describing a person's identity as 'BAME'.

- Respect people's preferences and allow options to self-describe when asking survey questions.
- It can be okay to clarify how people describe their identity, but first, question why you need to know and avoid making racially minoritised individuals feel like outsiders by asking questions like 'where are you from?'
  - Continue to educate yourself, listen and learn as language continually evolves.
  - Own and learn from your mistakes and apologise if you get terminology wrong and cause offence.