

**ICEC**

Independent  
Commission for  
Equity in Cricket

IT'S NOT BANTER

Lived Experiences of  
Discrimination in Cricket



# Summary Report

## December 2022

Date: 11/12/22

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The Foundation

Status: Final Report

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## Disclaimer

This research report has been prepared at the request of the Chair and Commissioners of the Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket (ICEC). Any views expressed are those of the authors alone. Any findings arising from the research do not constitute findings or recommendations by the ICEC. Evidence gathered via this research is separate from but complementary to other evidence gathered by the ICEC. Terminology has been decided by the authors.

**Some of the information and language used in this report is potentially distressing.**

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## Acknowledgements

The authors wish to express their gratitude, first and foremost, to the thousands of people who generously gave their time and shared their experiences. Many found revisiting experiences of discrimination painful. Yet, they chose to take part because of a commitment to equity in a sport they love.

We extend our thanks to John Miller, Monika Bhaduri and Lucas Rehman, the qualitative researchers who engaged research participants with great sensitivity and care.

We appreciate the significant support given by the England and Wales Cricket Board in promoting our quantitative survey across their communication channels.

We would also like to thank Commissioners and members of the secretariat at the Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket for providing a strong steer throughout while always respecting independent expertise. Their knowledge of cricket, analytical rigour and attention to detail were hugely valuable.

Finally, colleagues at The Foundation, especially Charlie Sim and Charlie Dawson, provided invaluable financial, intellectual and moral support.

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# Introduction and Key Findings

In response to growing evidence of discrimination in the game of cricket, the governing body for the sport, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), established the Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket (ICEC) in March 2021. The ICEC's role is to independently evaluate the state of equity in cricket in relation to race, gender and class by gathering evidence, a key part of which is evidence of people's lived experiences. This report is the outcome of research commissioned by the ICEC to understand the lived experiences of discrimination and/or inclusion of those within the game.

This report documents the nature and scale of the problem, with a focus on the lived experiences of discrimination among people playing, coaching, officiating, and working in the game. In addition the research has sought to identify good practice which can be promulgated throughout the sport. The research aims to support the work of the ICEC by identifying how discrimination operates in the game so that targeted and effective solutions can be found.

Both the research instruments and the analysis are designed to give prominence to 'lived experiences'. This means that we focus more on those at the receiving end of discrimination than on the experiences of 'all' respondents: looking at 'averages' across cricket is much less informative than looking at the experiences of those who are the (potential) victims of discrimination. It also means that we give greater weight to direct experiences than to perceptions. While perceptions of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) also matter, the focus on lived experiences of discrimination is intended to capture events that occurred and directly impacted the person who shared the story: what the discrimination was, what it felt like, how it was interpreted, what emotional impact discrimination had on them, etc.

Lived experiences are powerful and, in some way, 'incontrovertible'. It is impossible to deny how people felt. These stories reveal what matters to people: they help to promote genuine understanding and empathy, and to ensure that future decisions to improve equity in cricket are informed by the voices that matter most on these topics.

The specific focus of the research is on lived experiences of discrimination based on:

- sex (i.e. sexism and misogyny)
- race/ethnicity/skin colour<sup>1</sup> (i.e. racism) – which often overlaps with faith, religion, or belief
- social class (i.e. class based discrimination/elitism)<sup>2</sup>

Unsurprisingly, the survey revealed that, beyond discrimination based on sex, race/ethnicity/skin colour and social class, many experienced homophobia, ableism, ageism and antisemitism, as well as prejudice and microaggressions based on other attributes.

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<sup>1</sup> Depending on context, the 'construct' of race/ethnicity/skin colour changes. In this report, when we refer to 'White' people in the report, we are referring to people who are White British. When we are discussing 'ethnic minorities', we include the responses of all research participants who are not 'White British'. They may be White, but come from countries other than England, Scotland and Northern Ireland (e.g. South Africa or Australia) or they may be from various non-White ethnic groups (e.g. Chinese or Arab Saudi, for instance). Their collective 'lived experiences' are likely to be more positive than those of people with a darker skin colour, such as people of South Asian, Black Caribbean or Black African heritage. When we use various 'types' (see Section 12.2. below) to capture intersectional experiences, we include people from all ethnic minority backgrounds, not just people of Black and South Asian heritage.

<sup>2</sup> Sex, race and religion or belief are 'protected characteristics' under the Equalities Act 2010 (which means that it is unlawful to discriminate against a person on the basis of their sex, race or religion or belief, except where permitted by the legislation in certain narrow circumstances). Social class is not a protected characteristic. However, a literature review carried out at the onset of the project indicated that class and socio-economic status play a significant role within cricket, with people from wealthier socio-economic backgrounds who attend private schools disproportionately overrepresented, particularly within the professional game. The importance of educational routes in shaping access and opportunities to play and progress in cricket is such that 'educational routes' was chosen as a proxy for social class. Clearly, there is no perfect correspondence between social class and the type of school that one attends: indeed, most 'middle-class' families send their children to state schools, and some children from low income, 'working-class' households receive financial support to attend private schools. Despite these important caveats, it was thought that focussing on educational routes – while drawing attention to issues of financial and cultural exclusion, where relevant – would be a good and practical proxy for class in the context of understanding barriers to equity in the sport of cricket.

## Key findings

In total, 4,156 people across England and Wales completed the 'Equity in Cricket' online survey. Some of them also took part in follow-up telephone and online research. People had much to say and they wanted to be heard.

Exactly half (50%) of all respondents reported some form of discrimination in the past five years. Among women and people from Black and South Asian communities, those who attended state schools, LGBTQ+ people, and disabled people, the figure is much higher still, rising to 87% for people of Pakistani/Bangladeshi descent.

Lived experiences of discrimination are widespread in cricket and, in many cases, shocking. They are not limited to one geographical area or aspect of the sport, nor found only in the professional or recreational game. They are found throughout cricket.

The cases of discrimination have also been harder to see by those in a position to act on them because, according to many of our respondents, the system for listening and formally recording them is broken. Most cases of discrimination are not heard, recorded, or acted upon, which creates the conditions that discourage people from raising concerns in the first place.

When compared to other sports, cricket is viewed as worse than others (35% of all respondents believed it was less diverse and inclusive, increasing to 54% among all ethnic minority respondents and to 72% among Black people). Racism and sexism are the most common forms of discrimination.

Based on the responses that we received, the impact of this is damaging. The majority of women and people from Black and South Asian communities, those who attended state schools, LGBTQ+ people and disabled people have either considered leaving the world of cricket, or have actually left cricket, specifically because of racism, Islamophobia, sexism, elitism, homophobia and ableism.

A summary of key findings is provided below.

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### Lived experiences of discrimination among women:

- Overall, 68% of all women surveyed have experienced discrimination over the past five years. Among ethnic minority women educated in state schools, 80% report recent experiences of discrimination.
- While opportunities have improved considerably for girls and women, there is a long way to go before cricket feels genuinely inclusive.
- Girls and women can find it hard to get the right kit; some clubs refuse to admit girls completely; and girls are often marginalised in mixed teams. They also have more restricted access to training facilities and to high-quality coaching than boys and men, who continue to be given priority over them.
- Despite the recent widening of opportunities, girls and women have fewer opportunities to play and face lower expectations, especially as they progress through the age groups. Those who show promise or exceptional talent also report attracting patronising comments which, over time, lead to resentment and even to leaving cricket altogether.
- 58% of women in the survey do not believe that everyone engaged with cricket has the same opportunities to enjoy the game, progress and be rewarded fairly, regardless of their sex. In fact, only 13% of women think that women always do have the same opportunities as men.



## Lived experiences of discrimination among people from Black communities:

- Black respondents were one and half times more likely than the average respondent to experience discrimination. 75% of Black respondents said that they had experienced discrimination (compared with 50% of 'All' survey participants).
- Among the Black respondents who had experienced discrimination in the past five years, about half reported that stereotypes and assumptions are made about them (51%) and feel undervalued compared to people of equal competence (49%).
- In Black communities, the lack of representation of people of colour – especially of fellow Black people – can itself be a barrier to having a sense of belonging.
- Black coaches, umpires, and officials report that they are disproportionately asked to demonstrate or establish their credentials; their decisions are challenged; they are singled out; they feel isolated and unsupported by other umpires and officials; they describe being victims of direct abuse or witnesses to abusive language or behaviour.
- Structural factors contribute to reduced uptake of cricket in Black communities. Black participants frequently report that the lack of cricket facilities in inner cities, the cost of playing, the heavy time commitment required from parents/guardians, the need to have private transport, and the fact that routes into cricket are often via expensive private schools combine to make it very difficult for less affluent people, and for Black people in particular, to play cricket.
- 72% of Black respondents do not believe that everyone engaged with cricket has the same opportunities to enjoy the game, progress and be rewarded fairly, regardless of their race, ethnicity or skin colour. The equivalent figures among White, privately educated, straight, cisgender men with no declared disability (labelled Type K) was markedly different: just 26% do not believe that everyone engaged with cricket has the same opportunities to enjoy the game, progress and be rewarded fairly, regardless of their race/ethnicity, whereas 71% believe everyone always or mostly does.

## Lived experiences of discrimination among people from South Asian communities:

- Of all the groups considered in this research, people of South Asian heritage are the most likely to experience discrimination. Only 18% of Indian respondents and 13% of Pakistani and Bangladeshi respondents reported no experiences of personal discrimination in the past five years – compared to 50% of all respondents.
- Participation in recreational cricket among people of South Asian heritage is extremely high. However, respondents noted that the culture of cricket becomes off-putting as young players reach adulthood. The prominence of alcohol, for example, is a strong deterrent among Muslims.
- Many people of South Asian heritage discussed what they see as a lack of genuine understanding of the value of diversity and inclusion. They believe many efforts at inclusion remain 'tokenistic' because they are not underpinned by an appreciation of cultural differences, nor by a genuine commitment to inclusion.
- By far the biggest problem reported by all South Asian groups – across all types of engagement with cricket – is the sense that, despite exhibiting talent and often outperforming their White peers, South Asians are not afforded the same opportunities, the same recognition, and the same support as others.
- People of South Asian heritage who play cricket also report that stereotypes and assumptions are made about South Asian players' temperament, physical fitness, predilection for bowling and for being 'spinners'. This type of generalisation can prevent coaches from noticing the full breadth of their talents and skills.
- 76% of people of Indian heritage and 80% of people of Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritage in the sample do not believe that everyone engaged with cricket has the same opportunities to enjoy the game, progress and be rewarded fairly, regardless of ethnicity/race. In fact, only 12% of Indians and 8% of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis think everyone always has the same opportunities.



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## Lived experiences of discrimination among people who attended state schools:

- 50% of respondents educated in state schools reported that they had experienced discrimination (often in connection to their social class/socio-economic status) in the past five years.
- The discrimination reported by many state-school educated people is systemic and institutional in nature – linked, for example, to the lack of access to cricket in state schools, and to the way the talent pathway is structurally bound up with private schools. This makes it much more challenging for talented young people who are not in 'cricketing' schools to progress and access adequate support. The cost and time associated with playing cricket are additional barriers for those with low socio-economic status, who overwhelmingly attend state school.
- Instances of overt discrimination, such as name-calling, verbal or physical abuse, and mocking, are relatively rarely reported. However, the elitist culture of cricket contributes to a sense among many state-schooled respondents that cricket is 'not for them'.
- Overall, more than half of those educated in a state school do not believe that everyone engaged with cricket has the same opportunities to enjoy the game, progress and be rewarded fairly, regardless of their social class. Almost four in ten people educated in state schools also do not believe that everyone can feel that they belong and be themselves in cricket, regardless of their social class.

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## Lived experiences of discrimination among LGBTQ+ people:

- About three-quarters (73%) of LGBTQ+ people reported experiences of discrimination in the previous five years. About half reported 'stereotypes and assumptions being made about me' (53%), 'being spoken to in a demeaning, insulting or hurtful way' (47%), and 'feeling undervalued compared to people of equal competence' (46%).
- LGBTQ+ people mainly attribute the discrimination they face to their sex (51%), and sexual orientation and/or gender identity (36%).
- Among LGBTQ+ people, the main lived experiences of discrimination relate to a culture where homophobic slurs, name calling, verbal abuse and harassment make it hard to come out and be themselves.
- These experiences account for the fact that 30% of LGBTQ+ people continue to feel that not everyone has the same opportunities to enjoy the game, progress and be rewarded fairly, regardless of their sexual orientation, and more than half of LGBTQ+ people (53%) also disagree that everyone engaged in cricket feels that they belong and can be themselves, regardless of their sexual orientation.

## Lived experiences of discrimination among disabled people:

- 70% of respondents who self-identified as having a disability reported recent experiences of discrimination in cricket.
- The dominant forms of discrimination were 'being spoken to in a demeaning, insulting or hurtful way' (45%); 'feeling undervalued compared to people of equal competence' (38%); and 'stereotypes and assumptions being made about me' (36%). A further 19% experienced 'being excluded from games, events or social activities', and 18% experienced 'bullying, physical harassment or violence'.
- 23% of disabled people attribute the discrimination they face to their mental health/condition and 17% to their physical impairment, but they are also likely to invoke a wider range of factors.
- Among disabled people, lived experiences are extremely varied. This is partly because the nature and severity of the disability or impairment can vary greatly and because the environment where disabled people play cricket or work in the sector can also differ substantially.
- Overall, despite improvements in recent years, the survey indicates that attitudes towards disabled people remain negative and restrictive, with some reporting mocking, verbal abuse, name calling and bullying. Many disabled people feel excluded from opportunities to play, coach or umpire.
- Discrimination impacts opportunities and sense of belonging among disabled people. Nearly half (48%) of disabled people disagree that everyone has the same opportunities to enjoy the game, progress and be rewarded fairly, regardless of disability. Similarly, 41% of disabled people disagree that everyone engaged in cricket feels that they belong and can be themselves, regardless of disability.

## Workplace discrimination:

- We received multiple descriptions of experiences that suggest that the culture within cricketing workplaces is not as diverse, inclusive and equitable as it should be.
- The culture of cricket and the profile of the workforce – especially in senior leadership and management roles – mean that women and people from various minority groups may not feel that they belong and have the same opportunities to progress at work. The workforce is said to be dominated by an 'old boys network' and to lack knowledge, understanding and lived experience in relation to EDI.
- Women and people from minority groups feel that EDI is not normalised in cricket workplaces. 'Casual' racism, sexism and homophobia still exist – as well as some instances of violent and degrading behaviours. Women and people from minority groups also report being used as 'tokens' to attempt to demonstrate that cricket is diverse, as well as being tasked with having to 'represent' minority groups and with driving the change.

## Responding to discrimination:

- About a quarter of survey participants who had experienced discrimination in the previous five years said that they had reported these incidents to authorities – with Black people being the most likely to do so.
- Currently, many instances of discrimination go unreported, partly because people are not aware of how to complain, partly because they do not trust that appropriate action will be taken, partly because they fear victimisation, and partly because they do not regard the matter as serious enough to warrant lodging a complaint. This points to cultural issues within the game and an ineffective approach to listening to and acting on complaints relating to discrimination.
- The most common reason for not reporting incidents is a lack of trust that appropriate action will be taken to address the issue. Across the 1,513 people who experienced recent discrimination but did not report it, 41% invoked this as the main reason.
- The trust deficit is especially high among people from ethnic minority backgrounds (58% of whom invoked this reason for not reporting incidents), and disabled people (47% of whom also invoked this reason for not reporting incidents).
- Hundreds of alleged victims of discrimination who had raised the matter said that 'nothing happened', things 'fell on deaf ears', incidents were 'swept under the carpet', and that it felt 'pointless to challenge' because they knew nothing would change.

## Impact of discrimination on player retention and wellbeing:

- The evidence from this research suggests that elitism, racism, sexism, homophobia, and ableism are impacting on performance and leading to a drain of people from cricket. This is true on and off the pitch. More than half of all those who experienced discrimination considered leaving 'sometimes', 'often', or 'actually left' cricket because of these experiences. Many of the people who self-described as 'disabled' reported mental health difficulties that they attribute to their experiences in cricket.
- The loss of people is not evenly distributed. Compared with White men educated in private schools who are straight and did not report any disability, women and people who are educated in state schools are both four times more likely to have left cricket because of discrimination; and people from ethnic minority backgrounds are five times more likely to have left cricket, with the greatest percentage loss being among Pakistani/Bangladeshi people, who are more than seven times more likely to have left cricket because of discrimination.
- Among people of South Asian heritage, the lack of progression, experiences of discrimination, and the mismanagement of complaints was said to lead keen cricketers to create their own separate cricket leagues. Respondents were clear that this is not a matter of choice, but largely a response to exclusion.
- Beyond the loss of individuals, experiences of discrimination – especially when they are not handled satisfactorily – can take a severe toll on the mental health of their victims. People reported suffering in silence and getting demotivated. Victims of discrimination are left with self-doubt and a sense of not being wanted, welcome or treated fairly because of factors beyond their control. Participants spoke of how their self-confidence and self-esteem have been crushed, leading to anxiety, depression and, in the most extreme cases, to suicidal thoughts, feelings and ideas.
- Some respondents described leaving cricket because, while they had never personally experienced discrimination in the game, they witnessed it against others and did not wish to be part of a sport where such behaviour is tolerated.

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## Barriers to change:

- While expectations of behaviours and competencies may reasonably differ in the professional and recreational game, there are important lessons to be learned to ensure that the game becomes more diverse and inclusive. People involved in leadership and managerial roles typically share a deep love and knowledge of cricket. However, the widespread view among respondents is that they do not always manage the game in a professional manner, with appropriate transparency, accountability or due regard for safeguarding everyone's wellbeing.
- We also heard that leaders and senior managers are often not cognizant of the experiences of discrimination among women and people from diverse minority groups in cricket. Indeed, evidence from this research makes plain that leaders and senior managers significantly underestimate the extent to which discrimination exists at all levels in the game. Many of them belong to Type K (White, straight, cisgender, privately educated men who reported no disability), among whom 71% believe that 'everyone always or mostly' has the same opportunities to enjoy the game, progress and be rewarded fairly. This contrasts sharply with the lived experiences reported by those who do not share this profile. Such lack of recognition of the scale of the problem itself acts as a powerful barrier to change.
- Evidence from this research suggests professionalising management throughout the game is necessary to change the culture. This should go hand in hand with reforms in the leadership team to ensure much greater diversity.

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## Perceptions of leadership and 'good practice':

- Leaders within cricket are seen to be making considerable efforts to drive up diversity and inclusion – as evidenced by a variety of initiatives (referenced in Appendix F) that are known and deeply appreciated – but they are still perceived by many to lack a serious commitment to EDI.
- While leaders tend to believe that cricket is meritocratic, that commitment to EDI is a core value in the game, and that everyone has the same sense of belonging and opportunities to be themselves regardless of their backgrounds, this positive outlook is not shared by most of the people these initiatives are designed to support.

# CHAPTER 1

## Methodology, analysis and report structure

# Chapter 1: Methodology, analysis and report structure

## 1.1 Methodology

The report is based on three main sources of data:

- **Survey:** 4,156 responses to a survey of people currently or previously involved in the game of cricket
- **Online qualitative research:** conducted over five days with 40 recreational players, parents/guardians of players, coaches, officials (umpires and scorers), ECB or county staff, and board or committee members
- **In-depth individual interviews** with 13 academy, current and former professional players who initially responded to the survey

### 1.1.1 Survey

The survey was designed and managed by Versiti, an independent research company, and was carried out in November and December 2021. It was widely promoted by the ICEC and the ECB through the ECB's own channels and through a range of national and local media: print, TV and radio. In response to low response rates from the Black community in particular, significant efforts were made by the ICEC to obtain more input from the Black community. Various stakeholders, including from the Black community, assisted with the promotion of the survey. More information on the process for driving awareness and participation in the survey can be found in Appendix C.

In total, 4,156 people completed the survey. These were recreational players, parents or guardians of recreational or academy players, county age group players, academy players, current professional players, former professional players, staff members (at the ECB or a County organisation), volunteers, board or committee members, coaches, officials, umpires, fans and some who worked in an ancillary role in cricket. Survey respondents included 749 women, 66 Black people, 490 South Asian people (of which 277 were people of Indian heritage, 195 people of Pakistani heritage and 18 people of Bangladeshi heritage<sup>3</sup>), 2,390 people who attended state schools, 161 LGBTQ+ people, 339 disabled people and 26 Jewish people. The majority of respondents were White British (3,291).

More detail about the profile of survey respondents can be found in Appendix D.

Given the high profile of the issue in the media at the time, the survey attracted a much larger number of responses than originally anticipated. It also gathered an unprecedented volume of detailed qualitative submissions, providing rich insights into lived experiences of discrimination in cricket, as well as some examples of good practice. Importantly, the survey asked people to respond based on their lived experiences during the last five years; their evidence is therefore recent, not historical.

Due to the scale and breadth of responses we have had from all aspects of cricket, we can be confident that it reflects the full breadth of experiences and opinions in the game.

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<sup>3</sup> For reporting purposes, and in line with many government survey reports, people of Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds are grouped together. This is because the number of Bangladeshis in the sample is too small to report on as a discrete group without compromising anonymity. It is also because Pakistanis and Bangladeshis share many common experiences linked to their skin colour, predominant faith (Islam), and greater likelihood of living in inner city areas and in areas of high multiple deprivation, for instance.

## 1.1.2 Online qualitative research

A subset of survey respondents was recontacted to take part in online qualitative research to explore issues in greater depth. These were selected from people who had agreed to be recontacted for research purposes. Priority was systematically given to women from diverse ethnic minority groups and to those educated in state schools. Considerable efforts were made to include them. Where numbers were insufficient or people were not available to take part, sampling criteria were widened to include representatives of other groups. In total 10 recreational players; 10 parents or guardians of young cricketers; 10 coaches, umpires and scorers; and 10 people working in the administration of cricket took part. Over five days, they provided more detailed information on their perceptions and lived experiences of discrimination in cricket, and shared other relevant insights and examples of good practice.

## 1.1.3 In-depth interviews with players

Finally, 13 men and women from diverse ethnic and educational backgrounds – all of them either academy, former or current professional players – took part in individual interviews. This complements the sample of players who gave evidence directly to the ICEC (views from those evidence sessions are not included in this report). Interviews lasted an hour. Some were recorded and transcribed, but most players preferred not to speak on the record. In such cases, extensive notes were made during the interview.

# 1.2 Analysis

## 1.2.1 Forms of discrimination

Discrimination in cricket can take many forms. Where possible, the analysis aims to refer to – and distinguish between – three main forms of discrimination:

- i) **Systemic discrimination:** this form of discrimination typically manifests across a range of domains, such as education, employment, housing, health, and other aspects of life. It pre-exists cricket but powerfully impacts the likelihood that a person can access opportunities to play, enjoy and progress in the game. For example, people from ethnic minority backgrounds are, on the whole, more likely to be poor and to live in inner city areas than their more affluent, White middle-class counterparts. These factors reflect systemic discrimination and significantly restrict access to cricket opportunities.
- ii) **Organisational or institutional discrimination:** we use this to describe a form of discrimination that can exist within institutions that are directly relevant to cricket and which pertains to issues such as governance and leadership, organisational culture, barriers to recruitment or progression, and pay gaps that make it more difficult for some groups to progress and be rewarded fairly. Organisational or institutional discrimination is not necessarily underpinned by deliberate prejudice; it is often unwitting – but no less powerful for being unintentional.
- iii) **Personal or direct discrimination, microaggressions, abuse and harassment:** this form of discrimination can be directly experienced or witnessed in personal interactions. It is more likely to be overt and can manifest through, for example, exclusion, name calling, verbal or physical abuse, harassment, stereotyping, 'assumptions' being made about a person based on their gender, skin colour, faith, sexual orientation, etc. Most of the 'lived experiences' of discrimination reported by people in the survey fall under this category.

All three forms of discrimination can contribute to less favourable outcomes for women, minority groups and people within lower socio-economic groups. While they often overlap in practice, distinguishing between them matters because the levers of change and responsibility for driving change are different depending on the type of discrimination.



## 1.2.2 Making sense of intersectionality

Intersectionality refers to the overlapping and interconnected nature of disadvantage, discrimination and identity experienced by someone based on social categorisations such as race, sex and social class, and other stigmatised social categories. For example, there may be differences between the experiences of a Black woman who attended state school and those of a Black woman who attended a private school, or between the experiences of a White man and a Black man who both attended state schools.

There is no agreed-upon way of measuring intersectional experiences because of the sheer variety and complexity of intersectional permutations. In this report, we report on each of the key variables (i.e. sex, ethnicity, and social class) on their own and, where relevant or possible, draw attention to evidence of intersectional disadvantage or discrimination.

To measure intersectional advantage and discrimination, we created 'personas' or 'types' that combine different attributes. The first persona, Type K, is intended to capture intersectional advantage or privilege due to the absence of barriers against equal experiences. It includes the responses of White men, educated in private schools, who are straight and cisgender, and did not report a disability. Because cricket has a significant number of people with this profile, especially in leadership positions, it is important to understand their views and perceptions, as these disproportionately impact on the opportunities and lived experiences of others within the game.

The other four personas were created to capture different forms of intersectional disadvantage based on race, sex and educational background. Everyone in these four personas attended state schools, but they vary in terms of sex and race.

- Type L comprises men from non-White ethnic minority groups
- Type M comprises women from non-White ethnic minority groups
- Type N comprises White men
- Type O comprises White women

We do not report systematically on similarities and differences between all these types but draw attention to disparities when they occur.

## 1.2.3 The complexity of 'lived experiences'

Lived experiences are complex and multifaceted. Some experiences are isolated: they pertain to specific incidents that can be clearly located in time and place. They involve specific behaviours that can be pinpointed. Others unfold over time; they are much more difficult to put into words, have no clear 'perpetrator', and belong to the subtle group of microaggressions and unstated assumptions – such as assumptions about the typical profile of people in a particular role, for instance – that are part of the wider culture of cricket.

Lived experiences are even more complex in relation to intersectional discrimination, as those impacted must implicitly or explicitly attribute the experience to two or more dimensions of their profile: is the discrimination or disadvantage due to their social class, ethnicity, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, something else, or any combination of these? The evidence in this report suggests that some identities are considered, at least in this context, to be more significant than others. For instance, ethnic minority women respondents tended to attribute experiences of discrimination or disadvantage to racism, rather than sexism or elitism. This means, for example, that the experiences of a woman of Indian heritage would usually be reported in the chapter on the lived experiences of South Asian people, even though it may also be that she has experienced discrimination on the grounds of her sex. Generally, we found a great deal of evidence of discrimination based on multiple identities (gender, race and class) and that these discriminations had a mutually enforcing effect.

Finally, most people involved in cricket in the sample had multiple connections with the game: a person could be, concurrently, a parent of a younger player, a former professional player, a recreational player, a volunteer and a coach, for example. And while that same person may have had these five specific types of engagements with cricket at the time of completing the survey, they may also have been umpiring in the recent past, or be seeking umpiring

qualifications, for instance, and reporting on barriers in these former and/or prospective roles. It is often impossible to identify with any certainty where and when (beyond within the last five years), a lived experience occurred. Where possible (without compromising the need for confidentiality), we aim to identify the context as precisely as possible. Specifically, where identifiers are not given after quoted content, the decision to remove has been taken to protect confidentiality.

## 1.2.4 Anonymity and confidentiality

Given the small number of people from some minority groups in certain roles, the sensitivity of the issues, and the fear of reprisal, extreme care has been taken to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of research participants. Some of the most detailed and harrowing accounts cannot be covered in the report because they could lead to the identification of those individuals involved.

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## 1.3 Structure of the report

The report is firmly anchored in the lived experiences of people in the game and some who have recently left it. Chapters 2 to 6 focus, respectively, on the lived experiences of women, Black people, South Asian people, people who were or are educated in state schools, and people who report other forms of discrimination, such as homophobia and ableism.

We then look at discrimination in the workplace, how discrimination is handled in cricket and at the ways in which cricket is failing to address concerns and complaints appropriately, as identified by considerable volumes of survey respondents. More specifically, we explore how this is leading people who experience or witness discriminatory behaviour and practices to lose confidence in those who run the game at different levels and who have a responsibility to ensure a culture which is safe and fair.

Next, we highlight the loss of enjoyment and talent from diverse backgrounds which these experiences have caused, before considering some of the underlying conditions that enable this situation of discriminatory behaviours and practices experienced by people in the game, to persist and remain unchallenged.

We end by looking at respondents' views on the effectiveness of the current leadership in relation to EDI and people's awareness and perceptions of various initiatives designed to improve EDI in cricket.

## CHAPTER 2

# Lived experiences of discrimination among women

# Chapter 2: Lived experiences of discrimination among women

## 2.1 Introduction

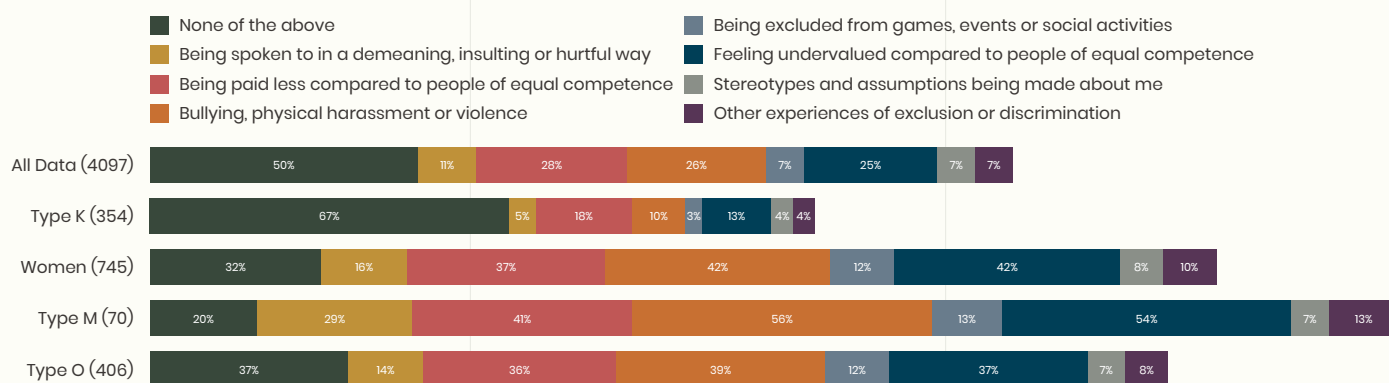
This chapter focuses on women's lived experiences of discrimination. In total, 752 women<sup>4</sup> took part in the survey, with representation across all types of engagement in cricket. This constituted around 18% of the total sample.<sup>5</sup> Where relevant, we compare the experiences of 'all' women in the sample with those of women who face intersectional disadvantage due to their ethnic and educational background. We then draw out differences between women who are/were on the talent pathway and those who are/were not.

## 2.2 Recent lived experiences of discrimination

Overall, 68% of all women surveyed have experienced discrimination over the past five years. Among White women educated in state schools, 63% report recent experiences of discrimination, and among ethnic minority women educated in state schools, 80% report recent experiences of discrimination. This contrasts with 50% of 'All' survey participants reporting recent experiences of discrimination.

**Figure 1: Experiences of personal discrimination over the past five years among women**

*Over the past five years, have you personally experienced any of the following?*



*Type K: White, straight, cisgender, privately educated men, with no disability*

*Type M: Non-White women, state school educated*

*Type O: White women, state school educated*

<sup>4</sup> This refers to the total number of women who took part in the survey. For each individual question, the number may be slightly lower, where some women did not answer a particular question.

<sup>5</sup> This compares with 12% to 18% of women players in cricket, according to the ECB's Inspiring Generations: Women & girls and cricket/ECB Trackers 2019.

The most common forms of discrimination reported by 'All' women, across all types of engagement with cricket are as follows:

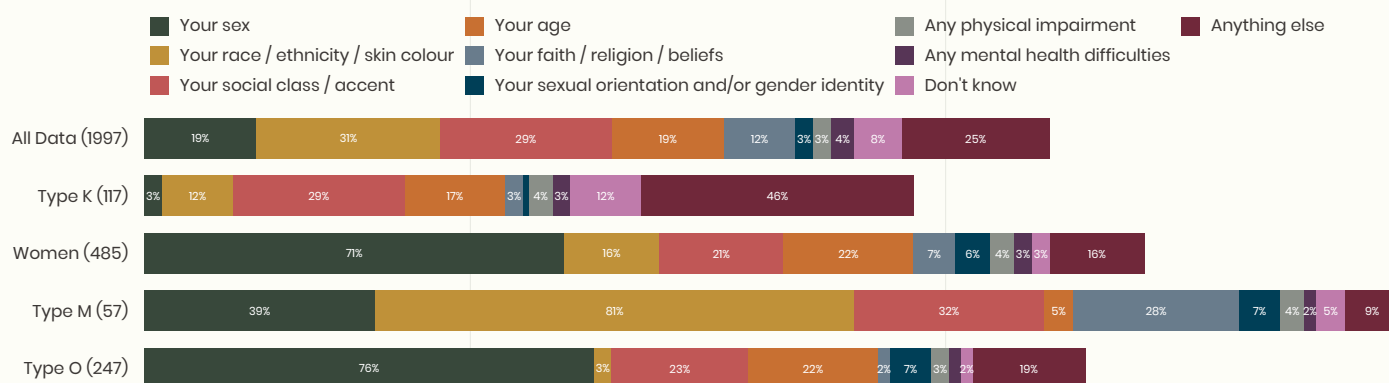
- Stereotypes and assumptions being made about me (42%)
- Feeling undervalued compared to people of equal competence (42%)
- Being spoken to in a demeaning, insulting or hurtful way (37%)
- Being excluded from games, events or social activities (16%)
- Being paid less compared to people of equal competence<sup>6</sup> (12%)
- Bullying, physical harassment or violence (8%)

A further 10% of all women report 'other experiences of exclusion and discrimination'. Percentages do not add up to 100% because women could and did report multiple forms of discrimination. Overall, women's experience of the game seems to be radically different from, and much less positive than, typical experiences of all respondents and, certainly, than those of Type K.

Overall, most women (71%) attribute their experiences of discrimination primarily to their sex (though their age, social class/accent, sexual orientation/gender identity are also often invoked). Among the 57 ethnic minority women who attended a state secondary school, the main cause of discrimination seems to be their race/ethnicity/skin colour – rather than their sex – with class and faith also contributing to their negative experiences.

**Figure 2: Perceived cause of discrimination among women**

*Overall, would you say that these negative experiences were mainly based on?*



*Type K: White, straight, cisgender, privately educated men, with no disability*

*Type M: Non-White women, state school educated*

*Type O: White women, state school educated*

<sup>6</sup> This should only be relevant to women who are in paid roles.

The main reasons behind the perceptions surfaced in the survey are discussed below, drawing specifically on lived experiences among parents and guardians of girls who play recreationally; women who are/were on the talent pathway, current or former professional players; women who coach, umpire or score; and women who work in administrative, managerial or leadership roles, including as board or committee members.

## 2.2.1 Opportunities to play for girls and women are said to have increased significantly

Respondents believe that rather than through PE classes at school, most girls access cricket through clubs, ECB initiatives (principally All Stars and Dynamos), or Chance to Shine (run independently of the ECB and part-funded by it). (See Appendix F for a description of initiatives to increase inclusion.) The belief that these initiatives have made cricket more inclusive for girls (as well as children from ethnic minority backgrounds, those who go to state schools and who live in inner city areas) was widespread across respondents. Many parents report that their girls have had very positive experiences and feel that, at this level, the game is getting more diverse and inclusive. Many reported feeling hopeful that, over time, women's cricket will grow in quality and appeal, and become better resourced.



There were few opportunities for girls, but this has improved dramatically over the past 18 months, especially with the introduction of Dynamos – more girls playing cricket at our club, which led to them doing more training, putting on more events, etc.

*White woman, parent/guardian*



South Asian Initiative and ACE programme are both initiatives that focus on engaging ethnic minority groups particularly from working class backgrounds to be involved in cricket. Also initiatives to increase the participation of women and girls in the game.

*Black/Black (Caribbean) woman, staff member (at the ECB or County organisation)*



All Stars and Dynamos initiatives for grass roots engagement and involvement, wish we had got our daughter involved sooner.

*White woman, parent/guardian*

## 2.2.2 Girls and women often do not feel included and welcome in mixed teams

A focus on the lived experiences of girls and women in the game shows that while opportunities have improved considerably, there is a long way to go before cricket feels genuinely inclusive. At the most basic level, girls and women can find it hard to get the right kit.



The girls' game [is] just not taken seriously. When you win a trophy, it has a picture of a man on it. When you grow boobs, you have to stuff them into a boy's top because there's no kit. The thigh pads are too wide. The pads are too long. The helmets are too big. These are [the] basics... get the kit right and don't 'shrink it and pink it'. Make it effective, functional and appropriate. When my daughter got into the County side, we took her to get a new helmet. We were eyeing up the titanium top shelf with stem guards. The guy in the shop took one look at her and handed me what I can only describe as a plastic 'Bob the Builder' hat. No stem guards, nothing. I asked about the titanium top shelf, he said: 'These are very expensive and for serious players'.

*White woman, parent/guardian*

While being able to play in mixed cricket teams widens participation and can speed up development, many parents and guardians of girls report that some clubs refuse to admit girls altogether, and that girls are often marginalised in mixed teams: the exclusion comes from both boys in the team and coaches.



**My daughter and a number of her female peers have been openly discriminated against by the Head of Junior Cricket at our club. He has made it clear that girls' cricket is a sideshow and that girls should not be part of boys' teams.**

*White woman, parent/guardian*



**As a girl in a boys' team, boys still find it difficult to accept her and try to undermine her ability (despite her being their opening bowler and top order batter), to the extent that she refused to play in that team.**

*White woman, parent/guardian, board or committee member*



**[The coach] ignores comments made by the boys towards the girls and has created a toxic culture towards girls.**

*White woman, parent/guardian*

A high proportion of parents and guardians of girls, as well as female cricketers, report that female players can be questioned, challenged, bullied, singled out, undermined, and humiliated for playing cricket, which many people continue to see as a 'boys' game'.



**Constant, constant humiliation when playing with men/boys on the field and even from others when telling them I played cricket. They would question why I played a 'boys' game', isn't cricket for boys?**

*White woman, former professional player*

Girls and women who show promise or exceptional talent also report attracting patronising comments which, over time, lead to resentment and even to leaving cricket altogether.



**I got tired of the constant backhanded comments, 'you can actually play' or 'you're good for a girl'. [...] These comments just made me angry and fall out of love with the sport.**

*White woman, recreational player*



## 2.2.3 Girls and women have fewer opportunities to play and face lower expectations

Despite the recent widening of opportunities, many girls and women reported having fewer opportunities to play, especially as they progress through the age groups. In recreational and age group cricket, girls are more likely to be put in weaker teams. Responses suggested that they are less likely to be selected to play – even when they outperform boys in their teams – and they are less likely to be encouraged or celebrated by coaches when they play well.



I was often not picked growing up for senior cricket because the coach didn't believe that girls could play cricket.

*White woman, current professional player*



My daughter has not been selected to play many games, being overlooked for boys who are younger than her. Many U15 boys have played over 30 games. Last season, my daughter played only 4. She was selected for her regional squad and yet the club continues to choose players by gender.

*White woman, parent/guardian*



I joined to volunteer in order to raise the girls and women's game locally so that my girls have a chance to play and be selected for games, friendlies and leagues. They love, live and breathe cricket. Girls are sadly not seen as equal to boys in what they can achieve for the club. Girls are pushed into friendlies and non-competitive games on a 'let's have a little fun' basis only. Boys of lesser abilities and younger age are picked for male league games with them automatically pushed into competition, girls didn't stand a chance.

*White woman, volunteer, parent/guardian*



Boys are noticed, encouraged more, praised more, invited to join the club more. I was really shocked at how sexist the club is towards girls. There is no point in them playing in that environment.

*White woman, parent/guardian*



[Our daughter was] the only girl in the local cricket team. Constantly invisible in language used by parents and coaches (congratulating the 'lads' for a good game, etc). Once, my daughter scored the most wickets and most runs winning a match and the parents' WhatsApp group (which the coaches admin) was full of 'Well done, Boys' messages.

*Asian/Asian (Pakistani) woman, parent/guardian*

A theme amongst a significant number of respondents was that the lack of opportunity for girls and women to play is not only a matter of attitudes but also that fewer girls and women play cricket, the talent pathway for women is not as developed as it is for men, and the number of fixtures between clubs and county academies is more limited as a result. Finding the right level of play can be difficult for women and girls, who must be prepared to travel even further than men and boys to train or compete.



My youngest daughter was selected for the final stages of [First-Class County] U11 girls' squad. The standard was very good & all those involved showed potential to develop as talented cricketers. The squad had to be reduced from 35 to 17 and the shame is that there was no follow up for the unsuccessful 18 (my daughter was one of these). [...] There seems to be no regional structure to bring together the girls for competitive cricket outside of the county squad. In the case of my daughter, she has been left playing in the boys' league where most do not play to her level. There is no organised girls' cricket through the age group structure & [First-Class County] just refer everyone to a list of clubs that run girls' teams (the club listed most locally to us do not even run a girls' team!)

*White man, parent/guardian*

## 2.2.4 Access to good cricket grounds, training facilities and quality coaching is limited – boys and men are given priority

Many girls and women reported having more restricted access to training facilities and to high-quality coaching than boys and men, who they observed continue to be given priority over them.



As part of the women's first team at a club, we were routinely included in the club information after the junior team. So, the order would be Men's 1, 2, 3, 4, Sunday Teams, then the junior groups, then the women's teams. Women's training times were arranged last, at the times others didn't want.

*White woman, recreational player, umpire*



Provision has never been equal in terms of kit, hall space allocation, volume of training/game and pay. There was never a full-time coach.

*White woman, former professional player, coach*



There is a [...] sense that women's cricket remains tokenistic: more about being seen to have cricket for women than about genuinely investing in developing that side of the game. [We] need investment in proper training facilities, proper coaching for girls/women.

*White woman, volunteer, official or umpire*

## 2.2.5 People make assumptions about girls' and women's sexual orientation

Responses indicate common assumptions that girls and women who play cricket are lesbians. This is not unique to cricket<sup>7</sup> but it is nevertheless damaging, especially for young girls who might be concerned that their sexuality will be a focus, as well as for teenagers whose identity is still developing and who may be sensitive to such assumptions about their sexual orientation.



There are all sorts of innuendoes that can be really hard for teenage girls. They are already so sensitive to how they are perceived. Our girl has been called 'butch' and all sorts because she plays cricket – and it comes from coaches as well as teammates. It's unacceptable but no one seems to bat an eyelid.

*White woman, parent/guardian*



Our daughter had her long hair cut into a shoulder length bob and the captain told her she looked like a lesbian. When we made a formal complaint, it was dismissed as banter. 'She's one of the lads', they said.

*White woman, parent/guardian*



Growing up as a girl playing cricket in boys' teams, I was not always welcome. Often mocked by opposition, for my gender and assumed sexuality.

*White woman, current professional player*

## 2.2.6 The drinking culture is off-putting and potentially dangerous for women

Social life around cricket often involves alcohol. This may be fun and relaxing, and an important source of income for clubs, but responses show it can be off-putting and sometimes dangerous. The male-dominated environment centred around drinking can lead to lower inhibitions and more inappropriate behaviour towards women. Women report being either excluded from cricket 'socials' or encouraged to attend for 'all the wrong reasons'. They talk of being sexualised and of the threat of sexual harassment, abuse, and violence.



At University there were certainly barriers. More money was spent on alcohol than on the women's side of the club... that should be telling. I am a working-class woman and I do not drink – which did not fit at all within the culture of cricket at university. The older male students would drink to excess every week, [whilst] encouraging the younger female students to do the same and wouldn't leave them alone. Disgusting behaviour.

*White woman, recreational player*

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<sup>7</sup> Denison, Erik; Kitchen, Alistair (2020): "Out on the fields: The first international study on homophobia in sport" (2015). Nielsen Sport, Bingham Cup 2014, Sydney Convicts, Sport Australia. Monash University. A multinational study of LGBTQ+ people in sport found that nearly 90% of female athletes say most people assume that they are lesbians if they play sports like rugby, cricket or football, and that many non-playing people – whether engaged in sport or not – believe there is a high proportion of lesbians in these sports.



I went to one social and never went back again, it was horrific, but I stayed playing. Most women go to one social and leave. At the AGM, the men refused to understand the link between alcohol, their behaviour, and the lack of a stable women's team. It was all just a laugh to them.

*White woman, recreational player*



Pissed guys 'sexting' my daughter. It's demeaning and threatening, so she stopped playing to avoid being exposed to that crap. How is this even allowed to happen in 2021?

*White woman, parent/guardian*



As a female, cricket has often felt like a male sport and one I'm not expected to appreciate or understand, the drinking culture at matches also feels oppressive.

*Mixed ethnic groups (White and Asian) woman, parent/guardian, county age group player*

## 2.2.7 Bullying is frequent across the whole game and impacts on girls' and women's enjoyment

Many women (and men) report that bullying is part of the culture of cricket. They provide multiple examples, and responses demonstrate that these experiences are not isolated, nor limited to a few counties. Accounts involve parents, team members, opponents, coaches and managers. They often lead girls and women to quit cricket and to the loss of talent.



Bullying is part of the culture. It's almost a coaching philosophy for some people.

*Asian/British Asian (Indian) woman, parent/guardian*



There's a lot of 'manning up' stuff and assumptions that being strong under pressure means that you have to bully as a coach and be prepared to be bullied as a player. I think it's a private school boy ethos that needs to be stamped out.

*White woman, coach*



There was a lot of bullying within girls' county age groups at [X] CCC. The bullying was known by authority figures (coaches and managers) but it was left unaddressed intentionally [...] This led to myself and a number of others quitting county age group cricket.

*White woman, former county age player*

## 2.2.8 Sexist assumptions limit women's opportunities to coach and typecast them in girls' cricket

Women are under-represented among coaches and officials, especially umpires.<sup>8</sup> This is not just a legacy issue: responses indicated that often current coaching events and courses attract very few women.



**I was recently at a coaching event that the county ran and, out of 25 coaches, I was the only woman there.**

*White woman, Board or committee member, coach*



**As a Level X coach, and the only woman on my coach education course, it's clear more needs to be done.**

*White woman, recreational player, coach*

Women who coach, umpire or score reported the need to negotiate what can be described as sexist and misogynistic attitudes and behaviours. Their responses indicated that many boys and men in cricket come across as thinking it is impossible that women can coach or umpire – though women are more likely to be accepted as scorers. When female coaches or officials arrive at venues, they report frequently being assumed to be caterers, people running tuck shops, or simply there to cheer on husbands or children. Both unconscious biases and open misogyny were present in a high proportion of responses, with evidence that it limits women's opportunities.



**I frequently arrive and am mistaken for a scorer or tea lady.**

*White woman, official or umpire*



**[I have been] told: A lady cannot be a good umpire. I should go back home. Get off the field. Women's cricket is shit. Women can't make decisions. Women shouldn't even umpire.**

*Unattributed to protect confidentiality*

Women coaches say that they must establish their credentials when coaching boys in particular – both to the boys themselves and to their parents. They also report that their professional opportunities are much more limited than men's, with some citing only being offered roles in girls' and women's cricket, and often below their qualification levels.



**Female coaches are often only used to coach girls and women. People believe you don't have the skill level to coach men.**

*White woman, county age group player, coach*



**When coaching younger males, I feel I need to get them to believe I'm good enough to even coach them. I have to prove that I am worth their time.**

*White woman, recreational player, coach*

<sup>8</sup> For indicative purposes, in the survey, 12% of the women who responded to the survey were coaches and 13% were officials (the majority of them scorers, not umpires). This compares with 27% of Type K respondents being coaches and 32% of Type K respondents being officials.



**I've not been allowed to coach boys' teams despite being a Level X coach.**

*White woman, staff, coach*

Some women who coach reported finding themselves in male-only cricketing environments (both physical and virtual), where they were further exposed to misogynistic and/or other inappropriate behaviours.



**I also left the coaches' WhatsApp group chat as they sent images of women's breasts, and this made me feel uncomfortable.**

*White woman, county age group player, staff member (at the ECB or County organisation) member, coach*

## 2.2.9 Women umpires face barriers and hostility based on sexism and misogyny

Like women who coach, women who umpire face a lack of opportunities as well as sexist stereotypes and biases.



**I have Level [X] umpiring but have never umpired a match.**

*White woman, Board or committee member, coach, umpire*



**I've just not been able to umpire because of sexist comments from the other team. No one challenges them.**

*White woman, umpire*

Women umpires and scorers say that they are regularly asked to demonstrate their knowledge of cricket and to establish their credentials. They report being treated in condescending and patronising ways – often described as 'mansplaining'. They discuss how their authority is deliberately tested and how their decisions are more likely to be challenged. Some report verbal and physical abuse.



**The men and male youths assume that you don't know what you are doing when you umpire. They push the boundaries of behaviour to check your reaction. They challenge your knowledge of the laws and patronise.**

*White woman, Board or committee member, umpire*



**As a female umpire, I was almost always at the receiving end of harsh comments, unnecessary questions and unfair bias from a few male players in almost every match I officiated in. I have been asked if I was umpiring because my son was playing in the team, if I had been trained, etc.**

*Asian (Indian) woman, official or umpire*



**You constantly have to prove your right to be there, to establish your knowledge and expertise, in front of players, captains, officials, club leaders, parents. It's exhausting.**

*White woman, umpire*



Very often had comments about my knowledge of the laws of cricket as a woman umpire despite having passed Level [X] and having 20 years umpiring experience and 40 years cricket experience.

*White woman, official or umpire*



I have been physically attacked while trying to support the first XI at my club.

*White woman, recreational player, volunteer, coach*

It was reported that routes into professional umpiring are further restricted by the practice of inviting former professional county players to umpire, on the assumption that they will know the rules better than people who have not played cricket at the highest level first, which not only limits opportunities but also replicates the lack of diversity that exists among professional players. The fact that women in these roles remain so few can lead to unpleasant 'singling out'.



The idea that if you have played first class cricket, then you will make a great first-class umpire, and the process of fast-tracking based on that, is unfair.

*White woman, official*

Finally, like women engaged with cricket in other ways, coaches, umpires and scorers report a culture where objectification, sexualisation and misogyny exist and go unchallenged.



As a scorer I was once told by a player that he really liked when I scored for the team. When I asked why, he stated: 'It's nice to have something to look at'. As an 18-year-old being told this by a senior player, I felt disgusted, and I haven't scored since. I felt like I wasn't valued as a person, player, or volunteer, and was only wanted there to gawp at. I told another senior player, but nothing was done.

*White woman, recreational player, coach, scorer*



I walked into a score box with a large sign saying, 'No-one wearing a bra is allowed in the score box'.

*White woman, recreational player, staff, coach, scorer*



'We're really pleased to have you. You're the type of good-looking girl we want to have on billboards. How incredible to have someone like you at the forefront of our marketing campaign.' It makes you feel you're there because of how you look rather than how you play.

*White woman, current professional player*



Objectification of women by men in senior positions: even at the highest level, women are still being discussed in terms of their looks instead of their talent or skills or achievements.

*White woman, current professional player*

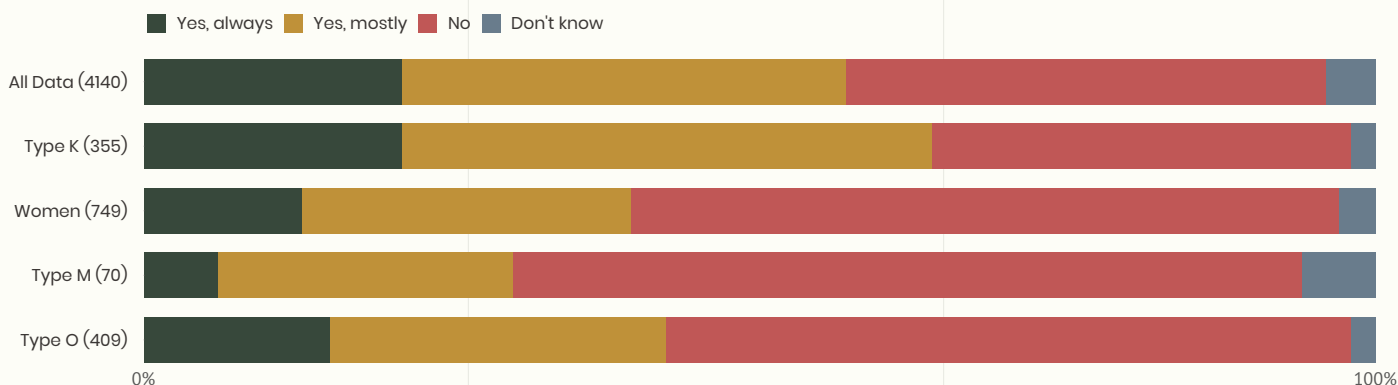


## 2.3 Discrimination impacts girls' and women's opportunities and sense of belonging

Despite reporting significant and successful efforts to widen access to cricket for girls and women, considering the experiences described above, it is not surprising that 58% of women in the survey do not believe that everyone engaged with cricket has the same opportunities to enjoy the game, progress and be rewarded fairly, regardless of their sex. In fact, only 13% of women think that women always do have the same opportunities as men. Among ethnic minority women educated in state schools, only 6% believe that everyone engaged with cricket has the same opportunities to enjoy the game, progress and be rewarded fairly, regardless of their sex. Type K respondents (those with intersectional privilege) appear to underestimate the extent to which women's opportunities are restricted. From their perspective, women enjoy the same opportunities as men in the majority of cases.

**Figure 3: Perceptions of opportunities to enjoy cricket, progress and be rewarded fairly regardless of sex?**

*Do you believe that everyone engaged with cricket has the same opportunities to enjoy the game, progress, and be rewarded fairly regardless of sex?*



*Type K: White, straight, cisgender, privately educated men, with no disability*

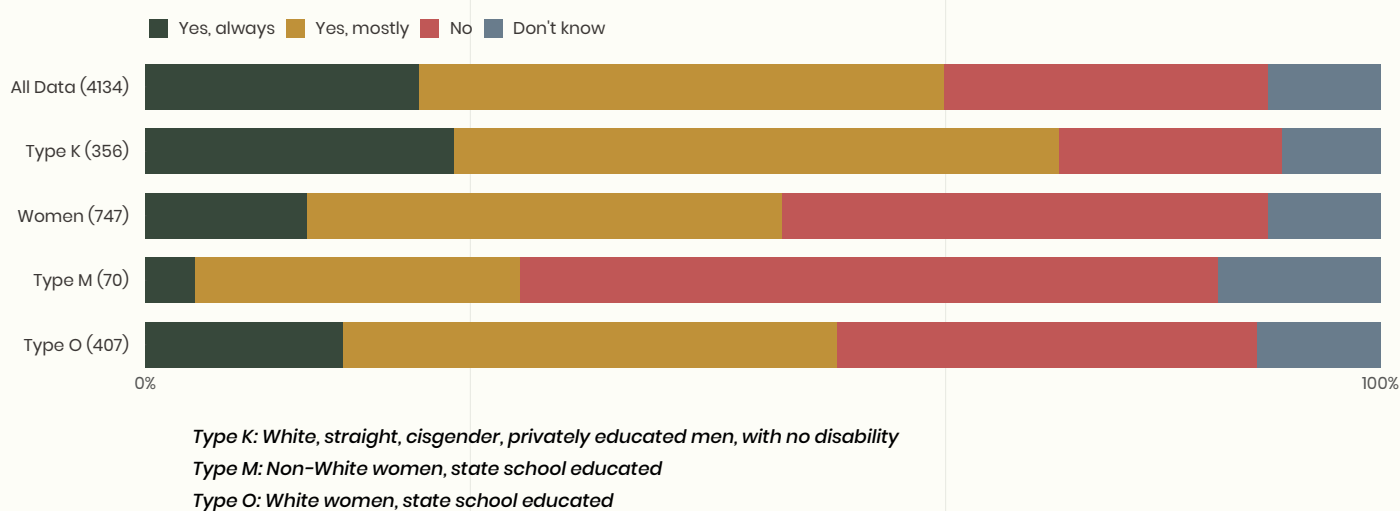
*Type M: Non-White women, state school educated*

*Type O: White women, state school educated*

Similarly, in light of the experiences reported above, it is not surprising that 39% of women in the sample do not believe that everyone engaged with cricket feels that they belong and can be themselves, regardless of their sex. In fact, only 13% of women think that they 'always' do, with 38% of women in the sample 'mostly' believing that to be the case. Ethnic minority women educated in state schools are much less likely to feel that they can always belong and be themselves in cricket: only 4% do. Again, most Type K respondents take a different view: from their perspective, almost three-quarters (74%) of women 'always' or 'mostly' feel that they belong and can be themselves.

**Figure 4: Perceptions of sense of belonging and ability to be oneself in cricket, regardless of sex**

*Do you believe that everyone engaged with cricket feels that they belong and can be themselves regardless of sex?*

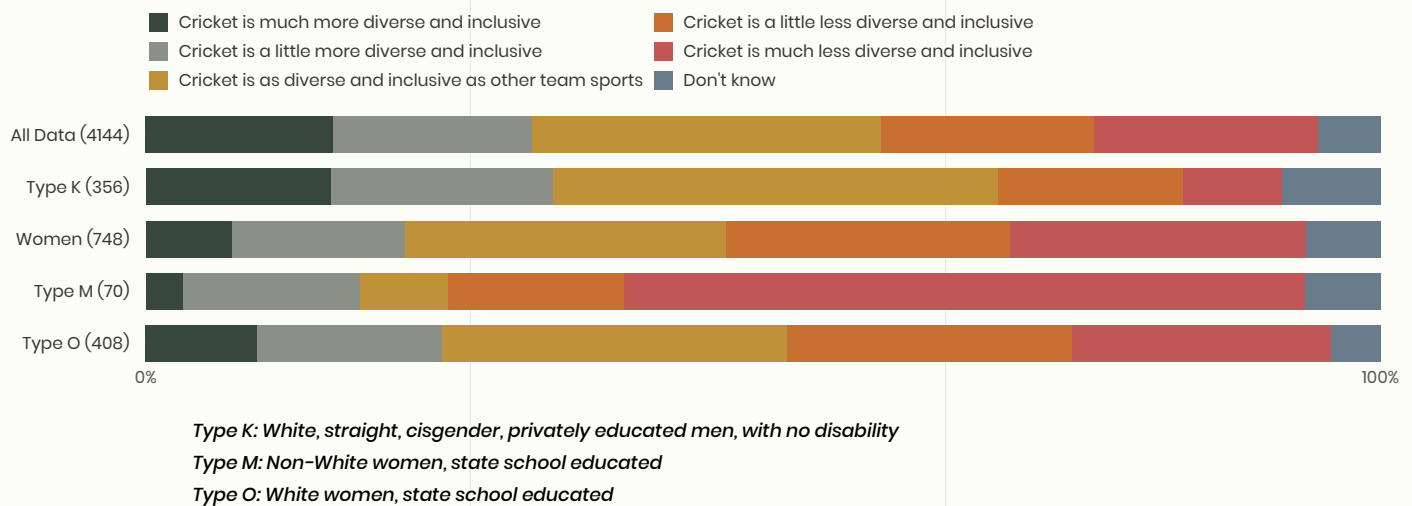


## 2.4 Women's perceptions of EDI in cricket and other team sports

Women are also likely to believe that cricket is less diverse and inclusive than other team sports, such as football, rugby and basketball. While 26% of women perceive that cricket is about the same as other team sports, 47% believe it is less diverse and inclusive, and only 21% believe it is more diverse and inclusive. Women's perceptions of EDI in cricket are at odds with those of Type K respondents, who are much more likely to believe that cricket compares favourably with other team sports when it comes to inclusion.

**Figure 5: Perceptions of diversity and inclusion in cricket compared to other team sports**

*Overall, how diverse and inclusive do you feel cricket is compared to other team sports (such as football, rugby or basketball)?*



## 2.5 Conclusions

Considerable progress has been made to encourage more girls and women to play recreational and professional cricket in recent years. However, girls and women still do not have the same opportunities as men to play cricket, enjoy the game, progress, coach or officiate.

More than two-thirds (68%) of all women in the survey reported experiences of discrimination in the past five years. Qualitative evidence makes it clear that this comes from male teammates, coaches, club managers, parents, colleagues and board members. Cricket, this evidence indicates, continues to be seen as a men’s sport.

Girls and women provided hundreds of examples of lived experiences of discrimination. This includes the exclusion of girls and women from mixed teams – or their reluctant inclusion; damaging and restrictive stereotypes and assumptions made about women; lack of access to opportunities to play, progress, train, coach, or officiate; lack of recognition; bullying, singling out and abuse; objectification, sexualisation and sexual harassment. Almost half of the girls and women surveyed believe that cricket is less diverse and inclusive than other team sports.

Women who coach or officiate face particular challenges: they are discouraged from training in coaching and umpiring roles, are seen as fit only for the girls’ or women’s game, are not taken seriously, and are more likely to be challenged and bullied than their male counterparts. While men are assumed to ‘know’ about cricket, women’s knowledge and competencies are constantly scrutinised. As discussed in subsequent chapters, women from ethnic minority backgrounds and those educated in state schools also face additional challenges linked to racism and elitism.

As with other groups, most of the women who experienced discrimination did not report it to relevant parties at the time. Those who did complain are rarely satisfied with the way the issue was handled (for further details, see Chapter 8 below). Our research suggests that the combination of fewer opportunities, a sexist and misogynist culture, and the lack of trust that management is serious about inclusion (a theme covered elsewhere in the report) is discouraging girls and women from playing and leading to a considerable loss of talent across various types of engagement with the game. Many women see no future for themselves or their daughters in cricket.

## CHAPTER 3

# Lived experiences of discrimination among Black people

# Chapter 3: Lived experiences of discrimination among Black people

## 3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the lived experiences of Black people in cricket. In total, 67 Black people completed the survey. While this is a small number in absolute terms, Black respondents in the survey are slightly overrepresented proportionately compared to the current number of Black people playing recreational cricket.<sup>9</sup>

## 3.2 Recent lived experiences of discrimination

The survey indicates that a significant majority of Black people have experienced personal discrimination in cricket in the past five years and that such discrimination is a factor in the loss of Black players from the sport. 75% of Black respondents said that they had experienced discrimination in the past five years (this contrasts with 50% of all survey participants). In other words, Black respondents are one and a half times as likely as the average respondent to have been discriminated against.

Among the Black respondents who experienced discrimination in the past five years:

- About half report that stereotypes and assumptions are made about them (51%)
- About half feel undervalued compared to people of equal competence (49%)
- A large minority say they have been spoken to in a hurtful or demeaning way (42%)
- A significant minority report being excluded from games, events or social activities (12%)
- A significant minority report being paid less compared to people of equal competence (12%)
- A significant minority report 'other' experiences of exclusion and discrimination (12%)
- About 1 in 20 report bullying, physical harassment or violence (6%)



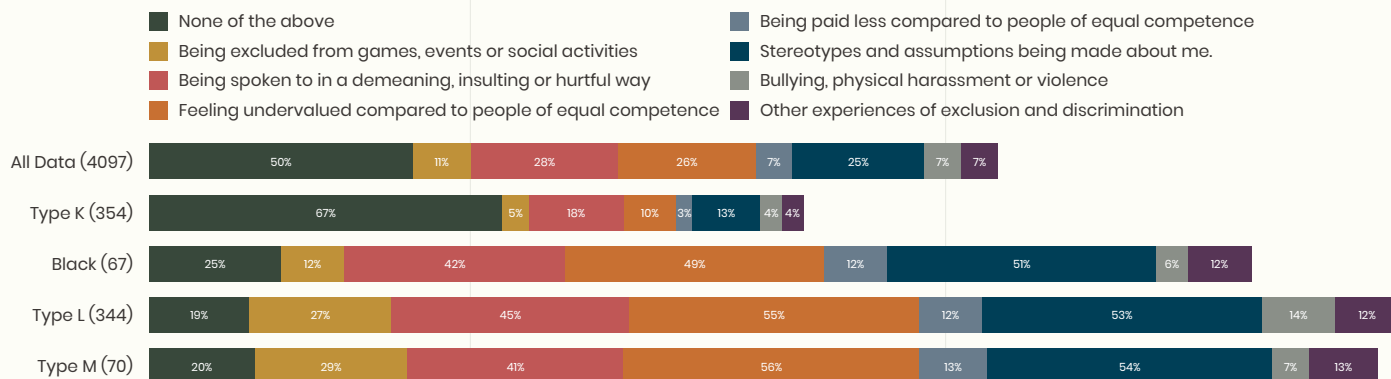
**[After experiencing such racism], why would we now encourage our kids to play?**

*Black/Black (Caribbean) woman, volunteer, staff member (at the ECB or County organisation)*

<sup>9</sup> According to ACE, Black people make up less than 1% of recreational cricketers (see [About Us – The Ace Programme Charity](#)).

**Figure 6: Experiences of personal discrimination over the past five years among Black people**

*Over the past five years, have you personally experienced any of the following?*



*Type K: White, straight, cisgender, privately educated men, with no disability*

*Type L: Non-White men, state school educated*

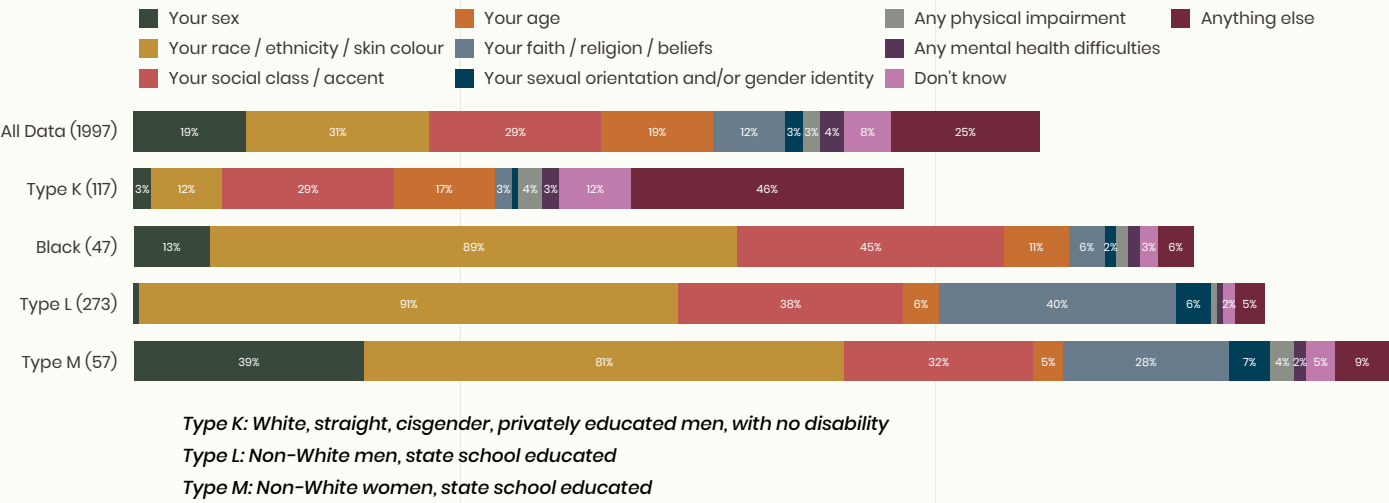
*Type M: Non-White women, state school educated*

People from Black communities overwhelmingly attribute the discrimination they experienced to their race, ethnicity or skin colour (89%). However, a large minority believe that it was also based on their social class or accent (45%) and some attribute it to their sex (13%). The remainder of the chapter discusses in more detail the main forms of discrimination reported by Black respondents.



Figure 7: Perceived causes of discrimination among Black people

Overall, would you say that these negative experiences were mainly based on?



### 3.2.1 The lack of representation makes it hard to fit in and feel a sense of belonging

We were told that in Black communities, where participation in cricket is low, the lack of representation of people of colour – and especially of Black people – can itself be a barrier to having a sense of belonging. One can feel self-aware and conspicuous, and respondents noted that it is important to have a critical mass of diverse people for everyone to feel welcome.



Playing particularly away games at club and county age group level, I was often made to feel like an outcast. Looking back this was down to the colour of my skin as 99% of the time I was the only Black person playing, entering the club house or the pub on the journey home.

Black (Caribbean) man, recreational player, parent/guardian



It's hard to fit in when there is no one looking like you.'

Black (Caribbean) man, umpire, recreational player

### 3.2.2 Black people are less likely to be selected and supported, despite outperforming peers



After playing for my club for 5yrs, [I] offered to take a leadership role in the XI that I played in. Was declined and told that 'I didn't have the experience', yet my aged peers did and got the role.

*Black (Caribbean) man, county age group player*



As a Black cricketer, I had to be 3 x better than my White counterparts. Schooling: facilities were poor. No PE teachers with a cricket focus. No school team at secondary level. Class: Playing England schools coming from an inner London Comprehensive school.

*Black (Caribbean) man, former professional player, coach*



During county trials practice and trial games, plus outscoring peers consistently in league cricket, I was told that I wasn't skilled enough for a 1st XI call up. This was despite outperforming a White peer in my local team consistently who was selected as a batter. When questioned, was told that 'He gets it - you don't'. Questioned my supportive local coach who happened to be on the selection committee, and he told me, 'They just don't like you! You go to a state school', implying that my education and background was hampering me.

*Black (Caribbean) man, county age player*

Some Black respondents described how the fact that so many critical decisions about players are made by coaches based on implicit and subjective criteria leaves Black people – and anyone from a minority group – more vulnerable to bias. These decisions can have a determinant impact on people's career.



I recall a day when [our] 1st team was playing the county champions [...]. I was batting on the outfield with friends and a [county] player came over and told me how talented I was. He then had a conversation with my father and was surprised that I was under [my county's] radar. He kindly offered to arrange for me to attend coaching courses at Lord's. As a result, I was invited to trial for the MCC staff a few years later.

*Black (Caribbean) man, former professional player*

### 3.2.3 Racist remarks, verbal and physical abuse lead to feelings of exclusion

Some Black participants reported overt discrimination, verbal abuse, name-calling, sledging, and various forms of exclusion.



I was playing for an all-black team in a cup match [...] Their opening bowler beat my outside edge with the first ball of the match. He stood with his arms on his hip glaring at me. The next ball was exactly the same and he shouted: "Someone give the monkey a barn door". I asked the keeper, did he hear that? He shrugged. This was the start of abuse throughout my innings and no one – not the umpire – said anything.

*Black (Caribbean) man, county age group player*



I was playing for a team in which I was the only player of colour and we were playing an all-black team. When they arrived one of my teammates said: "Look guys, we are playing a team of golliwogs". Another teammate kicked him, and he looked at me and said "sorry mate, but you are one of us."

*Black (Caribbean) man, county age group player*



Countless microaggressions, from stereotypical suggestions about eating habits or cultural differences to lack of support in professional and tactical development, which in turn pigeonholes you into a certain role within a team.

*Black (Caribbean) man, coach, former professional player, parent/guardian*



Words like 'Wog' were used quite casually.

*Black (Caribbean) man, former professional player*



I didn't feel part of the game. I was excluded and marginalised [...] I've been subjected to racist attacks both verbal and physical on a number of occasions which made me leave the game.

*Black (African) man, recreational player*

This kind of racism can create huge distress, with often long-term damaging impacts on physical and mental health.<sup>10</sup>

One former Black cricketer said he never really experienced discrimination. He attributed this to exceptional talent, being tall and physically imposing, having a strong personality, and being willing and able to 'fit in' with the others.

As elsewhere in the game, we were told that incidents are rarely spontaneously managed by victims or witnesses. When they are reported, discrimination is typically denied, minimised, or justified, and is rarely acted upon. The person raising the issue is likely to face victimisation. The result, our research participants indicated, is that the culture does not change, talent leaves the game, and the next generation are discouraged from taking up cricket at all.

### 3.3 Experiences among Black coaches and officials

Black people are conspicuous by their absence among coaches, umpires and officials. In total, 10 Black officials or umpires and 15 Black coaches took part in the survey. None were women. Opportunities are said to be few and far between. Black people report that they are not encouraged to apply for roles, to access training, etc. When opportunities open, they are offered to people with fewer qualifications and less experience than their own.



I have been overlooked for promotions, jobs, coach education courses and my identity mistaken on numerous occasions – the only thing I could find as an issue had to be my race and class status, as I was more than qualified, overqualified in some instances, and still overlooked.

*Black (Caribbean) man, coach, recreational player, staff member (at the ECB or County organisation)*

<sup>10</sup> Indeed, some of the survey participants who identified as disabled did so because of mental health challenges which they attributed to their experience of discrimination and racism in cricket.



I had to leave my County to commence my level [X] course. I also witnessed White guys who had done [lower level course] with me who ended up being assistant head coach for the County. I can't even coach a County age group team.

*Black (Caribbean) man, coach, former professional player*



ECB did not actively promote opportunities for ethnic minority officials to progress to higher levels at all levels in the administration, at local, regional and national levels. An 'old boys' network operates in my opinion. As a high performing individual, I was never asked to join the ECB panel but White colleagues have been approached who were less qualified and scored lower in umpires' marks given by captains.

*Black (Caribbean) man, official*



Being the only black coach and at the time the second-longest serving, I was never given the opportunity to coach for the club during the indoor season, although every other coach, irrespective of tenure, was able to. I was constantly side-lined with phrases such as 'there is no money in that buddy, so no need to apply'.

*Black (Caribbean) man, coach*

We were told that Black coaches, umpires and officials are disproportionately asked to demonstrate or establish their credentials; their decisions are challenged; they are singled out; they feel isolated and unsupported by other umpires and officials; and they may be victims of direct abuse or witnesses to abusive language or behaviour.



Every decision questioned, as opposed to a White colleague. Players will ask the same question to my colleague. Not supported by colleagues when players get into arguments.

*Black (Caribbean) man, official or umpire*



Whilst umpiring, on many occasions I have heard comments as to my colour. As umpires, we are meant to co-operate and act together. However, many times we have ended up being in utter disagreement. I was even told recently 'I am fed up of you lot' as the parting shot as an umpire walked off.

*Black (Caribbean) man, official or umpire, coach, board or committee member, volunteer, recreational player*



I once belonged to an umpires' panel where I felt discriminated against, not given any real encouragement to develop. I was fobbed off when I asked questions about progress up the umpires' ranks. I was given games to umpire which would not have been given to the elite umpires of that panel.

*Black (Caribbean) man, official or umpire, recreational player*

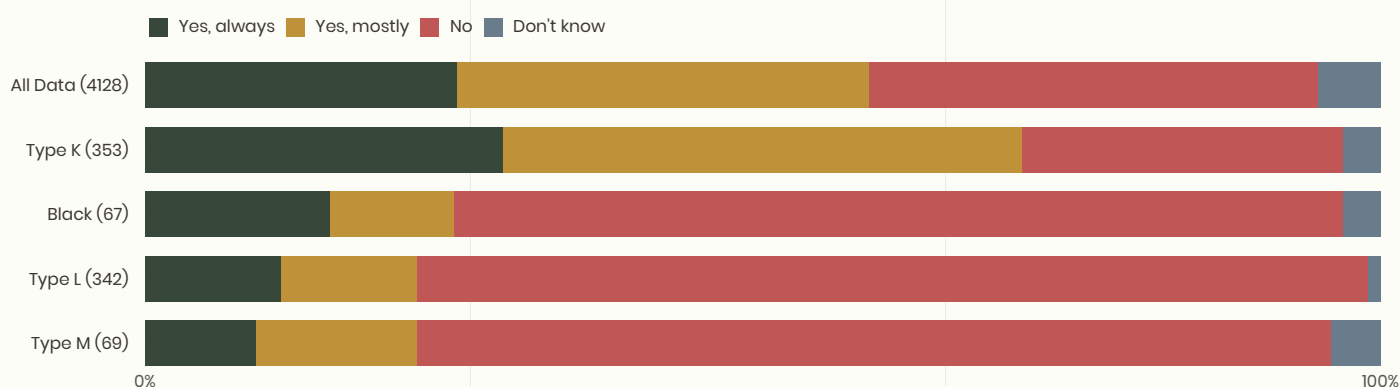
Black respondents attributed their experiences of discrimination primarily to their race, ethnicity or skin colour. However, many Black women also stated that they experienced discrimination based on their sex and/or social class. Furthermore, the qualitative evidence suggests that Black women face the cumulative impact of sexism, racism and socio-economic disadvantage.

### 3.4 Discrimination impacts Black people's opportunities and sense of belonging

Given these lived experiences, and despite recent efforts to attract more Black people into cricket (e.g. the ACE programme), it is not surprising that 72% of Black people do not believe that everyone engaged with cricket has the same opportunities to enjoy the game, progress and be rewarded fairly, regardless of their race/ethnicity. In fact, only 25% of Black respondents believe everyone always or mostly does. The equivalent figures for Type K respondents were markedly different: just 26% do not believe that everyone engaged with cricket has the same opportunities to enjoy the game, progress and be rewarded fairly, regardless of their race/ethnicity, whereas 71% believe everyone always or mostly does.

**Figure 8: Perceptions of opportunities to enjoy cricket, progress and be rewarded fairly regardless of ethnicity/race**

*Do you believe that everyone engaged with cricket has the same opportunities to enjoy the game, progress and be rewarded fairly regardless of ethnicity/race?*



*Type K: White, straight, cisgender, privately educated men, with no disability*

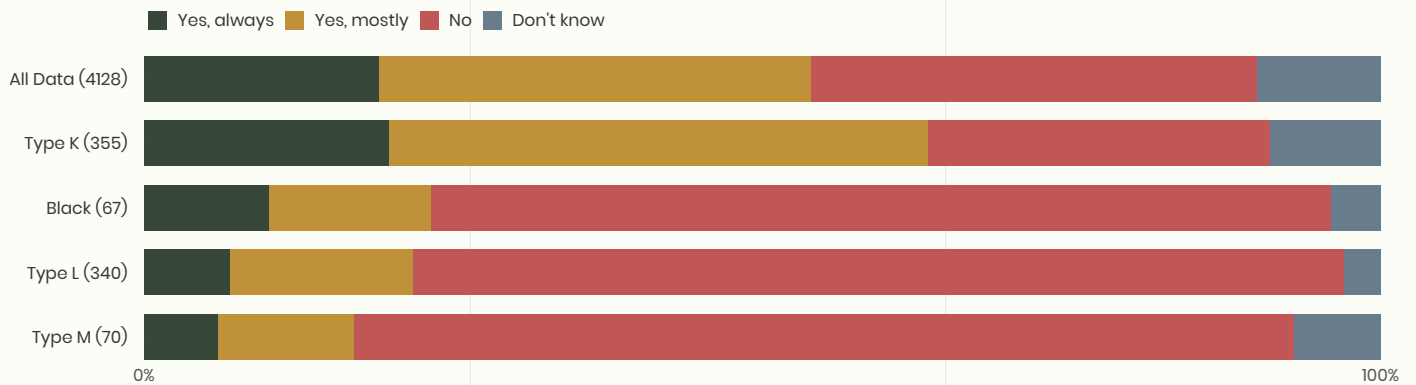
*Type L: Non-White men, state school educated*

*Type M: Non-White women, state school educated*

Similarly, it is not surprising that 72% of Black people in the sample do not believe that everyone engaged with cricket feels that they belong and can be themselves, regardless of their race/ethnicity. In fact, only 23% of Black respondents think that everyone always or mostly can. The comparative figures for Type K respondents were 28% and 64% respectively.

**Figure 9: Perceptions of sense of belonging and ability to be oneself in cricket, regardless of ethnicity/race**

*Do you believe that everyone engaged with cricket feels that they belong and can be themselves regardless of ethnicity/race?*



*Type K: White, straight, cisgender, privately educated men, with no disability*

*Type L: Non-White men, state school educated*

*Type M: Non-White women, state school educated*

## 3.5 Structural factors reduce uptake of cricket in Black communities

Many socio-economic factors combine to account – at least in part – for the lack of participation in recreational cricket among the Black community. Black communities are largely concentrated in urban areas, especially in the most deprived neighbourhoods (ONS, 2013).

At the time of the Census in 2011, 18.9% of Black households were lone parents with dependent children, which compares with 6.7% of White British households in the same situation (ONS, 2020). And while only 17% of White British households do not have access to a car or a van, this figure rises to 40% among Black households.

With respect to private education, the 2021 Census and Annual Report of the Independent Schools Council (ISC, 2021) shows that of the 532,237 pupils in private education at the time, 1,417 were Nigerian (63% of whom have parents overseas) and 1,650 were from the 'rest of Africa' (37% of whom have parents overseas). Because the ISC Census reports by nationality and not by ethnic group, there is no data on Black British pupils of Caribbean descent. However, it is reasonable to assume that the number is very small.

Black respondents (as well as other survey respondents of all backgrounds) frequently report that the lack of cricket facilities in inner cities, the cost of playing, the heavy time commitment required from parents/guardians, the need to have private transport, and the fact that routes into cricket are often via expensive private schools combine to make it very difficult for less affluent people, and for Black people in particular, to play cricket. Accessing cricket in the first place, as well as taking children and young people to cricket training and fixtures, are both more challenging.



**There are so many hurdles to overcome to just play. There's no support in schools. No facilities. No cricket coaching. The cost is prohibitive for most people in our community. The equipment, subs, transport, etc.: it's just a deterrent for most people of colour. There are no coaches or role models left either. You have to have a passion for cricket already, otherwise you wouldn't bother.**

*Black (Caribbean) woman, parent/guardian*



**[After experiencing such racism], why would we now encourage our kids to play?**

*Black (Caribbean) woman, volunteer, staff member (at the ECB or County organisation)*



**Cricket has a huge class and race divide that impacts people across the whole game. Being Black British from a working-class family, my opportunities to progress my career within the game have been stalled.**

*Black (Caribbean) man, coach, recreational player, staff member (at the ECB or County organisation)*

These structural barriers are real. Investment in grassroots cricket among Black communities is needed to overcome them, to rebuild the connection Black Caribbean communities used to have with cricket,<sup>11</sup> and to introduce other Black communities to the game. Black girls and women are conspicuously absent. Engaging them with cricket will require dedicated efforts.

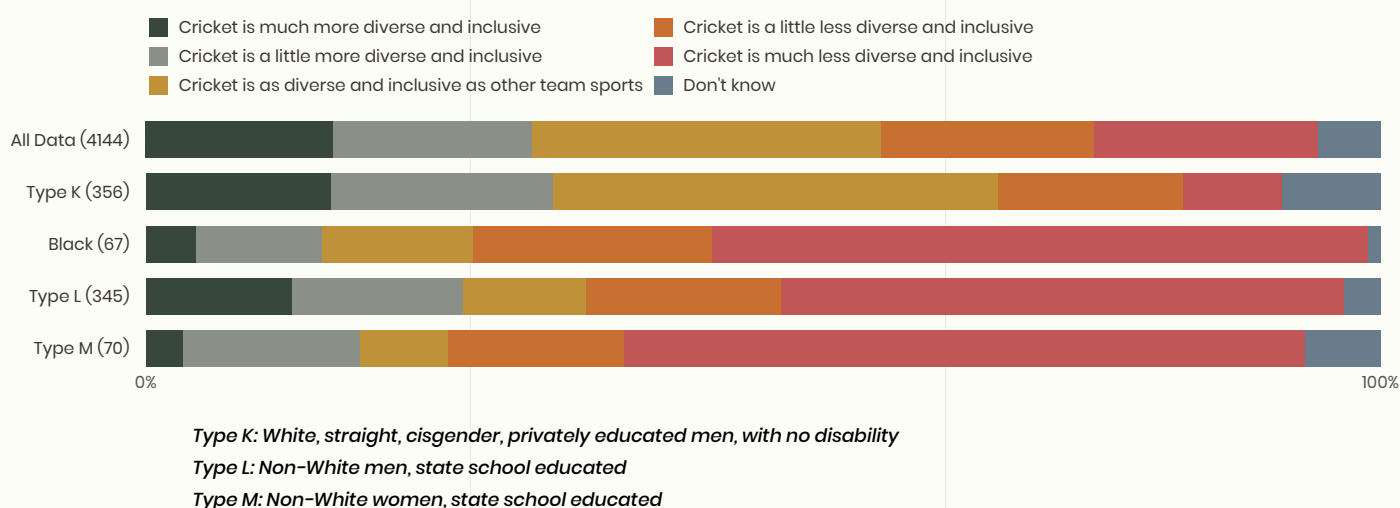
<sup>11</sup> Holden, R. (2017) Losing the Heritage – Falling out of Love with Cricket: Why Has This Happened to the British Afro-Caribbean Community? *International Journal of Human Movement and Sports Sciences* 5(3): 41–50.

## 3.6 Black people's perceptions of EDI in cricket and other team sports

Black people are also likely to believe that cricket is less diverse and inclusive than other team sports, such as football, rugby and basketball. While 12% of Black people perceive that cricket is about the same as other team sports, 72% believe it is less diverse and inclusive, and only 14% believe it is more diverse and inclusive. Black people's perceptions of EDI in cricket are at odds with those of Type K respondents, who are much more likely to believe that cricket compares favourably with other team sports when it comes to diversity and inclusion.

**Figure 10: Perceptions of diversity and inclusion in cricket compared to other team sports**

*Overall, how diverse and inclusive do you feel cricket is compared to other team sports (such as football, rugby or basketball)?*





## 3.7 Conclusions

In contrast with girls and women – where the uptake of cricket is on the rise – the Black community has either been disengaged from cricket (in the case of the Black Caribbean community) or has yet to be engaged (in the case of the Black African community). Black people experience multiple forms of discrimination in cricket (at the systemic, institutional and personal level).

Three-quarters of Black respondents reported recent personal experiences of racism. Of those, about half experienced racist stereotypes and assumptions being made about them. About half also felt undervalued compared to people of equal competence. Indeed, players and parents/guardians of players reported that the pathways are often blocked and that Black players are less likely to be selected, despite outperforming their peers. Coaches and umpires feel that their opportunities are limited. Umpires, in particular, reported being under greater scrutiny, having to establish their credentials, and being more frequently and aggressively challenged than their White peers. More than 40% of Black respondents also experienced being spoken to in a demeaning, insulting or hurtful way, including some racist name-calling and verbal abuse.

Our qualitative research also highlighted that the fact that routes into cricket are more difficult for children from lower socio-economic groups and those who do not attend private schools presents further obstacles for many people from the Black community.

Overall, discrimination impacts negatively on Black people's opportunities and sense of belonging in the game. Almost three-quarters of Black survey participants did not feel that everyone had the same opportunities nor that they could belong and be themselves in the game, regardless of their race/ethnicity/skin colour. Furthermore, over half of all Black people in the survey believe that cricket is much less diverse and inclusive than other team sports. It is reasonable to believe that these perceptions and experiences impact on the uptake of cricket in the younger generation. As discussed later, they do impact directly on the loss of talent from the game.

## CHAPTER 4

# Lived experiences of discrimination among South Asians

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## 4.1 Introduction

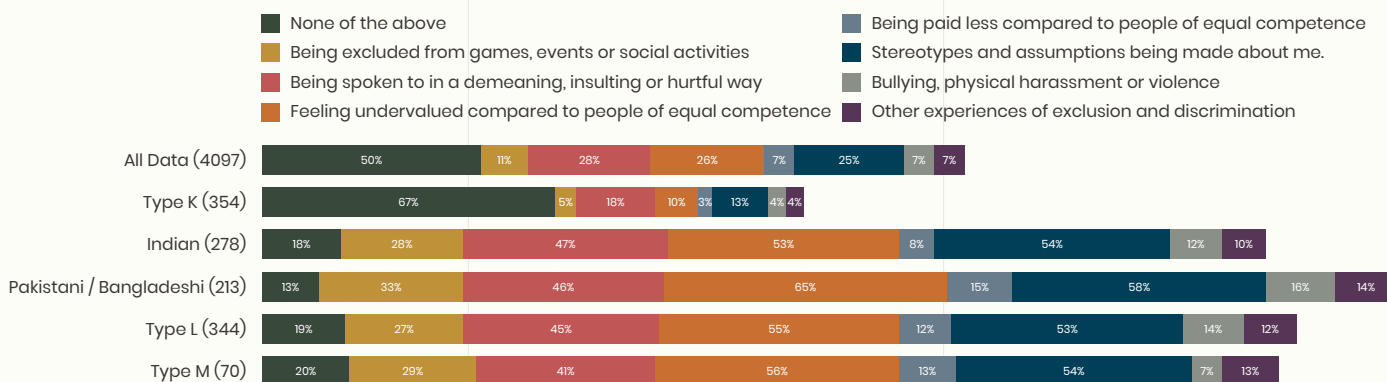
This chapter focuses on the lived experiences of South Asian people (specifically, those of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage) in cricket. In total, 490 South Asian participants took part in the survey, of whom 277 identified as Indian, 195 identified as Pakistani and a further 18 identified as Bangladeshi. Because the Pakistani and Bangladeshi populations have much in common – both in terms of their culture of origin and faith, and in terms of their experiences in the UK – we are reporting on their joint experiences.

## 4.2 Recent experiences of discrimination

Overall, people of South Asian heritage describe experiencing discrimination at the highest levels amongst all ethnic minority groups. Only 18% of Indian respondents and 13% of Pakistani and Bangladeshi respondents report no experiences of personal discrimination in the past five years – compared to 50% of all respondents and 67% of Type K respondents.

**Figure 11: Experiences of personal discrimination over the past five years among South Asians**

*Over the past five years, have you personally experienced any of the following?*



*Type K: White, straight, cisgender, privately educated men, with no disability*

*Type L: Non-White men, state school educated*

*Type M: Non-White women, state school educated*

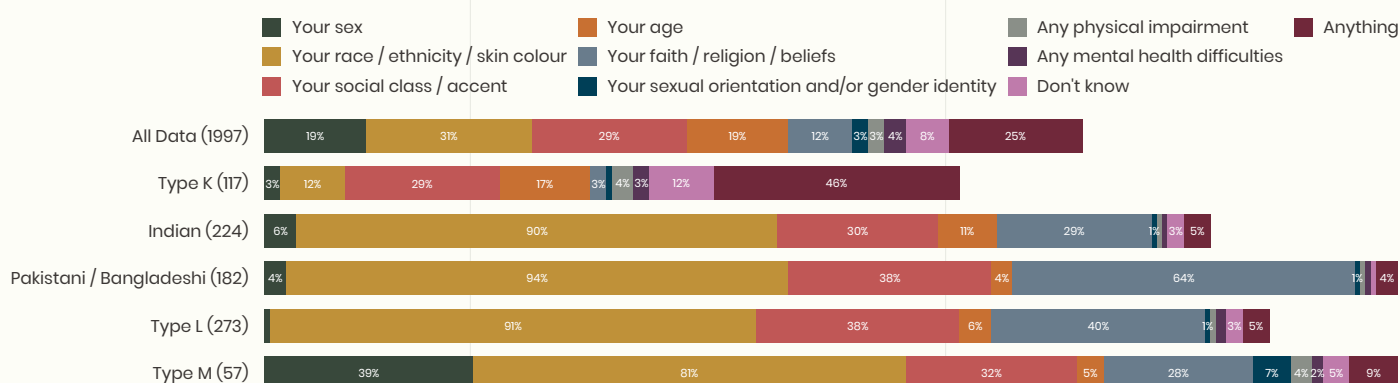
The main forms of discrimination reported by South Asians are, in decreasing order:

- Feeling undervalued compared to people of equal competence (between 53%-65%)
- Stereotypes and assumptions being made about me (between 54%-58%)
- Being spoken to in a demeaning, insulting or hurtful way (between 46%-47%)
- Being excluded from games, events or social activities (between 28%-33%)
- Bullying, physical harassment or violence (between 12%-16%)
- Being paid less compared to people of equal competence (between 8%-15%)<sup>12</sup>
- Other experiences of discrimination (between 10%-14%)

Respondents of South Asian heritage are clear that they primarily experience discrimination on the basis of their ethnicity: 90% of Indians and 94% of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis do so. However, two-thirds (64%) of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, and many Indians (29%), believe that their faith, religion or belief also accounts for the discrimination they experience.<sup>13</sup> Across all three South Asian groups, about a third believe that their social class and/or accent contribute to the discrimination they face.

**Figure 12: Perceived causes of discrimination among South Asians**

*Overall, would you say that these negative experiences were mainly based on?*



**Type K: White, straight, cisgender, privately educated men, with no disability**

**Type L: Non-White men, state school educated**

**Type M: Non-White women, state school educated**

<sup>12</sup> This is only relevant for South Asian people who are in paid roles in cricket.

<sup>13</sup> Indians are religiously diverse, with the largest groups being Hindus (49%), Sikhs (22%), Muslims (14%) and Christians (10%) (ONS, 2011). By contrast, more than 90% of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis in England and Wales are Muslims. This suggests that Islamophobia (the fear of and hostility toward Muslims and Islam, rooted in racism, which leads to individual and systemic discrimination, exclusion, and violence towards Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim) is probably at the heart of the lived experiences reported by Pakistanis and Bangladeshis.

The remainder of the chapter discusses the lived experiences of discrimination reported by South Asians, with attention to both the similarities and differences between subgroups.

## 4.2.1 Participation in recreational cricket among South Asians is extremely high

Despite a wide range of systemic barriers,<sup>14</sup> there is widespread engagement with and participation in cricket at grassroots level among South Asians. There is a strong interest in, and passion for, cricket among South Asians, with 'cricketing families' often introducing the next generation to the game.



**My children love cricket more than anything else so as a parent I should support them in cricket rather than encouraging them to quit.**

*Asian (Indian) woman, volunteer, coach, parent/guardian*



**I love the game and won't allow White racists and bigots to steal my love of it from me.**

*Asian (Pakistani) man, parent/guardian, academy player*

## 4.2.2 South Asians have limited opportunities to play, access coaching and progress

By far the biggest problem reported by all South Asian groups – across all types of engagement with cricket – is the sense that despite exhibiting talent and often outperforming their White peers, South Asian people are not afforded the same opportunities, the same recognition, and the same support as others. There are hundreds of accounts, from across the game, exemplifying how selection was curtailed, despite strong performance. South Asian players, and parents/guardians of recreational players, have this to say:



**With [my daughter] being a young Muslim girl, she now understands why she never progressed further in district cricket and feels hurt that it was not her skills at cricket but her ethnicity or religion that stopped her from progressing.**

*Asian (Pakistani) woman, parent/guardian*



**My son was overlooked for County match selection despite being the highest scorer and the highest average. When asked for a reason why, was told that other players were better than him. The statistics show otherwise.**

*Asian (Indian) man, coach, parent/guardian*

<sup>14</sup> The Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities are heavily concentrated in urban areas: approximately 99% of Pakistani and Bangladeshi households live in cities and often in areas of high multiple deprivation. They face significant economic disadvantages. Overall, they are the two communities most likely to be poor. Over the period between 2017–2019 (DWP, 2019), once housing costs are taken into account, the percentages of people living in households where the head is from the following backgrounds were said to live in poverty: 55% of Bangladeshis and 47% of Pakistanis. With respect to private education, of the 532,237 pupils in independent schools (ISC Census and Annual Report, 2021), only 510 were of Pakistani, Bangladeshi or Sri Lankan descent (the data is presented as aggregate). Among those, 17% have overseas parents who would therefore not take them to cricket. Among all South Asians, 21% (compared to only 17% of White households) do not own a car or a van, making it likely slightly more challenging to accompany children to cricket training or fixtures. The Indian community is also heavily concentrated in urban areas: about 97% live in urban areas. Once housing costs are taken into account, 24% of Indian people live in households in poverty (compared to 19% for White households). With respect to private education, the ISC Census and Annual Report, 2021 shows that there were 1,497 pupils of Indian backgrounds (with about 15% of those having parents overseas).



My son did not get a match all season. Coaches and other players do not socialise with us. It's hard to make inroads and strike up conversations to build a rapport and make relationships when others can't see past the colour of your skin and their prejudices, thinking you are different from them.

*Asian (Indian) woman, recreational player, parent/guardian*



[My family] decided to keep records of my performance in the games this year. I am one of only 3 non-White kids in the entire age group, and the other two go to elite private schools. I was the only player to get out the son of a former pro-cricketer in my age group the whole summer and was dropped from the pathway. I took the second most wickets of everyone in my age group. Over 60 players. Still, I was dropped.

*Asian (Indian) man, recreational player*



We have noticed a shift in the handling of my son. There is a feeling of differential treatment during training, matches and the level of criticism levelled when compared to others. We cannot say that there has been one clear cut example of an action which would amount to racism, but the feeling of inclusion and fair opportunities has not felt right. My child's statistics and performance have been at the level expected and has, in our opinion, certainly warranted exposure to the next level which is Second XI cricket. However, this opportunity has not been provided. There have been examples of other Academy players who have either performed at the same level or even not at the same level but have been pushed and backed to be given second XI opportunities. This has caused a sense of lack of inclusion and my son asking the question as to why his treatment is different.

*Asian (Pakistani) man, parent/guardian, state school*

Though racism is undoubtedly at play, the exclusion of South Asian people – the vast majority of whom come through state schools – is often intersectional in nature. Their experiences illustrate how the process for scouting, selecting and progressing talent in cricket disadvantages those who do not access cricket through private or grammar schools and do not build connections with elite coaches as a result. This leads to a dramatic loss of South Asian people across the game.



My team coaches and earlier age group coaches openly indulge in selection based on which schools you came from, how well you knew the coaches, whether you were White, and whether you were part of elite academies run by other senior coaches. So, by the time all the filters were applied, you would either not get picked, or get picked but have a minimal to insignificant role to play.

*Asian (Indian) woman, county age group player*



These players do not have the network or connections to be able to access the elite level. How many players slip through the net through being invisible to the top-level academies? Somebody like [Pakistani individual] runs an academy in Bradford but how many of those Asian children will find a route into the county youth set up? Very few. Do counties have a diverse scouting network, or do they rely on the usual talent network? No.

*White man, parent/guardian*



As a mother of two [Indian] children who absolutely love this sport and play it at the club level, I have been witnessing the reasons for this [underrepresentation of South Asians in professional cricket] each year during the cricket season. More training and match opportunities that private school kids enjoy end up giving them the edge. Add to this the homogeneity-led group thinking and we have a perfect recipe for divisiveness. Captains giving preferential treatment to their own private school mates when it comes to batting or bowling order in games, having nets sessions together and segregating others etc. are all a result of this homogeneity-led thinking. This is made worse by the fact that it is almost considered acceptable behaviour and ignored by coaches, managers and training staff. Favouritism and nepotism are all by-products of this divisive culture. The excluded population then comes to a point where they wonder if it is all worth it or better to concentrate their efforts on other areas/ interests, as progress in cricket is not currently solely dependent on talent but also on one's financial background or parents' background, or who they are friends with or where they study.

*Asian (Indian) woman, parent/guardian*

The evidence suggests that the culture of cricket is off-putting, that opportunities are more restricted for South Asians – due to a combination of structural factors (classism, racism), favouritism and nepotism – and that, as a result, many see no point in pursuing a career in the game.

### 4.2.3 South Asians may be typecast in more limited roles

South Asians who play cricket sometimes report that stereotypes and assumptions are made about South Asian players' temperament, physical fitness, predilection for bowling and for being 'spinners'. This type of generalisation can prevent coaches from noticing the full breadth of their talents and skills.



You hear that a lot as an excuse when it comes to Asians: 'you are not fit enough', or 'you're a hot-headed lot' to imply that we don't have the right temperament for the game.

*Asian (Pakistani) man, recreational player, parent/guardian, official*



You never hear an Asian kid being described as 'a good lad' or a 'good egg'. Unconscious biases in how people assess character and 'coachability' that put some groups at a disadvantage.

*Asian (Indian) woman, coach*



[I was told:] 'You chaps play wristy shots'.

*Asian (Pakistani) man, recreational player, coach, volunteer*



[South Asian players] get pigeonholed into certain roles. They [coaches] can't see them outside of those roles.

*Asian (Pakistani) woman, parent/guardian*

## 4.2.4 The culture of cricket becomes off-putting as young players reach adulthood

Respondents noted that the culture of cricket – in local schools and clubs – tends to be more inclusive among younger age groups. Many parents report that boys and girls introduced to cricket via ECB initiatives have positive experiences. There are exceptions but cultural barriers to participation are typically less severe when South Asian cricketers are young. We were told, however, that they become a more severe problem as players mature and alcohol consumption increases, time away from home goes up, and the sexualisation of girls and women become more prevalent. This drives many South Asian families away from the game.

## 4.2.5 Lack of genuine commitment to diversity and inclusion

Many South Asians discussed what they see as a lack of genuine understanding of the value of EDI. They perceive that efforts at inclusion often remain 'tokenistic' because they are not underpinned by a genuine commitment to and respect for diversity and appreciation of cultural differences.



**Shallow, superficial, insincere and patronising conduct by White people, and all hygiene factors like dietary requirement, social, religious, cultural, show lack of knowledge or currency in these matters. What inclusion is, is completely not understood in a practical, meaningful, respectful way.**

*Asian (Indian) man, board or committee member, volunteer, recreational player, parent/guardian*

The lack of diversity in management means that knowledge, understanding and sense of ease with South Asian (and other) cultures do not develop as fast as they should. The implicit norm – the 'default' – remains White men, with diversity often said to be an 'afterthought', if considered at all.

## 4.2.6 The prominence of alcohol is a strong deterrent among Muslims

The culture of cricket is regularly described as 'laddish'. Drinking is part of that laddish culture: socialising after Saturday matches, midweek T20s and, in particular, general 'socials', are all said to revolve around alcohol. Many people involved in cricket – of all backgrounds – complain about the ubiquity of alcohol in the game and say it makes the culture of cricket feel less professional as well as unwelcoming for those who do not drink, such as Muslims (the vast majority of Pakistani and Bangladeshi people) and many women (see [chapter 2](#) above).



**At club level, there is still a drinking culture so Muslim players are never integrated that well. Peer pressure on young players to join in with the drinking as they don't feel part of the team otherwise. Most social events are all centred around alcohol.**

*Asian (Pakistani) woman, recreational player, parent/guardian, board or committee member, coach*

Alcohol is also often seen as the lubricant of the social relationships between parents and coaches that are key to seeing a child progress.





End of season drinks awards function that focus on alcohol in which the networks and favouritism amongst coaches and parents are forged. That, in addition to low ethnic minority representation, lack of transparency and feedback on selection, and high representation from private school networks, all in all mean an Asian, Muslim, state school child of a single working parent has very little opportunity to progress, is often not selected to bat, has fewer opportunities to practice, has less access to being able to play. Everything requires inherent investment, be it transport to fixtures, annual kit, equipment and then bias.

*Asian (Bangladeshi) woman, parent/guardian*

## 4.2.7 Opportunities are severely curtailed for coaches and officials of South Asian heritage

South Asian coaches and umpires do not believe that they are afforded the same opportunities to coach and umpire at all, or at the right level given their skills and formal qualifications.<sup>15</sup> Some South Asians say that the communities are so aware that the system is biased against them that there is no point in even trying. With no genuine prospect of meritocratic progression as coaches or officials, some may choose not to get involved.

Among South Asian coaches, there is a widespread feeling that opportunities to coach as well as promotions are unfairly given to White people. As elsewhere, for women and those educated in state schools, the barriers are even stronger.



I was working with district squads and asked many times if I could be awarded with the chance to coach county squads as I believe I am adequately qualified as I am a Level [X] coach. But was ignored time and time again. Eventually, I became so disheartened I could no longer keep coaching.

*Asian (Pakistani) man, parent/guardian, coach, staff member (at the ECB or County organisation)*



The Director of Cricket promoted worthless, less qualified and less experienced coaches ahead of me.

*Asian (Indian) man, parent/guardian, former professional player, staff member (at the ECB or County organisation), coach, official or umpire*



Being an [Indian] female coach, a lot of people tend to undervalue my knowledge or my ability to teach. Being young is another factor in this.

*Asian (Indian) woman, recreational player, coach*

One coach reported that false rumours and allegations were made about him to undermine his reputation, with the aim of sabotaging his coaching business.



[I have experienced racism] plenty of times. I was asked by the Director of Cricket 'When will you guys learn to fall in line?'. [...] He tried to stop my business by threatening me and spread rumours about me.

*Asian (Indian) man, parent/guardian, former professional player, staff member (at the ECB or County organisation), coach, official or umpire*

<sup>15</sup> In the sample, there were 35 Indian and 10 Pakistani/Bangladeshi officials, and 57 Indian and 39 Pakistani/Bangladeshi coaches. While 32% of Type K people in the sample are officials, only 12% of Indians and 5% of Pakistanis/Bangladeshis are officials. Similarly, while 27% of Type K people in the sample are coaches, only 20% of Indians and 18% Pakistanis/Bangladeshis are coaches. We cannot know to what extent the sample is representative of the world of cricket but the underrepresentation of South Asians among coaches and officials in the sample seems to mirror their underrepresentation in the professional game.

A similar – but even more pronounced – pattern is apparent among umpires. Opportunities are said to be regularly offered to White people with fewer qualifications and less experience than their own, and that they are also asked to umpire matches below their skill set. The practice of fast-tracking former professional players into umpiring roles is seen as making it even harder for umpires who do not come via this route to access opportunities.



There is limited progression in the umpiring circuit. There is a token allocation of games to the premier division to non-White umpires to show that there is inclusivity. In reality, it is a sham. There is hardly any scope for progression for non-White umpires, however good you might be. Umpires less competent than you, who have come years after you, are more likely to be promoted to the premier division depending on their race.

*Asian (Indian) man, umpire*



In (over 30) years of umpiring with [X] accredited qualification, not at all progressed. Still doing low level cricket and done just [over 7000] games in total.

*Asian (Indian) man, official or umpire*



I was demoted one category down, even being the most qualified umpire in the group. I could see appointments were done to benefit and suit friends who also were on the appointments committee. The reason I was given was that they didn't know me and wanted to assess me. That was one year wasted. I was then promoted to [X] where I belong. Then the appointments were done to favour friends.

*Asian (Indian) man, official or umpire*



Was told I would not be fast tracked as Indian first-class cricket is not recognised for fast tracking to umpire in first-class cricket. An English friend with [the] same credentials as myself was fast-tracked, though.

*Asian (Indian) man, parent/guardian, former professional player, staff member (at the ECB or County organisation), coach, official or umpire*



Once I was chosen to umpire a good level of match for three days which I was more interested in umpiring, but then the senior umpire cancelled my name. I gave up umpiring since then and now umpire only 1-2 local games. The [FCC] senior umpire knows how passionate I am in playing and umpiring cricket, but (they) never select me to umpire good games, though I'm a qualified umpire. I simply gave up umpiring now as I anyways earn more in my job. If I had been supported, then I would have umpired more games.

*Asian (Indian) woman, recreational player, parent/guardian, official or umpire*

On the pitch, umpires of South Asian heritage say that they are disproportionately asked to demonstrate or establish their credentials; that their decisions are challenged; that they are singled out; that they feel isolated and unsupported by other umpires and officials; and that they can be victims of direct abuse or witnesses to abusive language or behaviour.



The players and captains are less likely to accept a decision from a non-White umpire who doesn't have an English accent. It also impacts on their behaviour towards the umpire.

*Asian (Indian) man, official or umpire*



Umpires are sworn at and abused verbally often if decisions are not accepted. Snide remarks 'just within your earshot' about your race are not uncommon if they don't like your decision.

*Asian (Indian) man, recreational player, volunteer, board or committee member, coach, official or umpire*



I do not feel valued when I go to a cricket ground to officiate. I am picked upon regularly and I feel scared to make correct decisions due to some players' hostile body language, words and gestures.

*Asian (Indian) man, official or umpire*

## 4.2.8 Verbal abuse, name calling, and mocking of accents remain common

Many South Asian parents, players, coaches and officials at all levels in the game have experienced various forms of racism and microaggression that spoil their enjoyment of the game, limit their progression, and create a great deal of distress. While Indian people report some name calling and verbal abuse, this is much more common among Pakistanis. The word 'Paki' is used. Pakistani men also say that they have been called 'terrorists', 'paedos', 'nonce', 'elephant washers', 'kaffirs', 'taxi drivers', 'curry eaters', and given nicknames such as 'Hairy' or 'Bomber'.



Three Asian players who were speaking to each other in Urdu when the coach walked in and said to us directly: 'I don't want any of that sh\*t spoken in here'.

*Asian (Pakistani) man, former professional player*



I was told by a teammate that they did not want to stay in the sun too long on a match day and end up looking like me.

*Asian (Indian) man, recreational player*



Myself and a fellow player were called terrorists after a game. We complained to the opposition Chair and, after an initial apology, the Chair decided that he wanted to defend the person who made the remark and that we were attempting to defame the club and they were the victims.

*Asian (Indian) man, recreational player*



Continued racism in the league and difficulty finding a club where I was treated equally despite being born and raised in the UK. Ultimately, I gave up after 15 years of playing. The final straw was being nicknamed 'Joe' (short for Joe Daki, which is cockney rhyming slang for 'Paki'). After that I stopped playing.

*Asian (Indian) man, recreational player*



[After reporting an incident], instead of protecting me, they made my life hell. I was isolated, I could not progress, they called me 'terrorist' and, of course, 'Paki'. All the routes were blocked. Basically, the system is set up so you can't win.

*Asian (Pakistani) man, former professional player*



I could write a book about it: 'P\*\*\*', 'paedo', 'nonce', 'terrorist': you name it.

*Asian (Pakistani) man, recreational player, volunteer*

If respondents of Indian heritage are unlikely to experience abuse based on Islamophobia, they nonetheless report verbal abuse, intimidation and mocking of their accent.



At times I am intimidated, passed sarcastic comments, [told] rude words and they make me feel that I am not worthy to be an umpire. Many umpires quit due to the abuse they get and I thought about quitting myself.

*Asian (Indian) man, umpire*



As soon as they see me or an Asian umpire, they start intimidating us by words and action. They mock me, laugh and joke about me if I don't understand their accent or mishear them. Not a pleasant experience and I don't feel comfortable to express myself and perform my role to the best of my ability.

*Asian (Indian) man, umpire*



I do feel if you speak with a British accent you are accepted. If you don't, then it's a lot harder to be accepted.

*Asian (Indian) man, umpire*

South Asians also report that they are accused of cheating – both as players and umpires.



We created our own team in a local league where the team was all Asian players. We always had constant accusations of being cheaters and being problematic from other teams. The league management also thought the same. We brought accusations of racial abuse to them and they did nothing about it. Eventually we didn't feel welcome so we finished the team.

*Asian (Pakistani), man, recreational player, official or umpire*



Even before the start of the recreational game and knowing I am an off-spinner, I was asked will I chuck like Muthiah Muralidaran. Was called a typical Asian cheater for any appeals.

*Asian (Indian), recreational player*

## 4.2.9 Some report bullying, physical abuse and degrading treatment

Finally, some players of South Asian heritage – mainly Pakistani men – reported bullying, physical abuse and degrading treatment. This deep disrespect shown to some South Asian people can only sensibly be attributed to racism and/or Islamophobia.



I recall several occasions when players would unnecessarily throw the ball so hard into my keeping gloves from close range that it would bruise my hands. This is with coaches present but when I mentioned it to them, I was told that I would need to toughen up.

*Asian (Indian) man, former professional player*



I am a previous player [...] I will never forget being in my hotel room on the phone leaning out of the window minding my own business when teammates from their room above decided to urinate on my head. I reported this to the coach who told me not to worry and he would deal with it. He never did.

*Asian (Indian) man, former professional player*



I overheard senior players talking about how they slept with a girl and then used a fellow Muslim player's prayer mat to clean up the mess. I was sat with the players when they were sharing this as a joke!

*Asian (Indian) man, former professional player*



All the stories that Azeem Rafiq talks about, that all happened to me. All the abuse, the isolation, the hatred. [Teammates] poured alcohol on me. They threw bacon sandwiches at me. I have lived with all that and never spoke to anyone about it.

*Asian (Pakistani) man, state school, former player*

As discussed later (see Chapter 8 on the management of complaints), respondents explained that incidents like this are rarely spontaneously managed either by victims or witnesses. When they are reported, discrimination is typically denied, minimised, or justified, and is rarely acted upon. The person raising the issue is likely to face victimisation. As a result, respondents indicate the culture does not change and people suffer deeply, leave the game, and discourage the next generation from taking up cricket at all.

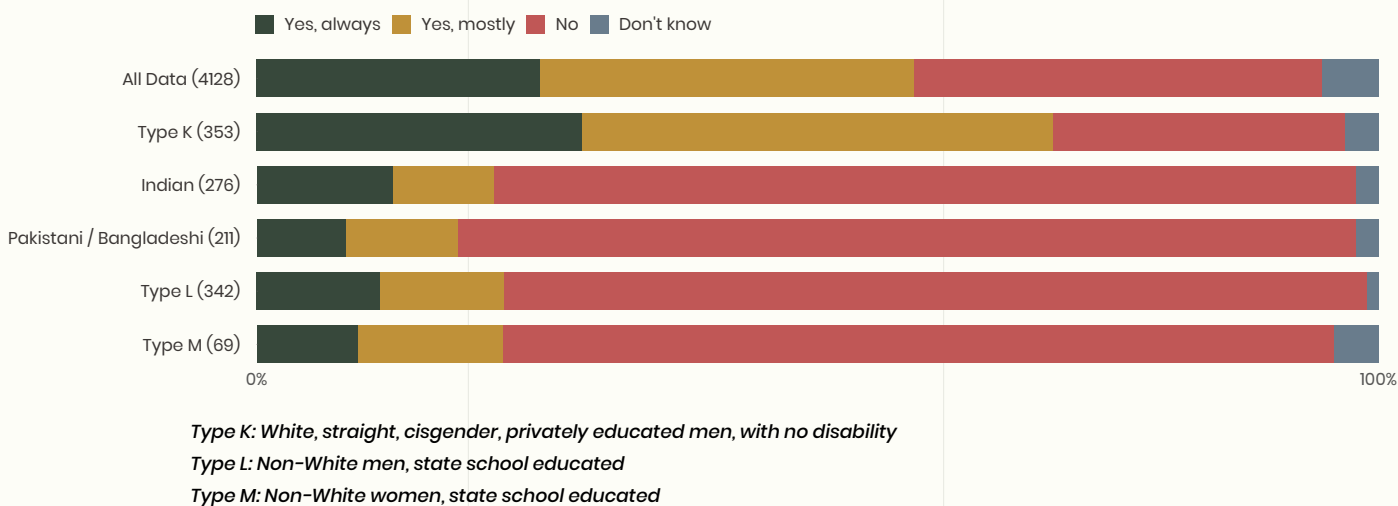
Against this background, South Asians repeatedly say that they have been 'forced out' of the game and have had to create their own clubs to serve the community because mainstream cricket failed them.

## 4.3 Discrimination impacts South Asian people's opportunities and sense of belonging

Given these lived experiences, 76% of people of Indian heritage and 80% of people of Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritage in the sample do not believe that everyone engaged with cricket has the same opportunities to enjoy the game, progress and be rewarded fairly, regardless of ethnicity/race. In fact, only 12% of Indians and 8% of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis think everyone always does.

**Figure 13: Perceptions of opportunities to enjoy cricket, progress and be rewarded fairly regardless of ethnicity/race**

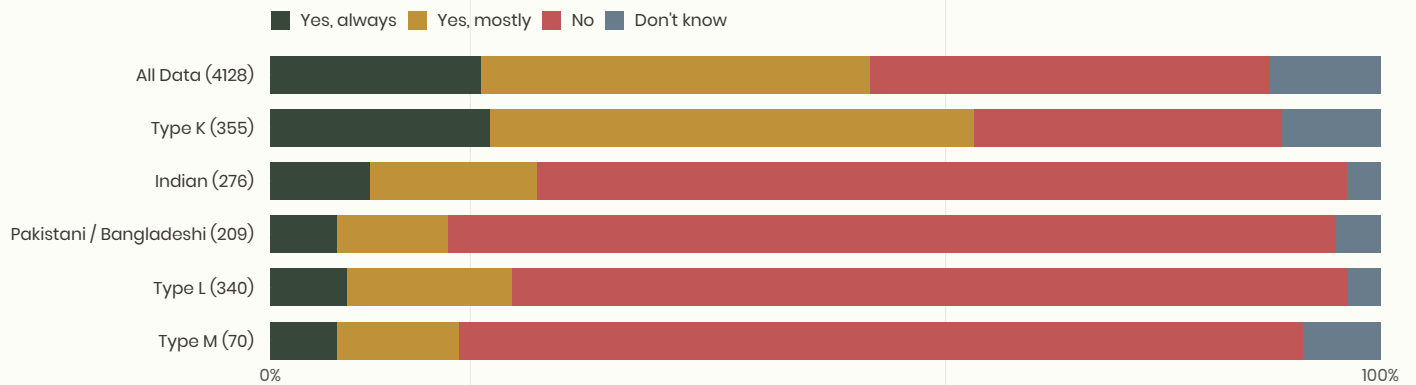
*Do you believe that everyone engaged with cricket has the same opportunities to enjoy the game, progress and be rewarded fairly regardless of ethnicity/race?*



Similarly, it is not surprising that 73% of people of Indian heritage and 80% of people of Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritage in the sample do not believe that everyone engaged with cricket feels that they belong and can be themselves, regardless of ethnicity/race. In fact, only 9% of Indians and 6% of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis think that everyone always does.

**Figure 14: Perceptions of sense of belonging and ability to be oneself in cricket, regardless of ethnicity/race**

*Do you believe that everyone engaged with cricket feels that they belong and can be themselves regardless of ethnicity/race?*



*Type K: White, straight, cisgender, privately educated men, with no disability*

*Type L: Non-White men, state school educated*

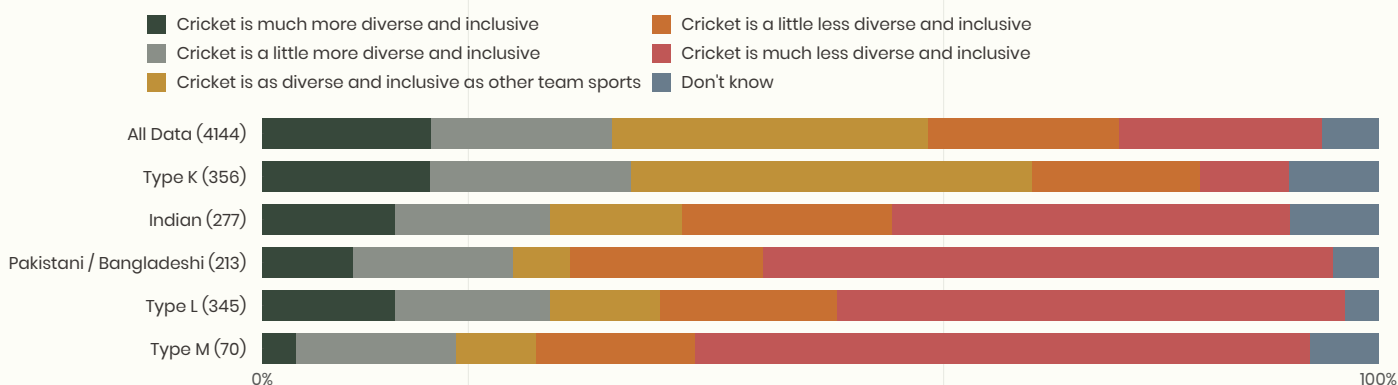
*Type M: Non-White women, state school educated*

## 4.4 Perceptions of EDI in cricket and other team sports among people of South Asian heritage

South Asian people in the sample are also likely to believe that cricket is less diverse and inclusive than other team sports, such as football, rugby and basketball. While 12% of Indian people and 5% of Pakistani/Bangladeshi people consider cricket to be about the same as other team sports, 55% of Indian people and 67% of Pakistani/Bangladeshi people believe it is less diverse and inclusive. Moreover, only 26% of Indian people and 22% of Pakistani/Bangladeshi people believe it is more diverse and inclusive than other team sports. The perceptions of EDI among people of South Asian backgrounds stand in stark contrast to those of Type K respondents, who are much more likely to believe that cricket compares favourably with other team sports when it comes to diversity and inclusion.

**Figure 15: Perceptions of diversity and inclusion in cricket compared to other team sports**

*Overall, how diverse and inclusive do you feel cricket is compared to other team sports (such as football, rugby or basketball)?*



*Type K: White, straight, cisgender, privately educated men, with no disability*

*Type L: Non-White men, state school educated*

*Type M: Non-White women, state school educated*



## 4.5 Conclusions

Of all the groups involved in the research, people of South Asian heritage reported the most frequent and egregious cases of discrimination. Systemic and institutional barriers to participation are not dissimilar for South Asians as for other groups, but experiences of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, skin colour, faith and class abound. They account for the dramatic loss of both recreational and professional players of South Asian heritage, as well as the underrepresentation of South Asians among coaches, officials and other roles in cricket. The assumption that South Asians simply 'prefer' alternative career paths for their children is not supported by evidence.

While participation in recreational cricket is high, barriers to progression become more pronounced as cricketers reach adulthood. Many of those barriers are related to the fact that most South Asians go to state schools (see Chapter 5 on lived experiences of discrimination among people educated in state schools), which limits their access to cricket and to quality coaching. But the qualitative responses reveal that the class divide, the ubiquity of alcohol, the objectification and sexualisation of women, the need to travel for training and competitive playing, for instance, all make cricket less inclusive, especially to South Asian women and to South Asian men and women who are Muslim.

We were told by research participants that selection processes that rely on relationships with coaches and lack transparency and accountability lead to many people of South Asian heritage not being selected and failing to access high quality coaching and to progress, despite showing talent. Some players are typecast in certain roles (such as spin bowling); others are simply excluded.

Almost half of all South Asians in the survey reported being spoken to in a demeaning, insulting or hurtful way. Indeed, racist and Islamophobic name-calling, mocking and verbal abuse, as well as bullying, physical abuse and cruel and demeaning treatment are part of the experience of many, especially among Muslims.

These experiences explain why more than three-quarters of South Asian people do not believe that everyone engaged with cricket has the same opportunities to enjoy the game, progress and be rewarded fairly, regardless of ethnicity/race. It also explains why a similar proportion do not believe that everyone engaged with cricket feels that they belong and can be themselves, regardless of ethnicity/race. In their experience, cricket is less diverse and inclusive than other team sports.

## CHAPTER 5

Lived experiences of  
discrimination among  
people who attended  
state schools

# Chapter 5: Lived experiences of discrimination among people who attended state schools

## 5.1 Introduction

A recent report by the Sutton Trust and the Social Mobility Commission, *Elitist Britain 2019*,<sup>16</sup> found that men's cricket in England is heavily skewed towards those who attend private schools. At the time, the profile of the national test team made it one of the top ten professions with the highest representation from private schools (at 43%) – and the situation had worsened by 10% over the previous three years. This chapter focuses on the lived experiences of discrimination among people who attended state schools.<sup>17</sup>

## 5.2 Recent experiences of discrimination

In total, 2,395 people educated in state schools took part in the survey (58% of the whole sample). Given that about 93% of the population attend state school, this in itself indicates that people educated in private schools are significantly overrepresented in cricket.

People educated in state schools are much less likely to report having experienced discrimination in the past five years than women, Black, South Asian, LGBTQ+ and disabled people. Exactly half (50%) report none of the types of discrimination listed as response options.

There are some straightforward reasons why one might expect this to be the case. In particular, many of those educated in state schools are White, middle class, male, straight and not disabled. It follows that a large subset of those educated in state schools are less likely to be subjected to discrimination on the basis of their race, class or sex (or other characteristics) than, for example, women, other minority groups or those with low socio-economic status. Nonetheless, it is striking that 50% of people educated in state schools, most of whom are White, did report that they had experienced discrimination (often in connection to their social class/socio-economic status) in the past five years.

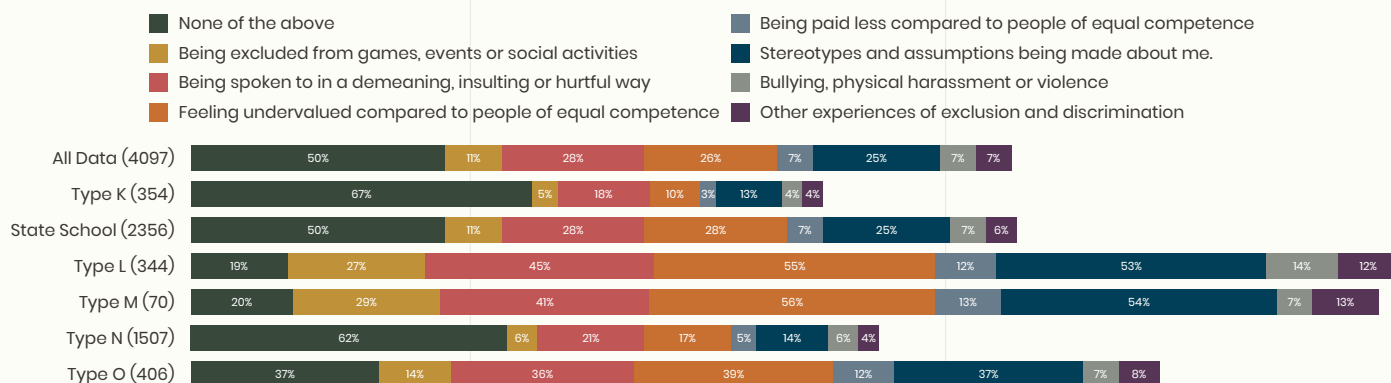
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<sup>16</sup> [Elitist-Britain-2019.pdf](#) (suttontrust.com)

<sup>17</sup> It is worth noting that some talented youth in state schools have been recruited and financially supported to attend 'cricketing' private schools, to widen the talent pool and develop young cricketers from less privileged backgrounds. The survey does not distinguish between children and young people who attended state schools earlier in their education if respondents answered that they attended a secondary private school.

**Figure 16: Experiences of personal discrimination over the past five years among people educated in state schools**

*Over the past five years, have you personally experienced any of the following?*



*Type K: White, straight, cisgender, privately educated men, with no disability*

*Type L: Non-White men, state school educated*

*Type M: Non-White women, state school educated*

*Type N: White men, state school educated*

*Type O: White women, state school educated*

The fact that a lower percentage of state school educated people reported discrimination than women, Black, South Asian, LGBTQ+ and disabled people also seems to relate to a combination of two other factors. First, the primary form of discrimination for people educated in state schools appears to be systemic and institutional in nature, that is, connected to the lack of cricket played in state schools and the deep links between the talent pathway and private schools (as will be discussed below).

While these forms of discrimination are extremely impactful, they may not be regarded or experienced as 'discrimination', which tends to be understood as personal, overt, direct, and observable in human interactions. Indeed, the response options in the survey referred to such overt forms of personal discrimination. Moreover, because of the systemic nature of discrimination based on class and educational routes, it may be that any discrimination (or any direct experience of such discrimination) occurred more than five years ago when respondents were of primary or secondary school age.

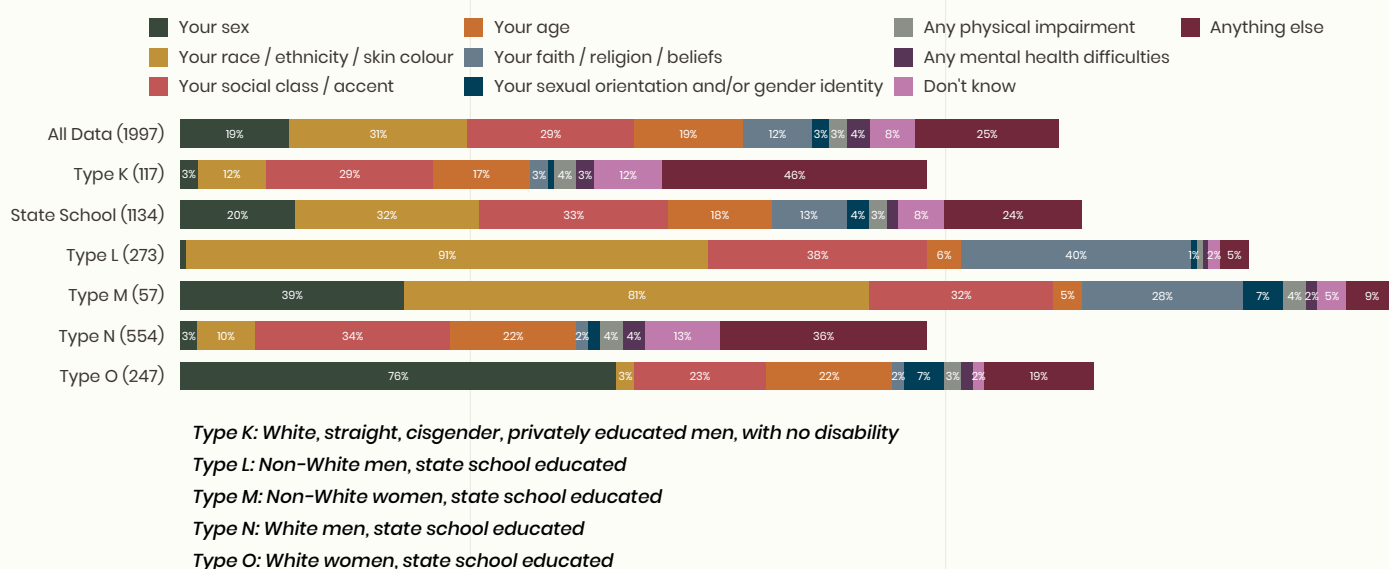
With this in mind, the main forms of personal discrimination that people educated in state schools describe are, in decreasing order:

- Feeling undervalued compared to people of equal competence, and being spoken to in a demeaning, insulting or hurtful way (both 28%)
- Stereotypes and assumptions being made about me (25%)
- Being excluded from games, events or social activities (11%)
- Bullying, physical harassment or violence (7%)
- Being paid less compared to people of equal competence (both 7%)<sup>18</sup>
- Other experiences of discrimination (6%)

Unlike women and ethnic minority respondents (the majority of whom attribute the discrimination to their sex, and race/ethnicity/skin colour or faith/religion/beliefs respectively), 33% of people educated in state schools attribute the discrimination experienced to social class/accent. This may be because, as noted above, many of those educated in state schools are from middle-class families, illustrating the intersectional nature of discrimination. Respondents educated in state school who report discrimination attribute it to a mix of factors that include their race/ethnicity/skin colour (32%), sex (20%), age (18%) and religion/faitb/belief (13%). Almost a quarter (24%) also invoke factors unrelated to 'protected characteristics'.

**Figure 17: Perceived causes of discrimination among people educated in state schools**

*Overall, would you say that these negative experiences were mainly based on?*



<sup>18</sup> In principle, this is only relevant for state school educated respondents who are in paid roles.

## 5.2.1 Lack of access to cricket in state schools

According to respondents, the main reason for the lack of participation in recreational cricket among people educated in state schools is that cricket is simply not offered in most state schools. Since only 7% of children attend private schools where cricket is more likely to be played, the majority of children in England and Wales are simply not exposed to cricket, or enough cricket, at school. State schools are unlikely to have adequate grounds or facilities, or to have PE teachers with the right qualifications and experience. As a result, cricket is not a sport that children of all socio-economic groups get to play.



**In effect, cricket is a sport that is not played. In my experience, cricket is introduced to children out of school at a club or recreational level. [...] The equipment, facilities, staff etc are out of budget for many. [...] State schools generally don't have the facilities. You cannot teach in a state school by being 'good at sport'; you have to have a government recognised teaching qualification. So even if a state school did want a cricket specialist teacher, they would not be able to hire one or probably compete with wages required.**

*White woman, parent/guardian, coach*

Young people who attend state school and who do not come from a 'cricketing' family or a community that has a tradition of playing cricket are therefore unlikely to ever take up the sport.

## 5.2.2 The talent pathway is structurally bound up with the private school system

Since state schools by and large don't have the sorts of facilities required to enable cricket to be played in the standard way, cricket is primarily played and grown through cricket clubs and private schools, especially those that are regarded as 'cricketing schools'. Respondents regularly discussed how the fact that the development of talent in cricket is so deeply interwoven with the private school network makes it more challenging for someone to play and progress outside of such a network.

This is not only because private schools have the facilities or many of the best cricket coaches (in some cases, former professional England players). It is also because, we were told, county coaches tend to look for talent among children who attended these schools. We heard that, over the years, coaches develop strong personal relationships with private school players (and, indeed, with their whole families). They select players from among the young people they already know, whose parents are often involved as volunteers and fundraisers, and whose 'character' or 'temperament' they can assess (and to judge on the basis of their own biases, as people who are themselves more likely to be privately educated).



**The feeder academies for cricket are all at private schools (state schools don't have the facilities or staff) and a lot of the PE staff at private schools are ex-prof players or coaches themselves.**

*White woman, parent/guardian*



**Cricket is not inclusive. It's exclusive and the sport is missing out on a huge pot of untapped talents. Money, contacts, private schools: that's what cricket looks like at County level.**

*White man, parent/guardian*



As a youth cricketer I was told to leave a club as I didn't go to the right school.

*White man, recreational player, parent/guardian, volunteer, board or committee, coach, official or umpire*



In my son's case – because the coaches who made the selections were associated with a private school and their associated club – they knew those players and treated them preferentially over 'ordinary state school kids' who were White as well. I don't know how non-White state schools' kids fared but the one season my son was associated with county there were none.

*Multiple ethnic groups (other), woman, parent*



County age group cricket is completely biased against less wealthy families and children from state schools. Coaches even work at the private schools they choose squads from, resulting in a biased selection process.

*White man, recreational player, parent/guardian*



Kids from private schools get different treatment in county setups. The coaches know all the kids and they take no account of the fact that the private school players have had years of coaching and playing, and the state school children have had almost none, so talented raw state school players are dropped in favour of well coached private school players. The set up assumes that players are in private school and parents have the money and time to attend every session.

*White man, parent/guardian*



Decisions are made by coaches – all White men – who only know the kids who they have coached in private schools, and they use information about these kids to make decisions about their involvement in county cricket [...] If you don't have that connection, your chances are very slim indeed.

*Asian (Pakistani) man, official or umpire*



If a kid is quiet or doesn't boast or bully, coaches think they don't have the right temperament to make it. They look for kids that behave like entitled, competitive public-school boys like themselves. That's not diversity!

*Black (Caribbean) woman, parent*

It was reported to us that everything is designed with young people educated in 'cricketing' schools in mind. This includes the assumptions that parents can afford to pay for all cricket-related expenses; that they have large private cars; that they do not work regular hours and have the time and inclination to drive children to trials, training and matches; that they can afford to rent nets and get additional private coaching. It also leads to training sessions sometimes being held during the (longer) holiday periods of private schools when state school children cannot attend.



My son has never played cricket at school at all. Just his club and got through the pathway on merit. This year, we got a survey sent to parents asking for details of their school cricket coach so that they can ask about his performance. We put N/A. It's embarrassing. State schools don't have one. [...] The private school system is interwoven into the fabric of the county game. If the County sends out a questionnaire asking who your cricket coach is, they are either ignorant of state schools set ups or are just writing this with only private school kids in mind.

*Asian (Indian) man, parent/guardian, county age group player*



One example: last year, a three-day training session was arranged at a time which was during the private school holidays while it was still term time for state schools!

*White man, parent/guardian*

We were also told that cricketers who attend state schools are also less likely to have experience of the longer game format compared to those who go to cricketing schools. This leads to further disadvantage.



Once we reached aged 16-18, the state lads were exposed to men's cricket, and it was a big jump. Going from 20 over games to 45-50 over games was hard to manage physically and mentally, whereas the private school lads were very comfortable in this format having been exposed to it from a younger age. This also meant that they were ahead in the selectors' minds before the state school lads. The same was true of the District games, it was a shock to the system and private school lads dominated the teams.

*White man, recreational player*

These issues are widely recognised. Hundreds of survey respondents of all backgrounds describe how decisions about which children will be selected, trained, coached and progressed are driven by 'favouritism' based on connections with children and families that are developed through the private school network and associated coaches.



### 5.2.3 Cricket is too expensive and time-consuming for many

A recurrent theme among survey respondents of all backgrounds is that playing cricket is expensive. This is more likely to be a problem for those who attend state schools and, more specifically, for those from lower socio-economic groups. The cost of cricket gear (e.g. bats, pads, helmets, gloves), clothing (e.g. 'Whites' and cricket boots), large kit bags, access to training facilities, coaching, club subscriptions, and transport, means that cricket (in its standard form) is inherently more exclusive than sports that can be played locally, with little specialist gear. Some respondents reported coaches excluding talented children and young people who cannot afford the best kit or whose parents do not drive.



I was from a poor background. I couldn't afford the kit and was looked down upon when I turned up in non-Whites, no protection, etc.

*White man, recreational player, parent/guardian*



As a child from a poor family, the cost of equipment, club fees and travel were always an issue, on top of additional fees for junior/regional cricket.

*White man, recreational player, former professional player, coach*



The coaching staff at [X] CCC singled out the fact that I was from a poor background by making fun of my trainers and 'cheap' cricket equipment.

*Asian (Pakistani) man, recreational player, county age group player, academy player*



As a younger player, once county coaches understood that my parents didn't drive or were not as affluent as other parents, I was discounted as a cricketer and did not get to represent my county, regardless of ability.

*Mixed ethnicity (White and Asian) man, recreational player, parent/guardian, staff member (at the ECB or County organisation), volunteer, board or committee member, coach, official or umpire*

Many matches – especially at County level – inevitably require significant travel to play in. Even weekly training at a home ground can be a long distance away and, with heavy equipment, is difficult to negotiate without private transport. Therefore, respondents pointed to the fact that to play cricket it is almost essential to have access to private transport, the ability to pay for the cost of fuel, and parents willing and able to drive children to training sessions and matches.



To be totally honest, it has cost an absolute fortune for the children to get where they are. The mileage on my car has been totally ridiculous. For training and matches, my previous vehicle had 75k on the clock and it was 3 years old.

*White woman, grammar school, parent/guardian and official*



As parents, we gave up many weekends to transport the children to matches. We would lose whole weekends as the girls' matches were on Saturdays and the boys' on Sundays. There were midweek matches during school holidays and festivals. It wasn't unusual to drive more than 300 miles in one weekend.

*White woman, grammar school, parent/guardian and official*



At County level cricket, I have seen how children from BME backgrounds never progress beyond a certain level. There is no recognition that, if you are from a minority group and a poor family, you may have particular difficulties with travel, fees, culture, belonging, etc.

*Asian (Pakistani) volunteer*

This leads to a feeling – widely shared across participants – that only children and young people from wealthy families can afford to play cricket and to access the facilities, coaching and match play necessary to progress.



The size of your wallet determines if your children progress or not, which is a clear indication that it's not a sport for everyone but for a privileged few.

*Unknown ethnicity man, parent/guardian, county age group player*

Whilst scholarships to help gifted young cricketers from lower socio-economic groups attend private schools are seen by some as one of a range of solutions to these issues, we heard that they are not enough for many families and that, until the culture of cricket changes, the majority of players from lower socio-economic groups will continue to be and feel excluded (see below).



As a single parent, I cannot afford to send [my children] to the expensive coaching academies so, again, they receive less coaching and are hindered from progression. Three of my children were awarded cricket scholarships at a private school of 50% each, but this still left £30,000 a year in fees, which is more than I earn in a year. So although they have been identified as gifted, they are disadvantaged due to social circumstances.

*White woman, recreational player, parent/guardian, volunteer, board or committee*

## 5.2.4 Local cricket clubs provide a route into cricket but do not solve inequities

Given the barriers to accessing cricket via state schools, many children and young people who attend state schools play cricket in local clubs, where they receive coaching and have opportunities to play and compete. However, these clubs are often said to be dominated by children and young pupils from grammar or private schools. As players progress through the age groups, differences between state and private school players emerge. Because state school children – even though they may be talented – often do not train at school and some may come from families that can neither afford the best coaches nor the best equipment, gaps in performance inevitably grow over time, to the detriment of those educated in state schools.



My son and daughter attend a state school which does not play cricket, so this has impacted on their development. Of my son's teammates, 90% attend a selective grammar school which plays cricket and has numerous cricket facilities, so this has certainly been a barrier for workingclass children to play the sport in a mainstream school.

*White woman, parent/guardian*



As a junior I played for my club, captained my school and represented District level. I loved it, however within the club/District group, there was a big split between State and Private school lads. Over the years, the private school group dominated as they had more coaching and exposure at school level. More of the private school lads joined the club so they could all play together with their mates, which put the state lads under pressure for places and led to most of them giving up or moving to other clubs for an opportunity. My honest opinion is the talent level aged 7-11 was similar (a few lads reached county level but majority were par) but once we reached under 13s- 15s, the gap opened and I would equate that to the increased level of exposure to quality coaching and better level of match play. At state school, you would play some competitive games but there would be a big variation in ability whereas the private school games were almost akin to club level for age group cricket.

*White man, recreational player*

## 5.2.5 An elitist and outdated culture stands in the way of change

Beyond the above structural factors linked to the primacy of private schools and/or socio-economic considerations, there are also cultural barriers to the inclusion of people from lower socio-economic groups/working-class backgrounds and/or people who attended state schools. Cricket is consistently described by respondents to the survey who attended state schools as 'a closed shop' and a 'clique' run by 'old White men', an 'old boys' network', comprised of 'middle-class' or 'upper-class' people who are 'snobs', 'posh', 'elitist', 'sexist', 'racist', 'pompous', 'old fashioned', 'out of touch', 'ignorant', and have a 'sense of entitlement'.



While I don't accept that many leadership groups are deliberately discriminatory, I do feel there is an issue with elitism in the Board room [...] From my experience, these individuals herald from a different era where cricket looked very different and they are subliminally holding on to opinions from the past without realising it.

*White man, recreational player, staff member (at the ECB or County organisation), volunteer, board or committee, coach*



It's not a meritocracy. [...] Old grammar school culture, cliquy, smoke and mirrors, old 'gentlemen' environment, racism and prejudice in club and county.

*White man, recreational player, volunteer, coach*

It is this pervasive culture that seems to be at the heart of many state-school educated people's experiences of discrimination in cricket. The elitist culture of cricket contributes to making people educated in state schools, especially those from working-class backgrounds, feel 'out of place', like 'outsiders', and undervalued. This is more of an issue in London and the South, where we heard that the class divide is more pronounced than elsewhere in England and in Wales.



I am the Chair of our local cricket club and have been for 6 years [...] I took on the role because I wanted to make a difference in cricket. I wanted every single person regardless of their age, sex, religion, etc to feel inspired by cricket and to never have to endure the constant discrimination there is in sport. Even though I am the Chair and lead a committee of equally committed people, I feel I am fighting a losing battle, particularly with governing bodies, leagues and other clubs.

*White man, recreational player, parent/guardian, volunteer, board or committee members*



My working-class background was very much the norm in northern recreational cricket. Treated like an alien in southern counties.

*White man, recreational player*

## 5.2.6 Intimidation, bullying, mocking and verbal abuse are present

While examples of overt, personal discrimination based on class and education are rarer, several respondents felt that the culture of cricket is rooted in a sense of private school superiority amongst those involved in the game.



Public school boys mickey taking about state schools.

*White man, recreational player, parent/guardian, official or umpire*



At county sessions, comments from the other children have included calling 'peasants' children attending state schools.

*White (Gypsy or Irish traveller) man, parent/guardian*



We were divided into 'Chavs' and 'Public School Boys'. I averaged over 40 (with over 2,500 runs for the county) but only got 1 second team game. Other private school lads had similar stats and had about 40 second team games by the time I left. I left after scoring 163 and was told, in front of the group, that to get into the second team I needed to score 'big', which meant more than 170. (Only 3 players in 20 years had done that, so I was clearly being told that I was not wanted.)

*Other ethnicity, man, academy player*

There is a perception among some that children from state schools are 'tolerated' because their coaches or teams need to be seen to be including everyone. Statements from parents of some state school educated children described their children as feeling seen solely in monetary terms. Behaviour around inclusion was deemed by parents to be performative rather than sincere.



My son has taken part in the pathways scheme. The coaches were bad tempered and rude to boys and their attitude seemed to say that the boys should be grateful to be there and that it was a waste of the coaches' time. Hardly the best way to get the most out of boys already intimidated by arrogant private school boys who knew the coaches well as they taught at their schools. As a parent, it feels like a box ticking exercise and a way to milk parents for money to fund the academies.

*White woman, parent/guardian*



My son says 'they just want my subs money' – not me.

*White man, parent/guardian*

## 5.3 Discrimination impacts on opportunities and sense of belonging among people educated in state schools

Despite efforts to widen access to cricket (see Chapter 11), more than half (54%) of people educated in a state school do not believe that everyone engaged with cricket has the same opportunities to enjoy the game, progress and be rewarded fairly, regardless of their social class. In fact, only 19% of people educated in a state school think that everyone always has the same opportunities, regardless of their social class.

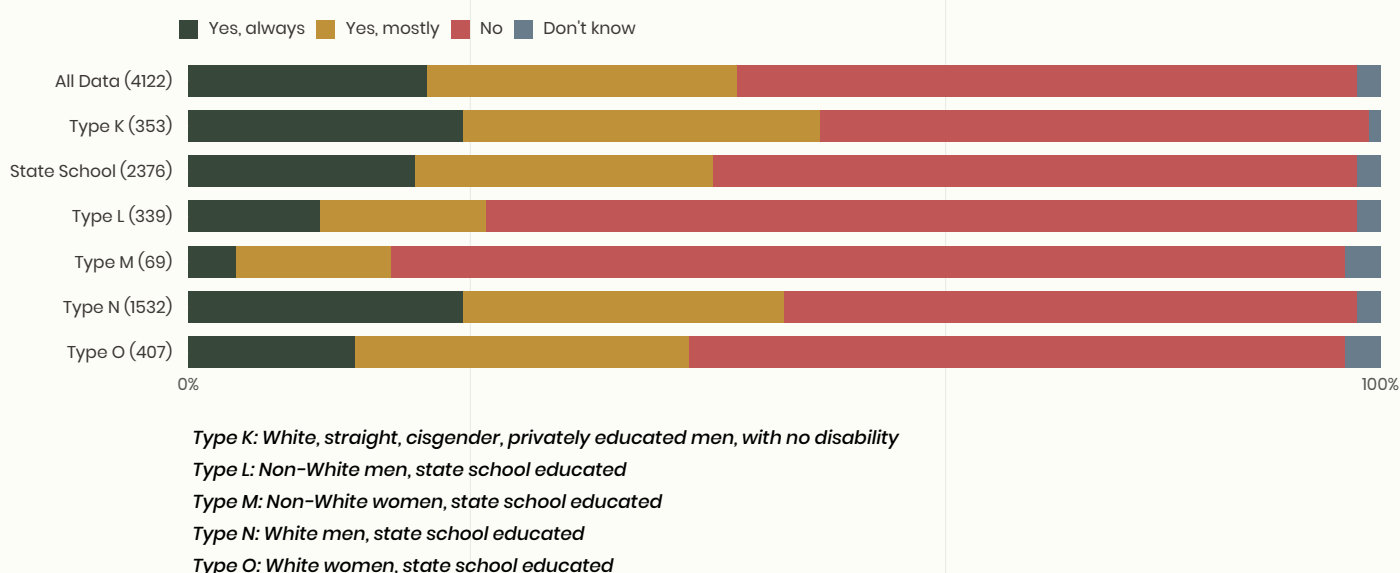
The sex of respondents impacts on perceptions of opportunities, with women feeling at a greater disadvantage than men: 55% of White women educated at a state school do not believe that everyone engaged with cricket has the same opportunities to enjoy, progress and be rewarded fairly in cricket regardless of their social class, compared to 48% of White, state-school educated men.

However, by far the greatest differentiator is race, ethnicity and skin colour: 80% of ethnic minority women and 73% of ethnic minority men (both educated at a state school) do not believe that everyone engaged with cricket has the same opportunities to enjoy the game, progress and be rewarded fairly, regardless of their social class. This highlights how race/ethnicity intersects with gender and social class/educational routes to create cumulative disadvantages and negatively shape experiences and opportunities.

It is notable that almost half (46%) of Type K respondents do not believe everyone has the same opportunities regardless of social class. That compares with only 26% of Type K respondents thinking that ethnicity is an obstacle to having the same opportunities, and 34% thinking sex is an obstacle to having the same opportunities. This suggests greater sensitivity to class barriers than to other forms of discrimination.

**Figure 18: Perceptions of opportunities to enjoy cricket, progress and be rewarded fairly regardless of social class**

*Do you believe that everyone engaged with cricket has the same opportunities to enjoy the game, progress and be rewarded fairly regardless of social class?*

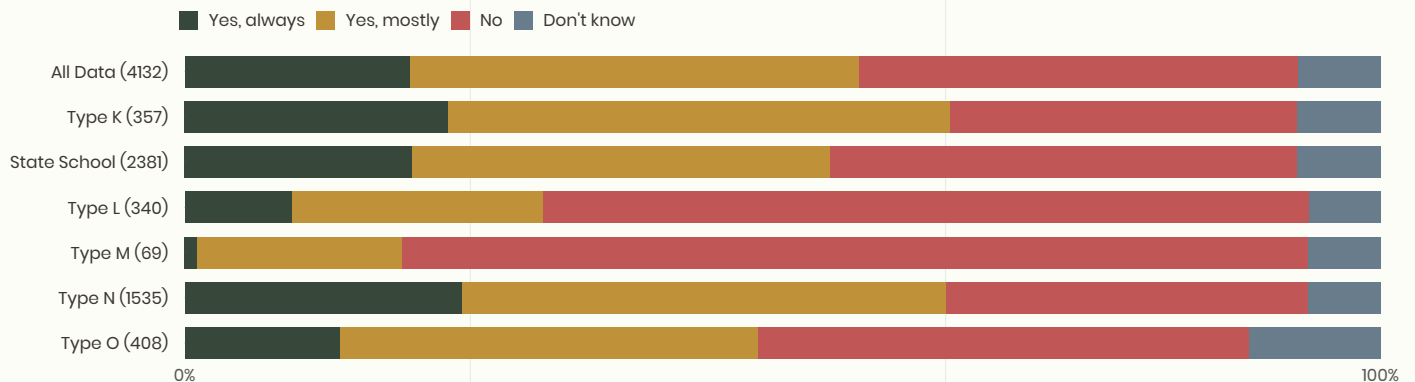


Social class is seen as impacting less dramatically on a sense of belonging among White men and women educated at state schools than among their ethnic minority counterparts. Only 30% of White men educated in state schools do not believe that everyone engaged with cricket feels that they belong and can be themselves, regardless of their social class. This proportion increases to 41% among White women educated in state schools. By comparison, among ethnic minority men educated in state schools, 64% do not believe that everyone engaged with cricket feels that they belong and can be themselves, regardless of their social class. This proportion increases to 75% among ethnic

minority women educated in state school – and only 1% of these women feel that everyone engaged with cricket feels that they ‘always’ belong and can be themselves regardless of social class.

**Figure 19: Perceptions of sense of belonging and ability to be oneself in cricket, regardless of social class**

*Do you believe that everyone engaged with cricket feels that they belong and can be themselves regardless of social class?*



*Type K: White, straight, cisgender, privately educated men, with no disability*

*Type L: Non-White men, state school educated*

*Type M: Non-White women, state school educated*

*Type N: White men, state school educated*

*Type O: White women, state school educated*

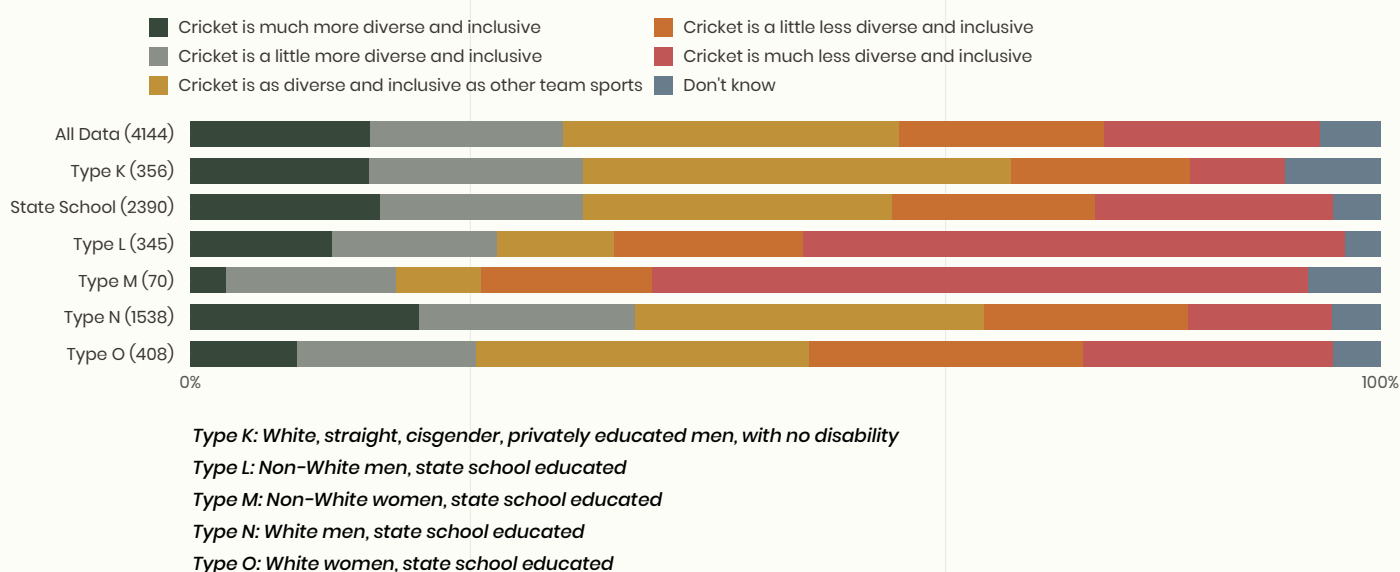
## 5.4 Perceptions of EDI in cricket and other team sports among people educated in state schools

People educated in a state school are also more likely than all respondents to believe cricket is less diverse and inclusive than other team sports, such as football, rugby and basketball. While 26% of state-school educated people perceive that cricket is about the same as other team sports, 37% believe it is less diverse and inclusive, and 33% believe it is more diverse and inclusive.<sup>19</sup>

This is exacerbated greatly when ethnicity is considered, with about two-thirds of state-schooled ethnic minority men and women believing that cricket is less diverse and inclusive than other team sports, and only 26% and 17% respectively believing that it is more so. Their views contrast sharply with those of Type K respondents, who are much more confident that cricket is at least as diverse and inclusive as other team sports.

**Figure 20: Perceptions of diversity and inclusion in cricket compared to other team sports**

*Q17: Overall, how diverse and inclusive do you feel cricket is compared to other team sports (such as football, rugby and basketball)?*



<sup>19</sup> Evidence from the Sutton Trust shows that, while 5% of men's football international players attended independent schools, 37% of rugby internationals and 43% of the England cricket team had done so. Based on this evidence, at the highest levels, cricket is indeed more exclusive and elitist than these other leading team sports.

## 5.5. Conclusions

Half of the people educated in state schools have experienced none of the types of discrimination listed in the survey in the past five years. They are also more likely to attribute any discrimination they did experience to factors other than their social class. Indeed, class is invoked in only a third of cases. Notwithstanding this, it is striking that 50% of people educated in state schools, many of whom are White, did report that they had experienced discrimination (often in connection to their social class/socio-economic status) in the past five years.

The discrimination reported is much more likely to be systemic and institutional – linked to the lack of access to cricket in state schools, and to the way the talent pathway is structurally bound up with private schools. This makes it much more challenging for talented young people who are not in 'cricketing' schools to access the sport and to progress within it. The cost and time associated with playing cricket are additional barriers for those with low socio-economic status.

Instances of overt discrimination, such as name-calling, verbal or physical abuse, and mocking, are relatively rare. However, the elitist culture of cricket contributes to a sense among many state-schooled respondents that cricket is 'not for them'. Some parents and guardians of young cricketers also report a 'public school' ethos which they describe as harsh and bullying.

Overall, more than half of those educated in a state school do not believe that everyone engaged with cricket has the same opportunities to enjoy the game, progress and be rewarded fairly, regardless of their social class. Almost four in ten people educated in state schools also do not believe that everyone can feel that they belong and be themselves in cricket, regardless of their social class. Many women and people from ethnic minority groups who are educated in state schools (and ethnic minority women, in particular) simply do not believe that cricket is equitable or inclusive.

Responses from those educated at state school reveal the intersectional nature of discrimination, with women, particularly from ethnic minority backgrounds, who have attended state schools being most likely to report experiences of discrimination.



## CHAPTER 6

Lived experiences of  
discrimination among  
LGBTQ+, Jewish and  
disabled people

# Chapter 6: Lived experiences of discrimination among LGBTQ+, Jewish and disabled people

## 6.1 Introduction

While the survey was focused on lived experiences of discrimination related to race, sex and class, respondents were given the opportunity to raise issues related to other forms of discrimination. This chapter focuses on the lived experiences of discrimination among lesbians, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning (LGBTQ+) people, as well as people who live with long-term physical, cognitive or sensory impairments or mental health difficulties (jointly referred to as disabled people<sup>20</sup>). We also include a short section on the experiences of Jewish people who responded to the survey.

## 6.2 Recent experiences of discrimination among LGBTQ+

In total, 160 people in the sample identified as LGBTQ+. About three-quarters (73%) reported experiences of discrimination in the previous five years. About half reported 'stereotypes and assumptions being made about me' (53%), 'being spoken to in a demeaning, insulting or hurtful way' (47%), and 'feeling undervalued compared to people of equal competence' (46%). A further 21% reported 'being excluded from games, events or social activities', and 16% mentioned 'bullying, physical harassment or violence'. 'Being paid less compared to people of equal competence' (which is only relevant to those in paid roles), and 'other experiences of discrimination' were both mentioned by 11% of LGBTQ+ respondents (see Figure 21 below).

As indicated in Figure 22 below, LGBTQ+ respondents attribute the discrimination to a combination of factors. These include their sexual orientation and/or gender identity (36%), as might be expected, but also their sex (51%), age (26%) and social class/accent (18%), in particular.

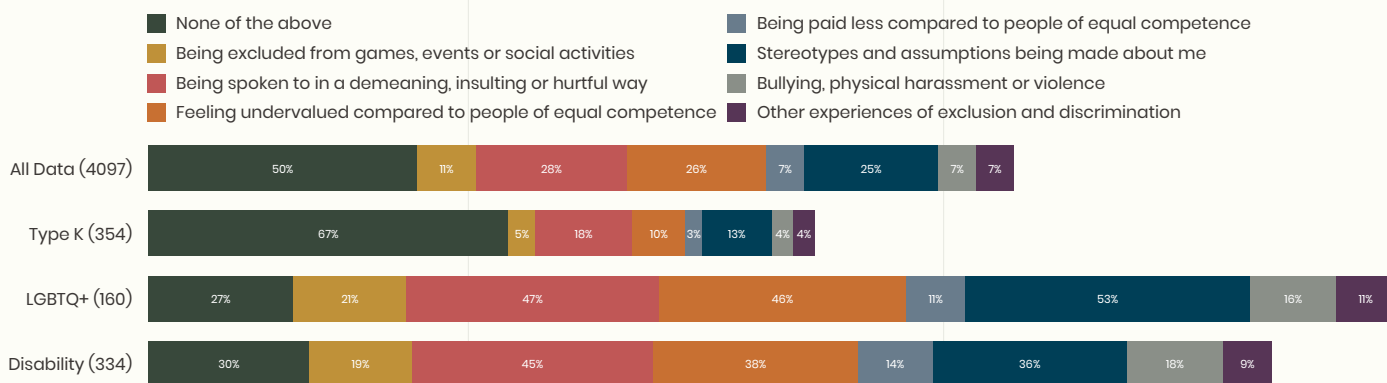
<sup>20</sup> Technically, a person has a disability if they have a physical, cognitive or sensory limitation, or a mental illness which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. That definition suggests that the impairment itself stands in the way of a person's full social and economic participation. Most people living with a 'disability', however, feel that it is less the impairment that holds them back, and more a mixture of public attitudes, social norms and physical arrangements that prevent their full participation in social, economic and political life. They therefore prefer to refer to themselves as 'disabled people': people who are disabled by a world that doesn't allow them to participate fully and to flourish. Thus, the term 'people with a disability' is more biomedical and legal, while the term 'disabled people' is more political.

## 6.3 Recent experiences of discrimination among disabled people

In total, 334 people who self-identified as disabled completed the survey. Of them, 70% reported recent experiences of discrimination. The dominant forms of discrimination were 'being spoken to in a demeaning, insulting or hurtful way' (45%); 'feeling undervalued compared to people of equal competence' (38%); and 'stereotypes and assumptions being made about me' (36%). A further 19% experienced 'being excluded from games, events or social activities', 18% experienced 'bullying, physical harassment or violence' and 14% 'being paid less compared to colleagues of equal competence', which is only relevant to those in paid roles (see Figure 21 below).

**Figure 21: Experiences of personal discrimination over the past five years among LGBTQ+ and disabled people**

*Over the past five years, have you personally experienced any of the following?*

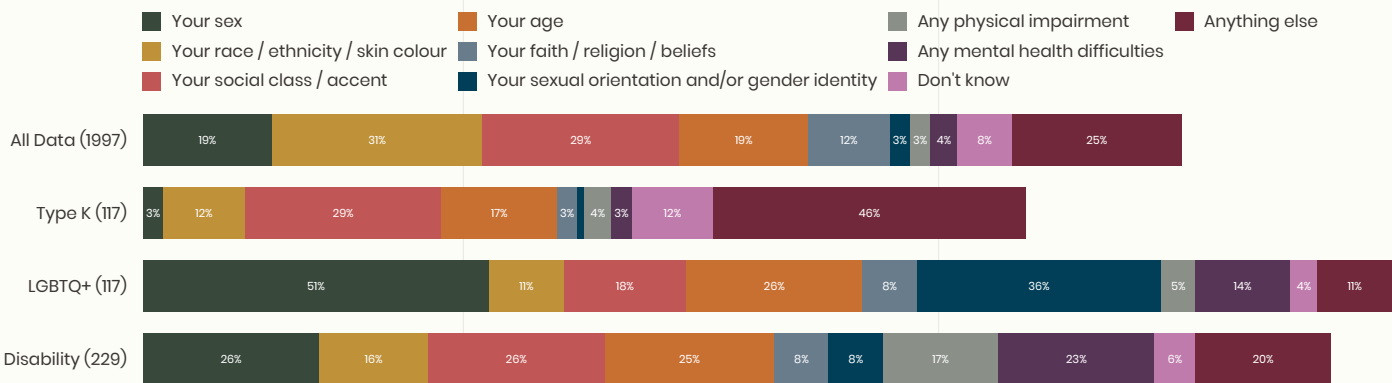


*Type K: White, straight, cisgender, privately educated men, with no disability*

Unlike women and people from ethnic minority backgrounds, disabled people do not attribute the discrimination they experience primarily to this particular ‘characteristic’ i.e. their disability. Only 17% attribute the discrimination to their physical disability or impairment and 23% to their mental health condition or impairment. A wide range of factors come into play which also include sex, class/accents, race/ethnicity and age, among others.

Figure 22: Perceived causes of discrimination among LGBTQ+ and disabled people

Overall, would you say these negative experiences were mainly based on?



Type K: White, straight, cisgender, privately educated men, with no disability

## 6.4 Lived experiences of homophobia

Homophobia takes many damaging forms. The qualitative data sheds light on the precise nature of these experiences.

### 6.4.1 Homophobia makes it hard to come out and feel a sense of belonging

Respondents indicated that for LGBTQ+ people who play, coach, officiate or work in the administration of cricket – at all levels of the game – the culture of the sport means that many have made the decision not to be ‘out’ (or to disclose their sexuality to only a few trusted people). Many LGBTQ+ people reported that derogatory language, jokes, ‘banter’ and other hurtful behaviour make it hard for them to feel at ease in the world of cricket and to come out to their peers.



Only some of my teammates know that I’m gay because I’ve heard very homophobic language and views from others and feel I would be an outsider if they knew.

White gay man, recreational player, official or umpire



I have had a captain who was outspoken in her dislike of gay people.

White (Other) woman, queer, recreational player



I heard older players using phrases like “playing like a poof” [...] and “I’ve seen ‘his sort’ before”, if not on the field then within hearing distance of players of colour and queer players, whether or not they were out as queer.

*White man, bisexual, recreational player*



I have decided to keep my sexuality a secret because of remarks that have been made in my presence.

*White gay man, recreational player, volunteer, official or umpire*

## 6.4.2 Assumptions and stereotypes about LGBTQ+ people

We also heard that heteronormative assumptions prevail in men’s cricket: it is the unstated norm that men who play cricket ‘must’ be straight, making it especially hard for gay, bisexual or queer men to come out and be accepted.



There is an assumption that you are straight if you are male, and clubs don’t always do enough to ensure that these binaries are broken down.

*White (Other) gay man, board or committee member*

According to many of those who participated in the research, the opposite (as discussed earlier) is true in women’s cricket: it is sometimes assumed that girls and women who play cricket are lesbians. Whilst this may be less damaging for gay women themselves, it is nevertheless a stereotype that needs addressing.

A further, homophobic assumption reported by respondents is that some gay people (especially men) are sexual predators and/or paedophiles, who are involved in cricket to gain ready access to young people.



The worst part as a gay man was the insinuations from some club members that any relationship you might have with younger players is predatory in nature. I know of others who have coached young players and not disclosed their sexuality because of this.

*White (Other) gay man, board or committee member*



I received discrimination because of my faith and sexual orientation – I am a bisexual Christian. My teammates knew I was Christian when I met them and, it was because of this, people often called me paedophile and paedophile supporter (referencing Catholic priests).

*White man, bisexual, recreational player*



They [teammates] would shout ‘nonce’ or ‘faggot’ when I would help out with the younger players at the club or help with junior cricket, which I don’t anymore.

*White gay man, recreational player*

### 6.4.3 Homophobic slurs, name calling, verbal abuse and harassment

A number of LGBTQ+ people, especially men, report homophobic name calling, verbal abuse and alleged 'jokes'. We received considerable evidence suggesting that, as with other forms of overt discrimination in the game, the use of homophobic slurs (like 'poof', 'faggot', 'nonce') to describe people – both as terms of abuse to any man, regardless of their actual sexual orientation, and, more pointedly, to demean gay, bisexual, or queer men themselves – is tolerated and dismissed as 'only banter', 'just a joke', and 'not serious', when it should immediately be stamped out.



One time, I was sat on my own and two Board members walked past me. One of them outed me as gay which provoked the other person, whom I doubt knew about my sexuality, to say: "I would fucking hate it if [my nickname] was gay".

*White man, bisexual, recreational player*



I told my teammates at my local club [that I am gay]. Immediately the atmosphere changed, gay 'banter' would fly my way regularly on and off the pitch. Had to change and shower in a different room to stop the 'are you eyeing me up' banter or the soap being dropped in front of me in the shower. When batting would get teammates shout '6 or gay' from the side-lines. [...] It's just a daily occurrence during the summer and echoes again when winter comes with indoor training and indoor cricket. Can't get away from it. Changed clubs several times, it is prevalent at most clubs.

*White man, gay, recreational player*



When I was young, I experimented with my sexuality. I was accused of a VD [venereal disease] whilst naked in the showers. It was an eczema rash brought on by the stress caused by the death of my brother a few months before.

*White man, gay, county age group player*



I was called by some teammates a "fucking Jesus faggot". When I confronted the first team captain about these allegations, I was told to "just get on with it, accept it and not throw your toys out the pram".

*White man, bisexual, recreational player*



Being told I'd rather sleep with my sister than be gay, that all female staff are slags, criticised at every opportunity for being gay. Not allowed to bring my partner to work events, being told to look for another job as my types are not welcome at [X] CCC. All this by the head groundsman and reported but nothing done.

*White lesbian woman, volunteer*

In line with the experiences reported by many women and ethnic minority officials, some LGBTQ+ respondents describe regular bullying, abuse, and threats from players when they umpire, leading some to leave the game altogether.



Abuse and threats from players. I quit as an umpire as a result due to the lack of support from the SNCL [Scottish National Cricket League].

*White gay man, volunteer, board member, coach, umpire*



**Abused by players virtually every match I umpired. As a consequence, I gave up.**

*White man, gay, recreational player, volunteer, board or committee member, umpire*

Some LGBTQ+ people report that homophobia is more prevalent in ethnic minorities and faith communities, where attitudes are said to remain very conservative and negative.



**Anti-LGBT is prevalent in the Muslim & BAME communities.**

*Other (Mixed ethnic background) woman, bisexual, recreational player, parent/guardian*



**One club had members of a religion that looks down on homosexuals and it was really difficult to enjoy cricket.**

*White man, gay, recreational player*

## 6.4.4 Sexual harassment, abuse and assault

At the sharpest end of a homophobic culture, some LGBTQ+ women report sexual harassment, abuse, and assault.



**I have been inappropriately touched by members, witnessed homophobic and racial discrimination by Board members and colleagues, reported sexual harassment and nothing was done.**

*White woman, bisexual, staff member (at the ECB or County organisation), volunteer, coach*



**I was sexually assaulted in my club, and despite the offender being found guilty by a judge in court, I was the one pushed out of our club. He HAD to leave because [organisation] said he had to, but they were reluctant about doing so. I was unsupported and slowly pushed out of several [...] roles.**

*Unattributed to protect confidentiality*

## 6.4.5 Exclusion and loss of opportunities

In some cases, LGBTQ+ people also report that their sexual orientation and/or gender identity means that they are more likely to be excluded from games, events, opportunities to play and to tour.



**I went from being a key member of the team to being surplus to requirements almost overnight (this was not due to poor performances) and only chosen to play if the team would have otherwise had to forfeit their game.**

*White man, bisexual, recreational player*



I was belittled, isolated, excluded from certain opportunities and my sexuality was a point of disgust from [...] to the point that, after my first tour, I was told that 'this sort of person' shouldn't tour. [He] then continued to block everything I was put forward for. He also described having a gay man [...] openly in a meeting as 'an irritant'.

*White woman, recreational player*

The sense of exclusion is particularly acute for transgender people, who struggle to find a team they can join, to be accepted, to access the right facilities, etc. We also received evidence that the recent guidance from Sports Councils has made it especially 'challenging' for transgender people.



As a transgendered player who has not undergone gender reassignment it's hard to belong to either a men's or women's team.

*White woman, bisexual, recreational player, volunteer, coach, board member*



As a trans woman, finding a team to play for with other women has been hard. Playing for men's teams as a woman is also hard – not enough separate facilities. Sports Councils' announcement this year about gender identity and sport has made it especially challenging, even in an accepting and supportive team full of allies and supporters. We don't know what the rules will even be or how other teams will react. I play cricket with other women as one of my few social/non-work opportunities to socialise with other women and make new friendships while playing a sport I love.

*White woman bisexual, grammar school, recreational player, volunteer*

Overall, LGBTQ+ people report that whilst the culture of cricket has improved in this regard over time, this has not eradicated discrimination in the sport. Homophobia endures, often in crude and toxic forms, but more often in assumptions and language that can be hurtful, demeaning, and which curtails opportunities to play, belong and progress as LGBTQ+ people would wish to. When witnessed by others or directly reported, these experiences are said not to be acted upon, leading some LGBTQ+ people with no choice but to leave the game.

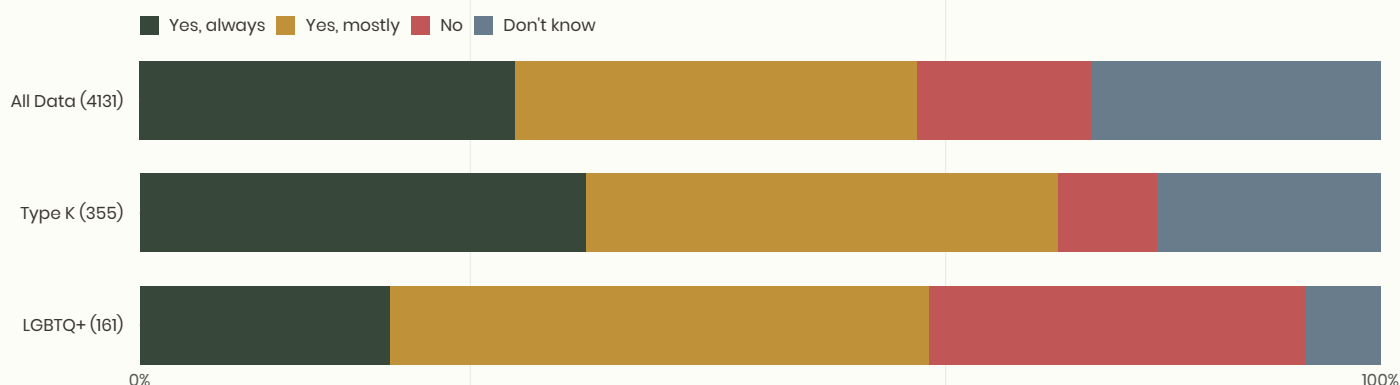


## 6.4.6 Discrimination impacts opportunities and sense of belonging among LGBTQ+ people

Given the above experiences, a significant minority of LGBTQ+ (30%) continue to feel that not everyone has the same opportunities to enjoy the game, progress and be rewarded fairly, regardless of their sexual orientation. This compares with 14% of all respondents and just 8% of Type K respondents. About half (63%) of LGBTQ+ people also disagree that everyone engaged in cricket feels that they belong and can be themselves, regardless of their sexual orientation.

**Figure 23: Perceptions of opportunities to enjoy cricket, progress and be rewarded fairly regardless of sexual orientation**

*Do you believe that everyone engaged with cricket has the same opportunities to enjoy the game, progress and be rewarded fairly regardless of sexual orientation?*



*Type K: White, straight, cisgender, privately educated men, with no disability*

## 6.5 Lived experiences of discrimination among disabled people

The lived experiences of disabled people are extremely varied, reflecting both the significant differences between types and severity of people's disability, as well as the environment where they/their children play, coach, officiate or work. This makes it difficult to draw clear conclusions. However, a few points stand out.

### 6.5.1 Systemic factors reduce engagement with cricket amongst people with disabilities

Nearly one in five of the UK population aged 16 to 64 years was disabled<sup>21</sup> in 2018. Half of disabled people aged 16 to 64 were unemployed, and those in work earned on average 12.2% less than non-disabled people. A large proportion of disabled people do not own a car or a van. Many have more restricted public travel options, too. Overall, disabled people make 40% fewer trips than the average driving population, spend less time travelling and travel shorter distances.<sup>22</sup> Respondents pointed to the way in which these factors impacted on their ability to engage with cricket.



**Travel to meetings is far too much to participate, it costs people like me to volunteer (petrol money)!**

*White man, physical impairment, volunteer, coach or umpire*



**Playing cricket is expensive. You need private transport. You need to carry heavy and bulky equipment. There might not be the right equipment for some disabled either. There is no recognition of those barriers, I think. Not enough effort to overcome that and make cricket more inclusive. If we did that, it would also overcome barriers for lots of other people.**

*White (woman, parent/guardian)*

### 6.5.2 Attitudes towards disabled people remain negative and restrictive

Many disabled people – across all types of engagement in cricket – report experiencing discrimination and disadvantage linked to negative attitudes, ignorance and insensitivity in relation to disability and disabled people. This is true with respect to physical conditions (long-term, chronic, degenerative illnesses) and impairments, as well as to mental health conditions and neurodiversity.



**Discrimination is often not intentional. It happens due to lack of training and being judgemental on what people can and can't do.**

*White man, physical disability, parent/guardian, coach*

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<sup>21</sup> There are multiple definitions of disability and it is accepted that no one definition is universally recognised amongst those that identify with the term. The Government Statistical Service (GSS) defines as disabled 'a person who has a physical or mental health condition or illness that has lasted or is expected to last 12 months or more, that reduces their ability to carry-out day-to-day activities.' The same GSS defined an 'impairment' as any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expecting to last 12 months or more'.

<sup>22</sup> Inequalities in Mobility and Access in the UK Transport System (Foresight, Government Office for Science, 2019).



There still is in some areas a perception that if you have a disability then you can't coach or that your knowledge of the game is inferior.

*White man, parent/guardian, volunteer, coach, staff member (at the ECB or County organisation)*



Continuing discrimination due to people saying that, as a person with autism, I am not suitable to score.

*White man, staff member (at the ECB or County organisation), coach or umpire*



As my condition worsened and I was less able to mobilise (going from crutches to a rollator to a wheelchair), former friends and teammates talked to me less, stayed clear of me generally and basically avoided me. I stopped watching my own team some years ago.

*White man, physical impairment, recreational player*

Some players with the talent and skills to play at the highest level are said to be pigeonholed into disability cricket, when this is unnecessary.



At present there needs to be proper training of coaches and welfare within the game to those with disabilities and not just accept that they are looked after in the ECB disability sector, many players have the ability to play at the highest level ECB, eg ASD ADHD but are categorised within disability cricket only because people at all levels of the game do not know how to handle those with special needs and are often dismissed.

*White man, physical disability, recreational player, parent/guardian, coach*

### 6.5.3 Exclusion from opportunities to play, coach or umpire

Respondents discussed with us the fact that it can be difficult to find a place to play that corresponds to the profile of the player with a disability and where needs are met/reasonable adjustments are made. As a result, opportunities are often limited.



After realising that my 10-year-old autistic son struggled to cope with Dynamos Cricket as he didn't understand the game (it isn't suitable for beginners as the description says), the coach and I decided it would be better he joined the younger children and All Stars cricket, and contacted the [X] club and explained my son's disabilities, I can't assist because I am physically disabled myself. They refused to take him, even though they were still accepting booking on the website.

*White woman, physical impairment, parent*

Reasonable adjustments are also not always made with respect to training for coaching and umpiring, leading to unreasonable requests that act as barriers to participation and progression.



My son has a physical disability and the cricket club have NO training in how to effectively include physical disabilities. He can only participate if we provide an extra adult to support him in the group.

*White woman, grammar school, physical impairment, parent*



No provision for young deaf cricketers.

*White man, physical impairment, parent/guardian, coach*



My child is autistic and struggles with large groups and noise. She loves cricket and the individual skill nature of the game suits her, but she struggles to engage in coaching sessions with too many other children and too much noise etc. She needs smaller group sessions.

*Prefer not to answer (ethnic group), prefer not to answer (sex), recreational player, parent/guardian, coach*



When I did my Level [X] course, I was one of the first in the country to gain this qualification from a wheelchair. As part of my assessment, the tutor asked me to perform/demonstrate a run and sliding stop and throw. How was I meant to do that when I struggled to even walk? I consequently got marked down and was unable to progress to Level [X].

*White man, physical impairment, parent/guardian, staff, coach*

## 6.5.4 Limited accessibility for people with mobility impairments

According to some disabled respondents, many clubs and training facilities have yet to become fully accessible and appear not to have considered how to provide access to wheelchair users. This is not just about the pavilion and the changing rooms, but also other facilities such as score boxes.



A club I was part of was inclusive only on paper. They did not consider providing easy access to a physically disabled Asian man. And this was visible in the way the access work was deprioritised.

*Prefer not to answer (ethnic group), man, physical impairment, parent/guardian, volunteer*



As a scorer in the recreational game, I find that the provision in most score boxes is at best adequate and at worst appalling. I have arthritis and chairs/height of desk are rarely suitable to sit in for the length of a match.

*White woman, staff member (at the ECB or County organisation), scorer*

## 6.5.5 Mocking, verbal abuse, name calling and bullying

Finally, some disabled people report cases of verbal abuse and name calling (such as, for example, 'gink', 'weirdo', 'retard', 'downy', and 'nutter', both to refer to disabled people and as insults to non-disabled people), as well as mocking and bullying.



I was called an insulting remark as an autistic person by senior people at [County]. Who's the gink, the strange person? [...] I now don't want them to get away with this discrimination to a person with autism, like Yorkshire have not got away with racism. I want their actions to be reported to the press and their actions to me to reach the widest possible audience.

*White man, mental health condition, staff member (at the ECB or County organisation), official or umpire*



I suffer from depression and was told on a number of occasions that I was not a team player and should go and work elsewhere unless I cheered up. Was also told by a line manager that whenever I walked in looking sad, he wanted to punch me in the face.

*White man, mental health condition, staff member (at the ECB or County organisation)*



I was bullied after opening up about mental health, with one of the club directors using my vulnerabilities against me. To the point [that] I had to quit my role after over a 20-year association with the club and despite me and others complaining about the staff member/director in question to HR and Senior Management.

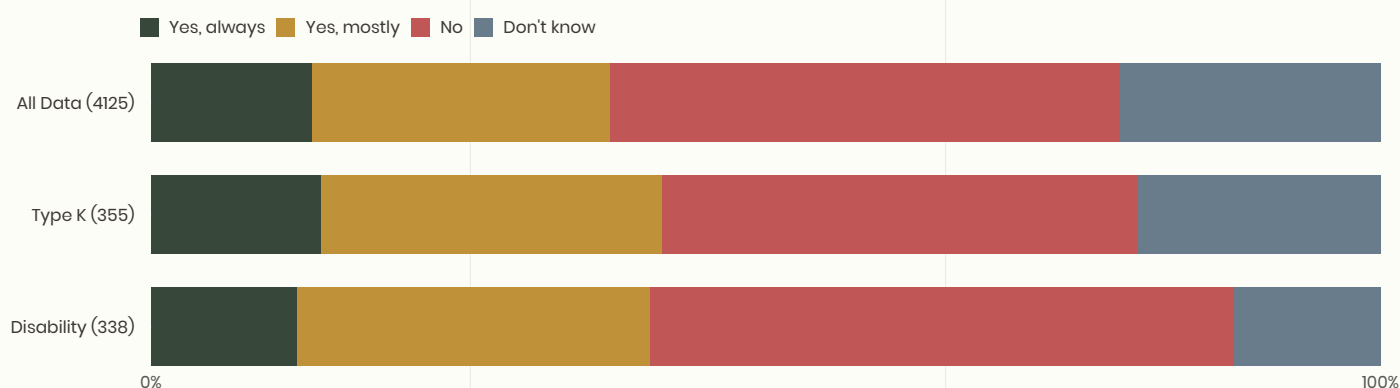
*White man, mental health condition, staff member (at the ECB or County organisation)*

## 6.5.6 Discrimination impacts opportunities and sense of belonging among disabled people

Despite hearing of progress in recent years to improve access to and participation in cricket among disabled people, the evidence we received clearly indicates that discrimination is still experienced by many disabled people across the sport. 48% of disabled respondents disagree that everyone has the same opportunities to enjoy the game, progress and be rewarded fairly, regardless of disability. Similarly, 41% of disabled people disagree that everyone engaged in cricket feels that they belong and can be themselves, regardless of disability.

**Figure 24: Perceptions of opportunities to enjoy cricket, progress and be rewarded fairly regardless of disability status**

*Do you believe that everyone engaged with cricket has the same opportunities to enjoy the game, progress and be rewarded fairly regardless of disability status?*



*Type K: White, straight, cisgender, privately educated men, with no disability*

## 6.6 Lived experiences of anti-Semitic discrimination

In total, 26 Jewish people completed the survey. 19% of those disagreed that everyone has the same opportunities to enjoy the game, progress and be rewarded fairly, regardless of their religion. A greater number (31%) also disagreed that everyone engaged in cricket feels that they belong and can be themselves, regardless of their religion. Two lived experiences of antisemitism were reported by the same individual.



I joined a diverse London cricket club to find it welcoming. During one incident, however, several members of the club seemed to think that it was OK to make light of, and joke about, anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism was even made part of a drinking game. During the one publicly audible conversation, one club member asked the other: “Why do you hate Jews?” and made up that the beer he was drinking was made by a company owned “by a rich Italian Jewish family” as if to say he shouldn’t drink it. I am Jewish and have been passionate about cricket since the age of 8. It was deeply upsetting to come across this racism and offensive behaviour. I had not been at the club long and felt isolated and shocked. I was also angry and saddened that no one else had raised any objection.

*White Jewish man, recreational player*



Months later, [a member of the same club] referred to a specific football pass as a ‘Jew pass’. It was meant in a derogatory way. Again, I was shocked. One of my teammates who had also witnessed the first episode said: “We don’t say those things anymore”.

*White Jewish man, recreational player*

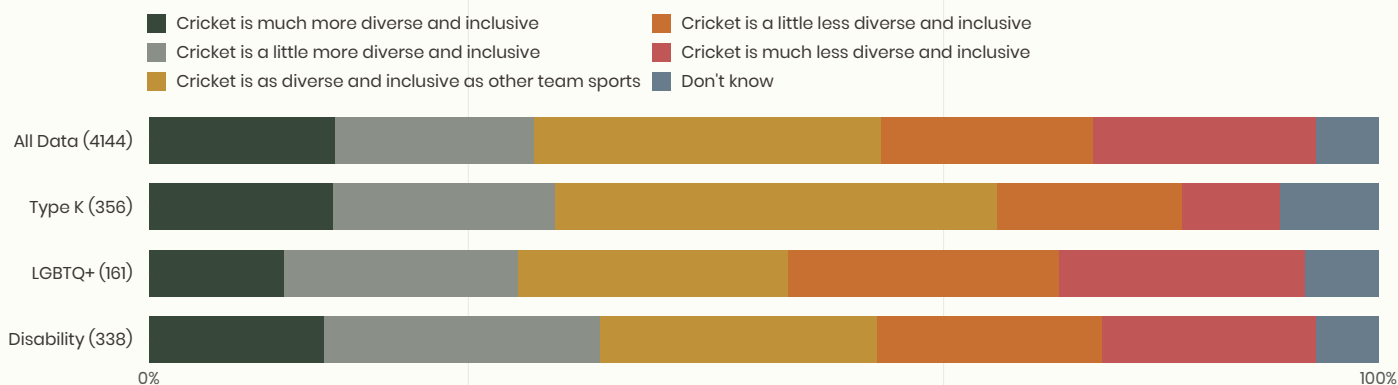
## 6.7 Perceptions of EDI in cricket and other team sports among LGBTQ+ and disabled people

42% of LGBTQ+ people believe that cricket is less diverse and inclusive than other team sports, such as football, rugby and basketball. Only 22% of both LGBTQ+ and disabled people perceive that cricket is about the same as other team sports. On a more positive note, 30% of LGBTQ+ people and 36% of disabled people believe cricket is more diverse and inclusive than other sports.

Indeed, disabled people and LGBTQ+ people are both groups of respondents where a majority (58% and 52% respectively) believe that cricket is at least as diverse and inclusive as other team sports.

**Figure 25: Perceptions of diversity and inclusion in cricket compared to other team sports among LGBTQ+ and disabled people**

*Overall, how diverse and inclusive do you feel cricket is compared to other team sports (such as football, rugby or basketball)?*



*Type K: White, straight, cisgender, privately educated men, with no disability*

## 6.8 Conclusions

A majority of LGBTQ+ and disabled people engaged in cricket report discrimination. More than seven in ten people in both groups experienced personal discrimination in the past five years. LGBTQ+ people mainly attribute the discrimination they face to their sex (51%), and sexual orientation and/or gender identity (36%). Disabled people attribute the discrimination they face to their mental health/condition (23%) and their physical impairment (17%), but they are more likely to invoke a wider range of factors.

Among LGBTQ+ people, the main lived experiences of discrimination reported related to ongoing and damaging assumptions and stereotypes about LGBTQ+ people and to homophobic slurs, name calling, verbal abuse and harassment, which are, at times, tolerated and dismissed as 'only banter', 'just a joke', and 'not serious'. All of this can make it extremely difficult for LGBTQ+ people to be themselves within cricketing spaces, as survey responses show. These experiences also account for the fact that a significant minority of LGBTQ+ (30%) continue to feel that not everyone has the same opportunities to enjoy the game, progress and be rewarded fairly, regardless of their sexual orientation, and that more than half of LGBTQ+ people also disagree that everyone engaged in cricket feels that they belong and can be themselves, regardless of their sexual orientation.

Among disabled people, the lived experiences are extremely varied. This is partly because the nature and severity of the disability or impairment can vary greatly and because the environment where disabled people play cricket or work in the sector can also differ substantially.

Overall, despite improvements in recent years, the evidence we received suggests that attitudes towards disabled people remain negative and restrictive, with some reporting mocking, verbal abuse, name calling and bullying. Many disabled people feel excluded from opportunities to play, coach or umpire and work remains to be done to improve accessibility. Discrimination also impacts the opportunities available to disabled people and sense of belonging among disabled people. Almost half of disabled people disagree that everyone has the same opportunities to enjoy the game, progress and be rewarded fairly, regardless of disability. Similarly, 41% of disabled people disagree that everyone engaged in cricket feels that they belong and can be themselves, regardless of disability. A majority of disabled people do, however, believe that cricket is at least as diverse and inclusive as other team sports.



# CHAPTER 7

## Workplace discrimination

# Chapter 7: Workplace discrimination

## 7.1 Introduction

Discussions of lived experiences of discrimination thus far have focussed predominantly on experiences among players, parents/guardians of players, coaches, and officials, i.e. those involved on the pitch in the game of cricket. This chapter shines a more focussed light on the experiences of people who work in the leadership, management, and administration of cricket at the ECB, on cricket Boards, in cricket clubs, etc.

## 7.2 The culture of the workplace

There are multiple descriptions of workplace experiences that suggest that the culture at cricketing organisations is not as diverse, inclusive, or equitable as it should be. Several themes dominate accounts.

### 7.2.1 Senior leaders and managers are still an 'old boys' network'

Research participants consistently describe how the culture of cricket remains dominated by an 'old boys' network' and is a 'closed shop' for people who do not match the profile of the 'typical' cricketer or leader: White, male, privately educated, affluent, straight and non-disabled.<sup>23</sup> This is seen to be manifest in the 'typical' profile of those who work in cricket, especially in senior management and leadership roles.



There is still too little representation on the Board of the ECB for players and people who are not White, middle/upper class men. The Board should reflect the makeup of the game and take a wider view of the desired make-up of the game. More transparency would help. They need to dispel the image of cricket being only for White, middle/upper class men, and make it appear available to everybody.

*White man, state school, staff member (at the ECB or County organisation)*



I look around and only see White colleagues in the department that have been promoted during the restructure and new roles. This makes me reflect that we are un-inclusive and feel not welcomed and makes me feel like I should start to look externally. [...] How are we meant to change the game if, internally, we are not inclusive and reflective of what we are trying to achieve as an organisation?

*Asian/Asian man, 'prefer not to answer' school, staff member (at the ECB or County organisation)*

<sup>23</sup> This is why we created a 'type' of people working in cricket (Type K) that would represent this profile and capture their experiences of the game, so that we could observe, empirically, whether there are differences in the perceptions and experiences of people with a Type K profile compared to those of people from any of the minority groups considered in the research. The findings show that, indeed, there are significant differences of perception and experience in all dimensions considered.

## 7.2.2 The workforce lacks knowledge, understanding and experience of EDI

According to many of our respondents, the actual and/or perceived lack of diversity itself is seen as being associated with a lack of understanding of, and commitment to, equity, diversity, and inclusion. EDI is said to often be an 'afterthought', an 'addendum' to standard ways of working and, in some cases, an unwelcome 'distraction'.



There is some awareness and some action, even, within [X cricketing organisation] but it's not mainstreamed yet. It's definitely not in the DNA of cricket so it's hard to shift elitist, sexist, racist and homophobic attitudes. There is also some pushback and a sense that 'the pendulum has swung too far', which is both not helpful and clearly not true!

*White woman, grammar school, professional cricketer*



Yes, cricket has a huge class and race divide that impacts people across the whole game and being black British from a working-class family, my opportunities to progress my career within the game have been stalled. I have been overlooked for promotions, jobs, coach education courses and my identity mistaken on numerous occasions – the only thing I could find as an issue had to be my race and class status as I was more than qualified, overqualified in some instances and still overlooked!

*Black (Caribbean) man, state school, staff member (at the ECB or County organisation)*



[X cricketing organisation's] management of diversity, inclusion and equity is welcomed, but remains in its infancy in my opinion and needs to do a lot more so people like me no longer have to do surveys like this. I have reached out to them offering to help on a voluntary basis but received unsurprisingly zero response or acknowledgement, which was equally disappointing. So here we are!

*Asian (Pakistani) man, state school, gay, committee member and volunteer*



I get a feeling from conversations and attitudes that a lot of people would like us to just 'move on' and not be distracted by all this stuff around racism. Some want to learn and change but some don't get it: they think it's damaging to 'dwell' on this. They'd rather brush things under the carpet.

*White man, state school, mental health condition, staff member (at the ECB or County organisation)*

We also heard that the lack of actual and/or perceived staff diversity also means that there are, according to those who gave evidence, few role models to inspire women and people from minority groups to join the world of cricket and contribute their knowledge, skills, and experiences to the management of the game.

## 7.2.3 Women, working class people, and people from minority groups can feel out of place and excluded

The sense of a largely homogenous cricket workplace and culture is said to contribute to a feeling, among many women, working-class people and people from various minority groups, that they are different and out of place. They can feel that they don't 'fit in', even though they do not experience any overt discrimination.



I come from a working-class background. I often feel out of place with the majority of my colleagues, although not overtly discriminated against because of my accent/background.

*White man, state school, staff member (at the ECB or County organisation)*



If you don't have the same privileged background as most other people do in cricket, you don't have the same accent, the same cultural references, the same values, the same life experiences. The everyday conversations are different. The drinks you order can be different. It's also about not having the same path and advantages, so you have to make your own way while trying to fit in. I like to think that this is an advantage and that I could really add something positive, but I can only do that if I am valued, unfortunately.

*White woman, bisexual, state school, staff*



It's a clique. They protect their own patch. You hardly see anyone of colour in office jobs, especially in more senior roles.

*Black (Caribbean) woman, state school, staff*



Being new to a committee with the old boys' network running the show [is hard].

*White man, state school, Board or committee member*



As a younger volunteer, I find that my general socio-economic situation, political leanings, societal viewpoints and so forth differ starkly with those that are older and more established within the decision-making cricket fraternity. Examples include other older/senior members using inappropriate language in relation to gender, sexual orientation and race.

*White man, state school, Board or committee member*

## 7.2.4 'Casual' racism, sexism and homophobia still exist at work

Some people mention that 'casual' racism, sexism and homophobia are still heard in the workplace as a staff member at cricketing organisations. This can stem from 'assumptions', rooted in the culture of cricket, that cricket is a game for 'lads' and 'boys', for instance, and may lead to feelings of exclusion and undermine any sense of belonging.



I have sometimes felt overlooked or humiliated in situations due to being female. There have been incidences where the majority of the room is male and questions asked such as: 'What do you think about that, lads?', or 'I'd be interested to get the view of the boys on this', or 'It's a lads thing.' I have experienced sexually explicit comments and inappropriate behaviour due to me being female.

*White woman, state school, staff member (at the ECB or County organisation)*



Having to listen to casual racism and inappropriate comments from team members/members of the public.

*Black (Caribbean) woman, state school, staff member (at the ECB or County organisation)*



Feel like the odd one out – bottom of the food chain and not valued. Even with all this happening, [I] have been told not to talk to people about how I feel.

*Asian (Pakistani) man, state school, staff member (at the ECB or County organisation)*

## 7.2.5 Women and people from minority groups complain of tokenism and 'representationalism'

Because it is felt, according to many of those surveyed, that diversity is not yet 'normalised' in cricket and that the culture of cricket has yet to become truly inclusive, women and people from diverse minority groups can feel conspicuous and as if they are being used as 'tokens' to 'demonstrate' that cricket is in fact inclusive. They can also be burdened with the responsibility of 'representing' or speaking on behalf of minority groups.



**Being tokenised due to ethnicity/gender.**

*Asian (Pakistani) woman, state school, staff member (at the ECB or County organisation)*



**I've had numerous occasions of being the only person of colour in a room or team, having to play the role of the ethnic voice in the majority of conversations. This is tiring to have to represent on every occasion and fight biases.**

*Asian (Indian) man, state school, staff member (at the ECB or County organisation)*



**Having to challenge racist and sexist comments made about people within cricket.**

*Black (Caribbean) woman, state school, staff member (at the ECB or County organisation)*



**I've had to challenge racist attitudes and opinions within the club I am a founder member of.**

*Asian (Pakistani) man, state school, Board or committee member*

In some cases, we received evidence that the culture is toxic for women and people from various minority groups.



**Overtly sexist language and topics of discussion in county cricket board offices (eg discussion by my line manager in an open office about his sexual exploits and interest in 'mixed race hotties'). Harassment by professional cricketers while in county board offices with clearly sexual intent (only targeting young female members of staff). On one occasion forcing me to lock myself into my boss' office to keep them away from me. There can at times be an environment of 'lad banter' which is shown by the lack of female staff involved sometimes.**

*White woman, private school, staff member (at the ECB or County organisation)*



**I've been called a 'effing butch' by a colleague who stormed out after I tried to say that we should aim for greater inclusion.**

*White woman, lesbian, state school, staff member (at the ECB or County organisation)*

As responses to the survey indicate, some people across groups believe that they are not able to progress fairly and that they are valued less and paid less than colleagues of equal competence.

As elsewhere in cricket, there is a view that cases of discrimination are not professionally managed – an issue we turn to in the next chapter.

## 7.3 Conclusions

We were repeatedly told that the culture of cricket and the profile of the workforce – especially in senior leadership and management roles – mean that women and people from various minority groups feel that they do not belong and/or have the same opportunities to progress at work. The workforce is said to be dominated by an ‘old boys’ network’ and to lack knowledge, understanding and lived experience in relation to equity, diversity, and inclusion. Women and people from minority groups feel that EDI is not normalised in cricket. ‘Casual’ racism, sexism and homophobia still exist – as well as some instances of violent and degrading behaviours. Women and people from minority groups also report being used as ‘tokens’ to attempt to demonstrate that cricket is diverse, as well as being tasked with having to ‘represent’ minority groups and with driving the change. While the survey identifies that many people feel that they are paid less well than colleagues of equal competence, the issue of pay gaps is not covered in detail in the survey and not best investigated through such a survey.

## CHAPTER 8

# Responding to discrimination

# Chapter 8: Responding to discrimination

## 8.1 Introduction

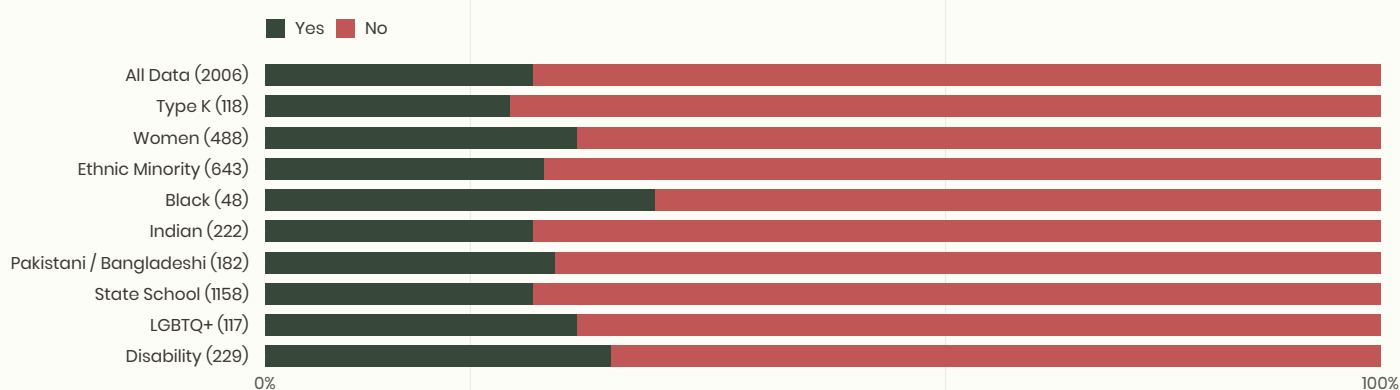
Everyone who experiences discrimination should know what to do about it, trust that appropriate action will be taken and be confident that they will not be victimised for making complaints. This chapter looks at the extent to which people who have recently experienced discrimination have reported these experiences to cricketing bodies, the reasons why some people chose not to report incidents, as well as satisfaction with the management of complaints among those who did report incidents.

## 8.2 Reporting discrimination

Survey participants who had experienced discrimination in the previous five years were asked whether they had reported these incidents. Of the 2,006 who had experienced discrimination, about a quarter reported it – with Black people being the most likely proportionally to report incidents.

**Figure 26: Percentage of victims of discrimination who reported experiences**

*Did you ever report any of these experiences of discrimination?*



*Type K: White, straight, cisgender, privately educated men, with no disability*

While it is common for people not to report discrimination, it is important to understand why people fail to do so, as this may be indicative of failures of governance and of a climate of distrust specifically in relation to matters of equity, diversity, and inclusion.



## 8.3 Reasons for not reporting discrimination

The most common reason for not reporting incidents is a lack of trust that appropriate action will be taken to address the issue. Across the 1,513 people who experienced recent discrimination but did not report it, 41% invoked this as the main reason. The trust deficit is especially high among people from ethnic minority backgrounds (58% of whom invoked this reason for not reporting incidents), and disabled people (47% of whom also invoked this reason for not reporting incidents). Indeed, hundreds of alleged victims of discrimination who had raised the matter said that 'nothing happened', things 'fell on deaf ears', incidents were 'swept under the carpet', that it felt 'pointless to challenge' because they knew nothing would change, etc.



**It's shocking that as a child I could be racially abused multiple times by another team, and nothing be done.**

*Mixed (White and Asian) man, recreational player, volunteer, coach*



**The concerns I raised to those who had a duty of care fell on deaf ears. I did not even tell my family what I had been through as I did not want to worry them. I was referred to as a wonderkid, a superstar but due to the institutional racism my talent and ability was suppressed. I was used and then discarded. My career was ruined. After giving my blood, sweat and tears winning almost everything for the club/teammates/coaches, I was then released via a letter through the post. No phone call, no meeting, nothing!! [...] Thanks to Azeem and hearing his story, I felt it was my duty to our future generations to speak out. I had my career ruined, I don't want anyone to go through what I/we have! My experiences have taken a toll on me. I basically buried what happened for 20 years and moved on. But all the emotions have come back now.<sup>24</sup>**

*Asian (Pakistani) man, former professional player*

The second most common barrier to reporting was that the incident was not deemed serious enough to warrant a complaint. This was the case for 38% of all people with recent experiences of discrimination. Women and LGBTQ+ people were more likely to find that the incident was not serious enough to warrant a complaint than people from ethnic minority backgrounds and disabled people.

We heard of a multitude of 'microaggressions' that did not seem to have been reported. Examples include the assumptions that ethnic minority people are not British; mistaking female umpires and coaches for mothers of players or 'tea ladies'; referring to a poor shot by a boy as 'playing like a girl'; calling some behaviours 'so gay'; referring to a person from any minority group as 'you lot' or 'your people'; making sweeping generalisations about behaviours, such as 'you chaps play wristy shots'; making comments that imply that cricket is currently meritocratic and that everyone 'gets what they deserve' when this is not the case; victim blaming; using people from minority groups as 'tokens' to convey the impression of diversity and inclusion, etc.

It can be even harder to report instances of discrimination when these are a matter of omission, rather than commission. Indeed, the incidences of discrimination that are mentioned are often about being cut off from opportunities, cut off from social activities, not selected, not promoted, or being made to feel unwanted. There is nothing tangible to report, no incontrovertible 'proof' that the omission was because of discrimination: for example, when the reason given for not being selected is because of 'character', 'leadership skills' or 'ability'. In all such cases, it is easy to see why people would choose not to report incidents.

The third most common barrier to reporting discrimination is the fear of being victimised, with 36% of all people who experienced recent discrimination failing to report it because of fear of reprisal and being cut off from opportunities. Again, this is especially the case among ethnic minority respondents, 52% of whom mentioned this as a barrier to reporting.

<sup>24</sup> The timeframe this response covers exceeds the 'within five years' period this research covers. It has been included on an exceptional basis to illustrate both why talent can be lost and to demonstrate the long term impact of discrimination on victims.



As a parent of an emerging player, nothing is said as you don't want your child dropped from the system. You would be labelled a trouble-maker and selection would stop. Complaints led to the club closing ranks.

*White woman, parent/guardian*



[It is] difficult to provide evidence as a lot of actions are conducted behind the scenes. [There are also] consequences of complaints which will always be borne by the child which makes parents wary.

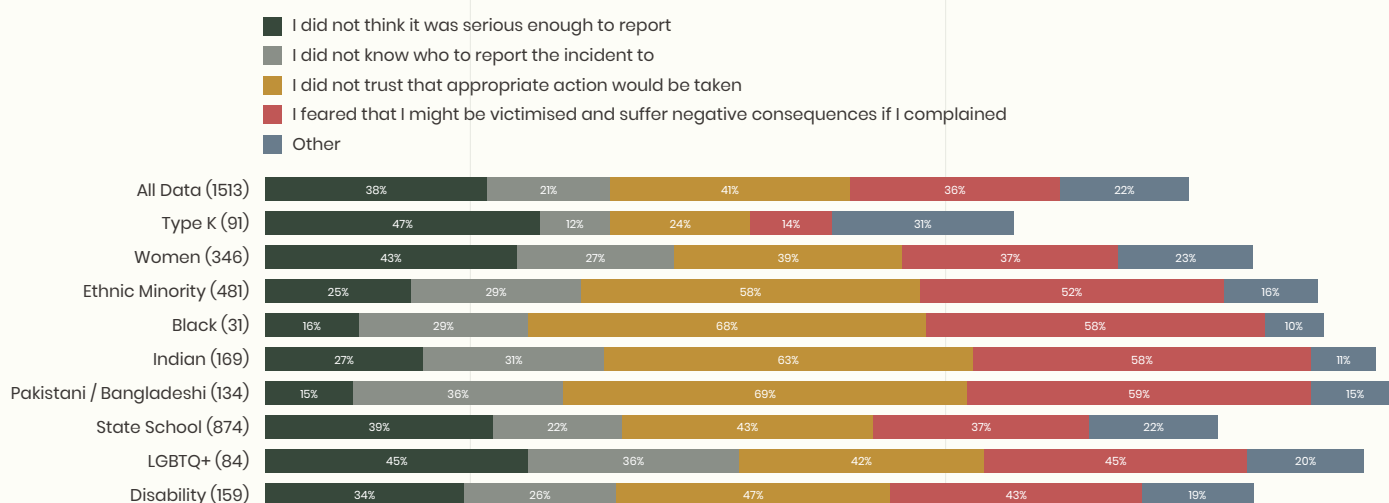
*Asian (Indian) man, recreational player, parent/guardian*

The fourth most common barrier was a lack of knowledge of the mechanism to report incidents. This was the case for 21% of all people with recent experiences of discrimination. Many people called for much improved complaints procedures that are clear and well publicised – in clubs, on websites, in handbooks for parents, etc.

Finally, 22% of all respondents with recent experiences of discrimination have 'other' reasons for not reporting. Type K people (i.e. White, privately educated, straight and cisgender men, who did not report a disability) are the most likely to give 'other' reasons (31%).

**Figure 27: Percentage of victims' reasons for not reporting experiences of discrimination**

*Why didn't you report your experience of discrimination?*



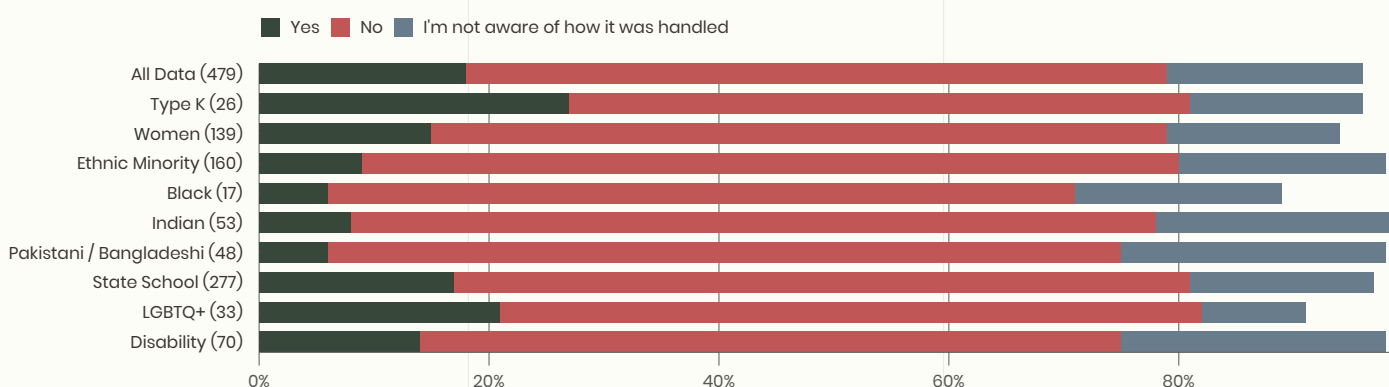
*Type K: White, straight, cisgender, privately educated men, with no disability*

## 8.4 Satisfaction with the management of complaints

Among the 479 people who did report incidents, only a small minority were satisfied with the way in which the issue was managed. On average, 18% were satisfied, 61% were dissatisfied, and 17% were not aware of how their complaint was handled. Type K respondents were the most satisfied with how the issue was handled (27%), while complainants with Black or Pakistani/Bangladeshi heritage were the least satisfied groups (6%). Almost a quarter (23%) of Pakistani/Bangladeshi and disabled people did not know how the issue was handled, the highest proportion of any group.

**Figure 28: Percentage of victims satisfied with how their issue was handled**

*Were you satisfied with how the issue was handled?<sup>25</sup>*



*Type K: White, straight, cisgender, privately educated men, with no disability*

The accounts of those who have reported discrimination suggest that discrimination is often denied, that appropriate action is rarely taken, and that victimisation and reprisal are common.



The concerns I raised to those who had a duty of care fell on deaf ears. I did not even tell my family what I had been through as I did not want to worry them.

*Asian (Pakistani) man, former professional player*

<sup>25</sup> People were given the option to respond "prefer not to answer" which has not been included

## 8.5 Conclusions

Currently, many instances of discrimination go unreported, partly because people are not aware of the right mechanisms to complain, partly because they do not trust that appropriate action will be taken, partly because they fear victimisation, and partly because they do not regard the matter as serious enough to warrant lodging a complaint. This points to cultural issues within the game and an ineffective approach to listening to and acting on complaints relating to discrimination.

## CHAPTER 9

# Impact of discrimination on retention and wellbeing

# Chapter 9: Impact of discrimination on retention and wellbeing

## 9.1 Introduction

The survey data and the qualitative research point to the toll discrimination takes on both wellbeing and on player retention in cricket. We received lots of evidence that the culture of cricket can make the experience of playing, coaching, umpiring, or working in the administration and management of cricket uncomfortable, even toxic, for many people. Understandably, and despite a deep love of cricket in some cases, people choose to quit.

## 9.2 Impact of discrimination on loss of talent

People who had recently experienced discrimination were asked whether they had ever considered leaving the world of cricket as a result. The research considers players across all types of engagement with cricket, not just for those on the talent pathway or in the professional game.

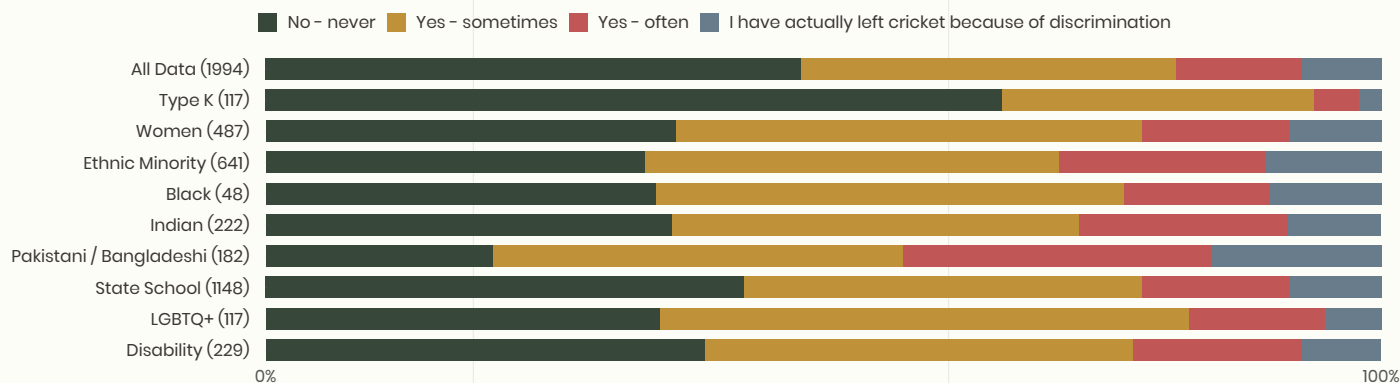
More than half of all those who experienced discrimination had considered leaving cricket 'sometimes', 'often', or had 'actually left' because of these experiences.

Not surprisingly, the loss of people is not evenly distributed: some groups are more likely to leave than others. Women and people who are educated in state school are both four times more likely to have left cricket because of discrimination than Type K respondents. People from ethnic minority backgrounds are five times more likely to have left cricket than Type K respondents, while people of Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritage, in particular, are more than seven times more likely to have left cricket than Type K respondents because of discrimination.

Many more have 'often' or 'sometimes' considered leaving cricket because of discrimination. Among both women and ethnic minorities, 54% have often or sometimes thought of leaving cricket, while among state school respondents, 48% have often or sometimes thought of leaving cricket because of discrimination. Similar numbers are found among LGBTQ+ (59%) and disabled (52%) people.

Figure 29: Percentage of people who have considered leaving cricket

Have you ever considered leaving the world of cricket because of racism, sexism, elitism or any other forms of discrimination?



Type K: White, straight, cisgender, privately educated men, with no disability

Unless actions and outcomes around EDI improve dramatically and quickly, the game will continue to underuse or lose people it can ill afford to do without.



Lack of opportunity to fulfil my potential. I was the leading wicket taker and had potential and attended County trials but would never get watched by the coaches from the start and so I stopped playing.

Asian (Pakistani) man, recreational player



[For] all of the reasons indicated within the survey, I will never return to the game and will not encourage others to take up the game either.

White man, state school, recreational player, county age group player



[There were] no opportunities for female athletes to be elite so had to take another career option. Changing in a positive way now.

White woman, former professional player



We did not progress our son through county cricket because of our experience.

White woman, parent/guardian, volunteer, board or committee member



Since the experience I had with my child who played 7 years at [First-Class County] junior, I have not put my younger one through this. I feel it's pointless as he would never compete with the system.

Asian (Pakistani) man, parent/guardian

We also heard that some people leave cricket because, while they have never personally experienced discrimination in the game, they witness it against others and do not wish to be part of a sport where such behaviour is tolerated.



It's not discrimination against me. But it's discrimination against others that I feel my continued involvement would tacitly condone. I can't be a part of it anymore.

*White man, recreational player, board or committee*

It is impossible to say with certainty, but it might be reasonable to assume that the perception of cricket as not being diverse and/or inclusive is also a factor driving the lack of uptake of the game in the first place.

## 9.3 Impact of discrimination on wellbeing

Beyond the loss of talented individuals, experiences of discrimination – especially when they are not handled satisfactorily – can take a severe toll on the health of victims. People suffer in silence and get demotivated. They are left with self-doubt and a sense of not being wanted, welcome or treated fairly because of factors beyond their control and for which there is no real recourse.



I totally lost my confidence. I could see I was performing well (better than almost everyone else) but I lost my self-belief. It's hard to keep believing in yourself if you get this negativity around you. I reported it and nothing was done. It made me feel anxious, low. I lost hope that things could change. It was getting so bad, I had no choice but to leave.

*Asian (Pakistani) man, former professional player, coach*



There was [a] clear motive to frustrate me, belittle my ability, promote their own and ensure I did not progress. [After multiple unsuccessful attempts to seek redress], finally, I gave up as I was in a losing battle. I was forced to quit umpiring by some people who still believe in [an] old racist mentality. I felt humiliated, suicidal and only the help of my wife kept me from taking the step.

*Asian (Indian) man, umpire*

Among people of South Asian heritage, the lack of progression, experiences of discrimination, and the mismanagement of complaints was said to lead keen cricketers to create their own separate cricket leagues. Respondents were clear that this is largely a response to exclusion.



Why else would there be an Asian cricket league? It's when our people see that they can't progress, they can't enjoy the game, [that] then they create their own environment to play the game they love, away from all the stresses, and with people who respect them.

*Asian (Indian) man, recreational player, coach, umpire*



Pakistanis and Indians totally dominate cricket among children. And then we drop off. There are studies to show this. And that's why we have our own leagues. If not for that, there would be no possibility for us to play at the right level.

*Asian (Pakistani) man, parent/guardian, recreational player, volunteer, staff member (at the ECB or County organisation)*





I don't want to play in an Asian League. We live in a multicultural society. Cricket should be for everyone. There should be no need to separate people by race in this day and age. You have to ask yourself how we got to this? It's not through choice.

*Asian (Pakistani) man, former professional player, coach*

## 9.4 Conclusions

The evidence from this research is clear: elitism, racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism and other forms of discrimination are impacting on performance and leading to a drain in cricket. This is true on and off the pitch. More than half of those who experienced discrimination considered leaving cricket 'sometimes', 'often', or 'actually left' because of these experiences. Many of the people who self-described as 'disabled' reported mental health difficulties that they attribute to their experiences in cricket.

The loss of people from the game is not evenly distributed: compared with Type K respondents, women and people who are educated in state school are both four times more likely to have left cricket because of discrimination; and people from ethnic minority backgrounds are five times more likely to have left cricket, with the greatest loss of talent being among Pakistani/Bangladeshi people, who are more than seven times more likely to have left cricket because of discrimination.

Experiences of discrimination lead to people disengaging from cricket. They also have more encompassing and damaging consequences on the lives of the victims. Participants spoke of how their self-confidence and self-esteem have been crushed, leading to anxiety, depression and, in the most extreme cases, to suicidal thoughts, feelings and ideas.

## CHAPTER 10

# Lack of professionalism in cricket

# Chapter 10: Lack of professionalism in cricket

## 10.1 Introduction

The report makes plain the extent of discrimination in English and Welsh cricket. It paints a damning picture of a sport where, in particular, sexism, racism, elitism, homophobia, and ableism are common, and exist across all types of engagement with cricket. It also shows that many people think that these issues are much worse in cricket than in other team sports.

This chapter looks at some of the conditions respondents believed enable this situation to persist, despite the toll it takes on victims of discrimination and its contribution to the loss of people from cricket itself. These conditions suggest that there exists what may be described as 'lack of professionalism' in leadership and management within cricket which, in turn, allows institutional and cultural barriers to equity and inclusion to remain in place without sufficient challenge.

## 10.2 Core competencies in modern management are lacking

Many people who work in cricket are volunteers: they are driven by a love of the game and wish to contribute in their spare time, without being financially compensated for their work. They perform a diverse range of roles, for instance staffing tuck shops, coaching children in local clubs, umpiring, or sitting on the Boards of county cricket clubs. While it may be unreasonable to expect the highest standards of professionalism from all volunteers, it is nevertheless useful to consider some of the core principles and competencies that everyone involved in cricket – whether they are paid professionals or unpaid volunteers – should aspire to and be helped to achieve.

Various theories of modern management and inclusive leadership exist. Their emphases differ but all stress the need for some core competencies. These typically include technical expertise and skills; integrity; objectivity and transparency; accountability and redress; respect and care; fairness and inclusion; and cognizance of personal, institutional, and systemic biases.

Evidence from this research shows that most of these core competencies are lacking across the game. We discuss those in turn.

### 10.2.1 Technical expertise and skills

This pertains to the mastery of the specific tasks a person is expected to be able to perform in their role. In cricket, technical expertise and knowledge of the game are in plentiful supply. Knowledge of cricket and prior participation in the game (ideally at a high level) are said to be critical factors in securing roles, particularly in the professional game. We received evidence to indicate, however, that this narrow emphasis on technical expertise and experience of playing cricket can mean that senior leadership teams lack other competencies that are necessary to professionally manage the modern game. Of immediate relevance is the fact, often reported by survey respondents, that many people involved in cricket lack core competencies in relation to EDI safeguarding, mental wellbeing, community engagement and community development.



Professional male paid players allowed to pursue female cricketers, when concerns were raised, I was advised there is no safeguarding and the females were fair game.

*White woman, recreational player, parent/guardian, volunteer, Board or committee member*

## 10.2.2 Integrity

Integrity refers here to the fact that leaders and managers should not be beholden to organisations, people and interests that influence their decisions; that there should be no favouritism or nepotism anywhere in modern, well-run organisations.

In this research, cricket was often described as a 'closed shop', dominated by an 'old boys' network', by 'cricketing schools' and 'cricketing families', where coaches select and promote people based on who they know. Hundreds of survey participants provided detailed examples revealing that opportunities to play, coach, umpire, work or lead in cricket – and how far one will progress – continue to be determined by factors unrelated to merit. These research participants believe that the game and its administration are too often compromised by favouritism and nepotism. In other words, they lack integrity.



Structures and networks designed on the basis of who you know, rather than on performance or ability.

*White man, recreational player, volunteer, board or committee member, official or umpire*



One only has to look at the number of state school players and compare it with private schools in the current England team and top county teams to know how difficult it is for kids from state schools to get into higher levels in cricket. [...] More training and match opportunities mean that private school kids end up gaining the edge. Add to this the homogeneity-led groupthink and we have a perfect recipe for divisiveness. Captains giving preferential treatment to their own private school's mates when it comes to batting or bowling order in games, having net sessions together, and segregating others. This is made worse by the fact that it is almost considered an acceptable behaviour and ignored by coaches, managers and training staff. Favouritism and nepotism are rife and at the heart of this divisive culture.

*Asian (Indian) man, parent/guardian, volunteer*



Not being part of a cricketing family [is a disadvantage]. Families dominate cricket and not being part of a family can make you feel an outsider and limit opportunities.

*White (man, recreational player)*

## 10.2.3 Objectivity and transparency

In modern professional organisations, leaders and managers are expected to act and take decisions using the best evidence available, without discrimination or bias, and with transparency.

Research participants have provided detailed examples of cases where they felt that objective and transparent criteria were not used to recruit, select, and progress people. For instance, one of the most common types of lived experience of discrimination reported across all groups was 'feeling undervalued compared to people of equal competence', which points to lack of objectivity. Issues were reported by and about people who play cricket as well as those who coach, officiate and work in cricket, at all levels. In qualitative answers, decisions were often said to depend on the judgement of single individuals or of groups of colleagues who share the same profile and may not be attuned to issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion. Research participants have shared countless examples where factors other than talent, ability or 'merit' are considered, including but not restricted to assumptions and stereotypes

made about people based on their demographic and socio-economic profile. Within the professional game, there was a desire from participants to establish objective and transparent criteria for the selection and progression of players, coaches and umpires, and to have diverse panels responsible for their implementation.



No record is kept of the kids' performance at [First-Class County]. Decisions on their future are taken exclusively by White coaches (there is not a single non-White coach and zero Black players) and the feedback from the school coaches.

*Asian (Indian), woman, parent/guardian, county age player*



There's no objectivity or transparency. You can't challenge decisions because the criteria are not clear and therefore not open to scrutiny and challenge if one feels that they have not been applied fairly.

*Asian (Pakistani) man, parent/guardian, recreational player, coach*

One participant did provide an example of a clear process and explicit criteria being used in player selection, to reduce subjectivity and improve transparency.



To select teams for the 1st and 2nd team, there have been occasions when a captain, who at the time was the sole selector of his team, would choose "lesser" players who happened to be their friends. Now we have a 5 man selection committee made up [of] the 1st and 2nd team Captains and Deputies, plus a Chairman who has the casting vote. This is backed up by rules on selection, i.e. the 1st team Captain can initially select players for the 1st team pool and any excess 1st team players, these are automatically selected for the 2nd team. If the 1st team is short, then the 1st team captain can select from the 2nd team pool but has to justify why that person is selected and not just because he is a friend. That selected person must be guaranteed to play a part in the 1st team and not just to field, not bowl and bat at 11. There is also consideration taken on how strong the 1st team needs to be against the opposition, especially if the 2nd team has a tough game and the 1st team is taking its best players when they are not really needed. In many ways, the Chairman has the veto. Whilst not totally rigid, the Chairman is normally a 'non player'.

*White man, staff member (at the ECB or County organisation), Board or committee member*

## 10.2.4 Accountability and redress

Accountability refers to the need to proactively ensure that everyone is held accountable for their decisions and behaviours, that clear and adequate procedures are followed, and that redress is available in cases where systems, procedures or behaviours fall short of expectations.

The lack of objectivity and transparency described by research participants makes it difficult to ensure accountability. We have also seen that the majority of lived experiences of discrimination have not been reported because victims or witnesses do not know how and where to report incidents, because they do not trust that their complaints will be addressed effectively, and because they fear victimisation. Those who do report issues in the game feel that these are rarely addressed satisfactorily. This is further evidence of widespread issues around accountability and redress.

## 10.2.5 Respect and care

Treating each person engaged in an organisation or within a sport with respect and care – regardless of their background or position – is a hallmark of professional management. It is incumbent on leaders and managers to create environments that promote psychological safety and trust. It is not unreasonable to assume that cricket organisations have a ‘duty of care’<sup>26</sup> – at least in a moral sense, if not always in a legal sense – towards children, young people and adults involved in cricket as players, coaches, officials, staff or in other ancillary roles (e.g. physiotherapists, volunteers). Coaches, in particular, exert a great deal of power over players and should be expected to demonstrate respect, care, fairness and inclusion.

According to the evidence we have gathered, however, cricket regularly falls short. We heard time and again of instances where individuals and organisations failed in their (moral) duty of care. Research participants describe multiple cases of bullying, verbal abuse, physical threats, sexual misconduct, and mental health concerns that were reported but not properly investigated and acted upon.<sup>27</sup>



**There is just no awareness of safeguarding, no effort to promote this, to make people take responsibility for looking after one another in a healthy, professional way. Some of the coaches normalise bullying. They use it almost as a coaching technique.**

*Asian (Pakistani) man, coach*

## 10.2.6 Fairness and inclusion

As the evidence presented throughout this report shows, in many cases, cricket is yet to develop core competencies in relation to EDI. Despite numerous initiatives to diversify cricket, from the perspective of some of our respondents, a consistent understanding of what Equity, Diversity and Inclusion mean, why they matter, and how to increase them seems to be lacking. There is also, we were told, little appreciation of the fact that successfully managing EDI would help increase participation in cricket and improve both performance and talent retention.



**There is no understanding at all of equity: that different groups have different experiences and needs so you might have to address that to make it more inclusive. If talented kids don't have the money to play, do you just leave them out and try to help them play and develop? Generally, we need to remove the barriers that stop people playing, enjoying the game and working in cricket.**

*White man, coach, former professional player*



**Ignorance. No knowledge of other cultures. No curiosity to even find out. People work off stereotypes and assumptions. They would not have the confidence to even ask questions so that they can find out what it's like.**

*Black (Caribbean) man, umpire*

<sup>26</sup> Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson (2017) Duty of Care in Sport. Independent Report to Government [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/610130/Duty\\_of\\_Care\\_Review\\_-\\_April\\_2017\\_\\_2.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/610130/Duty_of_Care_Review_-_April_2017__2.pdf)

<sup>27</sup> The research participants were only people aged 16 and over. This means that we have no direct data on the lived experiences of children, only evidence as perceived by parents/guardians, or reported by coaches. Given the experiences uncovered among adults in this research, it would be important to gather systematic evidence on safeguarding among children and young people under 16 in future work. As young people progress on the talent pathway, they inevitably become more dependent on coaches' approval and support, and therefore more vulnerable to misconduct. Some adults we heard from specifically said that they had never discussed their negative experiences outside of the current research – largely because of shame and not wanting to upset others. It is safe to imagine that many children would often not reveal their experiences either.



All boxes are ticked but we're left with nowhere to go as the main issue, racism, is circumvented. Certainly feels like this is to stop 'many like you' from entering the game.

*Asian (Indian) man, coach, recreational player, parent/guardian*

This was also clear in the responses from people who have no lived experiences of discrimination to survey questions that asked participants what the ECB should do to increase equity, diversity and inclusion in cricket. Answers revealed that EDI sometimes continues to be perceived as a 'problem', a 'tick box' exercise 'done' for 'tokenistic' reasons.

## 10.2.7 Cognizance of personal, institutional, and systemic biases

Professional leaders and managers in modern organisations should be cognizant of personal and organisational blind spots that act as barriers to equity, diversity and inclusion. They should be mindful of personal biases (such as the tendency to seek out and value people similar to oneself) and implicit stereotypes and attitudes. They should also be attuned to institutional biases, such as confirmation bias and groupthink,<sup>28</sup> and systemic or structural biases that impact on their organisation.

The evidence in this research shows that people in leadership positions, and especially Type K respondents (White, straight, cisgender, privately educated men, who reported no disability), often lack such cognizance. While there are certainly Type K individuals who are self-aware and knowledgeable about EDI, as a group, they consistently and significantly underestimate the scale of the issues faced by women and peers from minority groups in cricket.

Beyond lack of cognizance of the scale of the challenges in the game, there are also pockets of active resistance to change. We heard how some White people feel victimised by the drive towards greater diversity and inclusion. Some say that 'the balance has tilted too far the other way'; that 'dwelling' on matters of discrimination any longer could further damage the game; that the meritocracy of cricket is under threat; and some call to put an end to what they see as a 'woke' agenda in cricket.



Avoid discrimination against White men or positive discrimination towards non-White men.

*White man, recreational player*



Treat everyone the same. Do not now start with positive discrimination e.g making a point of penalising middle-class White boys for the sake of appeasing someone else. Judge and give opportunities based on talent and talent alone!!!!

*White woman, parent/guardian*



Draw a line under it all, describe the plan for the future and move on. Dwelling on this subject too long will cause more damage.

*White man, recreational player, parent/guardian, volunteer, board or committee, coach*



Don't bow to the scourge of wokeness. Yes, there are isolated cases that need to be dealt with, but 99.9% of people couldn't care less about a person's gender, sexual orientation, skin colour, etc. Also, apologise for the reprehensible way Ollie Robinson and Michael Vaughan have been treated!!!

*White man, recreational player, volunteer, board or committee, coach, official or umpire*

<sup>28</sup> Deloitte Australia (2012), Inclusive leadership: Will a hug do?, March 2012, p. 2, <http://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/au/Documents/human-capital/deloitte-au-hcdiversity-inclusive-leadership-hug-0312.pdf>.

### 10.3 Lack of representation in leadership roles

A large body of evidence shows that having a diverse leadership team, in both executive and non-executive roles, contributes to organisational success. Diversity of life experiences, backgrounds, and professional perspectives is essential to having the right set of skills to formulate the right strategic vision, provide insights into potential inequalities, act as critical friends, suggest and test innovations, and so on. This is especially the case where there are issues around lack of equity, diversity and inclusion, as is the case in cricket.

A consistent theme in the responses to the survey and the qualitative research is that leaders and senior managers in cricket constitute an ‘old boys’ network’ and a ‘closed shop’ for talent from diverse communities seeking to contribute their skills and experience. Moreover, women, people from ethnic minority backgrounds, people educated in state schools, LGBTQ+ and disabled people who are involved in leadership roles report multiple challenges. They say that they are frequently ignored and sidelined; that they encounter resistance and hostility when they draw attention to potential inequities or put forward recommendations to drive EDI; that some of their peers are only interested in diversity initiatives because they attract funding; that stereotypical assumptions are often made about women and people from diverse minority groups; and that inappropriate language and behaviours are still common.

### 10.4 Conclusions

While people involved in leadership and managerial roles typically share a deep love and knowledge of cricket, our research has indicated that they do not always manage the game in a professional manner, with appropriate transparency, accountability, due regard for safeguarding everyone’s wellbeing, etc. It is clear that leaders and senior managers (as exemplified by Type K respondents) are often not cognizant of the experiences of discrimination among women and people from diverse minority groups in cricket. Professionalising and diversifying the management of the game represents one of several steps necessary to change the culture of the sport as a whole.



## CHAPTER 11

# Perceptions of leadership and 'good practice'

# Chapter 11: Perceptions of leadership and ‘good practice’

## 11.1 Introduction

The survey inquired into participants’ views on leadership and governance in cricket. This section covered respondents’ views on the effectiveness of the current leadership in relation to EDI. It also gauged people’s awareness and perceptions of various initiatives designed to improve EDI in cricket. Issues of leadership and governance, as well as views on good practice, were also discussed in the qualitative research.

## 11.2 Perceptions of the effectiveness of cricket’s leadership on EDI

The survey looked at six different dimensions of cricket’s leadership in relation to EDI, to identify where leadership is perceived to be doing well and where it is seen as requiring further improvement. For all dimensions, the analysis looked at differences between categories of respondents based on demographic groups as well as on various intersectional groups.

On all dimensions, Type K respondents (White, straight, cisgender, privately educated men, who reported no disability) have much more positive perceptions than participants with other demographic profiles.

### 11.2.1 Seriousness of commitment to EDI

Respondents were asked to what extent they agree or disagree that EDI is taken very seriously across the cricket sector. Overall, 50% ‘agree’ (‘strongly’ or ‘somewhat’) that EDI is taken very seriously in cricket. But there are significant differences between groups.

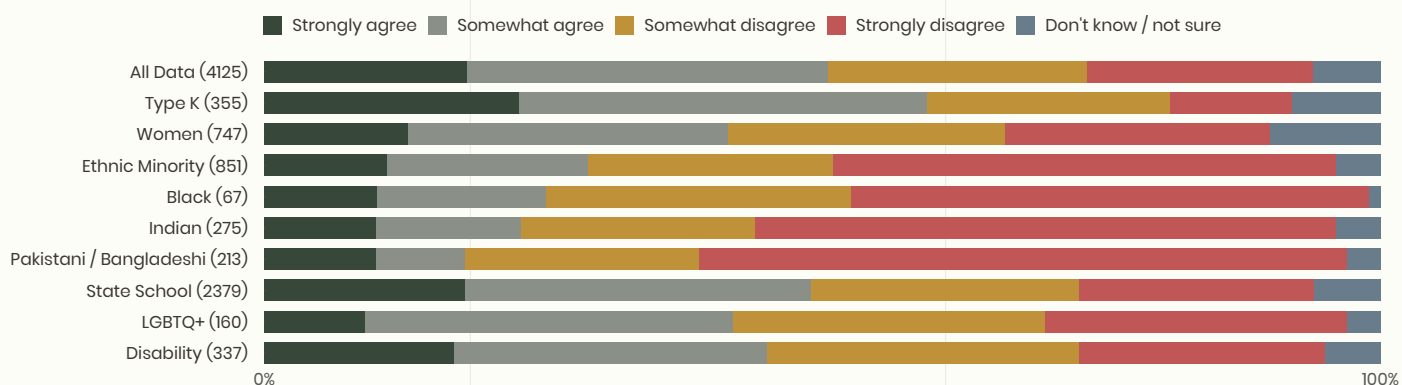
While 60% of Type K respondents believe that EDI is taken very seriously, only 42% of women, 29% of people from ethnic minority backgrounds, 49% of those educated in state schools, 42% of LGBTQ+ respondents and 45% of those with a disability share this view.

The strongest disagreement is found among ethnic minority people, especially Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, among whom more than three-quarters disagree (often ‘strongly’) that EDI is taken very seriously in cricket.

**Figure 30: Percentage of people who believe diversity, inclusion and equity are taken very seriously across the cricket sector**

*How strongly do you agree with this statement?*

*'Diversity, Inclusion and Equity are taken very seriously across the cricket sector'*



*Type K: White, straight, cisgender, privately educated men, with no disability*



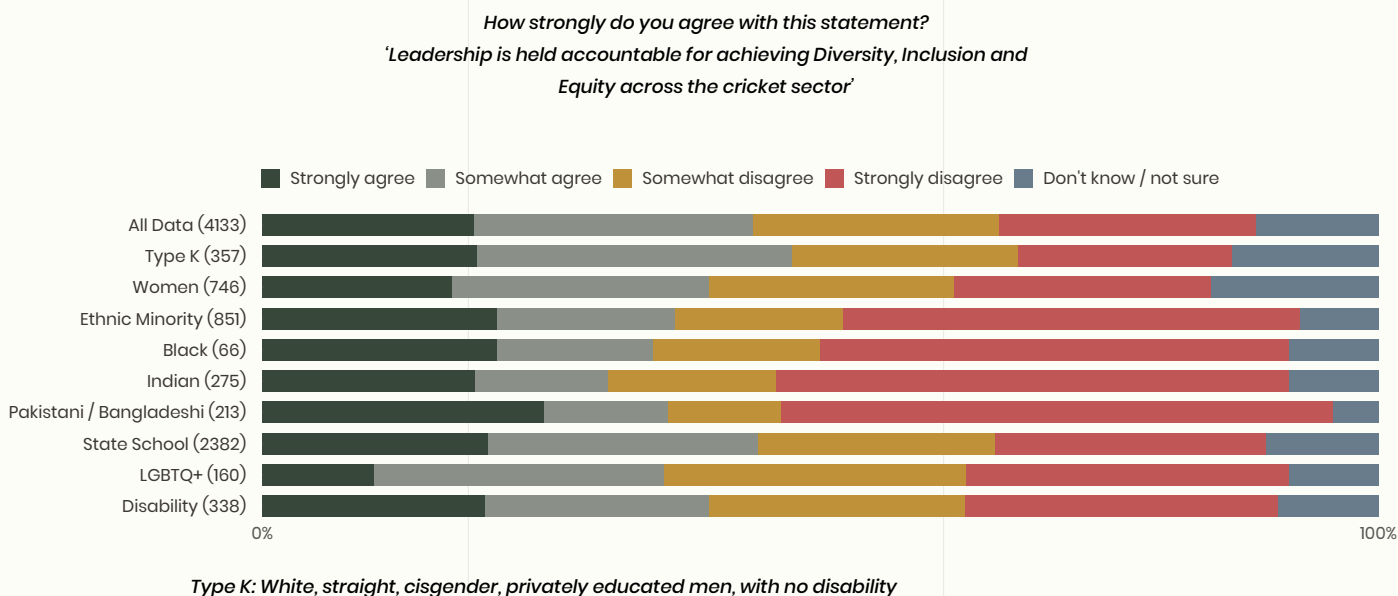
If you looked at the ECB's website, you'd think that diversity is so important! All sorts of mission statements and strategies and action plans. But the gap between the discourse and the reality is still huge.

*Asian (Pakistani) man, coach, former professional player*

## 11.2.2 Accountability of leadership

Respondents were asked to what extent they agree or disagree that leadership is held accountable for achieving EDI across the cricket sector. Across all groups, fewer than half of respondents believe that leadership is held accountable for achieving EDI in the sector. More than two-fifths (41%) of ethnic minority people strongly disagree, while about a quarter of women (23%), people educated in state school (24%), LGBTQ+ people (29%), and disabled respondents (28%) also strongly disagree.

**Figure 31: Percentage of people who believe leadership is held accountable for achieving diversity, inclusion and equity across the cricket sector**

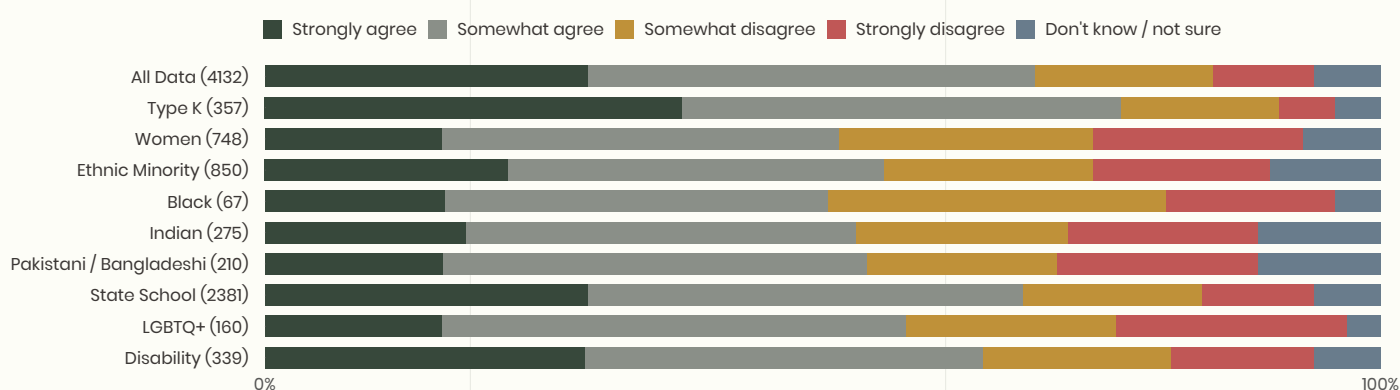


### 11.2.3 Efforts to ensure women are well represented at all levels

Respondents were asked to what extent they agree or disagree that significant efforts are made to ensure that women are well represented at all levels of the cricket world. Overall, a strong majority of people engaged in cricket believe that significant efforts are made around gender diversity: 69% of all respondents and 76% of Type K respondents agree with this statement. Women, however, are significantly less likely to agree with this statement: 52% agree while 42% disagree.

**Figure 32: Percentage of people who agree or disagree that significant efforts are made to ensure women are well represented at all levels of cricket**

*How strongly do you agree or disagree with this statement?  
'Significant efforts are made to ensure that women are well represented  
at all levels of the cricket world'*

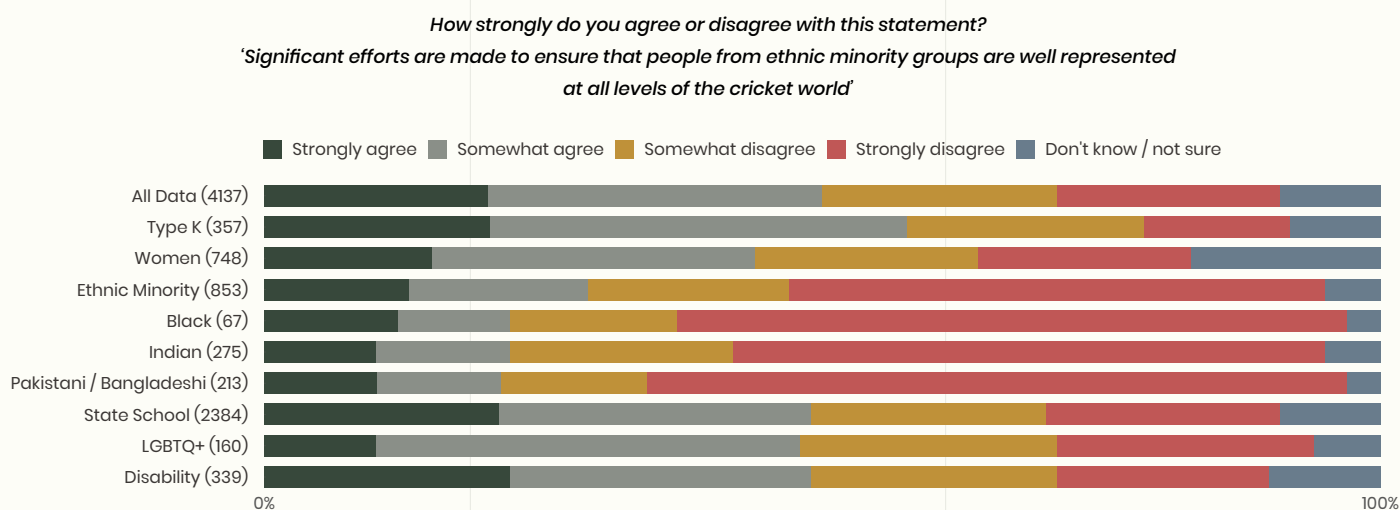


*Type K: White, straight, cisgender, privately educated men, with no disability*

## 11.2.4 Efforts to ensure ethnic minorities are well represented at all levels

Respondents were asked to what extent they agree or disagree that significant efforts are made to ensure that people from ethnic minority groups are well represented at all levels of the cricket world. Half of all survey participants believe that significant efforts are made to ensure such representation, increasing to 57% among Type K respondents. This is almost twice as many as those from diverse ethnic minority backgrounds, of whom 29% agree with the statement. In fact, around three-quarters of all Black, Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi people disagree that significant efforts are made to ensure people from ethnic minorities are well represented at all levels.

**Figure 33: Percentage of people who agree or disagree that significant efforts are made to ensure people from ethnic minorities are well represented at all levels of cricket**

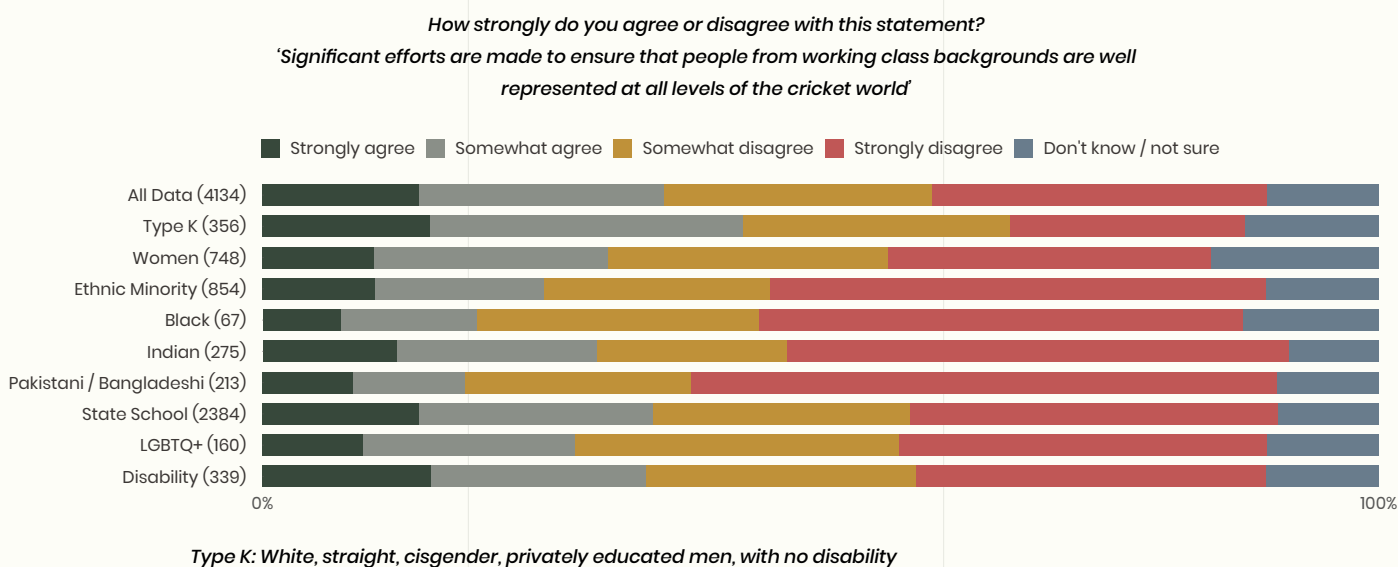


*Type K: White, straight, cisgender, privately educated men, with no disability*

## 11.2.5 Efforts to ensure people from working-class backgrounds are well represented at all levels

Respondents were asked the same question in relation to efforts to ensure that people from working class backgrounds are well represented at all levels of the cricket world. There is a general view that elitism is not tackled in the game. Only about a third (36%) of all survey participants believe that significant efforts are made to ensure working class representation at all levels. Even among Type K respondents, fewer than half (43%) agree with this statement, while among people educated in state schools, 35% agree and 56% disagree with the statement.

**Figure 34: Percentage of people who agree or disagree that significant efforts are made to ensure people from working class backgrounds are well represented at all levels of cricket**



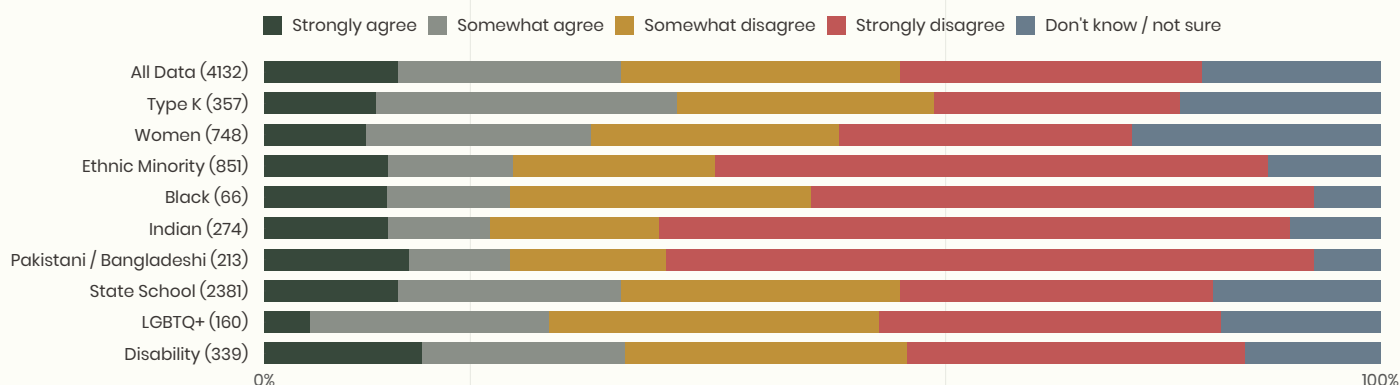
## 11.2.6 Perceptions of ECB leaders as role models in relation to EDI

Finally, respondents were asked to what extent they agree or disagree that leaders at the ECB are role models in relation to EDI. A sizeable minority of respondents (16%) feel unable to comment on whether leaders at the ECB act as role models in relation to EDI.

Among those who express an opinion, a significantly greater proportion disagree than agree with the statement (52% compared with 32%). Ethnic minority respondents are by far the most likely to disagree. The majority of people of Indian descent (56%) and of Pakistani/Bangladeshi descent (58%) strongly disagree that ECB leaders are role models in relation to EDI.

**Figure 35 Percentage of people who agree or disagree that the leaders at the ECB are role models in relation to diversity, inclusion, and equity**

*How strongly do you agree or disagree with this statement?  
'Leaders at the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) are role models in  
relation to Diversity, Inclusion and Equity'*



*Type K: White, straight, cisgender, privately educated men, with no disability*

## 10.2.7 Perceptions of leadership on EDI in different areas of the game

The survey enquired into perceptions in different areas of the game – at club level, in cricket leagues, national counties, first-class counties, and within the ECB itself. The differences are not marked, but leaders at club level are marginally more likely to be seen as understanding and recognising the importance of EDI in cricket, while leaders in national counties, county cricket and first-class counties are seen as the least aware of the importance of EDI.



# 11.3 Initiatives or ‘good practice’ to drive up EDI in cricket

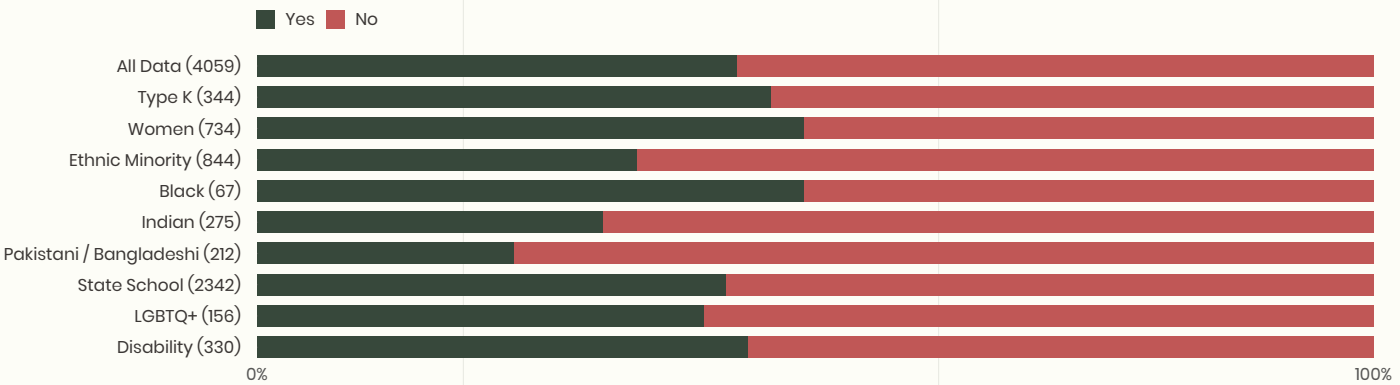
## 11.3.1 Awareness of initiatives and ‘good practice’

Survey participants were asked if they were aware of specific initiatives, or ‘good practice’, to make cricket more accessible, inclusive and equitable for women, people from ethnic minority groups, people from working-class backgrounds and other minority groups.

Overall, almost half (43%) of all survey participants were aware of at least one initiative or one case of ‘good practice’ in this area. Awareness was highest among women and black people (49% in both groups), followed by Type K respondents (46%), disabled people (44%), people educated in state schools (42%), LGBTQ+ people (40%), Indians (31%) and, lastly, among Pakistanis and Bangladeshis (23%).

Figure 36: Percentage of people who are aware of any initiatives or ‘good practice’

Are you aware of any initiatives or ‘good practice’ that are successful at making cricket more accessible, inclusive and equitable for women, people from ethnic minority groups, people from working class backgrounds and other groups?



Type K: White, straight, cisgender, privately educated men, with no disability

Participants mentioned a total of 27 different initiatives aimed at improving EDI in cricket. A short description of each initiative can be found in Appendix F. Attitudes towards all cricket initiatives aimed at increasing diversity and inclusion are overwhelmingly positive: everyone (regardless of background) feels that this is both needed and successful.



ACE is a new programme I have recently come across precisely set up to address the lack of African and Caribbean representation in cricket at all levels. From my point of view, this is a vital programme – that shouldn’t exist if the cricket world was fair, equal, diverse, open and transparent.

Multiple ethnic groups (White and Black African) woman, state school, volunteer, recreational player, parent



The All Stars initiative run by the ECB was brilliant in pulling new kids into the game. It’s how my son entered and helped his development and inclusion into our local club brilliantly.

Asian (Pakistani) man, state school, parent



The Hundred was an example of cricketers of both sexes being showcased which inspired my kids, e.g. I have a young son who takes part in Dynamos and now has both male and female heroes in the game. At Dynamos sessions our club handed out player cards which got the kids excited about it all.

*White (Other) woman, state school, parent/guardian, volunteer*



Lord's Taverners, Inner City Cricket. Giving opportunities to ethnic minority groups to challenge themselves at a higher level.

*South Asian man, state school, recreational player, volunteer, coach*



This Girl Can, Cricket All Stars. My daughter started playing cricket at a local club aged 9 due to these and has played at county level for the last 3 years.

*South Asian woman, state school, parent*



MCC Foundation hubs – fabulous for developing young talent in areas without significant funding. County disability cricket – the most welcoming environment I've been involved with within cricket.

*White (other) Jewish man, private school, recreational player, staff member (at the ECB or County organisation), volunteer, coach, official*



[Dream] Big Desi Women by ECB – getting more South Asian females involved in cricket, helping to boost their confidence, self-esteem and access to different courses to develop their knowledge and skills.

*South Asian woman, state school, staff member (at the ECB or County organisation)*

Most of the initiatives mentioned focus on increasing diversity and inclusion at the recreational level.

## 11.3.2 Confidence in the ECB's leadership and strategy on EDI

Participants were asked for their wider views about, and confidence in, the ECB's strategic plan to grow cricket in England and Wales: Inspiring Generations. Participants were also asked for their views about specific initiatives to improve equity in the game (such as the South Asian Action Plan and the Transforming Women's and Girls' Cricket Action Plan).

Overall, women and people from minority groups believe that the strategy and related action plans are aiming in the right direction and that they contain many of the right measures. However, the large majority remain unconvinced that the ECB will succeed in transforming the game, for the reasons set out at 11.3.3 to 11.3.5.

## 11.3.3 Lack of confidence in the leadership

The ECB is not thought to have a deep enough understanding of EDI or a genuine enough commitment to it to make the necessary change. Respondents feel that the plan will only be as good as the people charged with implementing it, enforcing it, and monitoring its impact (through clear KPIs), so that leaders can learn what works and what doesn't, for whom, and adapt accordingly. But confidence in cricket leaders, as demonstrated above, remains low.



Yes, the plan itself can work but it needs strong leadership first.

*South Asian gay man, Board member and coach*



If the plan is more of a wish list rather than realistic it will not be implementable and will therefore fail. There is also a major issue in that the plan will only succeed if the people it is aimed at/implemented by believe in the plan and abide by the plans rules/requirements.

*White man, coach, umpire, Board member, state school*



It will need key performance indicators reported on over time to demonstrate the progress. It needs to be a continuous improvement programme.

*White man, coach, state school*

### 11.3.4 Initiatives make a positive difference, but the culture of cricket as a whole needs to change

Respondents emphasised that, whilst initiatives do make a positive difference, the culture of cricket needs to change throughout the game for such initiatives to make a real impact. Attracting new talent that fails to progress (because of the culture of the sport) will not lead to cricket genuinely changing in a positive way.



It's a root and branch issue: it's the whole culture that needs to change, at all levels, up and down the country. Even though it is good to have some targeted initiatives, it will take more than that to change the culture. It needs to come from the top and have teeth. Zero tolerance. Transparency. A lot of good work is happening to increase the number of girls and women, South Asians and children from state schools [playing cricket]. But how far do they go, if they want to progress? That's the issue for our community.

*Asian (Pakistani) man, coach, former professional player*

### 11.3.5 The strategy needs to be more widely publicised to be effective.

Many had not heard about Inspiring Generations and had not seen any change in their local clubs, which diminished their confidence in the strategy's effectiveness.



It looks good on paper, but I have not heard anyone talking about it. The plan isn't very well publicised and known. It is my first time seeing it. Therefore, to achieve people's knowledge and understanding, there needs to be communication with all stakeholders and ongoing reinforcement. There should be local and regional champions to ensure delivery of the project. [...] People who experience discrimination need to be confident that they can report it and it will be taken seriously.

*White woman, LGBTQ+, official, state school*



I have not noticed any difference in how my son's clubs are being run and I have not seen anything come directly to me as a parent.

*Woman, Mixed/Other ethnic heritage, parent/guardian*

# 11.4 Conclusions

Overall, leaders in cricket are seen to be making considerable efforts to drive up diversity and inclusion – as evidenced by a variety of initiatives that are known and deeply appreciated – but they are still perceived to lack a serious commitment to EDI. While Type K respondents – likely to correspond demographically with many in the game’s leadership and management – tend to believe that cricket is meritocratic, that equity, diversity and inclusion are core values in the game, and that everyone has the same sense of belonging and opportunities to be themselves regardless of their backgrounds, the people whom initiatives are designed to support do not share the same positive perceptions. They believe that the culture of cricket as a whole needs to change.

For all the reasons evidenced throughout the report, many women, people from ethnic minority groups, LGBTQ+ people, disabled people, and many of those who attended state schools have yet to feel that cricket leaders truly understand their concerns and are genuinely committed to both driving out discrimination and creating equal opportunities for all.

# CHAPTER 12

## Conclusions

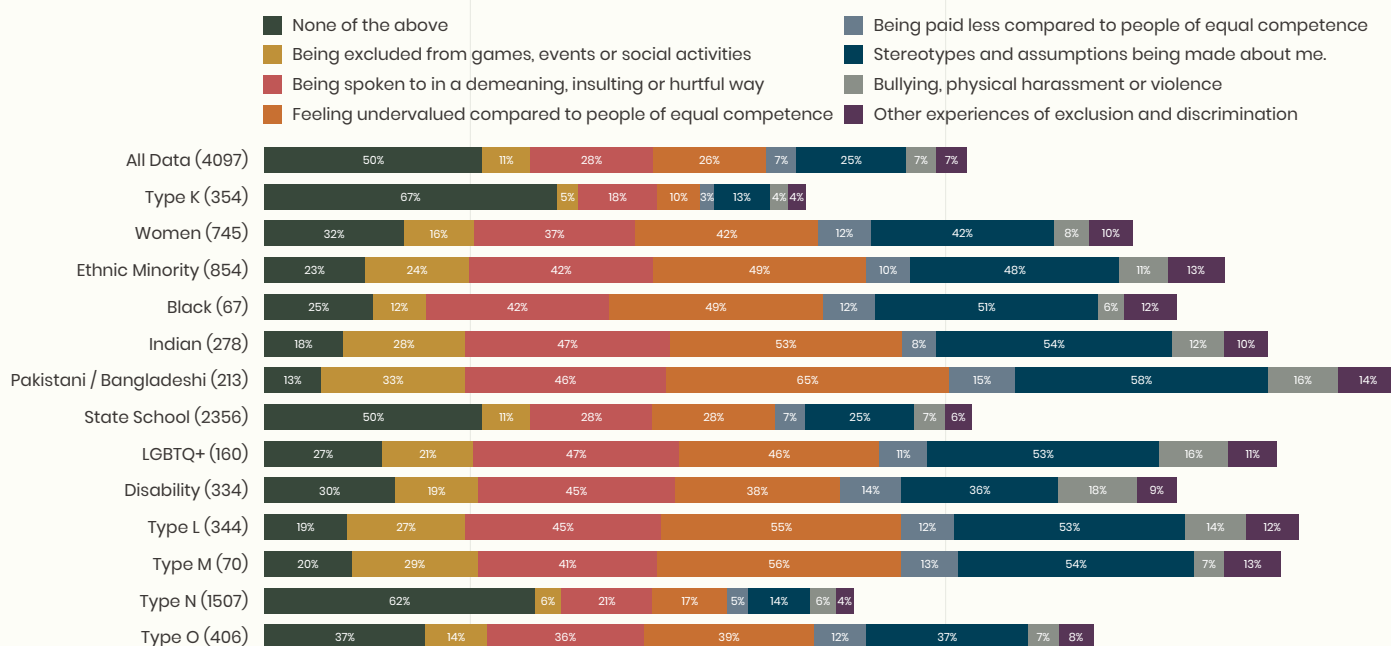
# Chapter 12: Conclusions

In total, 4,156 people across England and Wales completed the 'Equity in Cricket' online survey. More than 50 of them subsequently took part in in-depth qualitative research, either online or by telephone. In all research formats, the verbatim answers respondents gave were unusually rich, and often too detailed to be reported without disclosing the identity of the respondents. People had much to say, and they wanted to be heard.

Exactly half (50%) of all respondents reported some form of discrimination in the past five years. Among women and people from diverse minority groups, the figure is much higher still. People of Pakistani/Bangladeshi heritage are by far the most likely to describe being discriminated against (87% in the past five years), followed by people of Indian heritage (82%), Black people (75%), LGBTQ+ people (73%), disabled people (70%) and women (68%). By contrast, just 33% of Type K respondents report being discriminated against.

**Figure 37: Intergroup comparison of recent experiences of personal discrimination**

*Over the past five years, have you personally experienced any of the following?*



*Type K: White, straight, cisgender, privately educated men, with no disability*

*Type L: Non-White men, state school educated*

*Type M: Non-White women, state school educated*

*Type N: White men, state school educated*

*Type O: White women, state school educated*

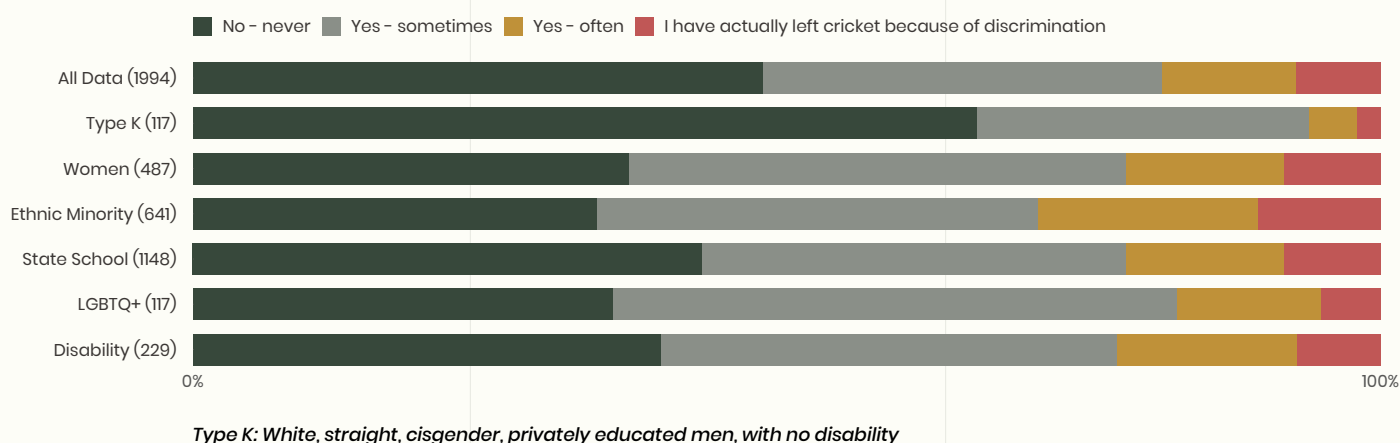
The report provides robust evidence to document the combined disadvantages linked to the intersection of sex, race, and class (as well as other protected characteristics). On all measures, ethnic minority women who attended state schools had the worst experiences and most negative perceptions. The analysis also highlights an intersectional advantage: the positive experiences and perceptions that come from being a man with no 'protected characteristics' and from being educated in private schools. A gulf often exists in people's lived experiences in cricket based on their socio-demographic and socio-economic profile, which undermines the notion that cricket is currently meritocratic or a game for everyone.

Across all groups, the main types of direct, personal discrimination are stereotypes and assumptions being made about people, feeling undervalued compared to people of equal competence, and being spoken to in a demeaning, insulting or hurtful way. We also heard how being excluded from games, events and social activities, and bullying, physical harassment and violence are part of life for many people engaged with cricket. The nature of the stereotypes and assumptions, the reasons why people feel undervalued, the specific abusive words being used, the grounds for exclusion, and so on, vary between groups. However, their cumulative impact is always damaging, both for the individuals involved and for the game of cricket.

The research makes clear how a combination of systemic, institutional and personal forms of discrimination leads to the loss of people across all types of engagement with the game. Most women and people from diverse minority groups in the sample have either considered leaving the world of cricket, or actually left cricket, specifically because of racism, sexism, elitism, homophobia and ableism (along with other forms of discrimination).

**Figure 38: Intergroup comparison of impact on discrimination on talent retention**

*Have you ever considered leaving the world of cricket because of racism, sexism, elitism or any other forms of discrimination?*



Four key factors were emphasised by our respondents as underpinning the experiences of discrimination described throughout this report:

- i) **Lack of leadership:** There is a perception, voiced by our research participants, that the ECB has not been effective at setting high expectations and standards for EDI across the game, and at providing the necessary guidance, training and tools, complaints procedures, or data and evidence, to both promote inclusion and eradicate discrimination from the game. For many, this makes bold mission statements feel hollow and tokenistic. There is very little confidence among women and people from diverse minority groups in cricket's leadership in relation to EDI. Across all these groups, many think that leaders are not seriously committed to EDI, that efforts to increase gender, ethnic and class diversity at all levels are not sufficient, and that there is insufficient accountability. Few think of ECB leaders as role models in relation to EDI.

- ii) **Lack of professionalism in management:** Cricket leaders, managers and coaches undoubtedly possess a great deal of technical expertise, skills and experience in relation to the game itself. However, according to our respondents, they often fall short in other respects. We heard, for example, that: favouritism and nepotism are common; unstated and subjective criteria can too easily subvert the opportunities for women and people from minority groups; there are too many instances where basic respect and care are not shown, especially but not exclusively towards women and people from diverse minority groups; perpetrators of discrimination and abuse are not held accountable for their behaviours; and redress mechanisms are not trusted and/or effective. Survey respondents also often described feeling that those in positions of power and authority in cricket are neither mindful of their own biases nor cognizant of the experiences and needs of women and people from minority groups. Indeed, notably, for every single issue explored in the research, Type K respondents (White men, educated in private schools, who are straight, cisgender and did not report any disability) – likely to correspond demographically with many in the game's leadership and management – were found collectively to have a much more positive view of the state of EDI than the rest of the research participants.
- iii) **Systemic and institutional forms of discrimination:** While cricket is offered in some state schools and through local cricket clubs, and is played by young people of all backgrounds, respondents often emphasised the fact that it remains a sport in which attending private school is likely to have a disproportionate effect on your chances of progressing in the game. This is because, we heard, the talent pathway is so bound up with the private school network that it makes it much more difficult to access for people outside of that network. The development of inclusive initiatives within club cricket has had a positive impact on diversity in recreational cricket, but players will continue to be lost to the game unless greater efforts are made to develop talent from all backgrounds through the age groups and to change the culture of cricket.
- iv) **The culture of cricket:** While respondents from demographic groups likely to overlap closely with those in positions of power and authority within the game tend to feel that cricket is meritocratic and equitable, this view is not held by those women and people from diverse minority groups who participated in our research. We received much evidence to suggest that those who do not conform to the 'typical' image of a cricketer (or someone involved in the game) can struggle to fit in, to have a sense that they belong and to be themselves. We were also told by some respondents about a culture in which abuse and denigrating behaviour towards women and those from diverse minority groups can go unchecked. It is perhaps for this reason that women and people from many of these minority groups feel that cricket is less diverse and inclusive than other team sports.

The concerns reported to us in relation to EDI in the game of cricket exist across all regions and at all levels in the game. They are not confined to a few counties or clubs, nor can they be disregarded as the result of a few 'bad apples'. The lived experiences of discrimination documented in this research are also recent: they cannot be dismissed as historical.

A fundamental reset is needed.



# APPENDICES

# Appendix A: Profile of players interviewed

Sex	Player Type	Ethnicity	School Type
Male	Former professional	White	State school
Male	Academy Player	Asian (Pakistani)	State school
Male	Former professional	Asian (Pakistani)	State school
Female	Former professional	White	State school
Male	Former professional	Mixed ethnic groups (White & Asian)	State school
Male	Former professional	White	State school
Male	Academy Player	Asian (Indian)	Private/independent school
Female	Academy Player	Mixed ethnic groups (White & Asian)	Private/independent school
Female	Current professional	White	State school
Male	Former professional	White	State school
Male	Former professional	Black (Caribbean)	State school
Male	Former professional	Black (Caribbean)	State school
Male	Current professional	Black (Caribbean)	State school

## Appendix B: Online qualitative research

In total, 40 people took part in the online community and contributed their views in relation to a range of topics related to their lived experiences of cricket.

Participants were recruited from survey respondents who had agreed to be recontacted for research purposes. Significant efforts were made to ensure a broad representation of sex, ethnic background and educational routes.

The online qualitative research involved only people with the following types of engagement with cricket:

- Recreational players
- Parents or guardians of players
- Staff members (at the ECB or a County organisation)
- Board or committee members
- Coaches
- Officials (umpires and scorers)

The online community took place over 5 days, with each day dedicated to specific topics:

- **Day 1** focussed on people's personal experience of equity in cricket, based on the nature of their engagement with cricket.
- **Day 2** focussed on the talent pathway and progression into professional cricket and participants' views on why cricket is not attracting and progressing talent from diverse backgrounds.
- **Day 3** focused on the culture of cricket and perceptions of what works well and what could be improved.
- **Day 4** looked at good practice to make cricket more diverse and inclusive, as well as the management of complaints.
- **Day 5** explored issues of leadership and governance in cricket, and perceptions of the ECB's strategy for cricket as well as initiatives to improve equity in the game (such as the South Asian Action Plan and the Transforming Women's and Girls' Cricket Action Plan).

## Appendix C: Dissemination of Equity in Cricket Online Survey

The ICEC undertook extensive media work to promote awareness of the Equity in Cricket Online Survey among the wider public. On 9th November 2021, the ICEC issued a Call for Evidence via its website to boost the dissemination of the survey. This was followed up across media channels targeting mainstream, specialist, and regional media. This included the BBC (BBC Radio 4, BBC Radio 5 Live, BBC News, BBC UK Black), ITV (ITV Lunchtime News, ITV Yorkshire), Inspire FM, and LBC.

In terms of print and online channels, the ICEC placed articles in news outlets to raise awareness of the Call for Evidence, including in PressReader, BBC, Sky News, Sky Sports News, Voice Online, The Mirror, Cricket World, ExBulletin, Yorkshire Post, DESIblitz, Cumbria Times and Tivyside Advertiser.

When an analysis of early responses (up until 30th November 2021) showed fewer responses among Black and Asian communities, among women, from Wales, and from English regions outside of London and the Southeast, the ICEC undertook more focused engagement and media activity to boost responses (particularly from Black respondents). Similarly, the ECB were asked to focus their later marketing emails on areas outside of London and the South East.

The ECB also used various communication channels to disseminate the Equity in Cricket Online Survey. This included their corporate website, Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn pages. ECB staff were invited to take part. The ECB also publicised the survey through the Association of Cricket Officials, County Board Lead Officers and Chairs, the Play-Cricket databases, as well as the All Stars and Dynamos database. They raised awareness of the survey via monthly newsletters of the Cricket Supporters Association and encouraged all cricket clubs and leagues to spread awareness in their newsletters. Some prominent figures in cricket, including Michael Holding, also promoted the survey and the work of the ICEC.

Although it is impossible to know the precise extent to which the sample profile matches that of the total population of people engaged with cricket, this breadth of coverage and range of targeted activities to promote the survey in an inclusive way gives confidence in the representativeness of the answers.

## Appendix D: Descriptive statistics – profile of research survey respondents

	All Data	Women	Ethnic Minority	Black	Indian	Pakistani/ Bangladeshi	State School
Total	4145	749	855	66	278	213	2390
Recreational player	2137	194	470	33	155	118	1258
Fan	1628	234	296	16	86	65	921
Parent/guardian of a recreational or Academy player	1397	379	310	13	102	77	906
Volunteer	1291	193	187	7	54	44	756
Official or umpire	1092	94	112	10	35	10	515
Coach	898	93	163	15	57	39	549
Board or committee member (paid or voluntary)	875	109	104	11	27	18	477
Other (please specify)	354	67	76	0	0	0	184
Staff member (at the ECB or a County organisation)	196	73	39	6	8	8	126
County age group player	188	33	71	4	30	15	105
Former professional player	111	5	32	8	5	13	65
Current professional player	44	12	9	5	3	0	27
Academy player	34	5	23	1	8	10	21
Prefer not to answer	7	3	2	0	2	0	4

	Type K	Type L	Type M	Type N	Type O	LGBTQ+	Disability
Total	357	345	70	1538	409	161	339
Recreational player	208	214	11	919	105	100	169
Fan	157	110	21	658	119	78	150
Parent/guardian of a recreational or Academy player	108	109	41	514	223	16	82
Volunteer	121	81	12	558	107	47	104
Official or umpire	113	38	3	438	43	40	84
Coach	97	97	2	401	54	37	74
Board or committee member (paid or voluntary)	91	42	6	369	64	34	67
Other (please specify)	33	32	8	112	36	10	37
Staff member (at the ECB or a County organisation)	12	16	6	57	43	20	24
County age group player	12	26	4	56	12	9	20
Former professional player	17	23	0	39	2	4	9
Current professional player	5	4	0	16	8	5	4
Academy player	0	13	0	6	2	1	4
Prefer not to answer	0	1	0	1	1	1	1

## Appendix E: Participants in online qualitative research

Quota	Ethnicity					Sex		State/grammar	
	Black	Indian	Pakistani/ Bangladeshi	White	Other/Dual heritage	Male	Female	State/ grammar	Private
Officials				X			X	X	
		X				X		X	
		X				X		X	
				X			X		X
				X		X		X	
				X		X		X	
				X		X		X	
				X			X	X	
				X		X		X	
				X		X		X	
Parents/guardians				X		X		X	
					X		X	X	
				X			X		
				X		X		X	
				X		X		X	
			X				X	X	
			X				X	X	
					X		X		X
				X			X	X	
	X					X		X	
Recreational					X	X		X	
				X			X		X
			X			X		X	
				X		X		X	
				X		X		X	
				X			X		X
				X		X		X	
	X					X		X	
					X		X	X	
Staff/Management				X			X	X	
				X		X		X	
				X		X		X	
				X		X		X	X
			X			X		X	
				X			X	X	
				X			X	X	
					X	X		X	
	X					X		X	
	X					X		X	

## Appendix F: Initiatives reported in 'Equity in Cricket' online survey

Initiative	Verbatims	Description	Target
ACE programme	166	Designed to engage young people of African and Caribbean Heritage and increase opportunities for them in cricket.	African/Caribbean Heritage
Allstars	164	Initiative from the ECB aimed at providing children aged five to eight with a great first experience in cricket.	Grassroots
Chance to Shine	118/33	Address the lack of participation in recreational cricket in state schools, with a view to widening and strengthening the talent pipeline.	State school
Dynamos	65	Next step for all those graduating from All Stars Cricket, introduction for all 8 to 11-year-olds new to the sport. Provides children with a more social offer focused on developing fundamental movement skills and applying them in an exciting game of countdown cricket. Idea to champion inclusion, encouraging more children to take up the game of cricket regardless of gender, ability, or background.	Grassroots
MCC	44	MCC Foundation (MCCF) cricket programme aims to raise the profile of cricket amongst state-school pupils and enable those players with talent to reach district and county youth age group standards.	State school
Transforming Women's and Girl's Action Plan	32	Five-year action plan by the ECB to transform the women's and girls' game with the goal of 'making cricket a truly gender-balanced sport'	Women
South Asian Cricket Academy	24	Intervention programme designed to tackle the inequalities highlighted by research regarding the lack of South Asian representation in professional cricket.	South Asian
Wicketz	17	Cricket programme for young people aged 8 to 19, living in deprived communities. By establishing sustainable community cricket hubs, they provide year-round weekly cricket sessions with a focus on breaking down barriers, developing crucial life skills, creating stronger communities, and enabling brighter futures for those taking part.	Children/young adults in deprived communities
South Asian Action Plan	16	11-point action plan by the ECB to better engage with South Asian communities.	South Asian
Lord's Taverners	15	Provide inclusive and impactful cricket programmes, empowering young people with disabilities and from disadvantaged communities to develop the knowledge, skills, capabilities, and confidence required to overcome the challenges of inequality, raise their aspirations and reach their potential.	Disabilities/disadvantaged communities
Dream Big Desi Women	12	Taking cricket to non-traditional centres, including faith centres and community settings, and signing up hundreds of South Asian female volunteers.	Female South Asian
This Girl Can	9	Capitalising on Sport England's This Girl Can campaign to promote cricket as a fun, social game that women and girls can play with their friends and without fear of judgement.	Women
Last Man Stands Initiative	6	Provide a cricket format that is fit for both the world today and tomorrow, which encourages more people to play (and return to playing) cricket and leads to the development of cricket at grassroots where the key to sustainability lies.	Grassroots
Rainbow Laces	3	Initiative of wearing laces in support and recognition of LGBTQ+ inclusion (in cricket).	LGBTQ+
Kwik cricket	3	High-speed version of cricket aimed mainly at encouraging children to take part in the sport, with an emphasis on participation and enjoyment.	Grassroots
Supers1 (Lord's Taverners initiative)	2	Super 1s gives young people with a disability aged 12 to 25 the chance to play regular, competitive cricket.	Disability
Club Mark	2	ECB Club mark is an accreditation scheme for cricket clubs which shows that a club is sustainable, well run and provides the right environment for its members.	Grassroots



