



More in
Common



Finding a Balance

How can we build a new consensus on EDI?

Labour Party Conference Fringe Event 2024

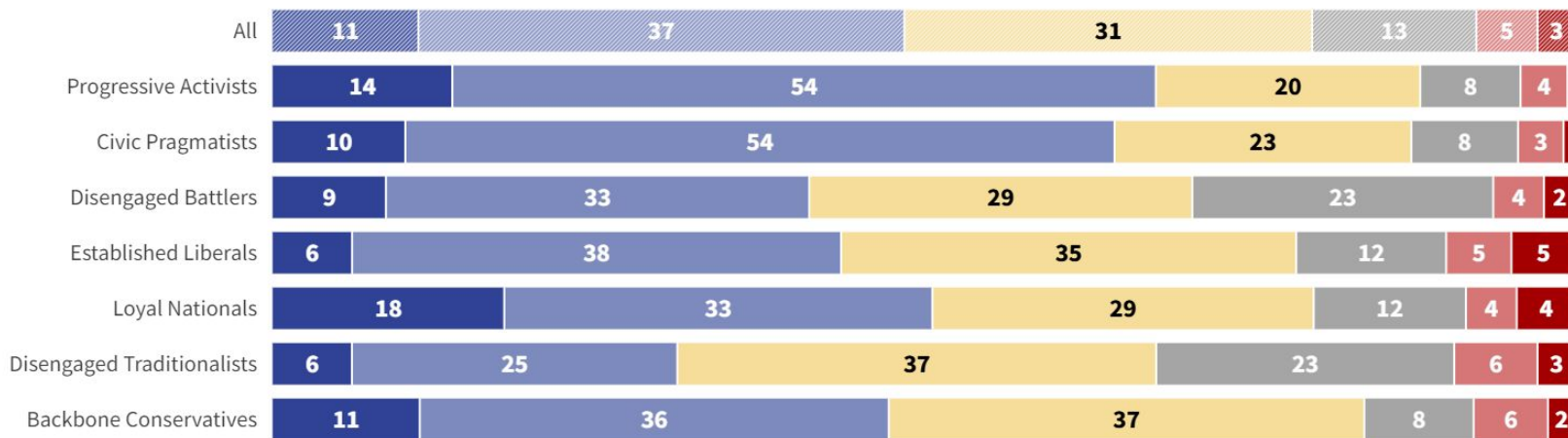
The public's starting points on EDI

Most of the public see EDI as a positive

Awareness of the basics of EDI are widespread and positive - 87 per cent have heard of EDI and Britons are four times as likely to say it's a good thing than a bad thing. But **EDI alone isn't solving the problem** - a majority think women and ethnic minorities experience discrimination at work but only a minority think current approaches to training are helping tackle that.

Thinking about those groups who may experience discrimination, what effect do you think diversity and inclusion training has on their experience in the workplace? Diversity and inclusion training makes their experience in the workplace...

● Much better ● A bit better ● No different ● Don't know ● A bit worse ● Much worse

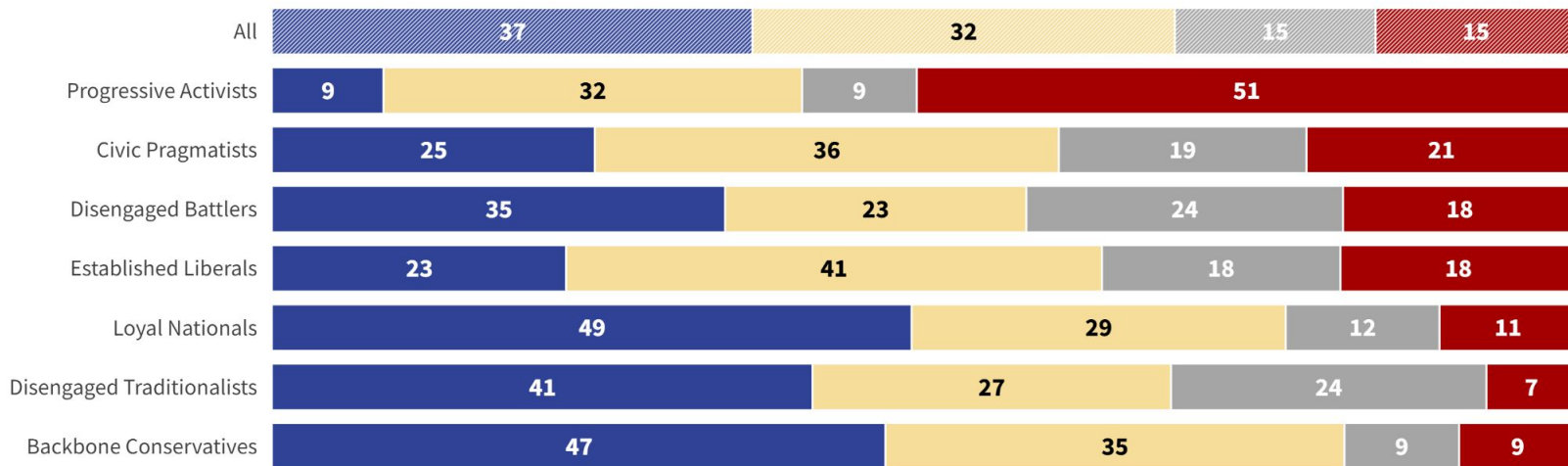


Many think we have gone too far on EDI

A plurality think society has gone too far on EDI and **socially conservative groups in particular think workplaces focus too much on this.**

Which of the following comes close to your view? ● Workplaces focus too much on diversity and inclusion

● Workplaces have the right level of focus on diversity and inclusion ● Don't know ● Workplaces do not focus enough on diversity and inclusion



Source: More in Common, November 2023

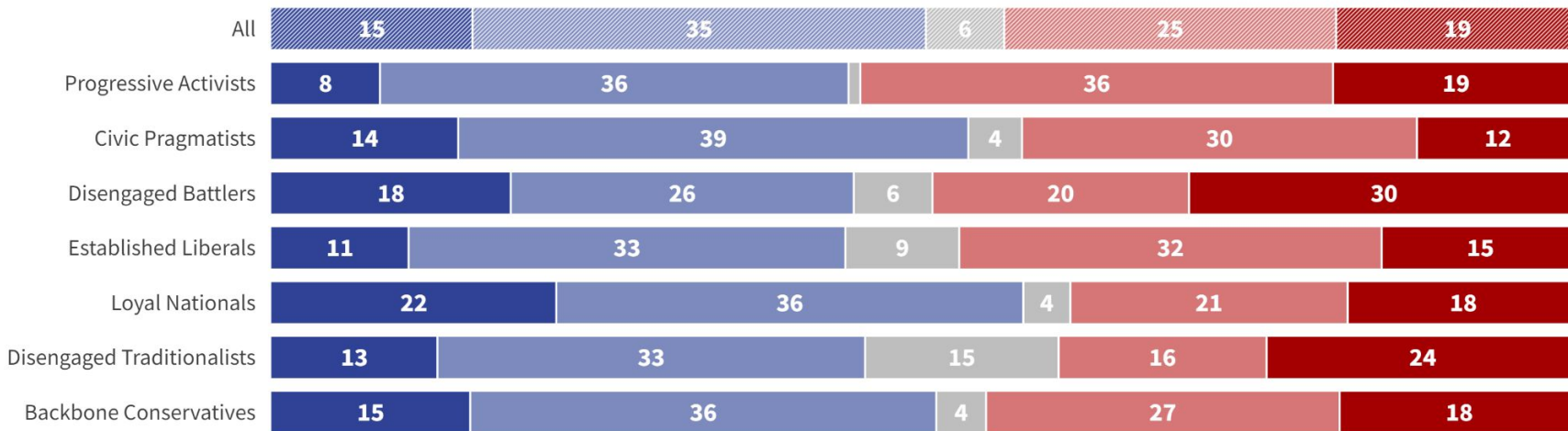
"Some people are just waiting for someone to make a mistake or say something that they disagree with to jump on it straight away." Zach, Sunderland

People find conversations around EDI difficult

7 in 10 think **people are made to feel stupid** and unfairly criticised for making mistakes on diversity issues.

For each of the following, please say how often you think they occur: [I personally worry about saying the wrong thing on diversity issues]

● Often ● Sometimes ● Don't know ● Rarely ● Never



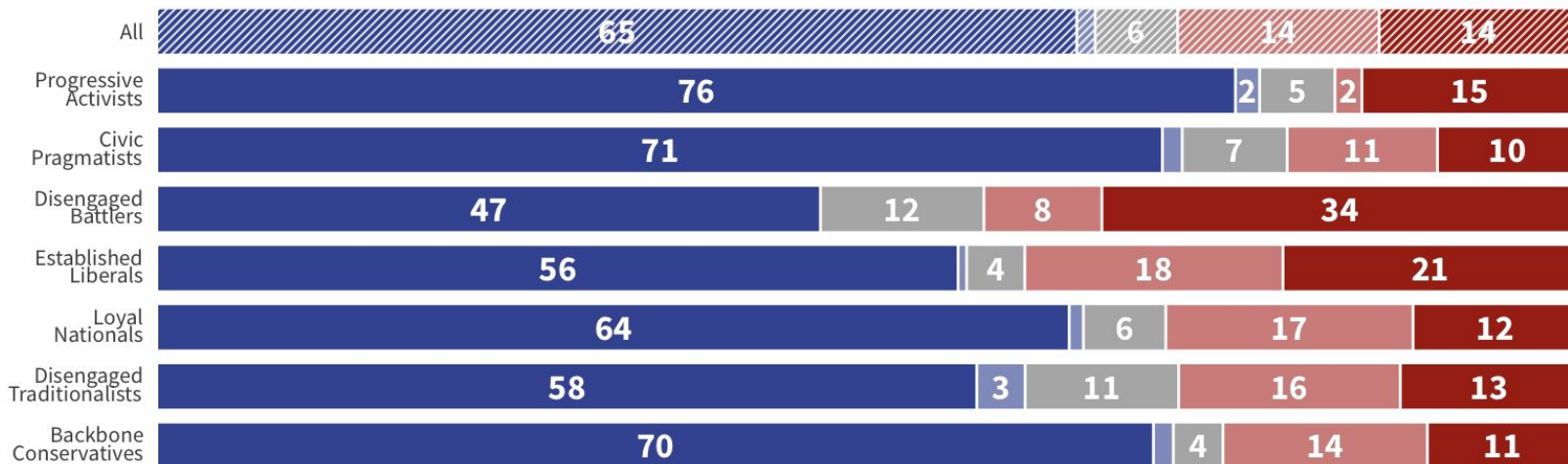
People are more positive about EDI in practice than in theory

Positive experiences - Most people who have participated in diversity and inclusion training in their workplace found it relevant and helpful and felt free to share their opinions. Training is particularly seen as beneficial by minority groups.

Social conservatives are not opposed to all EDI activity - within the socially conservative segments, a majority of those who have recently received diversity and inclusion training say they found it helpful. The key is focusing on the practical not abstract/philosophical debates.

Thinking about the training you took part in, which of the following best describes your experience?

- I found the training helpful, and my colleagues did too ● I found the training helpful, but my colleagues found it unhelpful ● Don't know
● I found the training unhelpful, but it was helpful for my colleagues ● I found the training unhelpful, and my colleagues did too



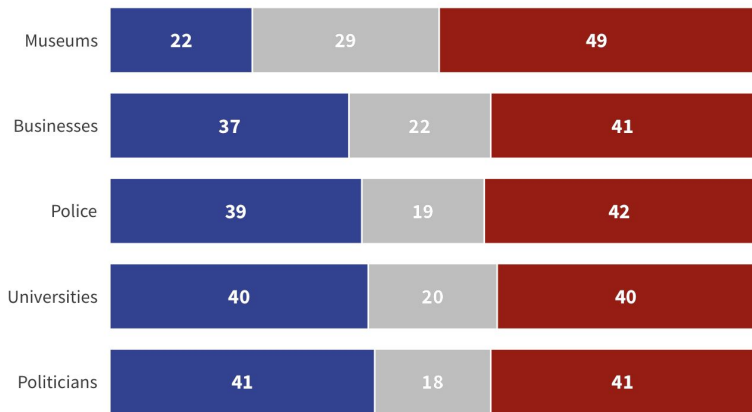
Britons think there is a time and place to focus on EDI

There is a clear distinction between 'in work' and 'out of work' - only one in three Britons consider it acceptable for someone to lose their job for expressing grossly offensive views out of work, but that number doubles to two in three if the views are expressed within the workplace.

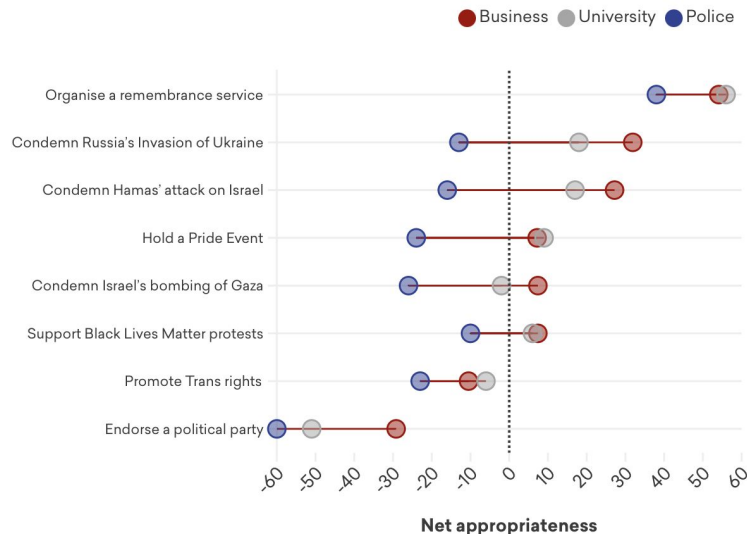
There's limited appetite for institutions getting political (though which institutions and what issue matters) - for organisations such as the police people feel opinions on divisive issues should be left at the door to focus on the job at hand.

For each of the following, which statement comes closest to your view:

- They should spend more time taking part in debates about equality and diversity issues
- Don't know
- They should spend less time taking part in debates about equality and diversity issues



For each of the following please say whether you think it is appropriate for a [business/university/police force] to:

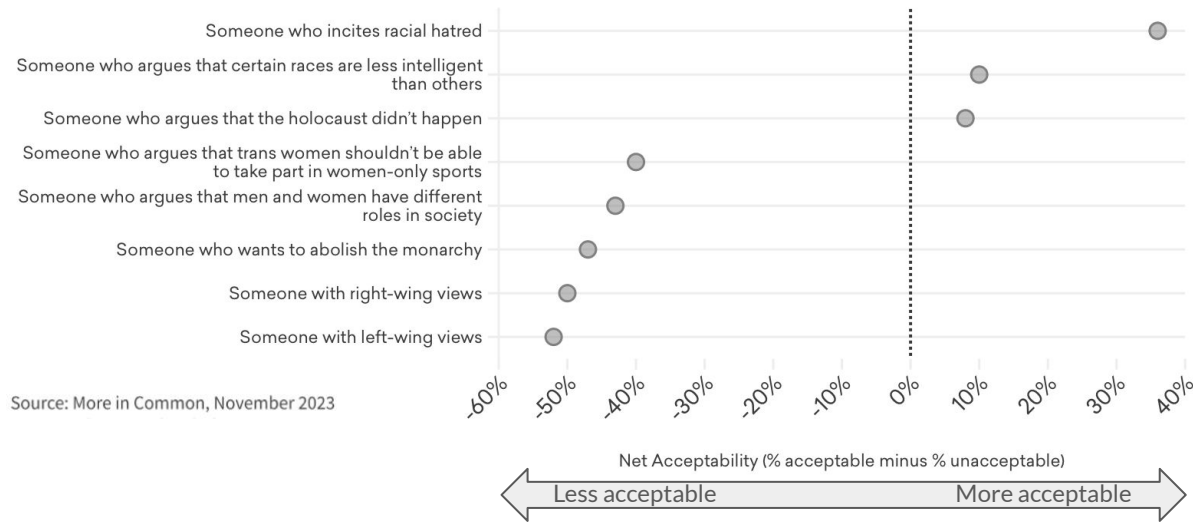


Source: More in Common, November 2023

The public see the nuance on free speech

Britons see free speech as fundamental to our democracy and **6 in 10 people consider free speech under threat**. But the public see the nuance - in focus group discussions, people express a sentiment that **free speech does not mean freedom from consequences**. EDI needs to position itself more as creating a space for discussion and understanding rather than closing debates down.

“No platforming” refers to preventing someone from taking part in a public debate or meeting, due to them holding views perceived as unacceptable or offensive. For each of the following speakers, please say whether you think it would be acceptable or unacceptable to prevent them from speaking in a public debate or meeting:



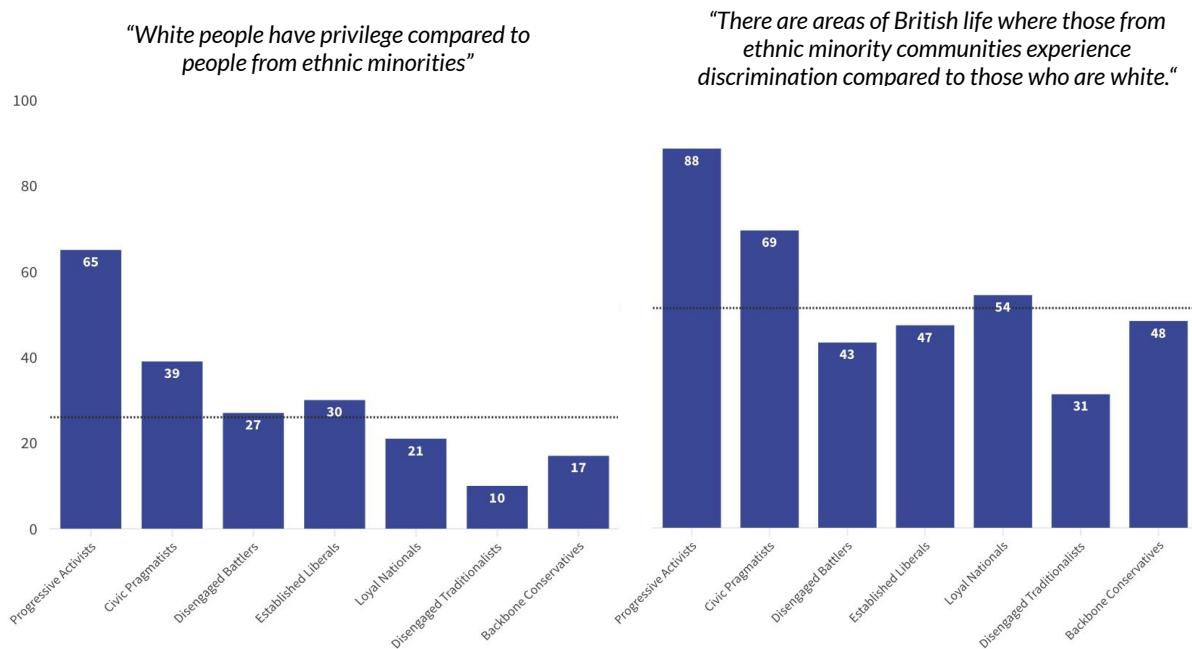
Acceptability of no-platforming depends on the speaker's views but **the public think it is more important that university students are exposed to a range of different views** than protected from views they may find offensive - this extends across segments.



Towards a more effective approach

Framing matters - focus on people, not concepts

Politically-charged frames dampen support for concepts people otherwise agree with, such as the continued existence of racial discrimination.



Staying relevant

The public think EDI discussions should be tailored to the institution and how that institution can be made better - workplace training is seen as too generic and not **grounded in everyday reality**. Suggestions from focus groups include using real life examples and holding training in person.

It is a fine line between pushing the message that's positive and... individual agendas taking over what should just be a workplace setting.

Ray, Progressive Activist, Bristol

[Training could be improved by] making it more bespoke and face-to-face... Otherwise it just becomes too general and vague to be useful, doesn't it?

Rob, Loyal National, Sunderland

The workplace is not considered an appropriate place to litigate contentious topics. In the eyes of the public, the remit of workplace training is **enabling workers to do their jobs** effectively, to reduce barriers to entry and provide an excellent and fair service.

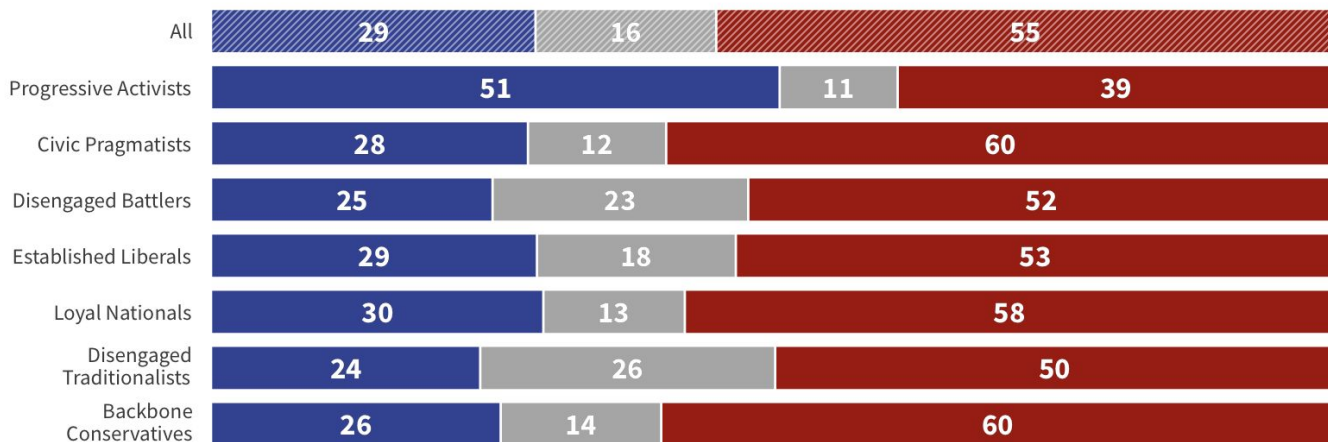
Appreciate that progressives are outliers

Progressive Activists who dominate the EDI field have outlier views - 60 per cent think society has not done enough on EDI. While Progressive Activists feel more free than others to speak during EDI training sessions, they can **hinder productive conversation** as any criticism of others for the way they express their view on diversity issues is seen as unhelpful and unfair by the general public.

Only Progressive Activists think it is helpful to criticise mistakes.

Which of the following comes closest to your view?

- ☐ It is helpful to criticise people for making mistakes on diversity issues so that they can learn from them
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ It is unhelpful to criticise people for making mistakes on diversity issues as it is more likely to make them feel embarrassed or stupid



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