

CCE Freedom of Expression Survey

Findings Report

June 2025



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1 Executive summary

The Commission for Countering Extremism (CCE) commissioned Ipsos to conduct a nationally representative survey in England and Wales to explore public perceptions and experiences of freedom of expression. This study, conducted between February 27th and March 5th, 2025, engaged 2,291 participants aged 16 and over to understand attitudes towards free speech across various social, political, and religious topics.

The survey reveals a nuanced landscape of public opinion on free speech. While the principle of free speech is generally valued, a notable segment of the population believes it is not adequately protected in England and Wales today. However, concerns regarding the protection of other fundamental freedoms, such as freedom from threats and abuse or freedom from discrimination, are seen as more pressing by a significant portion of respondents. This highlights the challenges of navigating free speech in a diverse society.

Generally, there is strong support for free speech, with a majority favouring open expression across a range of social, political and religious topics – but people recognise the importance of sensitivity towards some topics. Climate change and politics generally receive the strongest support for open expression. However, race and ethnicity stand out as an area where a plurality of individuals prioritise avoiding offence over the principle of free speech.

The survey looks specifically at attitudes towards a range of political views and religious topics. Here there is broad support for free speech about a range of political ideas, although again people value sensitivity on certain topics. Whilst people support the principle of free speech regardless of the religion being discussed, they express more varied views in their ability to share their views depending upon the religion at hand. However, the primary reasons why people hold back from sharing their views are to avoid causing offence or starting an argument which suggests that there are a broader range of motivations beyond the principle of free speech that leads them to refrain from sharing their views.

A subgroup of the population, comprising those who are most concerned about the pace of change, expresses stronger concerns about the protection of free speech and tends to favour the principle of free speech more strongly across various topics. While they generally feel able to express their views, they also express heightened concerns about their ability to speak freely on topics such as immigration, asylum, race/racism and religious extremism.

In conclusion, this study reveals the complex interplay between the principle of free speech and the practical considerations of navigating sensitive topics in a diverse society. While free speech enjoys broad support, its application is influenced by social dynamics, personal values, and the specific topic at hand.

2 Introduction

The Commission for Countering Extremism (CCE) commissioned Ipsos UK in January 2025 to conduct a nationally representative survey to examine public perceptions and experiences of freedom of expression in England and Wales. Building on prior research by Ipsos and Kings College London, this study explores attitudes towards free speech across various social, political and religious topics, examining differences across demographic groups and exploring reasons why individuals might refrain from expressing their views.

2.1 Research objectives

The aim of the research was to provide a temperature check on how free speech is viewed and experienced by the general public in England and Wales across a range of social, political and religious topics. In particular, the CCE wanted to explore whether there is a difference between what the public think people should be able to speak freely about and whether they themselves feel able to speak freely about these topics. Of particular interest to the CCE was whether attitudes towards free speech varies by demographics including age, gender, ethnicity, region¹ and religious beliefs, as well as by socio-cultural views.

The remainder of the report is structured to explore this as follows:

- Chapter 3: explores general attitudes towards free speech and a range of potentially interrelated topics including freedom from threats and abuse, and religious freedoms
- Chapter 4: introduces the concept of free speech in relation to offence and sensitivity. It explores the extent to which people feel that people are too easily offended, or that people should change the way they speak to avoid causing offence
- Chapter 5: explores how general attitudes towards free speech vary across a range of social, political and religious topics that are discussed in Britain today
- Chapter 6: explores general attitudes towards free speech and political views
- Chapter 7: explores general attitudes towards free speech and religious figures, texts, teachings and beliefs
- Chapter 8: explores the reasons why people hold back from expressing their views on certain topics

¹ There were few statistically significant differences by region therefore the results are not reported on.

Within each chapter, the report provides an overview of the key similarities and differences in views across key demographics and by various socio-cultural views where the results are statistically significant.

2.2 Methodology

The survey was conducted using Ipsos' UK KnowledgePanel, a random probability survey panel which provides a representative sample of the population in England and Wales.

The data collection took place between 27 February – 5 March 2025. In total, 2,291 interviews were achieved with residents across England and Wales aged 16+.

The study was designed to deliver a sample size of 2,000 individuals aged 16 and over from England and Wales. Additionally, a specific booster for Muslim participants was implemented to ensure a minimum sample size of 300 Muslim participants.

2.3 Questionnaire design

The questionnaire was developed collaboratively by Ipsos, the CCE and with expert oversight from Professor Bobby Duffy, Kings College London, and built upon a rapid evidence review of existing research that explores the topics of free speech and freedoms in general.

To examine attitudes towards freedom of speech across a range of topics, a scale was developed to measure what the public think people should be able to say and what they personally feel able to share. First, the public were asked to give their views on a scale of 1-7, where 1 means 'people should be able to say whatever they want' and 7 means 'people should be careful not to offend others' when speaking about a range of social, political and religious topics. Then, the public were asked to give their views on a scale of 1-7, where 1 means 'I feel free to say what I want about this topic' and 7 means 'I feel I have to hold back on expressing my opinions on this topic'. This enabled the analysis to focus on both the principle of free speech i.e. what the public think others should be able to say and the practice of free speech i.e. what they personally feel able to say. Overall analysis looks at those who give a score on either side of the scale (i.e. give an answer of 1-3 or 5-7) and those in the middle, though in some cases we also highlight those who feel more strongly (i.e. give an answer of 1-2 and 6-7, as those answering 3 or 5 may only have a slight preference).

2.4 Sample

The Ipsos UK KnowledgePanel is a random probability survey panel and does not use a quota approach to recruitment or when conducting surveys. Invited samples are stratified when conducting waves to account for any profile skews within the panel.

The sample for this survey was stratified by age, education and religion within country using the latest ONS Mid-year Population Estimates and the Annual Population Survey.

A total of 4,708 panellists in England and Wales aged 16+. were selected and invited to take part in the survey. Of these, 2,291 respondents completed the survey – a response rate of 48.7%.

2.5 Weighting

In order to ensure the survey results are as representative of the target population as possible, calibration weights were applied to the data using the latest populations statistics relevant to correct for imbalances in the achieved sample. England and Wales were weighted together.

2.6 Statistical analysis

Data tables were produced showing the results of each question broken down by a number of demographic and attitudinal cross-tabulations. The tables included significance testing at the 95% confidence level, using letters to show where any differences between sub-groups are statistically significant. These tables are available within a separate document.

The full survey data were analysed by a range of demographics including age, gender, region, religion, ethnicity, and by three separate socio-cultural values indicators. A detailed breakdown of the development of the indicators can be found in the appendix. In summary, the sample was grouped into three groups across each of the three values indicators:

- 1** More economically right leaning, average, more economically left leaning
- 2** Most concerned with the pace of change, average, least concerned with the pace of change
- 3** More authoritarian leaning in views, average, and libertarian leaning in their views

The analysis focuses on those that are grouped on either end of the spectrum because people within these groups tend to have the strongest views on free speech and sensitivity to offence. A detailed breakdown of the development of the indicators can be found in the appendix.

A table showing the breakdown of the sample by the indicators and key demographics can be found in the appendix. A summary of the key points is shown in the table below.

Table 2.1: Key demographic differences by sociocultural indicators

		Percentage of total sample	Summary of key demographics
Culture Wars Indicator	Most concerned about pace of change	37%	Skews male, older, white, non-graduate and Christian
	Least concerned about pace of change	26%	Skews younger, ethnic minority, graduate and no religion
Economic Left and Economic Right Indicator	Economically right leaning	41%	Skews male, middle aged, white, non-graduate, Christian
	Economically left leaning	33%	Skews younger, graduate and no religion
Authoritarian / Libertarian Scale Indicator	More authoritarian	38%	Skews older, white, non-graduate and Christian
	More libertarian	28%	Skews younger, graduate and no religion

Regression analysis

In addition to standard statistical testing, multivariate regression analysis was used to explore the relationship between demographic factors and free speech. The regression analysis was used to further explore whether or not there is a relationship between different measurements of free speech (the dependent variable) and certain demographic factors (the independent variables). A description of the regression model used, along with the table of the results from the regression analysis are provided in the appendix.

2.7 Ethics

Ipsos internal ethics review

Ipsos adheres to the highest ethical standards, guided by principles from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), the Social Research Association (SRA), and the Government Social Research (GSR) unit. This project was subject to a full internal review by Ipsos' in-house Ethics Board. The research team completed an ethics form at project inception, identifying and setting out mitigation plans for any potential risks to participants and researchers.

In addition, standard ethical procedures were followed, including;

- Clear and accessible privacy notices
- Clear plans to ensure informed consent

- All questions contained a 'Prefer not to say' option that allowed for participants to avoid providing answers to any questions they did not wish to respond to
- Clear reassurances and reiterations of confidentiality and anonymity of data

Polls for publication

The study, including the research design, questionnaire, data tables and report were reviewed by Ipsos' Polls for Publication team. This is a procedure in place to ensure accuracy, impartiality and credibility of our results, to prevent reputational risk and to abide by the MRS Code of Conduct and British Polling Council guidelines. It also ensures that research will stand up to legal, media, public, business, government or third-party scrutiny. Due to the sensitivity of the survey, the questionnaire was also reviewed by researchers in our Inclusion and Diversity Research Activators group who advise on best practice research in this area.

GDPR considerations

Ipsos' quality accreditation and strict governance underpin our commitment to data security. Ipsos is accredited to ISO 9001, ISO 20252, ISO 27001, and MRQSA quality accreditation BS7911:2003. All our data processing incorporates requirements of these standards, GDPR and the Data Protection Act, and MRS and SRA Codes of Conduct. In compliance with GDPR, Ipsos ensures that all data collection, processing, and storage are conducted in accordance with the highest standards of data privacy and security.

3 Summary of key findings

This survey provides valuable insights into the nuanced landscape of public opinion on free speech in England and Wales.

Free speech and freedoms in Britain

Free speech, while valued, is not perceived to be under immediate threat. People are most likely to think that freedom of speech has about the right amount of protection in Britain today (44% – compared with 33% who think it is protected too little and 19% who think it is protected too much). The protection of other freedoms such as freedom from threats and abuse, or freedom from discrimination are seen as more pressing (59% and 41%, respectively, think these are under-protected). This highlights a potential tension between upholding free speech and ensuring the safety and equality of all individuals. There is, however, a subgroup of people for whom free speech is a more pertinent topic. In particular, those that are most concerned about the pace of change and economically right leaning are more likely to think that free speech is under-protected (43% and 39% compared to 33% overall).

Free speech and sensitivity to offence

Public opinion in England and Wales is divided on the issue of offence and sensitivity. Nearly half of people lean towards the view that people are too easily offended (49%). Three in ten tend to think that people need to be more sensitive in the way they speak (29%).

People from different demographic groups tend to lean towards either side of the spectrum. For example, men, older people (aged 65+), people from white ethnicities and Christians are more likely to think that people are too easily offended². People from these demographic groups also tend to lean more in favour of free speech across multiple topics but generally feel able to freely share their views. However, for some topics Christians are more likely than average to feel that they have to hold back on expressing their views. Conversely women, younger people, people from ethnic minorities and people who are from a non-Christian religion (i.e., Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh or any other religion) tend to think that people need to be more sensitive in the way that they speak³. People from these demographic groups also tend to personally lean in favour of avoiding offence across a range of topics asked about. However, in practice, these groups do not always feel constrained when sharing their views (with the exception of people from ethnic minorities who tend to feel more like they have to hold back). This suggests that the practice of free speech is

² Scores 1-3 “People are too easily offended” on a 7-point scale: Overall: 49%, men (56%) vs women (44%), people from a white ethnicity (54%) vs people from an ethnic minority (27%), Christians (59%) vs people from any other religion (29%)

³ Scores 5-7 “People need to change the way they talk to be more sensitive to people from different backgrounds” on a 7-point scale: Overall: 29%, women (34%) vs men (25%), people from an ethnic minority (45%) vs people from a white ethnicity (26%), who are from a non-Christian religion (i.e., Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh or any other religion) (45%) vs Christians (21%)

driven by more factors than one's attitudes towards the use of sensitive language and that the topic being discussed matters.

Free speech across a range of social, political and religious topics

Generally, there is strong support for free speech, with a majority favouring open expression across a range of social, political and religious topics – but people recognise the importance of sensitivity towards some topics. Climate change and politics garner the strongest support for free speech, while child sexual exploitation by grooming gangs also received majority support⁴. However, race and ethnicity stands out as the only topic where a plurality favours avoiding offence over free speech. Transgender issues, religion, and immigration are also perceived as sensitive to some, with a notable minority prioritising caution in these areas.

This pattern is broadly the same when people are asked whether they personally feel free to say what they want or have to hold back on expressing their opinions to avoid offending others, highlighting the importance of the topic at hand. On balance, the proportion of people who think others should be able to speak freely is broadly in line with the proportion of people who feel able to speak freely, suggesting that the principle and practice of free speech align.

There are three subgroups within the population i.e. those who are most concerned about the pace of change, more economically right leaning or more authoritarian in their views who feel more divided on their ability to share their views on certain topics. These groups tend to lean in favour of free speech regardless of the topic at hand and simultaneously feel more constrained in their ability to freely share their views about most topics asked about. Those that are most concerned with the pace of change express the highest levels of concern about being able to share their views on race/racism (48% hold back versus 36% overall), immigration (43% hold back versus 32%), asylum (41% hold back versus 31% overall) and religious extremism (41% hold back versus 32% overall). Those who are more authoritarian in their views express highest levels of concern about being able to share their views on race/racism (49% hold back versus 36% overall), immigration (44% versus 32%), asylum (42% hold back versus 31% overall) and religious extremism (42% hold back versus 32% overall). Those who are economically right leaning express similar concerns around these topics and transgender issues but with varying degrees of emphasis. So, whilst people with these particular views are broadly able to speak freely about a range of topics, for certain topics – race/racism, immigration, asylum and religious extremism – there are instances where they feel more strongly than the general population that they have to hold back on expressing their views. This may warrant further exploration, or consideration when thinking about the practice of free speech.

⁴ Percentage that score 1-3 'People should be able to say what they want' on a 7-point scale: Climate change (72%), politics (69%), child sexual exploitation by grooming gangs (60%)

Free speech and politics

While there is general support for open expression in support of different political views, opinions diverge slightly when it comes to far-right ideas. On balance, people are more likely to lean towards thinking that individuals should be able to speak freely in support of centre-right, centre-left, and far-left ideas, with around half leaning towards free speech for each (51%, 56% and 49% respectively compared with 19%, 14% and 21% respectively who lean towards thinking that people should be careful not to offend. However, support for unrestricted expression in support of far-right ideas is somewhat lower, with 40% in favour (compared to 49% in support of unrestricted expression in support of far-left ideas) and a comparatively larger proportion (33%) who think that others should be careful not to offend when speaking in support of far-right ideas.

Again, there are groups of people with particular sociocultural values who place greater emphasis on the principle of free speech and although these groups of people are still more likely to feel able to express their own political views, some do express some concerns about feeling less able to do so. This is particularly the case for those that are most concerned with the pace of change. People who are most concerned about the pace of change feel strongly that people should be able to say whatever they want in support of a range of political views, particularly in support of far-right or centre-right ideas. Whilst around half (52%) feel able to share their own political views, they are more likely than average to feel that have to hold back (8% point difference – 31% versus 23% overall).

There are a number of reasons why people hold back from expressing their own political views, often wanting to avoid conflict or causing offence. Typically, people refrain from expressing their own political views because they don't want to get into an argument (50%), want to avoid causing offence (35%) or don't know enough about a topic (33%). They are most likely to hold back from expressing their views in public places or with people they don't know, or with work colleagues, which suggests that there is a wealth of factors involved in decisions about the practice of free speech, possibly related to people's own identities, the identity of others, social norms and socio-economic factors.

Free speech, religion and blasphemy

People's views on the protection of religious freedoms are divided. Whilst people are more likely to think that religious freedom has about the right amount of protection in Britain today (49%), a notable three in ten (29%) think religious freedom is protected too much. Again, this sentiment is most strongly felt by those who are most concerned with the pace of change, more economically right leaning or authoritarian in their views (43%, 36% and 40% respectively think religious freedoms are overprotected).

People's views about religious protection vary by the religion being discussed. People's views about religious protection also vary by the specific religion, with around half of people or more thinking that Christianity, Sikhism, Hinduism and Buddhism have about the right amount of protection in Britain today (48%, 53%, 55% and 58% respectively – though there are relatively high

proportions of ‘don’t know’ about the last three of these). Islam is the only religion asked about where a larger proportion of the public think that the religion is protected too much (39% compared to 18% protected too little). Again, the over protection of Islam is most likely cited by those that are most concerned with the pace of change, economically right leaning and more authoritarian in their views (67%, 54% and 57% respectively versus 39% overall).

When it comes to the principle of free speech and religious topics, broadly speaking the public tend not to differentiate too much across different religious figures, teachings and beliefs, and typically lean towards thinking that people should be able to speak freely about the main religious topics asked about. There are slightly higher proportions who think that people should be able to speak freely about Christian topics than those related to Islam, Judaism, Hinduism or Sikhism.

In practice, people’s sense of being able to freely share their views varies by the religious topic.

The survey findings suggest that, in practice, people’s ability to freely share their views varies by religious topic. For example, people tend to feel most able to speak freely about Christian topics (17% hold back on sharing their views) but have more reservations when speaking about Islamic topics (38% hold back on sharing their views). Those who are most concerned with the pace of change, more economically right leaning or authoritarian in their views follow this pattern, but more strongly than most feel that they have to hold back their views on Islamic topics (50% of those most concerned about pace of change, 49% economically right leaning, 46% authoritarian, compared to 38% overall).

People cited a range of reasons why they refrain from expressing their views on religious topics. Again, it is not necessarily because the principle of free speech does not exist, but most likely because they do not want to cause offence, they don’t know enough about the topic or want to avoid an argument (46%, 43% and 40% respectively). A quarter of people have felt that they have had to hold back on expressing their views on religious topics because of concerns for their safety (25%). This concern is felt more strongly by those who are most concerned with the pace of change, more economically right leaning or authoritarian in their views (37%, 32% 32% compared to 25% overall).

Summary of key conclusions

While the principle of free speech enjoys broad support, its practical application is complex and shaped by social dynamics, social views and contextual factors, as well as the topic being discussed. The findings reveal a tension between the abstract ideal of unrestricted free speech and the lived experiences of navigating potentially sensitive conversations in a diverse society.

There is a minority group of people for whom free speech is a more pertinent topic. This sub-group makes up around 37% of the total sample and tend to be most concerned with the pace of change. People that hold these views tend to express stronger concerns about the protection of free speech and tend to more strongly lean in favour of the principle of free speech regardless of the topic at hand. Whilst on balance, they tend to feel more able to express their views than not, they do express more heightened concerns about their ability to speak freely about race/racism,

immigration, asylum and religious extremism. Those that are most concerned with the pace of change typically tend to skew slightly towards being male, are older (aged 55+), predominantly white and disproportionately more likely to be Christian. Whilst their views do not represent the majority, they may be of particular interest to the Commission for Countering Extremism.

4 Free speech and freedoms in Britain

Key findings:

- People are most likely to think that freedom of speech and freedom of religion have the right amount of protection in Britain today (44% and 49%). This is compared to 27% that think freedom from discrimination and freedom from threats abuse have the right amount of protection.
- Men, older age groups and non-graduates are more likely to think that these are not protected enough.
- When asked about the protection of some of the major religious beliefs, about half consider each major religion to have the right amount of protection (Buddhism (68%), Hinduism (55%), Sikhism (53%), Christianity (48%).
- Islam is the religion that people are more likely to think is protected too much (39%) and it is again men, older people, non-graduates who are more likely to think that it is too protected.
- If people are of a certain religion, they are more likely to think that their own religion needs more protection (e.g. 41% of Christians think that Christianity is not protected enough, versus 28% overall). This is much sharper distinction among Muslims – 59% think Islam is not protected enough, versus 18% overall.
- However, it's important to view these findings in context. Freedom of speech and religious freedoms are not seen as the most important issues facing Britain today. When, asked to consider the most important issues from a list, just 9% selected free speech and 1% religious freedoms.

4.1 Free speech in the context of issues facing Britain today

People were asked to select up to three of the most important issues facing Britain today, from a range of issues. While it was not expected to be the most salient issue, it was intended to position free speech within the wider context of issues facing Britain. When asked to select up to three of the most important issues facing Britain today from a range of options, the top three most important issues are health and social care/NHS (57%), cost of living/inflation (52%), and immigration (29%). Around one in ten people say that free speech is one of the most important issues facing Britain today (9%), and just 1% religious freedoms.

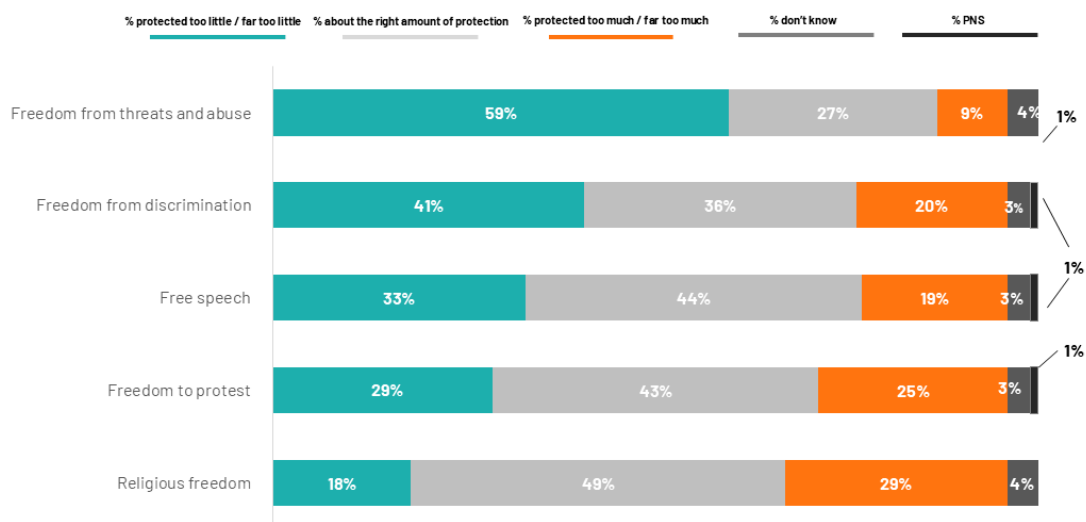
While free speech is not the most salient issue, there is a subgroup of the population for whom it is a slightly more pertinent issue. Those that are most concerned with the pace of change, more economically right leaning and more authoritarian in their views are slightly more to select free speech from the list of options available (16%, 13% and 12% respectively versus 9% overall). However, the top three issues are still the same for these subgroups, albeit the order of importance changes for those most concerned with the pace of change. All these subgroups prioritise immigration more than the average (51%, 41% and 43% versus 29% overall).

4.2 Free speech and the protection of different types of freedoms

While free speech is valued, it's not a top priority for most people. Other freedoms, like protection from threats and discrimination, are seen as more pressing. This is important because people's attitudes towards free speech may be interrelated with their attitudes towards other freedoms.

Figure 4.1: Protection of different types of freedoms

Q3. People have different opinions about freedoms in Britain today. Do you think that each of the following freedoms are protected too much or too little in Britain today, or about the right amount?



Base: All adults in England and Wales aged 16+, n = 2,291, Fieldwork dates: 27th February – 5th March 2025

People think that freedom from threats and abuse and freedom from discrimination are the least protected freedoms in Britain (59% and 41% respectively protected too little / far too little), compared to free speech, freedom to protest and religious freedom (33%, 29% and 18%).

Comparatively, freedom from threats and abuse is the only measure that a majority (59%) think is protected too little in Britain today. A quarter (27%) think it is protected about the right amount, and only 9% that it is protected too much. A plurality (41%) thinks there is not enough protection of freedom from discrimination, rather than too much (20%), though just over a third (36%) think it is protected enough.

People think religious freedoms are relatively more protected in Britain today, though still only a minority think they are protected too much. About three in ten (29%) think religious freedom is protected too much, while about half (49%) think it is protected about the right amount.

Views on freedom to protest are split. Around one in six people (18%) think it isn't protected enough. Four in ten (43%) think freedom to protest is protected about the right amount, 25% too much and 29% not enough.

4.3 The protection of free speech

People are most likely to think that free speech has about the right amount of protection in Britain today (44%). However, a third of people think that free speech is protected too little (33%) and around one in four people think it is protected too much (19%).

There are some slight differences by demographics with men and older people being more likely than most to think that free speech is not protected enough (36%, 38% of 65+ compared to 33% overall). Similarly, people who are most concerned about the pace of change and tend to lean economically right are also more likely to think that free speech is under protected (43% and 39% compared to 33% overall).

4.4 The protection of religious freedoms

Almost half of people think that religious freedom has about the right amount of protection in Britain today (49%). Three in ten people (29%) think religious freedom is protected too much in Britain today. This sentiment is felt most strongly by those who are most concerned with the pace of change, more economically right leaning or tend to be more authoritarian in their views (43%, 36% and 40% respectively). One in five people think it is not protected enough (18%).

In most cases across all demographic groups' half or nearly half think that religious freedoms are protected about the right amount, but there are differences in emphasis. For example, people from white ethnicities are more likely than people from ethnic minorities to think that religious freedoms are protected too much in Britain (31% versus 17%), while those from ethnic minorities are relatively more likely to think they aren't protected enough (by 27% to 16%). There is a starker difference by religion, with four in ten Muslims (40%) thinking that religious freedom is

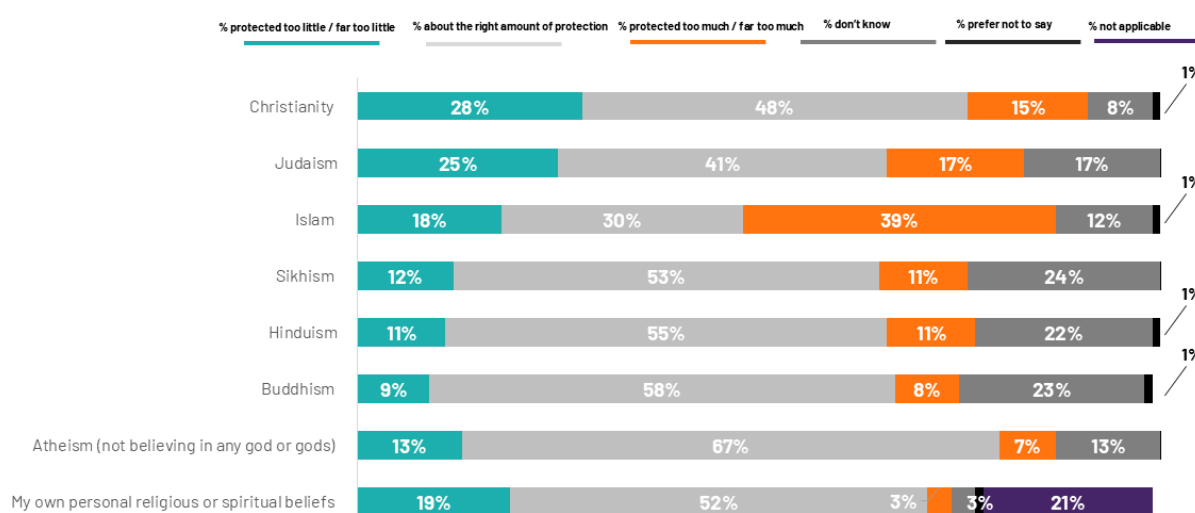
protected too little compared to 17% of those of another religion (including Christianity) and 15% of those with no religion.

4.5 Protection of different religious beliefs

When asked about several major religious beliefs, around half of people or more think that **Christianity, Sikhism, Hinduism and Buddhism have about the right amount of protection in Britain today** (48%, 53%, 55% and 58% respectively – though there are relatively high proportions of ‘don’t know’ about the last three of these). Around two in five people (41%) think that Judaism has about the right amount of protection. **Islam is the only religion asked about where a larger proportion think that the religion is protected too much (39% compared to 18% protected too little).**

Figure 4.2: Protection of different religious beliefs

Q4 And for each of the following beliefs, do you think these are protected too much or too little in Britain today, or about the right amount?



Base: All adults in England and Wales aged 16+, n = 2,291, Fieldwork dates: 27th February – 5th March 2025

People have more mixed views on the protection of Islam with four in ten saying they think this belief is protected too much (39%). Three in ten think Islam is protected about the right amount (30%) and one in six think it is protected too little (18%).

Across all the religious beliefs asked about, people are most likely to think that Islam is protected too much (39%) versus Judaism (17%), Christianity (15%), Sikhism, Hinduism (both 11%) and Buddhism (8%). Conversely, across all the religious beliefs asked about, people are most likely to think that Christianity (28%) and Judaism (25%) especially, followed by Islam (18%) are protected too little.

Those who identify with a particular religious group are more likely to think that their religion is protected too little. For example, Christians are more likely to think that Christianity is protected

too little (41%), versus 28% overall and 18% of Muslims. Whereas Muslims are more likely to think that Islam is protected too little (59%) versus 18% overall. Conversely, Muslims are more likely to think that Christianity is protected too much (23% versus 15% overall and 5% of Christians) whilst Christians are more likely to think that Islam is protected too much (49% versus 39% overall and 6% of Muslims). Muslims are also more likely to think that Judaism is protected too much (42% versus 17% overall) while Christians are more likely to think that it is protected too little (29% vs 25% overall).

Given the more varied views on the protection of Islam, this has been explored in further detail. There are some divergent views by demographics. On the one hand, there is a tendency for men (44%), older people (51% of those aged 55 or over) and non-graduates (44%) to be more likely than the overall average (39%), to think that Islam is protected too much. Conversely, there is a tendency for younger people (31% of those aged 34 or under), ethnic minorities (38%) and graduates (24%) compared to the overall average (18%) to think that Islam is not protected enough in Britain.

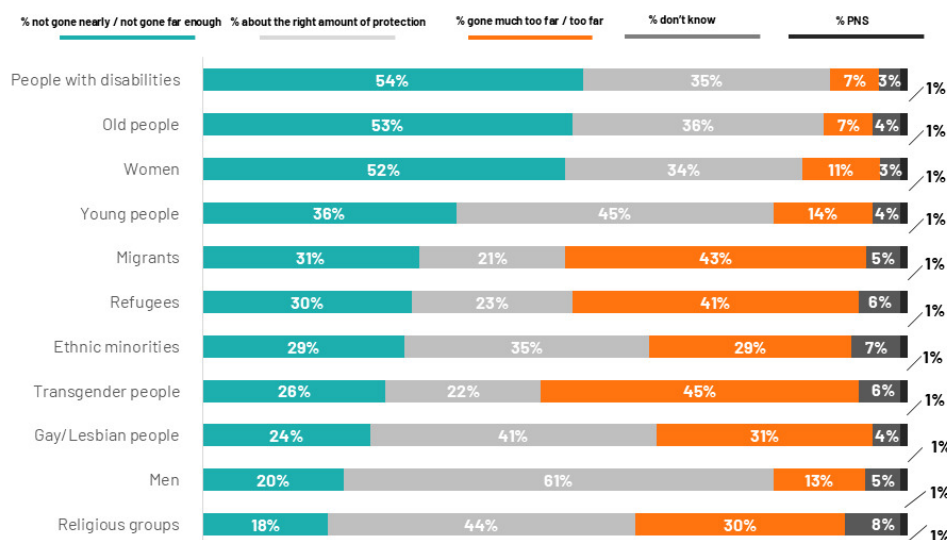
Turning to the values indicators, there are also differences by viewpoint. People that tend to be most concerned about the pace of change (67%), economically right leaning (54%) and more authoritarian in their views (57%) also tend to be more likely to than the overall average (39%) to think that Islam is protected too much. Whilst people who are least concerned about the pace of change (38%), economically left leaning (26%) and more libertarian in their views (32%), tend to be more likely than the overall average (18%) to think that Islam is protected too little.

4.6 Protection of different groups of people from discrimination

Public opinion is divided on whether efforts to protect various groups from discrimination have gone too far, not far enough, or struck the right balance. This is important because it may influence why people tend to have different attitudes towards free speech and the social, political, or religious topic being discussed.

Figure 4.3: Protection of different groups of people

Q5 Thinking about different groups of people, do you think that attempts to protect the following people from discrimination in Britain have gone too far, have not gone far enough or are about right?



Base: All adults in England and Wales aged 16+, n = 2,291. Fieldwork dates: 27th February - 5th March 2025

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A slight majority feel that protections for people with disabilities, older adults, and women haven't gone far enough (54%, 53%, 52%). Similarly, more people believe young people need greater protection from discrimination (36%). Conversely, a substantial portion of the public thinks that protections for migrants, refugees, and transgender people have gone too far (43%, 41%, 45% respectively), though these views don't represent a majority. Opinions are more evenly split regarding protections for gay/lesbian people, religious groups and ethnic minorities. Finally, a clear majority feels that men currently have the right amount of protection from discrimination (61%).

5 Free speech and sensitivity to offence

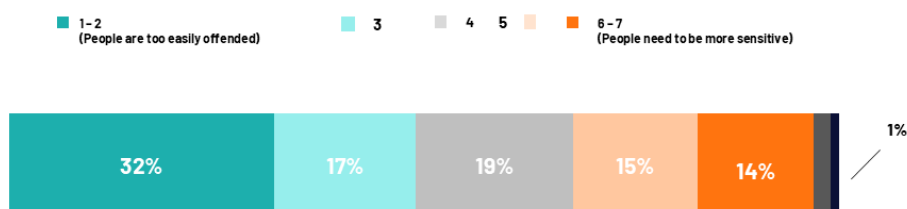
Key findings:

- Public opinion is divided on offence and sensitivity. Half of people think people are too easily offended (49%) and three in ten people (29%) think people need to be more sensitive. Around one in five people (19%) fall in the middle. The strength of feeling is notable, with those who think people are too easily offended tending to hold that belief more strongly (32% score 1-2 on a scale of 1 to 7).
- There are some variations across demographics. For example, men (56%), older people (59% of those aged 55+), people from white ethnicities (54%) and Christians (59%) are more likely than average to think people are too easily offended, whilst women (34%), younger people (38% aged 16-34), people from ethnic minorities (34%) and Muslims (45%) tend to be more likely than average to favour greater sensitivity.
- Regression analysis strengthens the association between these demographics and their views on free speech and sensitive language. For instance, being female is positively associated with being more sensitive than being a male. There are also interactions between demographics. Notably, being female and an ethnic minority shows the strongest positive association with favouring sensitive speech.
- Socio-cultural values also play a role, with clear divides on perspectives between those who tend to be most concerned about cultural change (73%), economically right leaning (66%) or authoritarian in their views (68%) tending to think people are too easily offended, compared to 49% overall. Those who are less concerned about the pace of change (59%), economically left leaning (43%) or libertarian in their views (49%) are more likely than average to think people should change the way they speak (30% overall).

People were asked to rate their views on a 7-point scale, where 1 means they think people are too easily offended and 7 means they think people need to change the way they talk to be more sensitive to people from different backgrounds. Overall analysis looks at those who give a score on either side of the scale (i.e. give an answer of 1-3 or 5-7) and those in the middle, though we also highlight those who feel more strongly (i.e. give an answer of 1-2 and 6-7, as those answering 3 or 5 may only have a slight preference).

Figure 5.1: Overall attitudes to free speech, sensitivity and offence

Q6 Some people think that the way people talk needs to be more sensitive to people from different backgrounds. Others think that many people are just too easily offended. Where would you place yourself on this scale?



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Public opinion in England and Wales is divided on the issue of offence and sensitivity. Nearly half of people leans towards the view that people are too easily offended (49%), with those who think people are more easily offended tending to hold that belief more strongly (32% score 1-2 versus 17% score 3). Three in ten people tend to think that people need to be more sensitive in the way they speak (29%). A smaller segment occupies the middle ground (19%).

Several demographic and socio-cultural values shape these perspectives, with a clear divide in how different parts of society perceive the balance between free speech and sensitivity. On the one hand, people that tend to lean towards thinking that people are too easily offended tend to be men (56%), older individuals (59% of those aged 55+), white respondents (54%), non-graduates (56%) and Christians (59%). On the other hand, people that tend to lean towards thinking that people need to change the way they speak are more likely to be females (34%), younger age groups (38% of people aged 16-34 years old), ethnic minorities (45%) and Muslims (46%).

There is a similar divide by socio-cultural values. Those who are most concerned with the pace of change (73%), those that tend to lean economically right (66%) or be more authoritarian in their views (68%) tend to think people are too easily offended. Conversely, those who are least concerned with the pace of change (59%), tend to lean economically left (43%) or be more libertarian in their views thinking (49%) tend to think that people should be more sensitive to others in the way they speak. All results are in comparison to the overall average. This is important because as later analysis shows, people that fall within these groupings also tend to have different perspectives on free speech across a range of topics.

Indeed, the regression analysis further demonstrates the associations between different demographic factors and attitudes towards free speech and sensitivity to others. For example, the regression analysis shows that there is an association (rather than a causal relationship) between gender, ethnicity, religion, age and education and the strength with which an individual leans towards one or other end of the scale.

The regression analysis was also used to test the interaction between two different independent variables on the dependent variable. The results of the interaction between gender and ethnicity, and between gender and religion suggest that the relationship between these demographics and attitudes towards free speech is complex. For example, the large positive coefficient of females who are from ethnic minorities suggests that this group of people tend to lean towards thinking people should change the way they speak. However, it should be noted that these analyses show associations, not causal relationships. It is not possible to conclude for example, that being a female and from an ethnic minority causes people to score higher on the scale. Other factors might be involved.

6 Views of free speech across a range of social, political and religious topics

Key findings:

- People value free speech. The balance of opinion is in favour of being able to speak freely about most topics.
- There is increased sensitivity towards certain topics. More people lean towards avoiding offence when talking about race/ethnicity (42%) and show higher levels of sensitivity towards transgender issues, religion and immigration compared to other topics like climate change or politics.
- Generally, the proportion of people who lean in support of free speech is similar to the proportion of people who feel able to speak freely, indicating a consistency between the principle and practice of free speech. But there are some disparities on certain topics.
- For some topics, there are particular segments of the population that feel they have to constrain their views. Those who are Christian are typically more likely to feel that have to hold back expressing their views on race/ethnicity. Immigration, asylum and religious extremism are topics where those who are most concerned with the pace of change, more economically right leaning or more authoritarian in their views are more likely to feel they have to hold back on expressing themselves.
- The analysis highlights the complexity of free speech where even those who are more likely to support it in principle may also exercise caution depending on the topic.

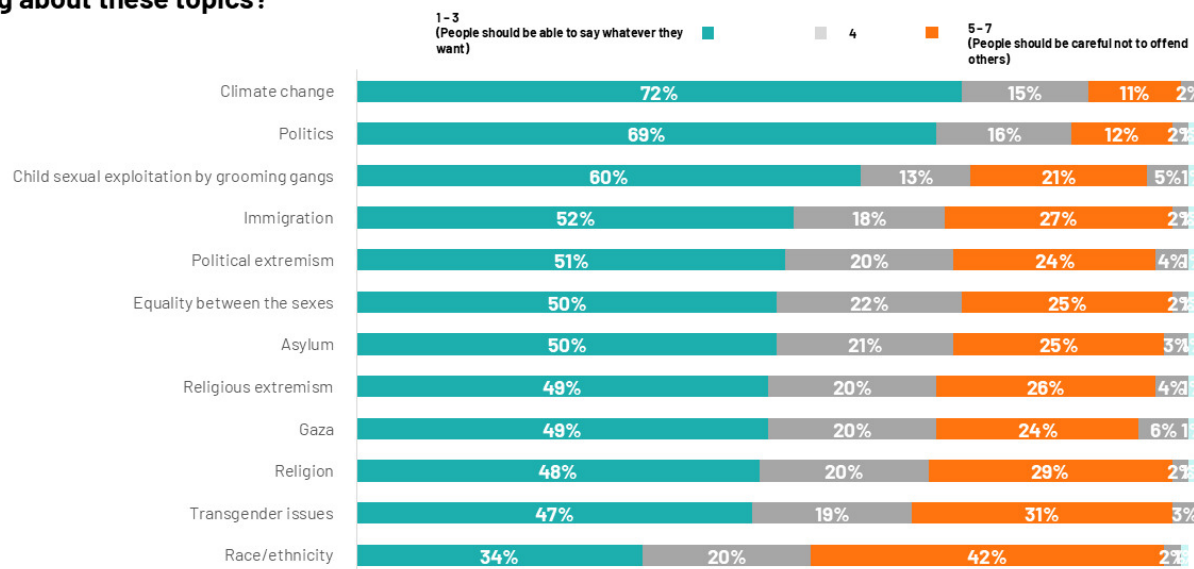
6.1 Free speech and social, cultural, political and religious topics

People were asked to give their views on a scale of 1-7, where 1 means people should be able to say whatever they want about a range of topics, and 7 that people should be careful not to offend others. Overall analysis looks at those who give a score on either side of the scale (i.e. give an answer of 1-3 or 5-7) and those in the middle, though we also highlight those who feel more strongly (i.e. give an answer of 1-2 and 6-7, as those answering 3 or 5 may only have a slight preference).

The balance of opinion is in favour of speaking freely about most of the topics asked about, with around half leaning towards free speech for most of them. A large majority of people tend to think that people should be able to speak freely (i.e. score 1-3 out of 7) about climate change (72%) and politics (69%), with a smaller, yet still a majority of people, supporting free speech on sensitive topics like child exploitation by grooming gangs (60%). However, there are some topics where a notable minority do lean more towards the belief that people should be careful not to offend others when talking about them (i.e. score 5-7 out of 7 on the scale). Whilst race/ethnicity is the only topic where the balance of opinion is more towards avoiding offence rather than speaking freely (by 42% to 34%), other topics that are relatively more sensitive include transgender issues (31% lean towards avoiding offence vs 47% speaking freely), religion (29% lean towards offence to 48% speaking freely) and immigration (27% lean towards avoiding offence to 52% speaking freely).

Figure 6.1: Public attitudes towards free speech across a range of topics

Q7. When thinking about each of the following, do you think people in general should feel free to say what they want about these topics or that people should be careful not to offend others when talking about these topics?



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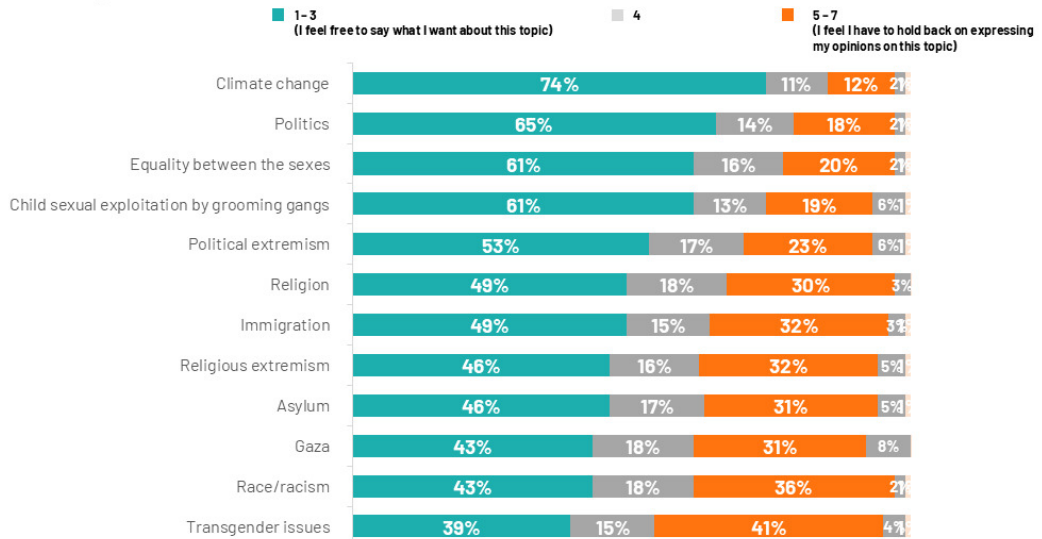


6.2 Personal experiences of free speech

The pattern is broadly the same when people are asked whether they personally feel free to say what they want or have to hold back on expressing their opinions to avoid offending others. Across most topics, people are more likely to feel they can say what they want than have to hold back, especially when discussing climate change (74% score 1-3 out of 7), politics (65%), equality between the sexes (61%), child sexual exploitation by gangs (61%), and political extremism (53%). The only topic where views are split is on transgender issues, where 39% tend to feel they can speak freely, and 41% that they have to hold back (scoring 5-7 on the 7-point scale). But around three in ten also tend to feel they need to hold back expressing their opinions when it comes to race/racism (36%), religious extremism (32%), immigration (32%), asylum (31%), Gaza (31%), and religion (30%).

Figure 6.2: Personal feelings about expressing views across a range of topics

Q8. Thinking about you personally, do you feel free to say what you want about each of the following topics, or do you feel that you have to hold back on expressing your opinions because you are worried about offending others?



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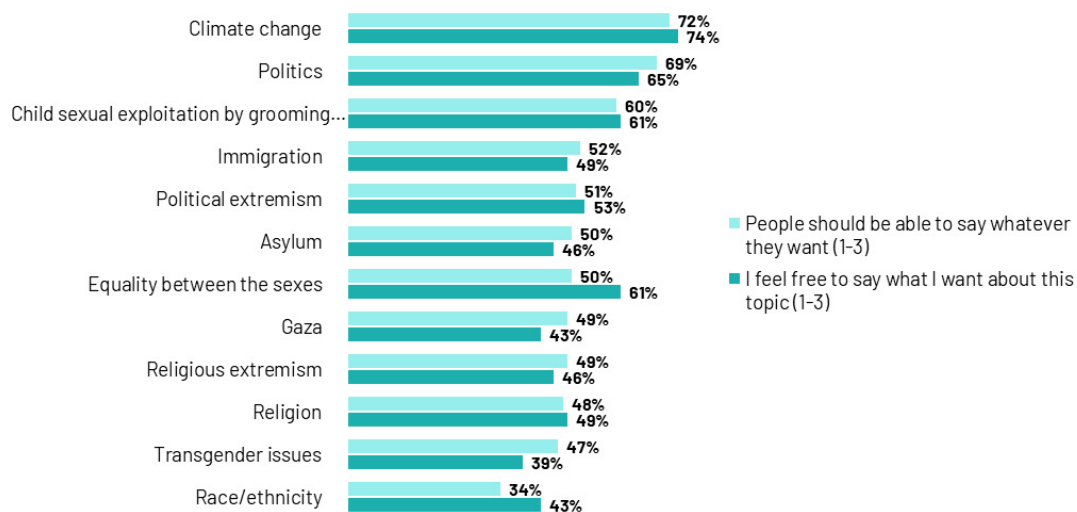
6.3 Comparison of differences between public and personal feelings towards free speech

On balance, the proportion of people who think others should be able to speak freely is broadly in line with the proportion of people who feel able to speak freely, suggesting that the principle and practice of free speech align. However, there are some gaps between public ideals and personal practice on some topics. For example, a greater proportion of people think that others should be able to speak freely about transgender issues, than feel free to do so themselves (47% versus 39%). Conversely, there are some topics (race/ethnicity and equality between the sexes) where people feel more able to speak freely than feel that others should be able to do so (race/ethnicity – 34% people should say what they want versus 43% feel able to do so and equality between the sexes – 50% people should be able to say what they want versus 61% feel able to do so). This highlights the complexities of free speech and how attitudes towards it vary by topic.

Figure 6.3: Comparison of people should be able to say what they want versus those that feel free to say what they want

Q7. When thinking about each of the following, do you think people in general should feel free to say what they want about these topics or that people should be careful not to offend others when talking about these topics

Q8. Thinking about you personally, do you feel free to say what you want about each of the following topics, or do you feel that you have to hold back on expressing your opinions because you are worried about offending others?



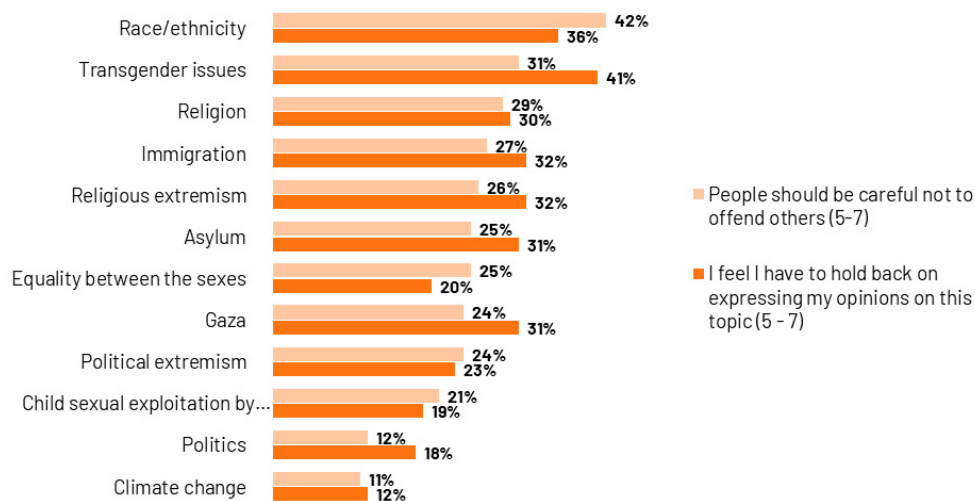
Base: All adults in England and Wales aged 16+, n = 2,291, Fieldwork dates: 27th February - 5th March 2025

Looking at the other end of the scale, where people score 5-7 and tend to think that people should be careful not to offend others, or that they have to hold expressing their opinions, there are also some differences. More people feel that people should be careful not to offend others than feel then have to hold back on expressing their opinions when it comes to race/ethnicity (42% versus 36%). Conversely, for some topics such as transgender issues, immigration, Gaza and politics more people feel they have to hold back on expressing their personal opinions, than feel others should be careful not to offend (41% versus 31%, 32% versus 27, 31% versus 24% and 18% versus 12% respectively). Again, this suggests a complex interplay between the topic at hand, people's perspective on the principle of free speech, and personal practice.

Figure 6.4: Comparison of ‘people should be careful not to offend others’ versus those that ‘feel they have to hold back on expressing their opinions on this topic’

Q7. When thinking about each of the following, do you think people in general should feel free to say what they want about these topics or that people should be careful not to offend others when talking about these topics

Q8. Thinking about you personally, do you feel free to say what you want about each of the following topics, or do you feel that you have to hold back on expressing your opinions because you are worried about offending others?



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6.4 Perspectives on free speech by demographics

Whilst there are groups of people that have stronger feelings in favour of the principle of free speech, these groups of people do not always feel that they have to hold back on expressing their views. There are some groups of people who feel more strongly about the principle of free speech and feel able to share their views. Men lean more towards the principle of free speech for all topics asked about and are as likely as the average to feel able to share their own views on these topics. This is also the case for people from white ethnicities and non-graduates. Notably, older people (aged 65+) lean in favour of free speech across all the topics asked about and are much more likely than average to feel free to express their own personal views on these topics. This is particularly the case for child sexual exploitation by grooming gangs, asylum, Gaza, and immigration (78% versus 61% overall, 58% versus 46% overall, 55% versus 43% overall and 60% versus 49% overall).

However, those who are Christian are more likely than average to favour the principle of free speech across all the topics asked about and also more likely than average to feel that they have to hold back on sharing their own personal views on race/ethnicity and immigration.

People who are Christian are more likely than average to feel that they have to hold back on sharing their views on race/ethnicity (43% versus 36% overall) and immigration (37% versus 32% overall). For all other topics the difference between Christians and the general population is negligible or less than 5%.

6.5 Perspectives on free speech by socio-cultural indicators

Turning to the socio-cultural values, there are differences in the degree to which people fall on either side of the spectrum with regards to their attitudes towards the principle of free speech. The analysis focuses on the groups of people that show the greatest levels of concern about free speech.

Most concerned with the pace of change

On balance, **those are most concerned with the pace of change are more likely than not to feel free to share their views on most topics** (religion, sex equality, politics, political extremism, climate change, grooming gangs, Gaza). They have divided views on their ability to share their views on religious extremism, immigration and asylum and are more likely than average to hold back on sharing their views on transgender issues, race and racism.

However, **those who are most concerned with the pace of change do feel more strongly that they have to hold back, compared to the overall average about certain topics, even if in practice they are still more likely to share their views than not.**

The most pertinent topics, where they most strongly feel that they have to hold back are race/racism (12% difference – 48% versus 36% overall), **immigration** (11% difference – 43% hold back versus 32% overall), **asylum** (10% difference – 41% hold back versus 31% overall) and **religious extremism** (9% difference – 41% hold back versus 32% overall). They also feel slightly more strongly about having to hold back on; child sexual exploitation by grooming gangs (8% difference – 27% versus 19% overall), political extremism (7% difference – 30% versus 23% overall), transgender issues (7% difference – 48% versus 41% overall), religion (6% difference – 36% versus 30% overall) and. They are in line with the average for sex equality, Gaza, politics and climate change. **So, whilst they might not always hold back on sharing their views, they do express feeling constrained when speaking about certain topics.**

Economically right leaning

On balance, **those who are economically right leaning are more likely than not to feel free to share their views on most topics** (religion, sex equality, politics, political extremism, climate change, grooming gangs). They are divided on their ability to share their views on religious extremism, Gaza, immigration and asylum but hold back on sharing their views on transgender issues, race/ethnicity.

However, **people who are economically right leaning are more likely than average to feel that they have to hold back on expressing their views on certain topics**, even if they still do so in practice.

The most pertinent topics, where they most strongly feel that they have to hold back are; immigration (10% difference – 42% hold back versus 32% overall), **race/racism** (9% difference – 45% versus 36%), **transgender issues** (9% difference – 50% hold back versus 41% overall) and

asylum (8% difference – 39% hold back versus 31% overall). They also feel slightly more strongly about having to hold back on; religious extremism (7% difference – 39% versus 32%), political extremism (6% difference – 29% versus 23%), Gaza (6% difference – 37% versus 31%) and religion (5% difference – 35% versus 30%). They are in line with the average for religion, politics, race, climate change and sexual exploitation by grooming gangs. **This suggests that these people feel more pressure to hold back their views on certain topics.**

Authoritarian

On balance, those that are authoritarian in their views are more likely than not to feel free to share their views on many topics (sex equality, politics, political extremism, climate change, child sexual exploitation by grooming gangs). They are more divided on their views on their ability to share their views on religion, religious extremism, immigration and asylum but are more likely than hold back on expressing their views on transgender issues and race/ethnicity.

Again, **people who are more authoritarian in their views are more likely than average to feel that they have to hold back on expressing their views on certain topics**, even if they still do so in practice. **The most pertinent topics, where they most strongly feel that they have to hold back are; race/racism** (13% difference – 49% versus 36%), **immigration** (12% difference – 44% hold back versus 32% overall), **asylum** (11% difference – 42% hold back versus 31% overall) and **religious extremism** (10% difference – 42% hold back versus 32% overall). They also feel slightly more strongly about having to hold back on; transgender issues (8% difference – 49% versus 41% overall), religion (7% difference – 37% versus 30% overall), sex equality (7% difference – 27% versus 20% overall), political extremism (7% difference – 30% versus 23% overall) and child sexual exploitation by grooming gangs (5% difference – 24% versus 19% overall). They are in line with the average for politics, Gaza and climate change.

People with these particular views (more concerned about the pace of change, economically right leaning, authoritarian) feel broadly able to speak freely about a range of topics, for certain topics – immigration, asylum and religious extremism. However, there are instances where they feel more pressure to hold back on expressing their views. This may warrant further exploration, or consideration when thinking about the practice of free speech.

7 Free speech and politics

Key findings:

- People tend to value free speech in support of a range of political views but are more divided when it comes to support for far-right political views.
- People are most likely to lean towards the need to avoid causing offence when speaking in support of far-right political views (33% score 5-7 out of 7, where 7 represents the strongest preference for avoiding offence). This contrasts with far-left ideas (21% score 5-7), centre-right ideas (19%), and centre-left ideas (14%).
- While a majority feel personally able to express their own political views (55% score 1-3), there are demographic differences. Younger and older age groups, men, white respondents, and graduates tend to feel more able to speak freely. Conversely, middle-aged individuals, ethnic minorities, and religious individuals tend to feel less able, though are still more likely to express their views than not.

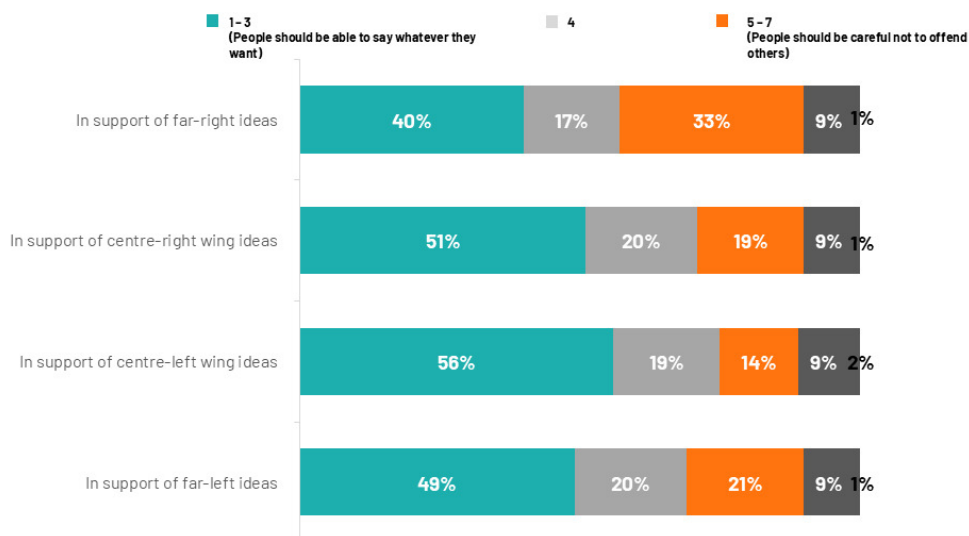
7.1 Free speech and political views

People were asked to give their views on a scale of 1-7, where 1 means people should be able to say whatever they want in favour of these political views, and 7 that people should be careful not to offend others. Participants were not provided with a definition of what constitutes far-left, centre-left, centre right or far-right ideas when completing the survey, and responses were based on their own understanding of the terms. These terms, particularly the “far left” and “far right” are inherently subjective therefore and a methodological decision was taken not to provide definitions to avoid imposing reductive categories.

On balance, people tend to think that people should be able to speak freely in support of a range of political views but are slightly more divided when it comes to speaking in support of far-right political views.

Figure 7.1: Public attitudes towards free speech and a range of political views

Q9. When thinking about each of the following political views, do you think people in general should feel free to say what they want in support of them or that people should be careful not to offend others



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Half tend to think that people in general should feel free to say what they want in support of centre-right wing, centre-left wing and far left ideas (51%, 56% and 49% respectively when asked to give a score of 1-3 out of 7). A smaller proportion, though still a plurality (40%), think people should be able to say whatever they want in support of far-right ideas. Notably, people who are most concerned about the pace of change, are economically right, male and older tend to have stronger views about being able to speak freely in support of different political views regardless of the political view itself.

Those who are most concerned with the pace of change are particularly more likely than average to think that people should be able to say what they want regardless of the political view – albeit they feel most strongly about this with regards to far-right ideas and centre-right ideas. For example, those who are most concerned with the pace of change think people should be able to say whatever they want in support of far-right ideas (16% difference – 56% versus 40% overall), centre-right ideas (13% difference – 64% versus 51% overall), centre-left ideas (7% difference – 63% versus 56% overall) and far-left ideas (8% difference – 57% versus 49% overall). A similar but less pronounced pattern occurs for those that are economically right leaning. This pattern does not occur for those that are more authoritarian in their views.

Broadly speaking there is a pattern whereby men, older people, and people from a white ethnicity tend to be more likely than most to think that people should be free to say what they want in support of any political view asked about. However, there are some occasions where the political viewpoint matters. For example, people who are university educated are more likely than most to think that people should be able to speak freely in support of the far-left, whereas people who are

not university educated are more likely to think that people should be able to speak freely in support of the far-right. This suggests that there are certain groups of people who tend to always favour free speech, but that other factors such as the topic also influence attitudes towards free speech.

People are most likely to think that the public should be careful not to offend others when speaking in support of far-right ideas, with 33% giving a score of 5-7 (versus 21% saying the same about far-left ideas, 19% centre-right ideas and 14% centre-left ideas).

There is a slight but less pronounced pattern across the types of people who tend to be more likely than average to say feel that people should be careful not to offend when talking in support of a range of political views. Those from ethnic minorities for example, are more likely than average to think that people should be careful not to offend when discussing *any* political view. Similarly, those that are least concerned with the pace of cultural change are also more likely than most to lean this way. However, there are slightly counterintuitive results with regards to speaking in the support of the far-left, with those who are least concerned with the pace of change being more likely to support free speech and avoiding offence than average. This suggests that this particular political viewpoint is more pertinent to this group of people.

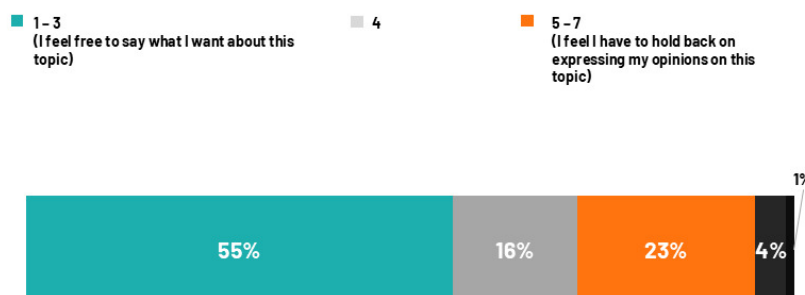
These differing attitudes towards free speech in support of political views highlights the complexity of developing a universally accepted understanding of the underlying principles of free speech. There is a tension between those that consistently tend to lean in support of free speech and those that consistently tend to be more likely to want to avoid causing offence. However, the results are nuanced, with different people avoiding causing offence depending on the political viewpoint.

7.2 Personal experiences of discussing one's own political views

People tend to feel more like they can speak freely about their own political views, than feel like they have to hold back on expressing an opinion. Over half (55%) of people feel that they can speak freely about their own political views (giving a score of 1-3 out of 7) whereas about one-quarter (23%) give a score of 5-7, where 7 means they have to hold back on expressing their views. Looking at those who feel more strongly, 41% give a score of 1-2 and 13% give a score of 6-7.

Figure 7.2: Personal feelings about being able to express own political views

Q10 Thinking about you personally, do you feel free to say what you want about your own political views, or do you feel that you have to hold back on expressing your opinions on this topic?



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Whilst most people feel able to freely share their own political views, there are certain characteristics which could indicate some demographic groups lean towards feeling more or less able to do so. Those that tend to feel more able to express their own political views are more likely to be either the youngest or oldest age group (62% and 64% respectively compared to 55% overall). Similarly, those that are male (58%), or a graduate (59%) also tend to be slightly more likely to feel this way (compared to 55% overall). As are those who are least concerned about the pace of change (66%), economically left leaning (63%) and with more libertarian views (69%). Conversely, those who are middle aged (28% of people aged 34-54 years old, again compared to 55% overall), from an ethnic minority (29%) or religious (26%) lean towards feeling like they have to hold back on expressing their own political views, compared to 23% overall.

Groups of people who favour the principle of free speech have a greater tendency towards feeling less able to share their views than others, even though in practice they are still typically able to do so. For example, those most concerned with the pace of change (52% feel able to share their own political views versus 31% who feel they have to hold back), those who are economically right leaning (52% feel able to share their own political views versus 28% who feel they have to hold back) and those who hold more authoritarian views (51% feel able to share their own political views versus 28% who feel they have to hold back) are still more likely than not to feel able to share their views. However, these groups of people do have a greater tendency towards feeling less able to do so, which suggests that they might feel less willing or able to express their opinion. For example, those most concerned with the pace of change are 8% more likely to hold back on expressing their own political views (31% versus 23% overall). The scores are 5% higher for those who are economically right leaning or authoritarian in their views (both 28% compared to 23% overall).

8 Free speech, religion and blasphemy

Key findings:

- Most people believe in the principle of free speech regardless of the religion in question.
- When it comes to feeling able to express their views personally, there is a clear pattern of increased sensitivity towards discussions about Islam.
- People tend to feel most comfortable discussing Christianity (51% combined score – feel free to discuss Jesus, the Bible, and Christian teachings), while feeling more hesitant about Islam (45% combined score – feel free to discuss Muhammed, the Quran, and Islamic teachings).
- Perspectives on free speech vary by age, gender and ethnicity depending upon the religion being discussed.

8.1.1 Free speech, religious figures, teachings and beliefs

Broadly speaking, people tend not to differentiate too much across different religious figures, teachings and beliefs when it comes to how freely or careful they think people should be when speaking about them.

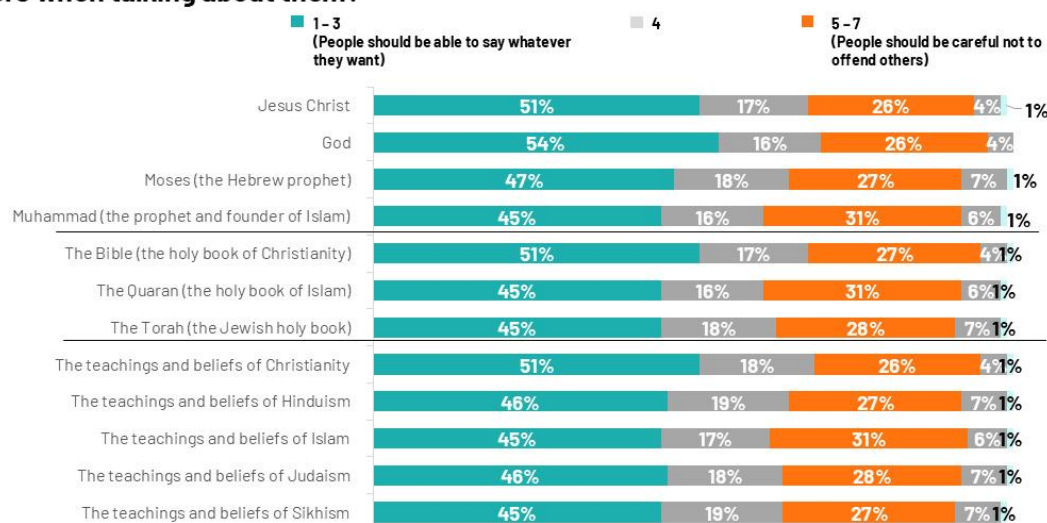
Overall, more people tend to think that people should be able to say whatever they want about various religious figures, teachings and beliefs, then tend to think that people should be careful not to offend others when talking about them.

On a scale of 1-7, where 1 is people in general should feel to say what they want about different religious figures, teachings and beliefs, and where 7 is people should be careful not to offend others when talking about them, between 45% – 54% tend towards saying people should be free to say what they want (giving a score of 1-3 out of 7 across all the major religious figures, texts, teachings and beliefs asked about). Between 26% and 31% feel more that people should be careful about offending others (giving a score of 5-7 out of seven across all the major religious figures, texts, teachings and beliefs asked about). Those with stronger views also tend towards thinking people should be able to say what they want: between 33-42% give a score of 1-2 out of 7, while between 16-21% give a score of 6-7.

Within this overall pattern, there are slight differences in emphasis. People are most likely to think people should be free to talk about God (54%), Jesus Christ, the Bible, and the teachings and beliefs of Christianity (all 51%). Whereas they are most likely to think people should be careful not to offend others when it comes to Muhammed, the Qur'an, and the teachings and beliefs of Islam (all 31%).

Figure 8.1: Free speech and religious figures, teachings and beliefs

Q14. When thinking about each of the following religious figures, teachings and beliefs, do you think people in general should feel free to say what they want about them, or that people should be careful not to offend others when talking about them?



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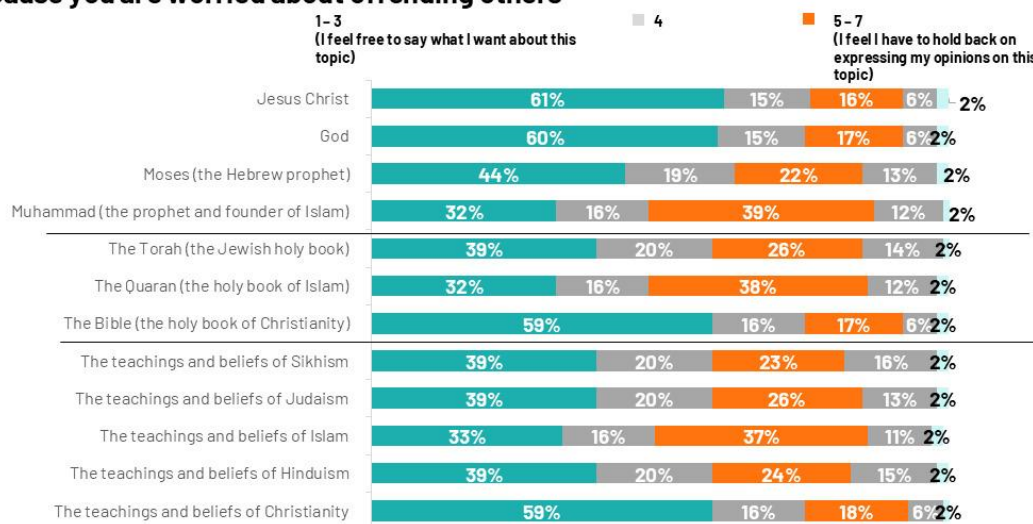
8.1.2 Personal experiences of discussing religious topics

When it comes to expressing their own opinions on various religious figures, teachings and beliefs, people tend to have more mixed views depending on the subject. The religion itself tends to make more of a difference than whether it is an individual holy figure, holy book or its teachings in general. In other words, there is more difference between religions (for example, between Christianity and Judaism) than there is within religions (for example, between, Jesus Christ and the Bible). For example, on the one hand, people tend to feel most able to say whatever they want about Jesus Christ, the Bible or the teachings and beliefs of Christianity (61%, 59% and 59% respectively scoring 1–3⁵). On the other hand, people feel most like they have to hold back on expressing their opinions when speaking about Muhammed, the Qur'an, or the teachings and beliefs of Islam (39%, 38% and 37% scoring 5–7¹), compared to the other religious figures, teachings and beliefs asked about. Notably, Muslims express higher levels of sensitivity to offence with regards to any of the religious topics asked about. Muslims are more likely than average to think that people should be careful not to offend when talking about Islamic topics (71% compared to 31% overall), Christian topics (64% versus 26% overall) or Jewish topics (60% versus 28% overall).

⁵ Scored 1–3 on a 7-point scale where 1 means I feel free to say what I want and 7 means I feel I have to hold back on expressing my opinions

Figure 8.2: Personal feelings towards free speech and religious figures, teachings and beliefs

Q15 Thinking about you personally, do you feel free to say what you want about the following religious figures, teachings and beliefs, or do you feel that you have to hold back on expressing your opinions because you are worried about offending others



Base: All adults in England and Wales aged 16+, n = 2,291, Fieldwork dates: 27th February - 5th March 2025

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Overall, people feel most like they have to hold back on expressing their views about Islamic topics (38% overall across all three items). Comparatively, around a quarter feel like they have to hold back on expressing their views on Jewish topics (25% overall across all three items) and least like they have to hold back on expressing their views on Christianity (17%).

Different demographic groups feel more or less able to speak about different religions. Again, the difference in opinion tends to relate to the religion being spoken about rather than the specific religious figure, text or teaching. The pattern of who tends to feel more or less able to speak about particular religious figures, texts or beliefs varies depending on the religion being referred to. This analysis reveals a complex interplay of age, gender and religious identity with freedom of speech.

When it comes to feeling able to speak freely about the Jesus Christ, the Bible or the teachings and beliefs of Christianity, men, older people, white respondents and Christians (as might be expected) tend to feel freer to share their views compared to the overall average across each of the three items (64% across all items combined compared to 60% overall). Conversely, women, ethnic minorities and Muslims tend to be more likely to feel like they have to hold back (19% of women, 28% ethnic minorities, 34% Muslims across all items combined compared to 17% overall).

A slightly different pattern emerges when looking at how strongly people feel able to share their views on Moses, the Torah and the teachings beliefs of Judaism. Whilst men and people from white ethnicities (46% and 43% across all items), again in comparison with Christian figures, texts or beliefs, lean towards being able to share their views, there is a difference whereby younger people and graduates also lean towards feeling more able to do so (47% and 44% compared to 41%

overall across all Jewish topics). Muslims, in particular, demonstrate reservations in sharing their views on these topic (39% compared to 25% overall across all items).

Perspectives also differ for Muhammed, the Qur'an and the teachings and beliefs of Islam with further differences between the groups of people who tend to feel more or less able to express their views. Here is it most likely to be younger people and (as might be expected) Muslims who tend to feel more able to say what they want about these figures, texts and beliefs (40% people aged 34 or under, 48% Muslims compared to the 32% overall). Older people and Christians in particular demonstrate reservations in sharing their views on these topics (42% and 44% respectively, compared to 38% overall).

Comparatively, the proportion of Christians who feel comfortable talking about Christian figures, texts and teachings (64% on average, across the three items) is greater than the proportion of Muslims who feel comfortable discussing same for Islam (48% on average across the three items).

Those who are most concerned with the pace of change, more economically right leaning or authoritarian in their views follow this pattern, but more strongly than most feel that they have to hold back their views on Islamic topics. For example, almost half of those most concerned with the pace of change hold back on expressing their views on Islamic topics (13% difference – 50% compared with 37% overall) as do a similar proportion of those who are economically right leaning or more authoritarian in their views (both 9% difference – both 46% compared with 37% overall).

9 Reasons why people hold back from their expressing their views

Key findings:

- There are a broad range of motivations beyond the principle of free speech that lead people to refrain from sharing their views.
- People predominantly hold back from sharing their own political views or views on religious topics to avoid causing offence or starting an argument
- Concerns about safety are heightened for those who feel they have to hold back their views on religious topics.

For all those who had ever held back on expressing their own political views (scores 2 – 7 on the scale about freedom to express their own political views) or expressing their own views on any of the religious figures, texts and teachings (score 2 – 7 for any religious figure, text or teaching), people were asked to share the main reasons why they felt they had to hold back on either topic, with whom and where they felt this way.

People predominantly hold back from expressing their views to avoiding causing offence or starting an argument. Just under half of people held back from expressing their views on any religious figure, text or teaching (46%) and just over a third of people (35%) held back their political views to avoid causing offence. Women are more likely hold back to avoid causing offence when discussing religious topics (51% women versus 40% men). The fear of causing an argument is a more common reason when holding back on political views, than on discussions about religious topics (50% versus 40%). A lack of knowledge about the topic is also one of the main reasons people hold back from sharing their views on either of these topics (33% political views and 43% religious figures, teachings and beliefs).

Not knowing enough about a topic is also a main reason why people hold back on discussing political views or religious topics. More than one-third of people feel they have to hold back on expressing their opinions because they do not know enough about the subject – with 43% saying this was the reason for holding back on discussing religious topics, and 33% citing it for political views. Women and those aged 16–24 are more likely than average to say they hold back because they do not know enough about the subject, or they don't feel confident enough. For example, 41% of women held back on discussing their political views and 47% for religious topics because they didn't feel they knew enough (versus 23% and 39% of men), while 23% and 17% held back on discussing the same because they don't feel confident enough (versus 10% and 8% of men).

People also hold back because they think that the topics are too controversial, albeit this is a greater concern for those holding back on religious topics (26% political views and 32% religious figures, teachings and beliefs). This reason is held more widely by those who are most concerned

with the pace of change, more economically right leaning or authoritarian in their views when refraining from speaking about religious topics (40%, both 38% compared to 32% overall).

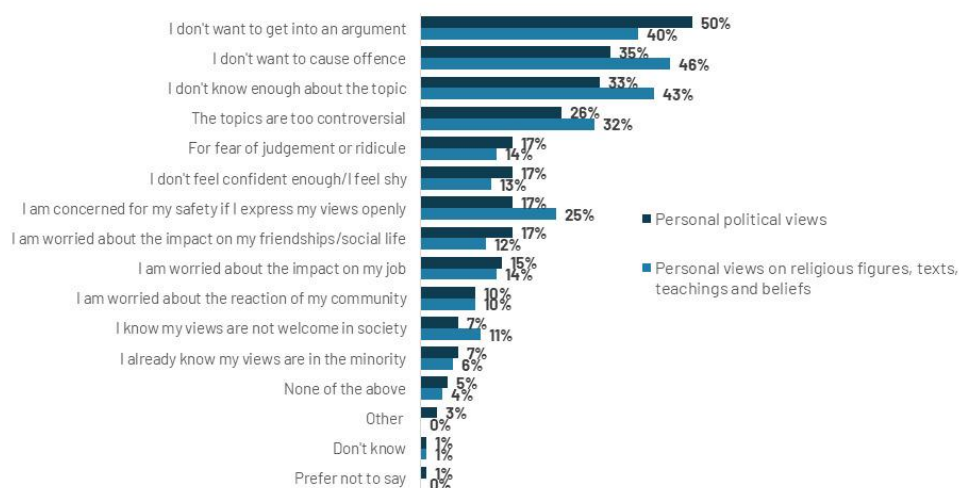
Concerns about safety are heightened for those who feel they have to hold back their views on religious topics (25% for religious topics compared to 17% political views). However, Muslims and ethnic minorities are more likely to feel that safety concerns cause them to hold back on discussing their political views (28%, 23% versus 17% overall). Those who are most concerned about the pace of change, more economically right leaning or authoritarian in their views are more likely to raise this concern when refraining from sharing their views on religious topics (33%, 37% 32% for both compared to 25% overall). This again suggests that the topic at hand influences the reasons why people hold back.

Around one in seven people say they feel they have to hold back due to concerns about the impact it would have on their social life or job security. Men are more likely than women to say they hold back because they are worried about the impact on their job – with 22% and 19% of men worried about discussing their political views or views on various religious topics for fear of it impacting their job, respectively, versus 9% of women.

Figure 9.1: Reasons why people hold back

Q11. What, if any, are the main reasons why you personally feel that you have to hold back on expressing your own political views?

Q16. What, if any, are the main reasons why you personally feel that you have to hold back on expressing your views or opinions on these religious figures, teachings and beliefs?



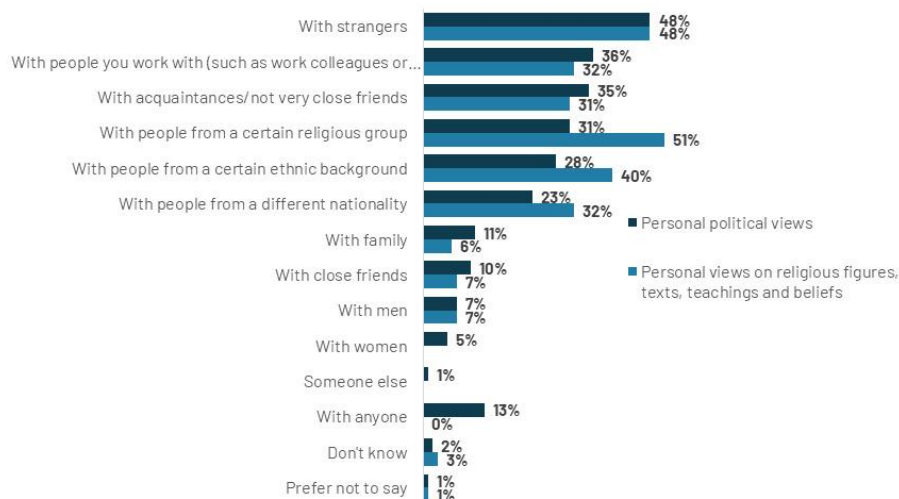
Base: All adults in England and Wales aged 16+ who ever self-censored political views, n=1,524 or All adults in England and Wales aged 16+ who ever self-censored religion, n=1,830. Fieldwork dates: 27th February - 5th March 2025

People consider who they are talking to when they think about expressing their own political views, or their views and opinions on various religious figures, teachings and beliefs. People are most likely to hold back expressing their views on either subject with strangers (both 48%). Moreover, people are most likely to avoiding expressing their views on religious topics around people from a specific religious (51%), which might reflect greater caution to sensitivity towards other faiths.

Figure 9.2: With whom people hold back

Q12. With whom do you personally feel that you have to hold back from expressing your own political views with?

Q17. With whom do you personally feel that you have to hold back from expressing your views or opinions on these religious figures, teachings and beliefs.



Base: All adults in England and Wales aged 16+ who ever self-censored political views, n=1,524 or All adults in England and Wales aged 16+ who ever self-censored religion, n=1,830, Fieldwork dates: 27th February - 5th March 2025

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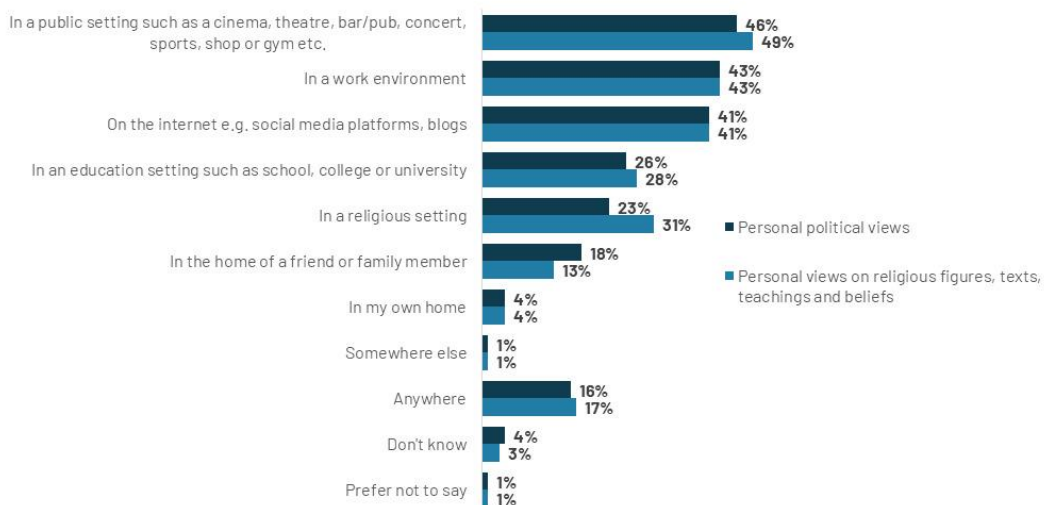
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People are most likely to hold back on expressing their own political views or their views on religious figures, texts and beliefs in public spaces, at work and online. The pattern is the same for both political views and religious topics (political views 46% hold back in a public setting, in a work environment (43%), or on the internet (41%) and for religious topics 49% hold back in a public setting, in a work environment (43%) or on the internet (41%).

Figure 9.3: Where people hold back

Q13. Where do you personally feel that you have to hold back on expressing your own political views?
Q18. Where do you personally feel that you have to hold back on expressing your views or opinions on these religious figures, teachings



Base: All adults in England and Wales aged 16+ who ever self-censored political views, n=1,524 or All adults in England and Wales aged 16+ who ever self-censored religion, n=1,830, Fieldwork dates: 27th February – 5th March 2025

10 Conclusion

While the principle of free speech enjoys broad support, its practical application is complex and shaped by social dynamics, social views and contextual factors, as well as the topic being discussed. The findings reveal a tension between the abstract ideal of unrestricted free speech and the lived experiences of navigating potentially sensitive conversations in a diverse society. For the CCE, these findings underscore the importance of understanding public perceptions of free speech when developing strategies to address extremism and in developing approaches that effectively navigate the complex relationship between free speech and offence in a democratic society.

For the majority of people, the principle and practice of free speech align, with people choosing to exercise caution when speaking about topics that are perceived to be more sensitive or controversial, e.g. transgender issues, religion and immigration. Notably, a plurality favour avoiding offence over free speech when discussing race and ethnicity. For topics specifically related to political views and religious topics, the picture is again nuanced. Whilst most typically favour free speech, their views on their ability to practice free speech varies according to personal identities, backgrounds and beliefs. Moreover, the findings suggest that people do not always feel that they have to hold back on expressing their views because the principle of free speech does not exist, the decision is often driven by a broader range of motivations including avoiding offence, as well as broader social norms and socioeconomic factors.

There is, however, a minority group of people for whom free speech is a more pertinent topic. People who are most concerned with the pace of change, are more economically right leaning or authoritarian in their views tend to have stronger views about the principle and practice of free speech. This sub-group makes up around 39% of the total sample. People that hold these views tend to express stronger concerns about the protection of free speech and tend to more strongly lean in favour of the principle of free speech regardless of the topic at hand. Whilst on balance, they tend to feel more able to express their views than not, they do express more heightened concerns about their ability to speak freely about immigration, race/racism, asylum and religious extremism. Those most concerned with the pace of change also express more heightened concerns about their ability to speak freely about topics relating to Islam, and in support of a variety of political ideas. Those that are most concerned with the pace of change typically tend to skew slightly male, be older (aged 55+), predominantly white and are more likely than average to be Christian. Whilst their views do not represent everyone, and there will be varying reasons behind their attitudes, this is a specific group of the population that the CCE might want to prioritise for further exploration regarding the drivers of their perceptions, and how and when this potentially leads to increased levels of concern.

11 Appendices

11.1 Development of the sociocultural values indicators

The questionnaire included several scales which aim to measure respondent's underlying attitudes across a range of values indicators; economically left to economically right leaning, libertarian to authoritarian and least concerned about the pace of cultural change to most concerned about the pace of change. The development of these scales draws on previous work by the British Social Attitudes survey⁶, as well as Ipsos and Kings College London's work on the UK Culture Wars⁷.

Drawing from established survey design principles⁸, the construction of an additive index involves summarising multiple related survey questions into a single composite score. This method assumes an underlying, or latent, attitudinal dimension reflected in the responses to these questions. The resulting index score is considered a more reliable measure of this underlying attitude than any individual question's response.

Each of the scales consist of a number of statements to which respondents can answer "strongly agree", "tend to agree", "neither agree nor disagree", "tend to disagree" or "strongly disagree".

The items used are described below.

Economic leaning: Economically left - economically right leaning

This scale measures people's attitudes towards income inequality and government welfare spending.

- Large differences in people's incomes are acceptable to properly reward differences in talents and efforts (Q19A)
- The government should spend more money on welfare benefits for the poor, even if it leads to higher taxes (Q19B)

Social values: Libertarian-authoritarian

This scale measures people's attitudes towards traditional values, the rule of law, censorship and authority.

- Young people today don't have enough respect for traditional British values (Q20A)

⁶ National Centre for Social Research, 2024

⁷ Ipsos and Kings College London, 2021

⁸ Spector, 1992; DeVellis, 2003

- People who break the law should be given stiffer sentences (Q20B)
- For some crimes, the death penalty is the most appropriate sentence (Q20C)
- Schools should teach children to obey authority (Q20D)
- The law should always be obeyed, even if a particular law is wrong (Q20E)
- Censorship is necessary to uphold moral standards (Q20F)

Cultural change: Least concerned about the pace of cultural change – most concerned about the pace of change

This scale measures people's attitudes towards national pride, cultural change and political correctness.

- I am proud of my country (Q2a)
- The culture in the UK is changing too fast (Q2b)
- I would like my country to be the way it used to be (Q2c)
- What people call 'political correctness' is actually a good thing (Q20G)

The indices for the three scales are formed by scoring the more economically right, authoritarian or most concerned with change as -2 and the most economically left, most libertarian or least concerned with the pace of cultural change as 2. Some of the items use a reverse-scored scale whereby agreeing or disagreeing with an item would suggest that an individual leans towards one or the other end of the spectrum; these have been coded accordingly. The "neither agree nor disagree" option is scored as 0⁹. The scores to all the questions in each scale are added and then divided by the number of items in the scale, giving indices ranging from -2 (most economically right leaning, most authoritarian in views and most concerned with the pace of change) and 2 (most economically left leaning, most libertarian in views and least concerned with the pace of change). A summary of the syntax used to develop these indicators is provided in the appendix.

The sample was then grouped into tertiles for each dimension; economically right leaning, average, economically left leaning, most concerned with the pace of change, average, least concerned with the pace of change and authoritarian leaning in views, average and libertarian leaning in their views to allow for analysis of the results by socio-cultural values.

⁹ A decision was taken to recode non-response items ("Don't Know and "Prefer not to say") to the midpoint of the scale.

11.2 Sample split by socio-cultural values indicators and key demographics

		Culture Wars Indicator		Economic Left and Economic Right Indicator		Authoritarian / Libertarian Scale Indicator	
		Most concerned about pace of change	Least concerned about pace of change	Economically right leaning	Economically left leaning	More authoritarian	More libertarian
Total sample	Total	37%	26%	41%	33%	38%	28%
Gender	Male	42%*	25%	45%*	32%	38%	31%
	Female	33%	26%	38%	34%	38%	26%
Age	16-24	16%	47%*	30%	40%*	16%	44%*
	25-34	20%	37%*	32%	35%	28%	37%*
	35-44	26%	28%	43%	31%	40%	27%
	45-54	38%	22%	48%*	29%	41%	24%
	55-64	47%*	19%	46%	31%	48%*	23%
	65+	61%*	10%	44%	33%	47%*	21%
Ethnicity	White (including White minorities)	40%*	25%	43%*	34%	39%*	29%
	Ethnic minorities (excluding White minorities)	21%	30%	34%	29%	31%	23%
Education	Graduates (Degree/Master/PhD/above)	23%	38%*	36%	38%*	23%	45%*
	Non-graduates	43%*	20%	44%*	31%	44%*	21%
Religion	Christian	50%*	15%	49%*	28%	46%*	21%
	Muslim	20%	29%	28%	33%	37%	21%

	Any other religion	39%	22%	44%	32%	48%	21%
	No religion	26%	38%*	36%	39%*	30%	39%*

11.3 Explanation of the syntax used for the development of the indicators

This technical note details the construction of development indicators from survey data. The survey data was manipulated in SPSS and then added to the data tables. The indicators cover three key dimensions: Culture Wars, Economic Left-Right, and Authoritarian-Libertarian. Each indicator is constructed as a composite score based on recoded and averaged survey items.

Economic leaning indicator

Recoding of the variables

Item 'q19a' (original scale: 1-5) was recoded to a -2 to +2 scale, where 1=-2, 2=-1, 3=0, 4=1, and 5=2. Item non-response values were coded as 0. The recoded variable was named 'Q19a_recoded'.

Item '19b' (original scale: 1-5) was recoded to a +2 to -2 scale, where 1=2, 2=1, 3=0, 4=-1, and 5=-2. Item non-response values were coded as 0. The recoded variable was named 'Q19b_recoded'.

Mean Score Calculation

The 'EconomicLeaningIndicatorsMeanScore' was computed as the mean of 'Q19a_recoded' and 'Q19b_recoded'.

Derived Variable

* A derived variable, 'EconomicLeaningIndicatorIndex_v1', was created by recoding 'EconomicLeaningIndicatorsMeanScore' into tertiles:

1: "Economically right leaning" (-2 to -0.05)

2: "Average" (-0.04 to 0)

3: "Economically left leaning" (0.1 to 2)

Authoritarian-Libertarian Index

Recoding of the variables

Items 'q20a', 'q20b', 'q20c', 'q20d', 'q20e', and 'q20f' (original scale: 1-5) were recoded to a -2 to +2 scale, where 1=-2, 2=-1, 3=0, 4=1, and 5=2. Item non-response values were coded as 0.

The recoded variables were named 'Q20a_recoded', 'Q20b_recoded', 'Q20c_recoded', 'Q20d_recoded', 'Q20e_recoded', and 'Q20f_recoded'.

Mean Score Calculation

The 'LibertarianAuthoritarianMeanScore' was computed as the mean of 'Q20a_recoded', 'Q20b_recoded', 'Q20c_recoded', 'Q20d_recoded', 'Q20e_recoded', and 'Q20f_recoded'.

Derived Variable

A derived variable, 'LibertarianAuthoritarianIndicatorIndex_v1', was created by recoding 'LibertarianAuthoritarianMeanScore' into tertiles:

1: "More authoritarian" (-2 to -0.66)

2: "Average" (-0.67 to 0)

3: "More libertarian" (0.1 to 2)

Cultural change indicator

Recoding of the variables

Items 'q2a', 'q2b', and 'q2c' (original scale: 1-5) were recoded to a -2 to +2 scale, where 1=-2, 2=-1, 3=0, 4=1, and 5=2. Item non-response values were coded as 0. The recoded variables were named 'Q2a_Recoded', 'Q2b_Recoded', and 'Q2c_Recoded'.

Item 'q20g' (original scale: 1-5) was recoded to a +2 to -2 scale, where 1=2, 2=1, 3=0, 4=-1, and 5=-2. Item non-response was coded as 0. The recoded variable was named 'Q20G_Recoded'.

Mean Score Calculation

The 'CulturalChangeIndicator_MeanScore' was computed as the mean of 'Q2a_Recoded', 'Q2b_Recoded', 'Q2c_Recoded', and 'Q20G_Recoded'.

Derived Variable

A derived variable, 'CulturalChangeIndex_v1', was created by recoding 'CulturalChangeIndicator_MeanScore' into tertiles:

1: "Most concerned about pace of change" (-2 to -0.75)

2: "Average" (-0.74 to 0)

3: "Least concerned about pace of change" (0.1 to 2)

11.4 Overview of the regression analysis

In addition to standard statistical testing, multivariate regression analysis was used to explore the relationship between demographic factors and free speech.

The analysis of responses was conducted using Ordinary Least squares (OLS) regression. Different indicators of free speech were modelled as a function of socio-demographic characteristics. The underlying hypothesis is that specific demographic features may affect the extent to which people feel free to express their views freely personally and with other people. The main regression model was expressed as follows:

$$y_i = \alpha_i + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_n X_n \dots + \varepsilon_i$$

The above equation expresses the change in the free speech score as a linear function of different covariates like gender, age or educational attainment. Each β coefficient, measures the effect of a specific variable on the outcome of interest, keeping all the other regressors constant.

The regression analysis was used to further explore whether or not there is a relationship between different measurements of free speech (the dependent variable) and certain demographic factors (the independent variable). The full tables of regression analyses are provided in the appendix.

The dependent variable "free speech," is represented by response to various questions that measure a respondent's tendency for people to lean towards thinking that people should be free to say what they want (free speech) or towards thinking that people should be careful to offend others. There are several different measures used within the survey, which have been explained in earlier chapters and will be revisited again here.

The independent variables are demographic factors that are predictors of the dependent variables. Several demographic variables were tested and those found to have statistical relevance are reviewed in this chapter. These are gender, ethnicity, religion, education and age.

Whilst the regression analysis can tell us that there is a relationship between the variables, it cannot determine causation.

It is important to note that the independent variables have been split into binary variables to enable analysis and must be analysed in reference to one and other. For example, men compared to women, or graduates compared to non-graduates. In addition, every coefficient¹⁰ associated to each variable should be interpreted as a change in the score on the respective 1 to 7 scale, if a

¹⁰ A coefficient is a number or symbol, representing a constant value

variable takes a specific score on the scale. For example, if the overall score on the scale is 4, and the coefficient for female is 0.5, the score for females will be 0.5 higher than the score for men.

Every coefficient highlighted in green in regression tables in the appendix is statistically significant either at the 5% (indicated by *) or at the 1% (indicated by **). The numbers in brackets are the standard errors. Only coefficients that are statistically significant at the 1% (indicated by the **) have been reported on in the body of the report.

11.5 Regression tables

Table 11.1: General freedom of expression and a range of social and political topics

	Free speech versus offence	Religious extremism	Gaza	Immigration	Transgender issues	Equality between sexes
2.b_gender (female) Reference category: males	0.518	0.606	0.778	0.695	0.706	0.344
	(6.55)**	(6.85)**	(8.33)**	(8.50)**	(7.96)**	(4.03)**
2.b_eth_net (Ethnic minorities excluding white minorities) Reference category: White British	0.632	0.56	0.579	0.752	0.44	0.648
	(3.82)**	(3.03)**	(2.97)**	(4.40)**	(2.37)*	(3.63)**
2bn.b_relig (Muslim) Reference category: Catholic	0.511	0.462	-0.031	0.121	0.155	0.103
	(2.80)**	(2.27)*	-0.15	-0.64	-0.76	-0.53
3.b_relig (Any other religion)	0.641	0.806	0.16	0.411	0.469	0.308
	(2.94)**	(3.32)**	-0.62	-1.83	-1.92	-1.31
4.b_relig (No religion)	0.445	0.195	0.088	0.338	0.374	0.172
	(4.74)**	-1.86	-0.79	(3.48)**	(3.55)**	-1.7
2.b_education (non graduates) Reference category: Graduates	-0.711	-0.067	0.013	-0.607	-0.451	-0.247
	(8.05)**	-0.68	-0.13	(6.65)**	(4.56)**	(2.59)**
1.lonvscountry (London) Reference category: Other regions	0.172	0.04	-0.019	0.036	0.099	-0.057
	-1.48	-0.31	-0.14	-0.3	-0.76	-0.45
2bn.b_dateofbirth (25-34) Reference category: 16-24	-0.317	-0.505	-0.183	-0.48	-0.48	-0.273
	-1.96	(2.79)**	-0.96	(2.87)**	(2.64)**	-1.56
3.b_dateofbirth (35-44)	-0.401	-0.601	-0.206	-0.599	-0.651	-0.442
	(2.54)*	(3.41)**	-1.11	(3.68)**	(3.68)**	(2.60)**
4.b_dateofbirth (45-54)	-0.513	-0.652	-0.463	-0.94	-0.948	-0.509
	(3.27)**	(3.72)**	(2.50)*	(5.79)**	(5.38)**	(3.00)**
5.b_dateofbirth (55-64)	-0.55	-0.931	-0.681	-0.989	-0.939	-0.814
	(3.43)**	(5.16)**	(3.57)**	(5.93)**	(5.18)**	(4.67)**
6.b_dateofbirth (65+)	-0.458	-0.782	-0.69	-0.952	-0.958	-0.7
	(2.96)**	(4.52)**	(3.77)**	(5.95)**	(5.51)**	(4.19)**

1.trust_list (yes, Trust in Parliament, Government and Courts)	0.08	0.276	-0.021	0.112	0.102	0.023
	-0.76	(2.35)*	-0.17	-1.03	-0.86	-0.21
_constant	3.686	3.492	3.492	3.771	3.937	3.712
	(18.74)**	(15.90)**	(15.04)**	(18.56)**	(17.84)**	(17.50)**
R2	0.14	0.09	0.13	0.14	0.1	0.07
Base size	2,103	2,103	2,103	2,103	2,103	2,103
P-Value	*p<0.05	** p<0.01				

Table 11.2: Political views

	Q9a – In support of far right ideas	Q9d – In support of far left ideas	Q10 – Politics personal views
2.b_gender (female) Reference category: males	0.685	0.73	0.264
	(6.87)**	(7.51)**	(2.85)**
2.b_eth_net (Ethnic minorities excluding white minorities) Reference category: White British	0.561	0.658	0.348
	(2.69)**	(3.24)**	-1.8
2bn.b_relig (Muslim) Reference category: Catholic	0.44	0.301	0.459
	-1.92	-1.34	(2.15)*
3.b_relig (Any other religion)	0.107	0.1	0.085
	-0.39	-0.37	-0.33
4.b_relig (No religion)	0.358	0.057	-0.379
	(3.03)**	-0.49	(3.45)**
2.b_education (non graduates) Reference category: Graduates	-0.081	0.372	0.408
	-0.73	(3.43)**	(3.94)**
1.lonvsountry (London) Reference category: Other regions	0.064	-0.086	0.023
	-0.44	-0.61	-0.17
2bn.b_dateofbirth (25-34) Reference category: 16-24	-0.336	0.369	0.601
	-1.65	-1.86	(3.17)**
3.b_dateofbirth (35-44)	-0.315	0.064	0.536
	-1.59	-0.33	(2.90)**
4.b_dateofbirth (45-54)	-0.314	0.238	0.393
	-1.59	-1.24	(2.14)*
5.b_dateofbirth (55-64)	-0.485	-0.01	0.294
	(2.38)*	-0.05	-1.55
6.b_dateofbirth (65+)	-0.755	-0.173	-0.14
	(3.87)**	-0.91	-0.77
1.trust_list (yes, Trust in Parliament, Government and Courts)	0.024	-0.118	-0.309
	-0.18	-0.19	(2.51)*
_constant	3.981	2.953	2.961

	(16.07)**	(12.22)**	(12.86)**
R2	0.07	0.07	0.07
Base size	2,103	2,103	2,103
P-Value	*p<0.05	** p<0.01	

Table 11.3: Religious figures and texts

	Jesus	Muhammad	Moses	Bible	Torah	Qur'an
2.b_gender (female) Reference category: males	0.65	0.734	0.777	0.701	0.744	0.778
	(6.88)**	(7.53)**	(8.03)**	(7.46)**	(7.50)**	(7.91)**
2.b_eth_net (Ethnic minorities excluding white minorities) Reference category: White British	0.679	0.494	0.584	0.662	0.689	0.38
	(3.44)**	(2.42)**	(2.89)**	(3.37)**	(3.32)**	-1.85
2bn.b_relig (Muslim) Reference category: Catholic	1.323	1.534	1.201	1.227	0.876	1.494
	(6.08)**	(6.83)**	(5.39)**	(5.67)**	(3.83)**	(6.59)**
3.b_relig (Any other religion)	0.477	0.472	0.206	0.391	0.329	0.512
	-1.83	-1.76	-0.78	-1.51	-1.21	-1.89
4.b_relig (No religion)	-0.12	-0.104	-0.066	-0.102	-0.178	-0.165
	-1.07	-0.9	-0.58	-0.91	-1.52	-0.142
2.b_education (non graduates) Reference category: Graduates	-0.144	0.009	0.004	-0.085	0.069	-0.019
	-1.37	-0.09	-0.04	-0.81	-0.62	-0.17
1.lonvsountry (London) Reference category: Other regions	0.021	-0.069	-0.008	-0.135	-0.055	-0.151
	-0.15	-0.48	-0.05	-0.98	-0.38	-1.05
2bn.b_dateofbirth (25-34) Reference category: 16-24	-0.464	-0.387	-0.564	-0.303	-0.394	-0.553
	(2.40)*	-1.94	(2.85)**	-1.58	-1.94	(2.75)**
3.b_dateofbirth (35-44)	-0.43	-0.288	-0.564	-0.341	-0.39	-0.48
	(2.28)*	-1.48	(2.92)**	-1.82	(1.98)*	(2.45)*
4.b_dateofbirth (45-54)	-0.552	-0.577	-0.619	-0.464	-0.483	-0.638
	(2.94)**	(2.98)**	(3.22)**	(2.49)*	(2.45)*	(3.27)**
5.b_dateofbirth (55-64)	-0.634	-0.478	-0.715	-0.663	-0.489	-0.618
	(3.29)**	(2.40)*	(3.62)**	(3.46)**	(2.42)*	(3.08)**
6.b_dateofbirth (65+)	-0.53	-0.459	-0.712	-0.561	-0.436	-0.541
	(2.86)**	(2.41)*	(3.76)**	(3.05)**	(2.25)*	(2.81)**

1.trust_list (yes, Trust in Parliament, Government and Courts)	-0.155	-0.102	-0.099	-0.129	-0.232	-0.151
	-1.24	-0.79	-0.77	-0.103	-1.76	-1.15
_constant	3.714	3.796	3.84	3.613	3.89	3.993
	(15.82)**	(15.66)**	(15.96)**	(15.47)**	(15.78)**	(16.33)**
R2	0.15	0.14	0.13	0.15	0.11	0.13
Base size	2,103	2,103	2,103	2,103	2,103	2,103
P-Value	*p<0.05	** p<0.01				

Table 11.4: Interactions between demographics and freedom of expression

	Freedom of expression and offence (Q6)
1. Male#Ethnic minorities	0.65
	(2.44)*
2.Female#white	0.973
	(7.23)**
2.Female#ethnic minorities	1.585
	(6.52)**
1. Male#Muslim	0.588
	(2.00)*
1. Male#Any other religion	0.539
	-1.68
1. Male#No religion	0.511
	(3.79)**
2.Female#Christian	-0.388
	(3.11)**
2.Female#Muslim	0.061
	-0.26
2.Female#Any other religion	0.355
	-1.17
2.b_education	-0.713
	(8.06)**
1.lonvsountry	0.167
	-1.43
2bn.b_dateofbirth	-0.313
	-1.93
3.b_dateofbirth	-0.401
	(2.54)*
4.b_dateofbirth	-0.519
	(3.30)**
5.b_dateofbirth	-0.556
	(3.44)**
6.b_dateofbirth	-0.455
	(2.93)**
1.trust_list	0.074
	-0.7
_cons	3.656
	(18.08)**
R2	0.14
Base size	2,103
P-Value	*p<0.05

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