

Glossary

This glossary includes diversity specific terms (words and phrases) that may be regularly used in conversations around diversity. It is not intended to be a comprehensive list but is rather as a collection of definitions provided by others which we have found useful. Is there a term you'd find it helpful to have clarity on that we've not included here? Or something you feel we've missed that you'd like to draw to our attention? [Please let us know.](#)

BAME

Black, Asian, and minority ethnic (used to refer to members of non-white communities in the UK)
Oxforddictionaries.com

NB: While this term is widely used in the UK, some, such as the Office for National Statistics, advise against this, suggesting that terms like ethnic minority, ethnic minorities, ethnic minority population(s) etc, be used instead to avoid highlighting particular groups above others.

BAMER

Black, Asian, minority ethnic and Refugee

Disabled

A person that has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities.
Equality Act 2010 definition

Used rather than terms such as 'handicapped'
[Graeae, Language Guide](#)

Disabled People

Used rather than terms such as 'the disabled' or 'people with disabilities'
[Graeae, Language Guide](#)

Discrimination

The unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of race, age, or sex.
Oxforddictionaries.com

Diversity

Various definitions of diversity exist. Arts Council England defines diversity by saying:

Diversity encompasses race, ethnicity, faith, disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, and marriage and civil partnerships. It also includes class and economic disadvantage and social and institutional barriers that prevent people from participating in and enjoying the arts.

And on the difference between equality and diversity:

Equality is ensuring individuals or groups of individuals are not treated differently or less favourably because of a characteristic that they share. However, this does not mean treating everyone the same. It means making sure that no one is disadvantaged from participating in art and culture because of barriers that disproportionately affect people who share the same characteristics as them. Diversity is about recognising, respecting and valuing people's differences to contribute and to realise their full potential by promoting an inclusive culture for all.
[Arts Council England, Equality Action Guide](#)

Dominant culture

The cultural beliefs, values and traditions that are centred and dominant in society's structures and practices. Dominant cultural practices are thought of as 'normal' and, therefore, preferred and right. As a result, diverse ways of life are often devalued, marginalised, and associated with low cultural capital. Conversely, in a multicultural society, various cultures are celebrated and respected equally.

[Buffer, Guide to Inclusive Language for Startups and Tech](#)

Equality

The state of being equal, especially in status, rights, or opportunities.
Oxforddictionaries.com

Ethnicity & Race

There is no single agreed international definition of ethnicity and race or of the distinction between the two.

Race is often defined as being related to notions of intrinsic physical differences between groups of people.

The [Office of National Statistics \(ONS\)](#) and the [United Nations Statistics Division](#) both describe ethnicity as a broader concept which includes or combines nationality, citizenship, race, colour, language, religion, and customs of dress or eating.

In the context of the UK's [Equality Act 2010](#), race includes a person's skin colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins. Race and ethnicity are seen more as interchangeable concepts than distinct categories.
[Gov.uk, Ethnicity facts & figures](#)

Gender

Often expressed in terms of masculinity and femininity, gender is largely culturally determined and is assumed from the sex assigned at birth.

[Stonewall Glossary of Terms](#)

Gender identity

A person's perception of their gender, which may or may not correspond with their birth sex.

[Buffer, Guide to Inclusive Language for Startups and Tech](#)

Inclusion

A dynamic state of operating in which diversity is leveraged to create a fair, healthy, and high-performing organisation or community. An inclusive environment ensures equitable access to resources and opportunities for all. It also enables individuals and groups to feel safe, respected, engaged, motivated, and valued, for who they are and for their contributions toward organisational and societal goals.

[Buffer, Guide to Inclusive Language for Startups and Tech](#)

Intersectionality

The interconnected nature of social categorisations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

[Oxforddictionaries.com](#)

The term was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, who used it to describe the experiences of black women – who experience both sexism and racism.

[Buffer, Guide to Inclusive Language for Startups and Tech](#)

LGBT

The acronym for lesbian, gay, bi, trans.

Additional letters such as Q for queer or questioning, or I for intersex are often added to the acronym.

Please see [Stonewall's Glossary of Terms](#) for definitions of each of these terms.

Person of colour

The term, sometimes abbreviated as POC, is used primarily in the United States to describe any person who is not white. The term encompasses all non-white people, emphasising common experiences of systemic racism.

[Wikipedia](#)

Privilege

A special right, advantage, or immunity granted or available only to a particular person or group. Under a newer usage of the term, privilege can also be emotional or psychological, regarding comfort and personal self-confidence, or having a sense of belonging or worth in society.

[Oxforddictionaries.com](#)

Check your privilege

Used to suggest that someone should recognise that their attitudes or views reflect the fact that they are in an inherently privileged or advantageous position because of the particular social category or categories to which they belong.

[Oxforddictionaries.com](#)

Sex

Assigned to a person on the basis of primary sex characteristics (genitalia) and reproductive functions. Sometimes the terms 'sex' and 'gender' are interchanged to mean 'male' or 'female'.

[Stonewall Glossary of Terms](#)

Social Model of Disability

The social model is based on the principle that disability is caused by the way society is organised, rather than by a person's impairment or difference. It puts the emphasis on what needs to be done to identify and remove barriers.

[Arts Council England, Equality Action Guide](#)

Socio-economic background

Socio-economic background, sometimes abbreviated as SEB, relates to a combination of an individual's income, occupation and social background.

[Open University, Equality & Diversity](#)