Written evidence from Show Racism the Red Card

Awareness and Education
1. How prevalent do you think racism and religious discrimination are? What do you think is meant by racism and religious discrimination?

Sadly, Show Racism the Red Card (SRtRC) believes that racism & religious discrimination are prevalent, and the organisation is witnessing a worrying & potentially dangerous rise in specific forms of racism including Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hatred, and prejudice towards immigrants in classrooms in both primary & secondary schools.

SRtRC is the UK’s anti-racism educational charity and was established in January 1996. The organisation utilises the high-profile status of football and football players to help tackle racism in society. The majority of the campaign’s output is the delivery of education to young people and adults in their schools, their workplaces and at events held in football stadiums. Across Britain, Show Racism the Red Card delivers training to more than 50,000 individuals per year.

In order to provide an effective starting point for young people to begin reflections on and discussions about the complex phenomenon of racism, SRtRC define racism in an internationally broad and straight-forward manner:

Racism is treating people badly or differently because of skin colour, nationality, religion or culture.

By this definition, to discriminate against someone because of their actual or perceived religious beliefs is in fact a type of racism, although SRtRC accepts that there are subtleties surrounding prejudice in each of these areas and that people may hold strongly discriminatory views based on one aspect of someone’s identity but be indifferent towards other aspects.

Over the course of SRtRC’s 20 year history of campaigning and delivering anti-racism education, the nature of racism and the methods of its transmission have evolved; with some overt examples of racist behaviour steadily in decline while other, more nuanced discourse has found the societal conditions in which it can flourish.

In 2015, SRtRC published the findings of a study into young people’s attitudes towards life in Britain which featured the opinions and experiences of almost 6000 young people aged between 10-16 from schools throughout England.

The study

Key findings

- The average estimate of the percentage of people living in Britain who were not born here is 47%*
  *the 2011 census date indicates that the percentage of non-British born people living in the UK is c. 13%

- 28% of respondents believe jobs being taken by foreign workers might stop them reaching their goals

- In response to the statement ‘There are poor relations between Muslims and non-Muslims in England’ 47% said they agreed or partly agreed

- In response to the statement ‘Muslims are taking over England’, 35% said they agreed or partly agreed
- In response to the statement ‘Migration to the UK is out of control/not being managed properly’ 49% agreed or agreed strongly

- 60% of respondents believed that it was true that ‘Asylum seekers and immigrants are stealing our jobs’

Many of the young people questioned as part of this research activity appear to understand and agree with the notion that ‘racism is bad’, 37% of respondents claimed that they would report examples of racism to a teacher and 15% said they report racism on Facebook, however many respondents revealed gaps in their understanding by displaying prejudice towards particular religions or nationalities, particularly with regards to immigration.

A full break-down of the findings from SRtRC’s research project into the attitudes of young people can be viewed here.

2. To what extent are people, particularly young people, aware of incidents of racism and religious discrimination? Do victims of racism and religious discrimination feel able to, and know how to, report that they have been a victim?

Many young people appear to be aware of incidents of racism & discrimination, as evidenced through conversations and discussions taking place as part of SRtRC workshops. Young people can readily reference high-profile examples of racism from within popular culture and sport but are less certain when pressed about what constitutes racism and discrimination.

SRtRC have gathered evidence about the impact of effective anti-racism education on young people’s awareness and understanding of racism and religious discrimination. During the 2014/15 football season, SRtRC delivered 38 educational events at football clubs throughout England and found that only 66% of young people strongly agreed that racism was against the law prior to taking part in an SRtRC intervention.

The figure rose beyond 77% following participation in activities delivered by SRtRC.

Recently, members of SRtRC’s education team have undertaken Hate Crime training & are currently operating out of premises which double as a Hate Crime Reporting Centre. We would hope to be able to share some further evidence related to young people’s awareness of the reporting procedures by the time the BYC hears oral testimony.

Outside of what is referenced above SRtRC do not provide specific services for targets or ‘victims’ of racism in isolation, but naturally offer guidance, support and signposting to relevant services to potential targets of racism and religious discrimination.

One of the most important and impactful aspects of SRtRC’s utilisation of the role model status of professional footballers as an engagement tool for discussing racism is the role that it plays in raising awareness about the need to report racism when it is witnessed, either to a teacher, parent or carer, trusted adult or police officer.

During the past year SRtRC have been fortunate enough to work in partnership with clubs including Manchester United, where full-back & England International Luke Shaw told young people "If you are getting bullied or racially abused, it’s important to let it out and tell someone, so you have people around you for support. Tell your family, your friends, your teacher – they will be able to help and make you feel more positively about yourself, which can only help you in the long run."
Speaking after the event Stretford High School pupil Ravarhn added: "It's really important as we’re learning about racism and different types of abuse and how it can affect different people. Luke gave us really good advice about how to support someone and be there for friends who might be being bullied."

In addition to this, a range of current and former professional footballers stress the importance of reporting racism & religious discrimination as part of SRtRC's anti-racism education film which is watched by all young people who take part in SRtRC workshops and interventions (c. 50,000 per year in the UK).

Former Manchester United player and current assistant manager Ryan Giggs discusses the racism that he faced as a young person and reflects on how he wishes he had reported it to his teacher or his Mum & Dad. Similarly, former Wigan Athletic goalkeeper Ali Al Habsi discusses the religious discrimination he faced simply because he is a Muslim.

3. What role do, and should, the Government and other organisations play in educating and in enabling young people, parents and the wider community to explore racism and religious discrimination?

SRtRC believes that the Government have a responsibility to educate and enable community-based explorations of racism and religious discrimination, either directly or via government funded projects delivered by external organisations.

In the past, SRtRC have been fortunate to receive funding from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to look specifically at the impact of far right movements like the English Defence League (EDL) on the attitudes of young people and found that young people are increasingly susceptible to ideas about immigration, ‘Britishness’ and Islam, that are similar in their communication to those espoused by far right groups in the UK and throughout Europe.

Evidence about the project’s success in challenging such ideas and concepts and on increasing resilience among young people to reject hatred and influence from groups espousing hate and intolerance can be viewed in detail here.

More recently, SRtRC has undertaken a Department for Education funded project to tackle Homophobia, Biphobia & Transphobia in schools. As an anti-racism education charity, we felt it essential to include some anti-racism education activities as part of this programme as we know that creating empathy towards one form of discrimination has a positive impact on creating empathy towards other forms of inequality. During these sessions, which took place right across England, young people shared some concerning ideas and attitudes on subjects related to racism and religious beliefs which further reinforced the need for greater anti-racism education and government-lead explorations into racism & religious discrimination.

At present, SRtRC receives no direct funding from government to support the delivery of anti-racism education to either young people or teachers and is unaware of any ongoing government funded projects in this field. Given the evidence supporting an increase in racial and religious intolerance detailed within this submission and from a wide variety of external sources, SRtRC finds the absence of such governmental support deeply concerning.

4. Is the current education (not only that provided by schools or education institutions) delivered to young people on racism and religious discrimination appropriate and effective? What changes could be made?
In the opinion of Show Racism the Red Card, the current level of education delivered to young people on racism & religious discrimination is neither dedicated enough nor comprehensive enough to effectively change the growing issues of racial and religious discrimination facing society.

We believe that precious little time is devoted to the consideration of these issues within the existing education curriculum and that the ever increasing pressure on teachers to focus on improving academic performance and capturing data is disempowering them from facilitating essential anti-racism education and discussion of related topics.

In a piece of research conducted in 2010, SRtRC discovered that just 61% of questionnaire respondents had received any training in tackling racism and much fewer respondents had received training with regards to supporting the needs of groups such as Travellers (34%) and asylum seekers and refugees (25%).

This despite 83% of questionnaire respondents having witnessed racist behaviour amongst their pupils and many feeling that there were strong racist attitudes amongst the pupil cohort. Racist behaviour was also evidenced amongst teachers, from the use of racist terminology and telling of racist jokes to lower expectations of pupils from black, Asian and other minority ethnic backgrounds or groups.

A comprehensive breakdown of this research activity – The Barriers to Challenging Racism & promoting Race Equality in England’s Schools can be viewed here.

A lack of formal anti-racism education training and a lack of confidence in dealing with issues of racism and racist incidents is also evident from data captured during more recent teacher training carried out by SRtRC for both established teachers and those currently undertaking teacher training. This data can be made available on request.

5. How does the content and quality of education on racism and religious discrimination vary by school/education institution? Why does this variation occur?

The absence of consistent governmental funding into anti-racism education and cuts to the budgets of local authorities have prevented SRtRC from working throughout a wide enough cross-section of schools nationally to be able to share informed statistics on variations in quality and content on a school-by-school or sub regional basis.

SRtRC would suggest that any variations are likely to be indicative of the presence or absence of a holistic or whole school approach to tackling prejudice and promoting equality, and also based on the quality of training afforded to members of staff within these institutions.

SRtRC are currently surveying teachers throughout England in partnership with the Anne Frank Trust to access their experiences of racism within schools, their confidence in tackling the issues and the extent to which they have received training. It is anticipated that these results will be available in late 2016/early 2017.

6. Is the training and guidance teachers receive on delivering lessons on racism and religious discrimination sufficient to prepare them to deliver such lessons?

See statistics from question 4 and the associated report.

7. At what age should lessons on racism and religious discrimination and its consequences be taught to young people? How should the styles of teaching and content be varied?
SRtRC believes that there is no lower limit preventing discussions related to racism & religious discrimination, as well as associated issues including fairness, equality, identity and human rights.

Clearly, consideration must be given to ensuring that all delivery is age appropriate and it is essential that conversations take place only after a safe and non-judgmental environment has been established. These principles sit at the heart of SRtRC’s anti-racism education delivery model and are strictly adhered to.

Guidance around the creation of a ‘Safe Space’ is provided to teachers during all SRtRC anti-racism education training and can be reviewed here.

8. What is the most effective way to engage with young people on the topic of racism and religious discrimination? Can it be varied to reach a wider audience? Are there any examples of engagement resulting in positive outcomes and change?

In addition to creating a safe and non-judgmental environment to support any discussion related to racism & religious discrimination, SRtRC also believe that ensuring activities are pupil-lead and action focused is key to the maximum effectiveness of engagements.

These are some of the guiding principles of all anti-racism education work delivered by SRtRC. The impact of this approach is well evidenced by the popularity and quality of entry into SRtRC’s National Schools Competition, which has been running for over 10 years and receives entries from over 20,000 young people annually.

Young people are eligible to enter only after they have worked with SRtRC’s anti-racism education resources within an educational setting and can submit entries in a variety of formats including creative writing, artwork and multimedia.

The use of role models as a means of engagement has been a highly engaging and impactful aspect of SRtRC’s delivery model throughout the organisation’s 20 year history. This is evidenced anecdotally through the testimony of young people as demonstrated in the response to question one, and by statistics from SRtRC’s educational events with football clubs, where 45% of young people regarded the racism question and answer session of the event as their most memorable aspect during the 2014/15 season and 91% said that they wanted to do further work about racism in school having attended an SRtRC event.

9. Do young people have opportunities to discuss and experience other cultures and explore diversity?

It is the belief of SRtRC that unfortunately young people do not always have the opportunity to discuss and experience other cultures and explore diversity if this opportunity is not afforded to them by the schools they attend. This is why we believe that it is imperative that teachers are given the appropriate anti-racism education training and that schools are afforded the time within the curriculum to carry out these explorations in a safe and non-judgmental way.

Worse still than a lack of opportunities to discuss and experience other cultures and explore diversity, SRtRC believes that many young people find racist ideas and attitudes being reinforced at home. This is the reason why we believe education is key in breaking the cycle of intergenerational racism and further supports the need for greater anti-racism education.