

## Written evidence from Poole Youth Forum

on behalf of: Poole Youth Forum (a focus group working on tackling prejudice in Poole) and MYP (Lili Donlon-Mansbridge) and DMYP (Lowri Bradley) for Poole

How prevalent do you think that racism and religious discrimination are?

Within Poole, we are not very culturally diverse (predominately white British). However, racism has been identified as an issue after working with the local youth council and schools, with young people feeling that there are many instances of stereotyping and in some cases individuals have experienced direct abuse. As a result of this, a focus group from Poole Youth Forum ran a survey to investigate the impact of prejudice on young people in Poole. From this only 23/123 felt prejudice wasn't an issue in Poole, and 73/123 said they had experience some form of prejudice. 23 ranked racism as the top instance of prejudice in Poole, with 43 ranking it in their top 3 issues. In terms of religious prejudice, 7 young people said it was the top issue in Poole, and 31 ranked in their top 3.

What is the most effective way to engage with young people on the topic of racism and religious discrimination?

In the survey young people were given a chance to suggest ways to tackle prejudice in Poole. Several young people suggested more active integration with different cultures, and better education about different faiths. One young person said they wanted to 'get rid of the myths surrounding those discriminated against', and another said 'greater race and religious education is needed (especially Islamophobia).

Does your place of education or work do anything to combat racism and religious discrimination? If so what? Is it effective?

One young person at Poole youth forum felt that their school 'sweeps things under the carpet' when it comes to racism and religious prejudice, and that issues will only be dealt with once they reach breaking point. Young people from other schools felt that school didn't really address the issue, and that the only religious groups in school was Christian Union, and therefore perhaps not very inclusive. Pastoral support teams are often those who deal with instance of racism, but the methods of dealing it are giving those who are experiencing prejudice a timeout card so they can leave. One young person said that he has had friends who have had to listen to racial slurs and were told they should leave the room; he felt it was like being told 'you're being bullied, so you can leave'.

Do young people have opportunities to discuss and experience other cultures and explore diversity? The majority of Poole Youth Forum felt that, at school, they were not given the opportunity to even discuss other cultures. However, young people felt that that opportunity was given at youth clubs and groups.

Are you aware of any work in local communities which has promoted diversity and inclusivity?

A group of Young People attended an event designed about promoting diversity called 'No Blacks, No Dogs, No Irish' where they watched a drama piece, and then participated in a workshop. A young person who attended felt that 'it opened up the discussion about how racism doesn't just affect people decades ago but it effects people today'.