

Bitesize learning: Racism

The aim of this learning resource is to give case handlers an understanding of racism in the context of policing and police complaints.

What is racism?

“A belief that race is a fundamental determinant of human traits and capacities and that **racial differences produce an inherent superiority** of a particular race”

(Merriam-Webster dictionary)

“**Harmful or unfair** things that people **say, do, or think** based on the belief that **their own race makes them more intelligent, good, moral**, etc. than people of other races”

(Cambridge Dictionary)

What is race?

Under the *Equality Act 2010* the definition of race includes colour, nationality, ethnic origin, national origin and caste.



Listen: [BBC Sounds – Challenging Racism](#)



Read: *Race & Class in the Ruins of Empire: Natives* by Akala



Watch: [Akala: Everyday racism](#) (The Guardian on YouTube)

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Racism can present in different ways

Micro aggressions and a belief in racial stereotypes.	Example: An officer assuming that someone has had previous criminal contact with the police because of their race.
Acts of racism between individuals or groups of people	Example: An officer acting as if they were afraid or intimidated by a Black person, even though they have not shown any aggression.
Policies or practices that maintain or create racial inequity.	Example: An officer claiming that they handcuff everybody as a matter of routine under the policy of 'compliant handcuffing' to justify the handcuffing of a Black person, where this disproportionately impacts certain groups and lacks a justifiable reason for the disparity.

Was race discrimination a factor?

Indicators pointing towards discrimination include:

- Concerns about discrimination being expressed by the complainant, witnesses or the community.
- Comparators showing a difference in treatment of people from certain ethnic groups.
- Patterns of previous behaviour showing disproportionality or repeat discriminatory behaviour.
- Treatment that aligns with known stereotypes.
- Discriminatory language including negative generalisations.
- Admission that the person's protected characteristic was a factor in decision-making.
- Unexplained hostility, disrespect, lack of care or dehumanising treatment where discrimination is a plausible reason.

Indicators pointing away from discrimination could include:

- No specific or contextual evidence indicating the person's protected characteristic might be a relevant factor.
- Patterns of an officer's past behaviour point away from disproportionality.
- Comparators showing no difference in treatment.
- Evidence pointing to a non-discriminatory reason for the officer's treatment or behaviour (take care to consider whether the protected characteristic could still be a contributory factor).
- Evidence of a respectful and empathetic approach, including efforts made to understand, empathise, de-escalate, provide care and to respect individual needs.



Read: *Why Diversity Matters*
by Vivian Hunt, Dennis Layton and Sara Prince

Organisational learning

- Is there anything that the service can do better?
- Review the [IOPC Learning Recommendations on Taser](#), and the [IOPC Stop and Search report](#)

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