



Government  
**Equalities** Office

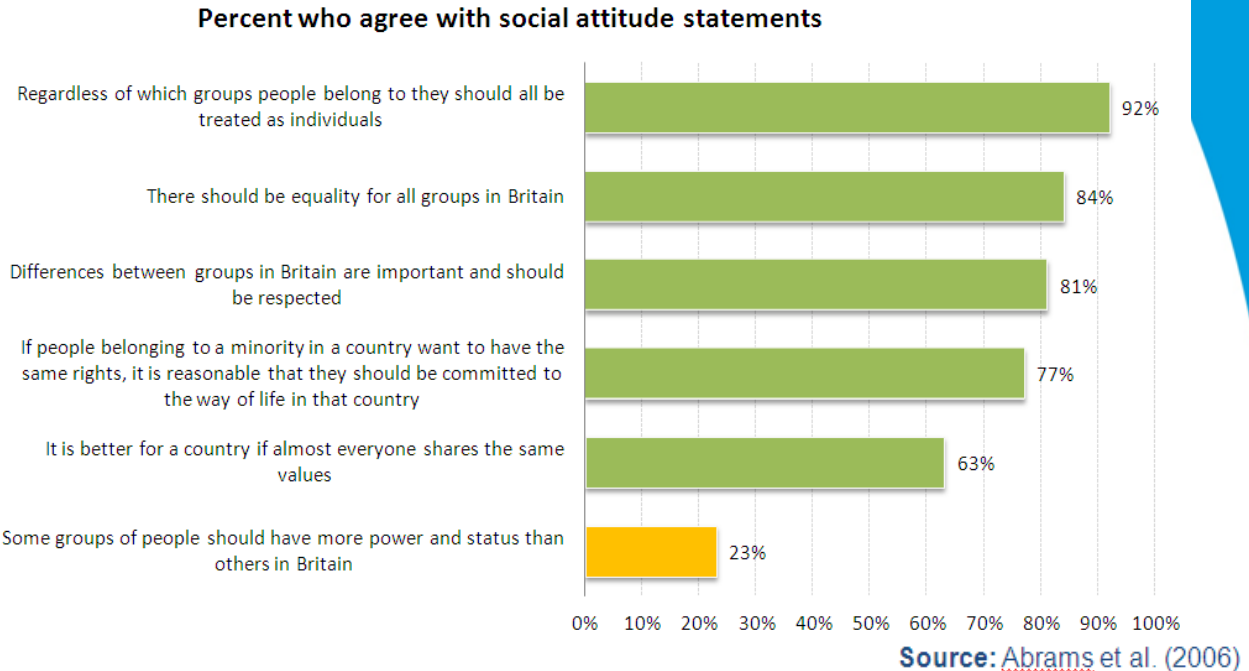
Putting equality at the heart of government

# Changing Attitudes to Equality

## Key findings

# Slide 1: UK society values equality as a concept

- **Strong consensus of liberal western ideological values in the UK;** general profile that prioritises an equal and just society with strong values of equality as a goal.



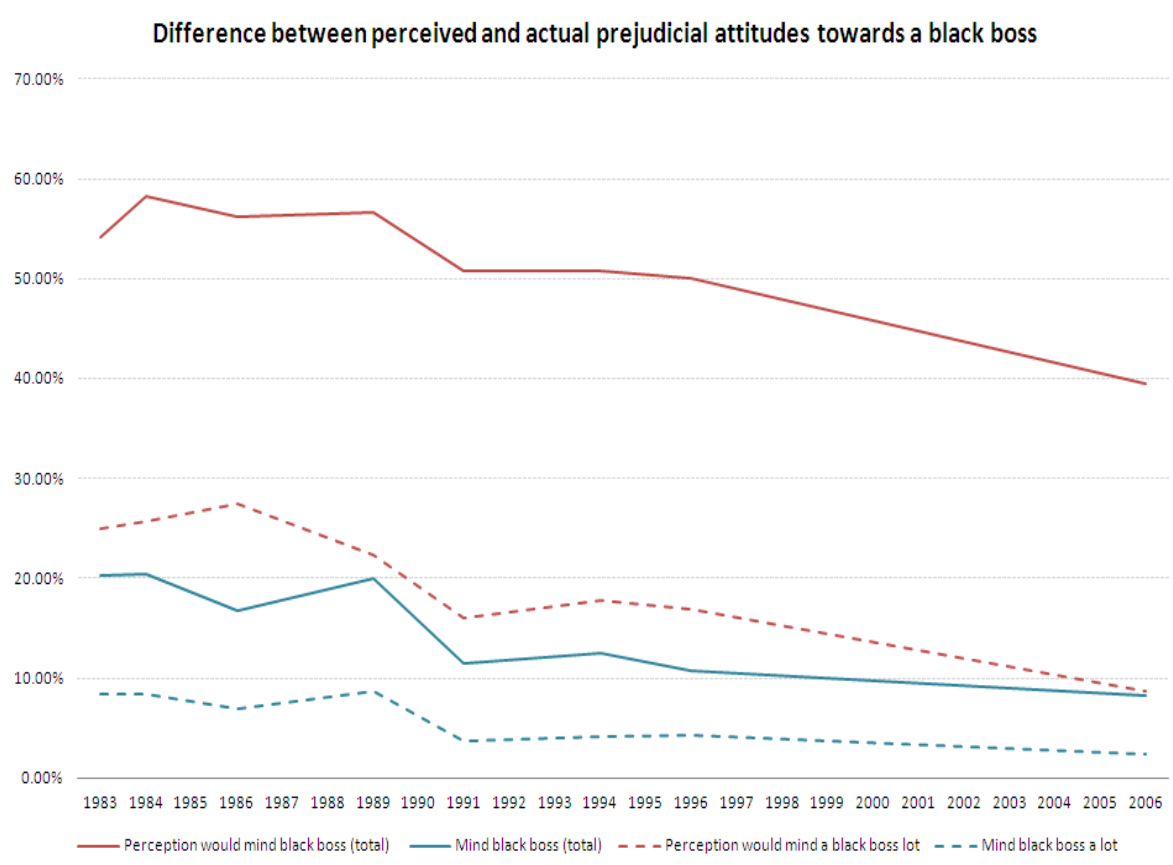
- UK has **similar value strengths on equality to the EU average** and the trend over 8 years indicates these values are **increasing in homogeneity.**

Respondents who identified with someone who thought it was important to...		2002	2004	2006	2008	2010
...treat people equally and have equal opportunities	UK	66%	70%	73%	71%	75%
	EU	74%	73%	73%	72%	79%
...understand different people	UK	60%	63%	66%	66%	67%
	EU	63%	62%	59%	62%	69%

**Source:** (European Social Survey 2002-2010)

# Slide 2: People are likely to feel there is more prejudice than there actually is

- Perceived prejudice is much higher than actual prejudicial attitudes e.g. prejudice by white people towards a black boss has declined significantly since the early eighties;
- In 2006 self reported prejudice is at the same level as perceived severely prejudice views (i.e. mind a black boss a lot).
- Disparity between self reported prejudice and perceived prejudice is increasing: 270% in 1983 to a peak of 477% in 2006.



Source: British Social Attitudes Survey 1983-2006 (XBOSSWI & XOBOSWI)

Social desirability bias in self reporting explains some of the pattern but there are two other phenomena at work in the data:

- Dilution - data contains not only those who change their views but also those whose views are not based on direct experience and/or assumed knowledge
- Lag effect - between actual attitude and behaviour change and when this is noticed/socially acceptable to report

# Slide 3: Different people hold different levels of prejudice to various groups

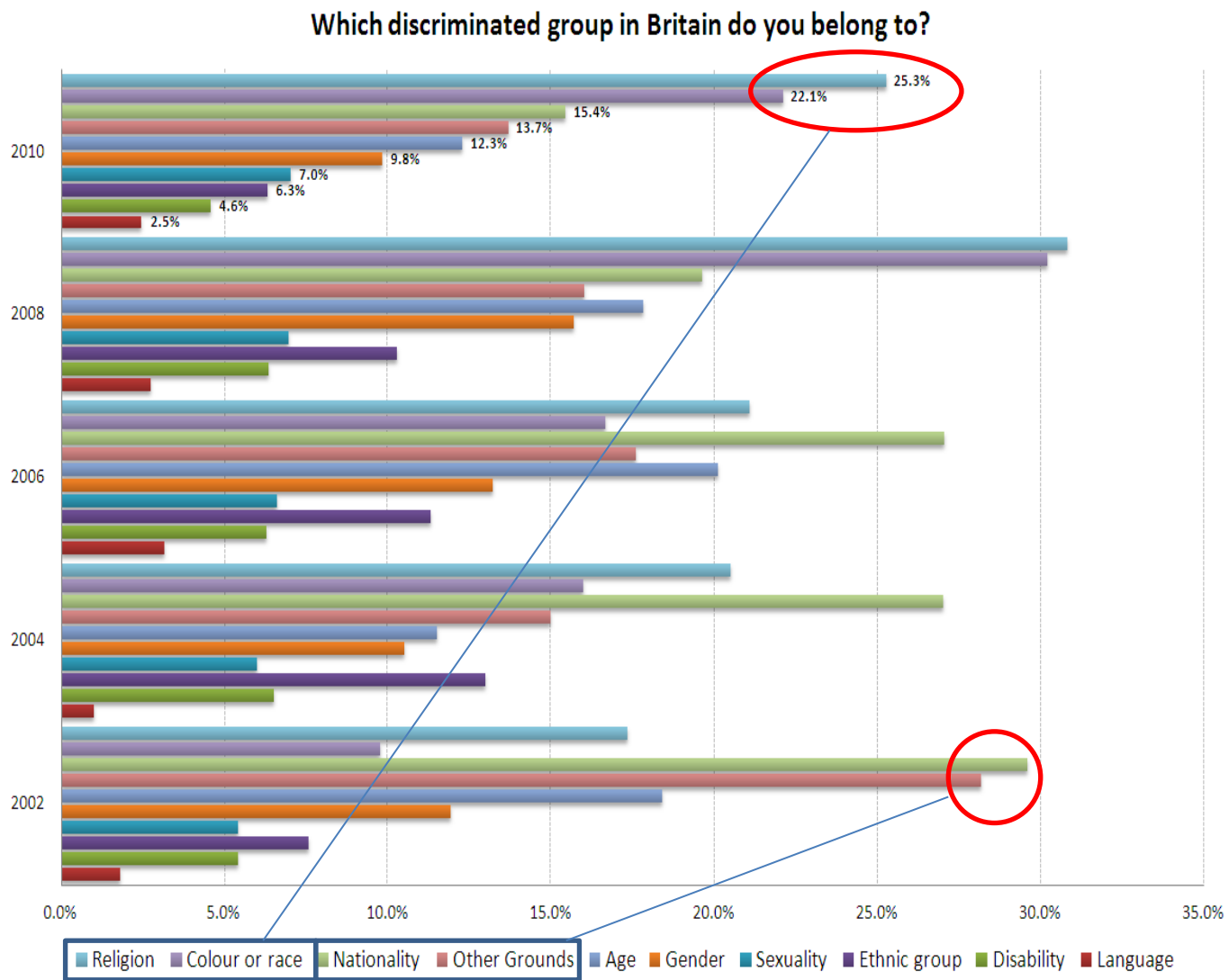
- **Prejudice still exists in all areas of society** with anywhere between a third and one in ten with prejudice of some kind at any one time.
- **Large amount of inter-group difference in prejudice to others** – only significant differences between red and green numbers shown in table
- Huge range - e.g:
  - **LOWEST - 9% of Christians** feel prejudice towards the over 70's (compared to **19% of other religions**)
  - **HIGHEST - 60% of Non-White people** feel prejudice towards gay men & lesbians (compared to **31% of white people**)
- Significant differences:
  - Largest differences in prejudice **between White and other minority groups** (sometimes positive/sometimes negative)
  - Only significant difference in prejudice towards black people that is not between ethnic minority groups and religions is between **disabled (34%)** and **non-disabled (23%)**
  - No intergroup difference and lowest levels of prejudice against disabled people
- **Prejudice can be changed** – if individuals can hold very positive and non-prejudicial attitudes about one minority group, but negative or prejudicial attitudes towards another it means prejudices are founded on beliefs, attitudes and feelings that should be open to change.

		Prejudice Against...						
		Women	Over 70s	Gay men & lesbians	Blacks people	Muslims	Disabled	
Prejudice from...	General	21%	13%	33%	25%	35%	10%	No significant group differences
	Men			41%				
	Women			33%				
	under 30s		19%					
	over 30s		10%					
	under 70s			32%				
	over 70s			41%				
	gay men and lesbians							
	heterosexuals							
	White	19%		31%	27%	37%		
	Non-White			60%				
	Blacks and Asians	33%			9%	23%		
	Non-religious			30%	26%			
	Christian	16%	9%					
	Muslims					20%		
Other religions		19%	59%					
Non-Christian	26%							
Disabled					34%			
Non Disabled					23%			

Source: Abrams et al. (2006)

# Slide 4: Why people feel discriminated against is changing

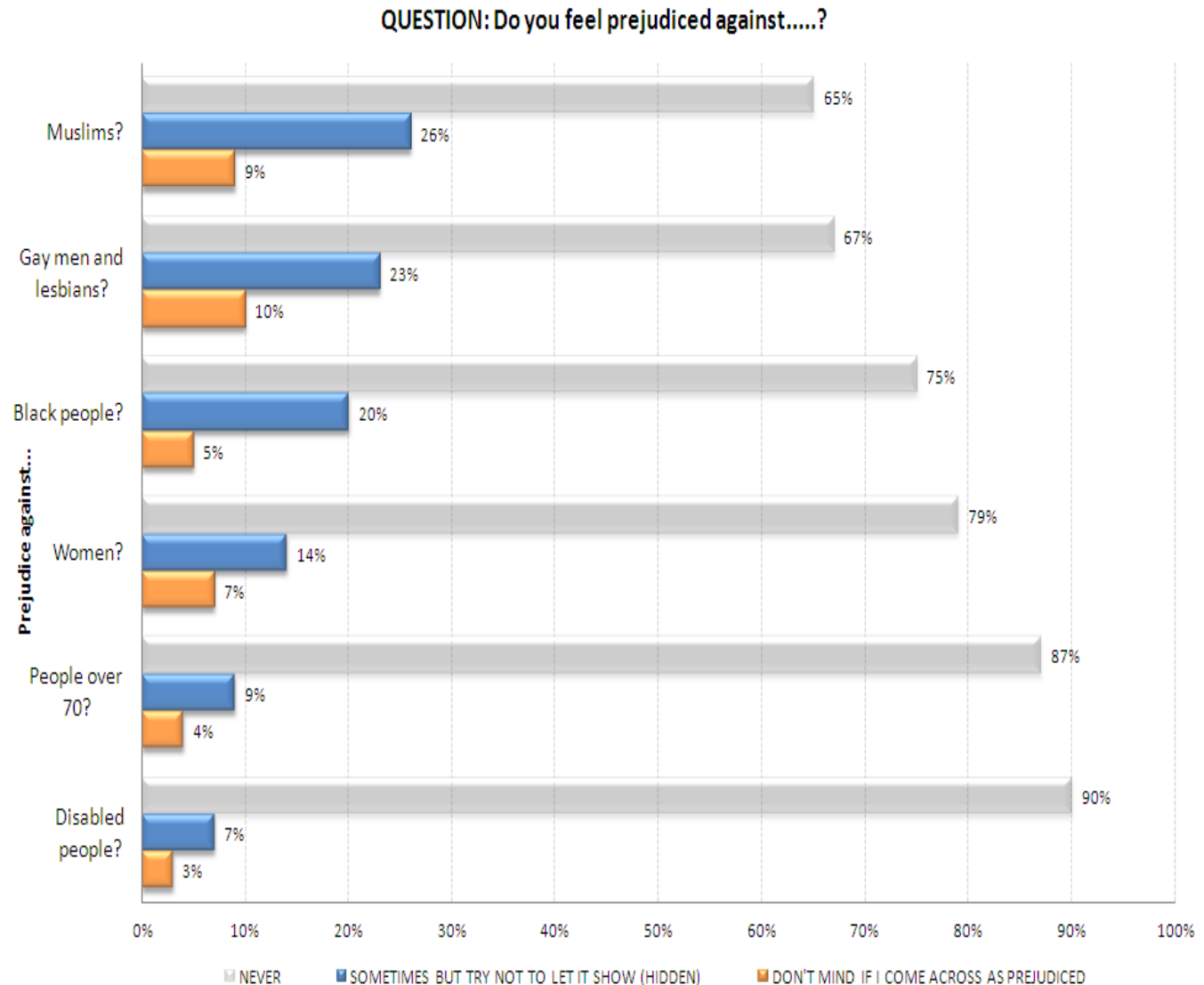
- The 'discriminated group' those who feel discriminated against belong to, has changed over the last 10 years
- In 2002 **nationality** and **other grounds** dominated but are now relatively minor in comparison to **religion** and **colour/race**
- A quarter of those feeling discriminated against cite **religion** is the reason (as high as 31% in 2008)
- **Colour/Race** has grown from 10% to a high of 30% in 2008
- Ethnic group has never been cited by more people than colour/race and nationality as a reason for discrimination
- Sexuality, disability and language as reasons have remained relatively static



Base: Those that feel they belong to a discriminated group in Britain  
 Source: European Social Survey 2010

# Slide 5: We often do not say what we really feel (self censorship)

- Prejudice is mostly **HIDDEN** - at least **two thirds** of prejudice is socially controlled, and may not be visible
- There is still a small but significant proportions of the population that feel prejudice is **'JUSTIFIABLE'** (Don't mind if appear prejudice)



Source: [Abrams et al. \(2006\)](#)