



Black Equity  
Organisation

# RESEARCH BRIEFING: BUILDING A COALITION FOR RACE EQUALITY



## INTRODUCTION

The murder of George Floyd in 2020 led to global protests and moved campaigns for race equality and justice to the top of the political and cultural agenda in the UK. But five years later, the momentum that drove global protests and policy conversations around race equality has slowed, and it is unclear what lasting policy change was enacted in its wake. In the same period, far-right extremism has emerged as a growing concern, and the threat of racialised violence is increasingly urgent, with recorded hate crimes for 2024/25 remaining higher than their pre-2020 levels.<sup>1</sup>

In parallel to these shifting social dynamics, the UK's two-party system is facing new pressures from the rise of insurgent parties, disrupting assumptions about policy, politics, and the electorate ahead of the next general election in 2029. This moment of electoral fragmentation presents a challenge: to attract a critical mass of voters, all parties must consider what a credible, vote-winning policy offer on race equality and addressing far-right extremism looks like. We cannot afford to be complacent and carry forward outdated approaches to these issues, nor can we allow political leaders to drop this agenda altogether.

Thus, while politics and culture have shifted significantly in the past five years, have we – civil society organisations, activists, and policymakers focused on enacting change for racial equality – critically evaluated our new environment and assessed whether we are ready to meet these new challenges?

This research briefing provides an initial snapshot of this new environment as a first step in articulating a vision for policy change – one that champions equality for Black communities while pragmatically taking account of the challenges we face. It focuses on public attitudes towards the UK government's prioritisation of race equality relative to other social justice issues, as well as perceptions of how conditions for Black people in the UK have evolved since 2020. It also considers how civil society and political leadership can address the threat of hate crime and far-right extremism.

These initial findings are intended to be the beginning of a longer, wider conversation. While our scope here is limited, we hope that the findings in this briefing will inspire further research on what a vote-winning policy offer on race equality looks like, expand our

coalition by encouraging collaboration between organisations and policymakers on race equality policy development, and prompt reflection from political leaders on how best to combat hate crime and far-right extremism.

## INITIAL FINDINGS

### 01

The general public is evenly split on whether the government is placing enough, too much, or too little priority on race equality. At a national level, most people think the government could either place more priority on race equality or are supportive of the government's current approach. While our results are indicative, this may counter the narrative of a public that is hostile to these issues and should provide the government with further confidence in continuing to progress its policy commitments on race equality.

### 02

There are a handful of issues that a majority think the government is not giving sufficient priority, including addressing economic inequality and poverty and preventing politically or socially motivated extremism. This presents an opportunity for policymakers and civil society organisations to frame policy action around these priorities as part of a pragmatic approach to formulating a vote-winning race equality agenda.

### 03

In light of the urgent need to combat hate crime and far-right extremism, our polling suggests that there may be a perception gap between the White majority general public and Black communities in the UK about the nature of these issues and their impact. The challenge for political leaders and civil society organisations is to draw attention to these trends and demonstrate that action to advance race equality is critical to tackling extremism. Policymakers, political actors, and civil society have to do more to integrate this approach into a wider policy agenda focused on making Britain a more equal and tolerant country for all.

1. Home Office (2025), 'Hate crime, England and Wales, year ending March 2025'. [Hate crime, England and Wales, year ending March 2025 - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-England-and-Wales-year-ending-March-2025)

## METHODOLOGY

This briefing presents the results of two recent BEO polls:

01

A nationally representative poll of 1,077 UK adults aged 18 and over, fielded from September 19th to 21st, 2025. This poll was conducted by Global Counsel on behalf of BEO. Fieldwork was conducted online, and the results are subject to a margin of error of approximately  $\pm 3$  percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

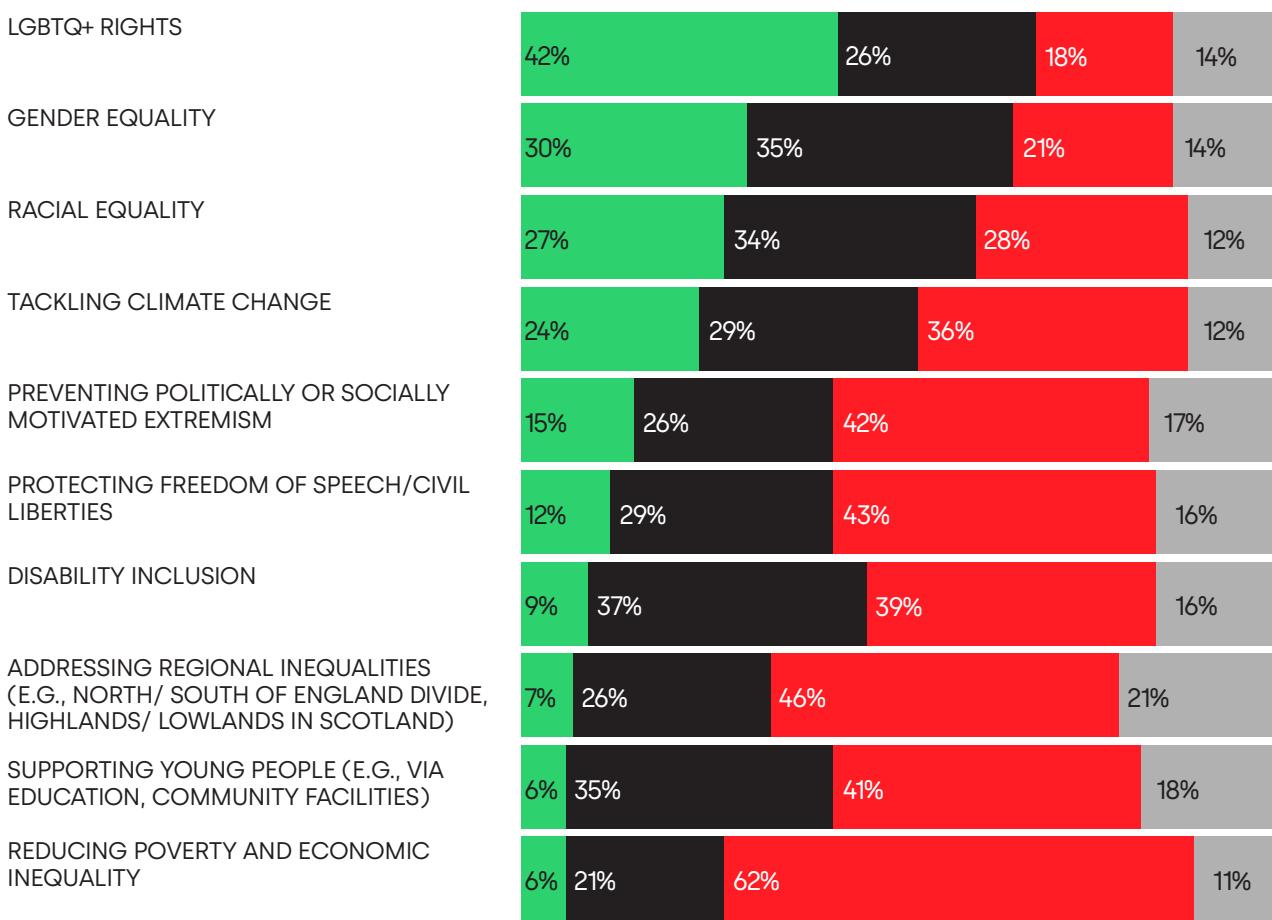
02

A poll of 1,045 Black UK residents age 18+, fielded from August 21st to September 1st, 2025, focused on perceptions of inclusion and safety. The poll was conducted by Survation on behalf of BEO.

**Note: Reported 'net' scores may differ by +/- 1% from their constituent parts due to 'rounding' effect**

## HOW DOES THE PUBLIC VIEW THE GOVERNMENT'S PRIORITISATION OF RACE EQUALITY, AND WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE 2029 GENERAL ELECTION?

Figure 1: % of responses to the question: "Do you think the UK government is giving the right amount, too much, or too little prioritisation to...?" (Base: 1,077 UK residents)



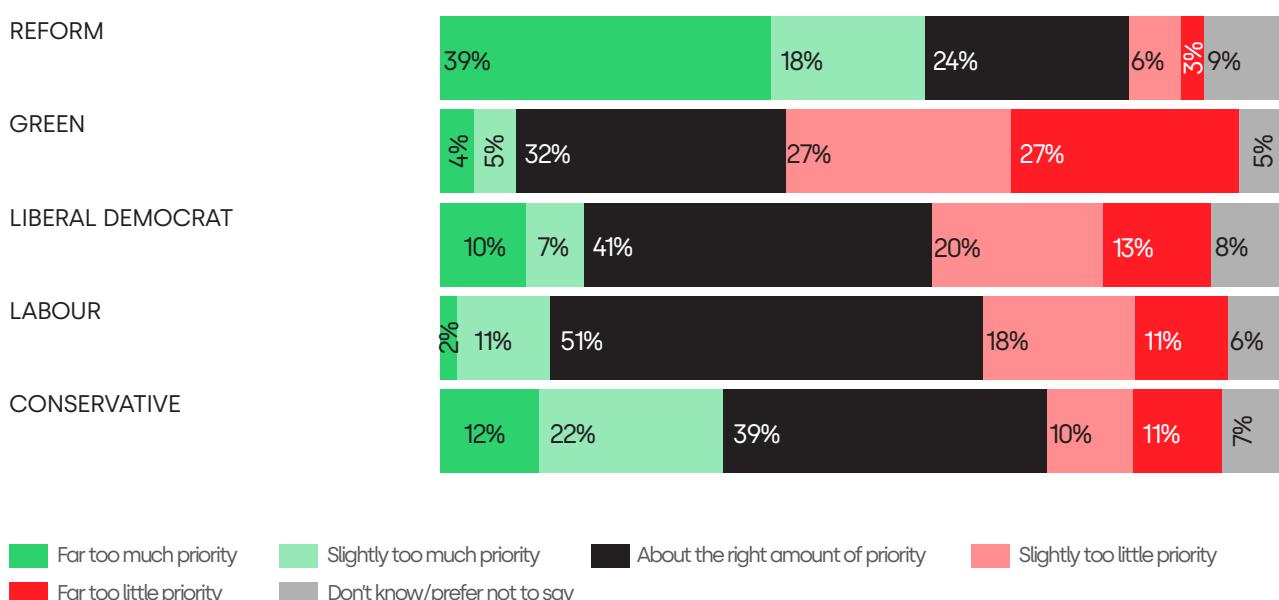
NET: Too much Priority    About the right amount of priority    NET: Too little priority    Don't know/prefer not to say

Our analysis found that the public's view of the government's prioritisation of race equality is fairly evenly split: 27% of those surveyed in our nationally-representative poll said that the government is placing too much priority on race equality, 34% said the government is placing about the right amount of priority on race equality, and 28% said it is placing too little priority on the issue.

## QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH:

- ① Do these findings suggest a relative lack of hostility from a majority of the public to policy action on race equality?
- ② What messages, framing, or policy recommendations could shift this potentially persuadable base of the public towards stronger support for race equality?
- ③ To what extent does the intersection between race equality and other rights-based issues such as gender equality, LGBTQ+ rights, and disability inclusion matter? Taking into account these findings, should campaigners decouple from these issues or lean into them when making the case for race equality?

Figure 2: % of responses to the question: "Do you think the UK government is giving the right amount, too much, or too little prioritisation to racial equality?" by voting intention.



As political parties look to define a credible platform ahead of the 2029 general election, they will need to navigate a shifting political landscape characterised by a fragmenting party system and weakening voter allegiances. With five parties now polling consistently above 10% of support<sup>2</sup>, competition for voters has become increasingly important.

Our polling suggests that voting intention is associated with significant differences in how people interpret the government's prioritisation of race equality, with the starker differences observed in the attitudes of prospective Reform and Green Party voters. Of the former, 57% think that the government

is putting too much priority on race equality (with 39% saying there is "far too much priority" on race equality), versus 24% who think there is about the right amount, and 9% thinking there is too little priority. Among prospective Green party voters, only 9% think there is too much priority placed on race equality, versus 32% who think there is about the right amount, and 54% who think there is too little priority. While prospective Liberal Democrat voters are somewhat more evenly split, 34% think there is too little priority placed on race equality, versus 41% who think there is the right amount of priority, and 17% who think there is too much priority.

2. Ipsos (2025), 'Ipsos Issues Index: September 2025'. [https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2025-10/Ipsos%20Issues%20Index\\_Sep25.pdf](https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2025-10/Ipsos%20Issues%20Index_Sep25.pdf)

## QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH:



Further research is needed to draw out how a party's approach to race equality influences vote choice, particularly in relation to issues such as the cost of living, healthcare, or immigration that often feature at the top of the public's list of priorities.<sup>3</sup> However, can political parties leverage what appears to be a base of support for further action on race equality to develop a coherent agenda about opportunity and equality?



How does the apparent polarisation of views on the government's approach to race equality impact the ability or desire of political parties to formulate a credible, vote-winning race equality policy agenda?

## SHOULD WE DO MORE TO FRAME RACE EQUALITY IN THE CONTEXT OF A WIDER SET OF ISSUES?

The polling reveals a striking disconnect between government policy and public perception. A clear majority (61%) think the government is giving too little priority to reducing poverty and economic inequality, with 42% saying the same about preventing politically or socially motivated extremism. In both cases, those who believe the government is over-prioritising are a small minority of 7% and 15% respectively.

## QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH:



Are there opportunities for political campaigners to emphasise the link between dismantling structural racism and addressing economic inequality? Are there trade-offs between these agendas?



Further research is needed to understand precisely what the public understands as "politically or socially motivated extremism". However, does this initial snapshot suggest that the public believes there is greater need for policy interventions emphasising unity and "mainstream values"? How does this impact campaigning on race equality?

3. Ipsos (2025), 'Public concern about immigration reaches highest level in a decade'. <https://www.ipsos.com/en-uk/public-concern-about-immigration-reaches-highest-level-decade>

## HOW SHOULD POLITICAL LEADERS, POLICYMAKERS, AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS RESPOND TO A BACKDROP OF RISING EXTREMISM AND HOSTILITY?

Figure 3: % of responses to question "How serious, if at all, do you think the risk posed by UK far-right groups is to Black communities" (Base: 1,045 Black UK residents)

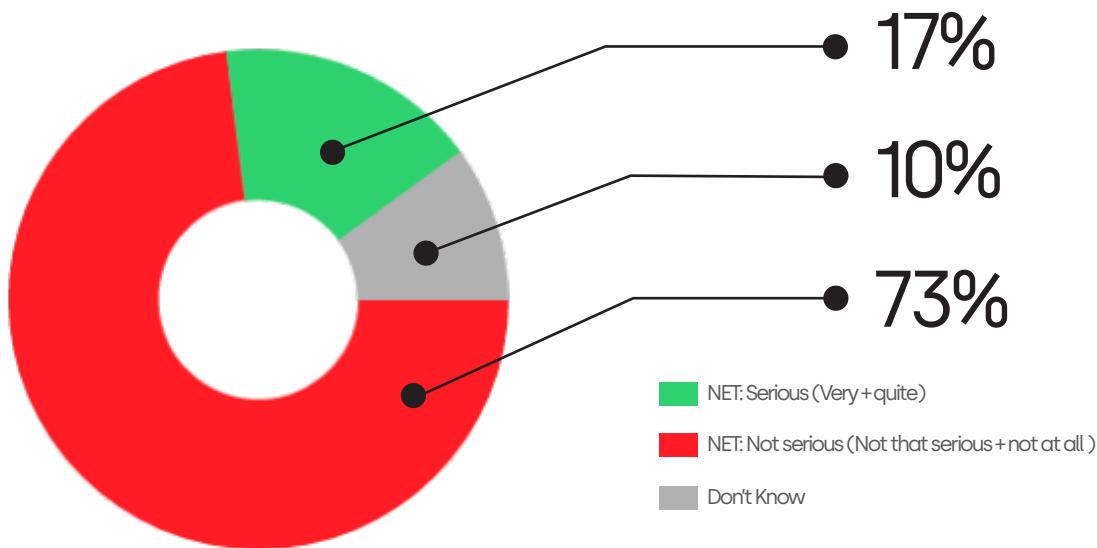
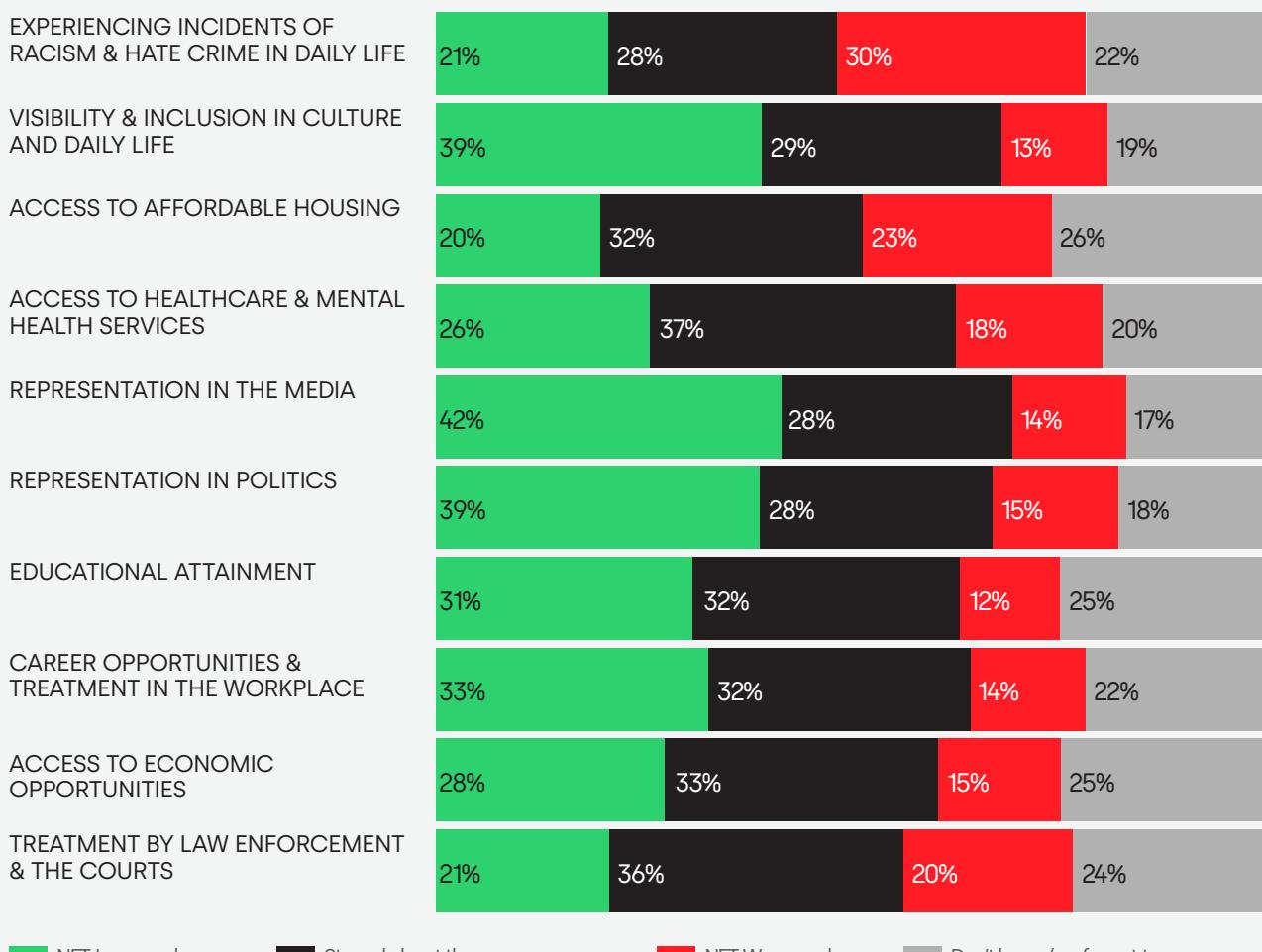


Figure 4: % of responses to question: "Thinking specifically about life in the UK for those with a Black ethnic background, do you think that the following have improved, worsened, or stayed the same over the last five years?" (Base: 1,077 UK residents)



The threats of hate crime and far-right extremism are a key concern for Black communities in the UK. BEO's survey of more than 1,000 Black UK residents on perceptions of safety and inclusion presented troubling results: following the 2024 Southport murders and subsequent riots, almost two-thirds of Black respondents expressed concern for their personal safety, and three in five were concerned for their community's safety. Concern was particularly high among women and those aged 25–44. Furthermore, three quarters of the respondents said that far-right groups pose a serious risk, highlighting that for many, extremism is not a theoretical concern, but a present and urgent one.

While Black communities perceive a clear threat to their safety posed by hate crime and far-right extremism, population-level public perceptions of the severity of the issue appear more muted. Our population-level polling indicates that, when asked to evaluate whether a set of indicators of race equality in the UK have improved, worsened, or stayed the same for Black people over the past five years, 30% of respondents said they believe hate crimes against Black people have worsened, while 21% think they

have improved, and 28% believe they have stayed the same. A further 22% answered "don't know" or "prefer not to say"; further research is needed on the driver of uncertainty on the issue, and whether it reflects a lack of direct experience with these issues. Nevertheless, 58% of respondents identified either no change or worsening circumstances for Black communities when it came to exposure to hate crime.

While sample sizes by ethnicity in the population-level polling are too small to draw definitive conclusions, there are indicative signs of a perception gap between ethnic minority and White respondents. 36% of ethnic minority respondents and 40% of Black respondents believed that Black people in the UK's exposure to hate crimes had worsened in the past five years, compared to 29% of White respondents.

Although the two sets of findings cannot be directly compared given their different samples, timing, and survey questions, they may provide an initial insight that racialised hate crime and far-right extremism are understood and experienced unevenly across British society.

## QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH:



How should campaigners combat the perception that hate crime is just 'hurtful words' posted online and highlight the violent and damaging real-world impacts of racially aggravated hatred?



While the public has perceived improvements in representation for Black people in the UK, issues like hate crime, access to healthcare, and affordable housing are understood to remain key challenges. Is there a case for moving into a new phase of campaigning 'beyond representation'?



What is the role of policymakers, political leaders, and civil society organisations in bridging the gap between public perception and the lived experiences of those most affected by far-right extremism and hate crime?



Is there an opportunity to reframe how we as policymakers, political leaders, and civil society organisations discuss and advocate around these issues to build a cross-cutting coalition against far-right extremism and violence?



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