

Calling out hatred and prejudice

*A guide to communications planning,
audiences and messaging*

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British Future

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British Future is an independent, non-partisan thinktank engaging people's hopes and fears about integration and migration, opportunity and identity, so that we share a confident and welcoming Britain, inclusive and fair to all.

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I. Introduction

Tackling hatred and prejudice is as important today as it has ever been.

The months after the 2016 EU referendum saw a spike in reported hate crime. The UK and many other European countries have also seen a rise in antisemitism, with 1,652 incidents logged by the Community Security Trust in 2018, the organisation that protects the Jewish community¹. Anti-Muslim prejudice is also widespread, as British Future found when we conducted the *National Conversation on Immigration*². Such prejudice takes many forms: violent attacks, vandalism and verbal abuse, but also hateful and prejudiced comments, which now reach a much larger audience through social media.

Those of us who are committed to working for a country that is safe, tolerant and welcoming face many important challenges ahead. But even as we face them, there are reasons to be confident that we can succeed. There has been progress upon which we can build, with positive shifts in attitudes, particularly among younger generations and those in our major cities where diversity is the norm.

Britain today is a very different place to that of 50 years ago, when Enoch Powell made his infamous ‘Rivers of blood’ speech. The widespread, overt racism of the 1960s has largely gone. Abusive chanting at football matches is no longer socially acceptable, albeit far from eradicated, and the police now take complaints of hate crime seriously.

There are new challenges too. Social media channels can provide a platform for those promoting hateful views. Hate crime and prejudice are now part of a fast-moving political debate in which events such as Brexit, Trump, the refugee crisis, long-standing challenges of integration and threats from extremism and terrorism, both in the UK and internationally, can quickly shift public opinion in a way that polarises communities and undermines a broad-based coalition of those who uphold decent values.

Those working to combat hate crime and prejudice have effective tools that they can deploy to call out hatred and prejudice and to entrench the norms of decent behaviour. These tools include communications – the messages that we might use in public statements, campaign leaflets, websites, on social media and in face-to-face conversations.

But greater consideration needs to be given to the different audiences that we are trying to reach with our communications, if they are to be truly effective in combatting hatred and prejudice. That can be more challenging in polarised times. So we hope that this report, which looks in more depth at different audiences and how to reach them, will serve as a practical guide for those who want to make a difference on these issues.

Different aims and different audiences

This booklet examines different audiences for anti-prejudice campaigns and the type of messages that might reach and resonate with them. We also provide some case studies of campaigns and communications that apply these principles in practice.

We believe it is important to look more closely at the specific **aims** of our communications, then to assess which **audiences** our messages need to reach in order to achieve these objectives.

We may want to mobilise existing supporters to raise money, express support for victims or to press the Government to take action; or to target the centre ground of public opinion in order to strengthen broader social norms. Communications targeted at more hostile audiences may aim to contain and reduce prejudice and hatred. The different aims of anti-prejudice campaigns may involve targeting different audiences and using different tactics and messages.

We talk about ‘campaigns’ in this booklet, but our suggestions are not only aimed at those who consider themselves to be campaigners, or for organisations that employ communications professionals. Our ideas are aimed at civil society organisations, teachers, youth workers, local authority staff and others who need narratives and messages that can successfully combat hate crime and prejudice.

Our research

In writing this booklet, British Future has drawn from some of our recent work, in particular:

- The *National Conversation on Immigration*, the largest-ever public consultation on immigration and integration. This comprised an open survey completed by nearly 10,000 people, a nationally representative survey by ICM, stakeholder consultation and citizens’ panels in 60 towns and cities across the UK³. Each of the citizens’ panels was made up of ten members of the public who were recruited to be representative of the local area, with the group taking part in a guided discussion about immigration, integration and identity.
- Our *Many Rivers Crossed* project, comprising focus groups and a nationally representative survey by ICM undertaken in 2018, which looked at changing attitudes to race, diversity and integration in the 50 years since Enoch Powell’s 1968 speech⁴. The survey enabled British Future to test a number of messages about integration and prejudice, with boosted ethnic minority participation.

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- British Future’s *No Place for Prejudice* campaign, a project which targeted people who had largely negative views about immigration and integration. British Future was given support from Facebook to use an advertising agency which provided the creative content for a targeted, online campaign against hatred. Using targeted advertising, the content was posted on Facebook and Instagram with tested anti-prejudice messages. We then analysed reach, click-through and engagement rates for the illustrations, as well as examining the nature of comments that were posted about the campaign.

Of course, effective communication is only one aspect of the work that is needed to end prejudice and hatred. Alongside good communications, we need the police to enforce the law, social media companies to take down content that breaches existing hate crime policies, and support for those who experience hatred and prejudice. We also know that meaningful social contact with people from different backgrounds reduces anxieties and prejudice, as well as encouraging empathy towards people who are ‘different’ to ourselves⁵. Strategies to reduce prejudice and hatred must also work to build a more connected society.

We hope that *Calling out hatred and prejudice* will be a useful resource for those who work to build good community relations.

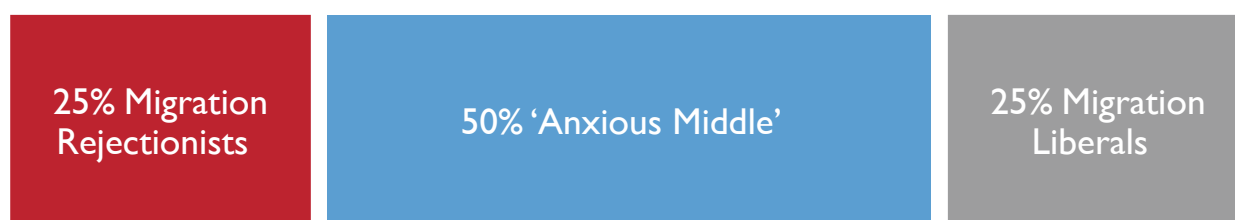
2. A range of views: public attitudes and audiences in the UK

Public debates on issues of migration, race, prejudice and diversity can feel very polarised - particularly when viewed on social media, where debates can often take the form of a 'culture war' between those with the strongest 'pro' and 'anti' views. But much research has been done in the UK to develop a more detailed understanding of the nature of public attitudes on these issues, including:

- Lord Ashcroft's *Small Island* report of 2013 which segmented the public into seven 'tribes'⁶.
- Analysis by the anti-prejudice campaigners HOPE not hate, first set out in their 2011 *Fear and Hope* report⁷, which divides people into six tribes.
- British Future's own analysis, published in *How to talk about immigration*⁸ in 2014 and in subsequent publications.

All of these studies follow a broadly similar pattern, grouping people according to their attitudes. Importantly, they all conclude that the majority of people remain engageable, despite having concerns about aspects of migration or integration and diversity.

British Future's analysis offers the most easily-comprehensible picture of audiences and opinions, segmenting the public into three groups. This segmentation is based on attitudes to migration, but it also reflects views about diversity, race and integration⁹.



Migration Rejectionists

This group comprises the 20-25% of the public who feel most negative about migration and diversity. Most would like significant reductions in immigration or no immigration at all. At the extreme ends of this group, some might support repatriation of migrants and a worrying minority hold toxic, racist views.

Migration rejectionists tend to be older, mainly white and are more likely to be male. Many in this group feel 'left behind' by the rapid economic changes over the last forty years. They are more

likely to live outside a big city, to have left school with few or no qualifications, and may now be retired, on a lower wage or seeking work.

HOPE not hate's *Fear and hope* analysis identifies two distinct groups within those who could be seen as Migration Rejectionists¹⁰. The **'Active Enmity'** group comprised 5% of the population in 2017¹¹. This group sees diversity and migration as having negative effects on all aspects of their lives. They express overt prejudice against all minority groups and are more likely to say that violence is acceptable if it is a consequence of standing up for what is 'right'. They are primarily unskilled workers and unemployed people who are disengaged from traditional political processes. Recently, Professor Matthew Goodwin's research has looked in more depth at this group, including supporters of the English Defence League and those who feel that violent conflict is inevitable, and concludes that it may have a broader socio-economic base than is commonly understood¹².

The **'Latent Hostile'** group shares many of the grievances of the 'Active Enmity' tribe, including a perception that minorities receive better treatment, but distance themselves from the latter's overt expressions of prejudice and racism. Nevertheless, they feel that diversity and migration have undermined British culture, public services and their own economic prospects and would support political forces that stood up for their identity. 'Latent Hostiles' are mostly over 35, not university educated and tend to be pessimistic and uncertain about their economic prospects and those of the UK more generally. This group makes up 17% of the UK population, according to the 2017 *Fear and hope* research, and includes those most likely to identify with UKIP and to have voted Leave in the EU referendum.

Migration Liberals

This group is the polar opposite of the Migration Rejectionists. Also making up around 25% of the population, Migration Liberals feel more positive about the changes that have taken place in the UK and feel that diversity and migration has been good for the country. They tend to be younger, more likely to have gone to university and live in London or another big city.

As with Migration Rejectionists, their views sit along a scale: some are happy with migration and diversity as it is now; some would support having fewer migration controls and some, at the more extreme end, would rather the UK had no borders at all. HOPE not hate's *Fear and Hope* analysis sub-divides this group in two. **'Confident Multiculturalists'** see cultural diversity as an integral part of British society and are predominantly younger, university-educated, city-dwellers. **'Mainstream Liberals'** are similarly confident and optimistic about multicultural society and the benefits of immigration, but to a lesser degree than the most-liberal 'Confident Multiculturalist' group.

The ‘anxious’ centre ground

Between these two extremes sits the **‘Anxious Middle’** - the 50-60% of Britain who are least often heard in the noisy public and online debates about migration and diversity. The National Conversation on Immigration called them ‘the balancers’, as while they are concerned about the pressures brought by large-scale immigration they recognise its benefits too¹³.

It is important to note that while the Anxious Middle group does have concerns about migration and diversity they do not share the more prejudiced views of many Migration Rejectionists. In a survey undertaken for British Future in 2018 some 78% of the Anxious Middle group agreed that *“it’s one thing to have concerns about immigration and quite another to take it out on people because of where they come from or the colour of their skin. It’s important to have an open debate about immigration, but there is no place for racism and prejudice in Britain.”* Just 2% of the Anxious Middle group disagreed with this statement¹⁴.

The concerns held by the Anxious Middle group can focus on economic or cultural factors, a finding supported by HOPE not hate’s research, which sub-divides them into the **‘Immigrant Ambivalent’** and **‘Culturally Concerned.’** The Immigrant Ambivalent group tend to be most concerned about the economic impact of new arrivals to the country on the availability of jobs, working conditions and wages. They are more likely to have insecure and less well-paid jobs themselves.

The Culturally Concerned are more focused on cultural factors: whether the place where they live still feels ‘British’ or ‘English’ and whether migrants and minorities share the same ‘British values’ as them. They are an economically diverse group, including the more affluent as well as those on lower wages, and tend to be older and more likely to live in towns rather than more diverse cities.

Understanding the views of the Anxious Middle group can sometimes be challenging for anti-prejudice organisations, whose staff and supporters will often be comprised of more liberal segments of the population.

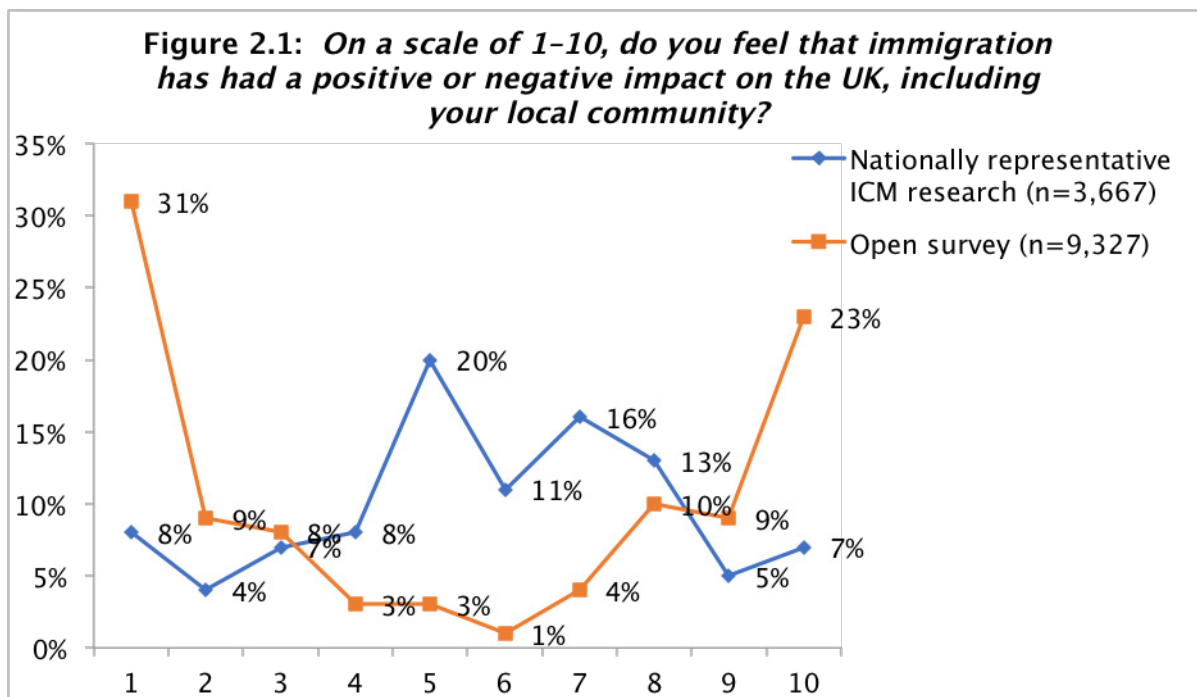
The online debate

Organisations should avoid seeing our polarised online debates as a barometer of broader public opinion about immigration and diversity. The online debate is dominated by a relatively small number of voices who hold the strongest views, either for or against immigration.

The difference between the views expressed in online debates and those held by the public more broadly was illustrated in two surveys that formed part of the National Conversation on Immigration. An open online survey was taken by 9,327 self-selecting people. A nationally representative survey was also undertaken as part of the

National Conversation on Immigration. Both surveys asked “On a scale of 1-10, with 1 very negative and 10 very positive, do you feel that immigration has had a positive or negative impact on the UK, including your local area?” The results are given in Figure 2.1 below.

A majority of the self-selecting online survey respondents chose either the minimum or the maximum score: almost one-third (31%) gave a score of 1 out of 10 and a quarter (23%) gave a score of 10 out of 10, showing the highly polarised nature of online debate. These most strongly held views were much more rare in the nationally representative research, where 45% of respondents gave a score between 4 and 7.



Source: National Conversation on Immigration surveys, 2018.

Fake news and local myths

Some prejudices that people hold may derive from local rumours or from fake news stories, with social media playing a significant role in spreading these views. Fake news is deliberate disinformation or hoax stories that are usually spread through social media, although traditional print and broadcast media can, (mostly) unwittingly, publish fake news too. Because it exists in written form, fake news differs from local myths, which are often spread both online and by word-of-mouth, although there is often overlap in their content.

Fake news and myths were topics that we discussed in the National Conversation on Immigration. Participants in the citizens’ panels often gave accounts of local myths, mostly relating to asylum-seekers and migrants from the EU. A few people believed these

local myths, usually people who were socially isolated, had few or no qualifications and had sceptical or hostile views about migration. In most cases, however, people were clear that they knew that these stories were untrue. There was also widespread recognition that online posts about such local myths came from a small number of people.

“I’ve heard people say things like ‘they [asylum-seekers] get a car, they get given a car, or they get so much money for a car’ and obviously they just don’t.”

National Conversation on Immigration citizens’ panel,
Middlesbrough.

Those who took part in the citizens’ panels for the National Conversation on Immigration also gave accounts of fake news stories, mostly relating to migrants and refugees living in continental European countries. Some citizens’ panel participants were able to recognise fake news, but in many cases participants struggled to recognise the less sensational stories as untrue.

Attitudes to Muslims

The face-to-face discussions that formed part of the National Conversation on Immigration citizens’ panels were largely open, decent and constructive. However, we were concerned about the prevalence of anti-Muslim prejudice, which we found to be widespread across the UK, particularly in places where the local population had little social contact with Muslim communities. This trend is supported by reporting data from the organisation Tell MAMA which works to counter anti-Muslim hatred. Anti-Muslim prejudice took different forms but many people – including some who could be considered ‘Migration Liberals’ – tended to stereotype Muslims as an homogenous group whose values and lifestyles are incompatible with the British way of life.

“I see why people get upset, they come from a country, I don’t want to pick on a country, let’s say somewhere in Asia, and they come over and they don’t make an effort to learn the language. They dress in their own way, which is okay, it’s fine, but it alienates themselves a little bit..... Well some are very nice, but others do keep themselves to themselves, speaking their own language when it suits them. Sometimes I’m terrified because I wonder what they are saying, on a train or something. You know, are they going to bomb us? It’s terrifying walking around Birmingham, around Christmas time. I’m far from racist, but I just don’t know.”

From the National Conversation on Immigration’s citizens’ panel group in Kidderminster.

Another survey for British Future in early 2018 highlighted anti-Muslim prejudice in the UK. It found that most people are generally at ease with the diversity of modern British society: some

79%, for example, would feel comfortable with a Prime Minister of a different race to their own. Yet only 65% said they would feel comfortable with a Muslim Prime Minister. Some 13% of Migration Liberals and 33% of the Anxious Middle group would feel quite or very uncomfortable with a Muslim Prime Minister. Polling for HOPE not hate, undertaken in 2018, suggested that 32% of adults believed that there were ‘no go areas’ in Britain where sharia law dominated and non-Muslims could not enter.

In the year April 2017-March 2018 some 94,098 hate crime offences were recorded by the police in England and Wales, ranging from aggravated assault, harassment and vandalism. Hate crime motivated by the victim’s religion increased by 40% from 2016/17 to 2017/18 and Muslim adults were the most likely group to be victims of religiously-motivated hate crime¹⁵.

Clearly, more work is needed to address prejudice and hatred directed against Britain’s Muslim communities and this needs to target a broad range of public opinion.

3. Talking to the right people: targeting audiences to meet objectives

It is surprising how many campaigns fail at the most basic level: working out exactly what the campaign's objective is and which audience it needs to communicate with in order to help achieve it. It can sometimes feel that someone has simply come up with what they think is a good idea – for a message, a stunt or a social media action – without actually thinking through what they hope it will accomplish. An essential first step for any public-facing communication is to consider objectives and audiences. This applies to those working to combat prejudice too.

Civil society organisations, local authorities and others whose job involves combating hate crime and prejudice should consider four distinct audiences as the targets for their communications:

1. **Active supporters** - the section of society most committed to taking action against prejudice and hate crime. We may target active supporters to encourage them to express support for victims of hate crime, or to get them to press the Government to take action.
2. **Potential supporters** – those currently not engaged with anti-prejudice campaigns, but who are sympathetic and could potentially be reached and mobilised.
3. **The centre ground or Anxious Middle** – the majority of citizens, who are not overtly prejudiced but are not currently engaged in opposition to it. We may choose to communicate with this group so as to strengthen social norms.
4. **Tougher audiences** – those who correspond with HOPE not hate's Latent Hostile and Active Enmity groups. We may wish to communicate with this group to get them to change their behaviour, or to contain and isolate the most prejudiced.

Reaching and mobilising supporters

Communications that reach and mobilise existing supporters can play an important part in building coalitions for change. Engaging a supporter or activist base, for example with an ask to write to their MP, local authority or the Government demanding action on hate crime or discrimination, would be a legitimate ask of supporters.

The supportive 'base' can also be mobilised to express solidarity with victims or to be champions of a campaign, spreading the word to a broader audience. They are the group most likely to organise a protest or rally; and indeed the most likely to give money as well as time to an organisation.

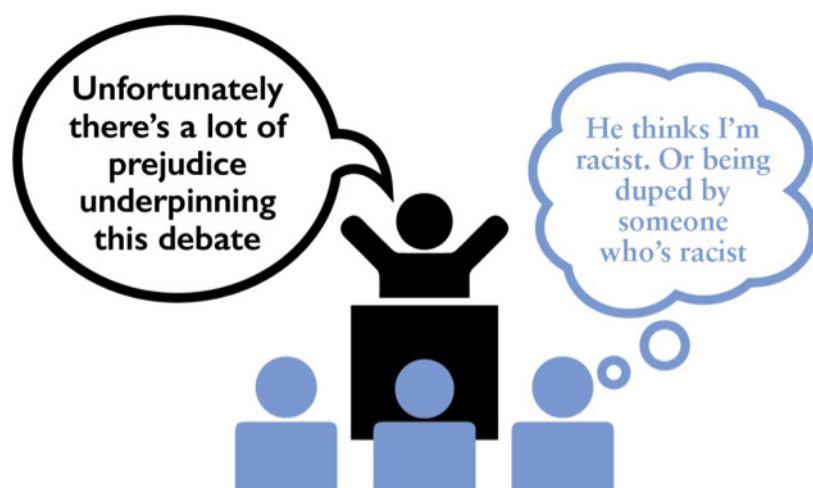
Reaching potential supporters

People under 25 who are not currently engaged with anti-prejudice campaigns are just one example of a ‘soft support’ audience that campaigners could do more to research and target – those who would be more likely to be sympathetic to anti-prejudice messages but are not doing anything about it at present.

Those aged 18-24 tend to hold broadly liberal views on issues around diversity, having grown up in a society where, in most places, diversity is the norm. Polling undertaken for British Future in 2018, for example, found that 86% of 18-24s feel comfortable with mixed-race relationships, compared with 64% of those aged over 65. Mobilising a younger audience to the cause of anti-prejudice may also pay longer-term dividends¹⁶.

Reaching the centre ground to strengthen social norms

Anti-prejudice communications that target the centre ground or Anxious Middle have different aims: to consolidate social norms about decent and non-prejudiced behaviour. This will sometimes require different messages and messengers than communications where the main aim is to mobilise existing supporters. Many messages do resonate with both supporters and the centre ground, but often these are not the messages deployed in campaigns. Messages which resonate most strongly with supporters can often be heard quite differently by the Anxious middle audience.



It is also essential that hate crime and prejudice is something that we all oppose, irrespective of our personal politics. This should be something that unites supporters of all the mainstream political parties, as well as those who voted Leave or Remain.

But since the referendum, discussion of the spike in hate crime has sometimes been used as a continuation of the referendum debate. Remain supporters do a disservice to anti-prejudice campaigns if they insist that the referendum proves that ‘Britain is 52% racist’, or that all Leave votes were motivated by prejudice. Reinforcing that stereotype will only succeed in alienating moderate Leavers who would support bridging messages that appeal to shared values of decency. At the same time, Leave supporters have a particular responsibility to call out anyone who believes that the EU referendum was a licence to express hatred.

Persuasive messages for the Anxious Middle audience will need to bridge referendum divides, finding shared ground between Leave and Remain voters.

Reaching tougher and more hostile audiences – to contain and isolate hatred

Anti-prejudice communications may also seek to reach those with the most hostile views to migration and diversity, people who may fall into the ‘Latent Hostile and ‘Active Enmity’ groups identified in HOPE not hate’s research. This will certainly entail a different approach to those campaigns which seek to mobilise support: a ‘one size fits all’ approach that tries to reach all sectors of society is unlikely to succeed. Again, specific attention will need to be given to appropriate messages and frames, as well as the messengers delivering them and the outlets for dissemination.

Communications may aim to deny these groups the oxygen of perceived support by reinforcing and encouraging the articulation of widely-held behavioural and attitudinal norms. Other campaigns targeted at these groups may try to change attitudes, or to persuade people to change their behaviour – for example, by leaving far-right organisations or keeping their prejudiced opinions to themselves.

Different messages, messengers and tactics for dissemination may all be required when targeting more hostile audiences – some of which may hold little appeal for more liberal audiences. This can be challenging when the staff and supporters of campaigning organisations fall into this more liberal audience. Internal communications may be needed to explain the rationale for campaign messages and tactics that might seem alien to staff and supporters. For example, the use of messages that appeal to inclusive patriotism has been found to be successful in targeting more hostile audiences, in campaigns such as *There is nothing British about the BNP*. This campaign, launched in 2009, used inclusively patriotic messages and armed forces veterans as messengers. Its online videos are still available¹⁷.

4. Successful approaches: what we have learned

The following suggestions may help your messages reach and resonate with your target audience, whether you are communicating in public statements to the media, on social media (as a response or in a proactive message), in campaign materials or on websites.

Thinking about your aims

The first and most important question is to think about the aims of your communications. What do you want to achieve? As previously discussed, such aims might include mobilising supporters, entrenching social norms, or changing people's behaviour.

Identifying your audience

With clear aims in mind, you will need to think about the audience you need to reach. If the aim of a public-facing campaign is to get MPs to change the law or take a certain course of action then the key public audience to reach, alongside the MPs themselves, is existing supporters who will take a campaigning action targeting politicians. But if the core aim of anti-prejudice work is to strengthen our social norms, it is essential that messages reinforcing these norms reach broad majorities of the population.

Persuasive messages

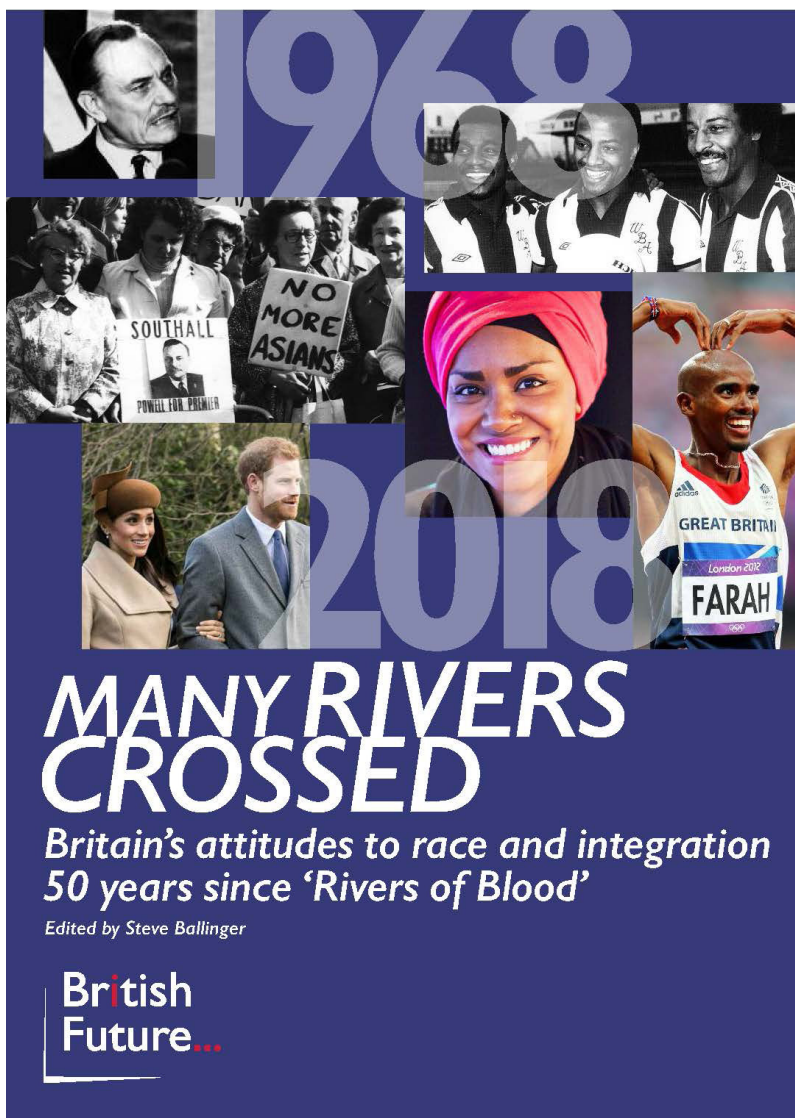
Messages that that are most likely to be successful will tend to:

- Use accessible language, rather than policy or academic terms;
- May use human stories;
- Suggest solutions, not just critiques;
- Acknowledge people's concerns, where appropriate, rather than dismissing them;
- Where possible, state what is permitted first before calling out what is not.

Different messages may sometimes be needed for different audiences. We found that messages appealing to inclusive patriotism, for example, have been effective in reaching tougher audiences.

Some messages can reach a broad cross section of society. In developing anti-prejudice messages, we were concerned to reach and persuade the Anxious Middle and tougher audiences, but also to maintain strong support among Migration Liberals too: this group represents our core support and will need to feel comfortable using the messages in campaigning activities. We also tested the messages with a boosted sample of ethnic minority Britons to make sure they were seen as fair and resonant with all sections of our society.

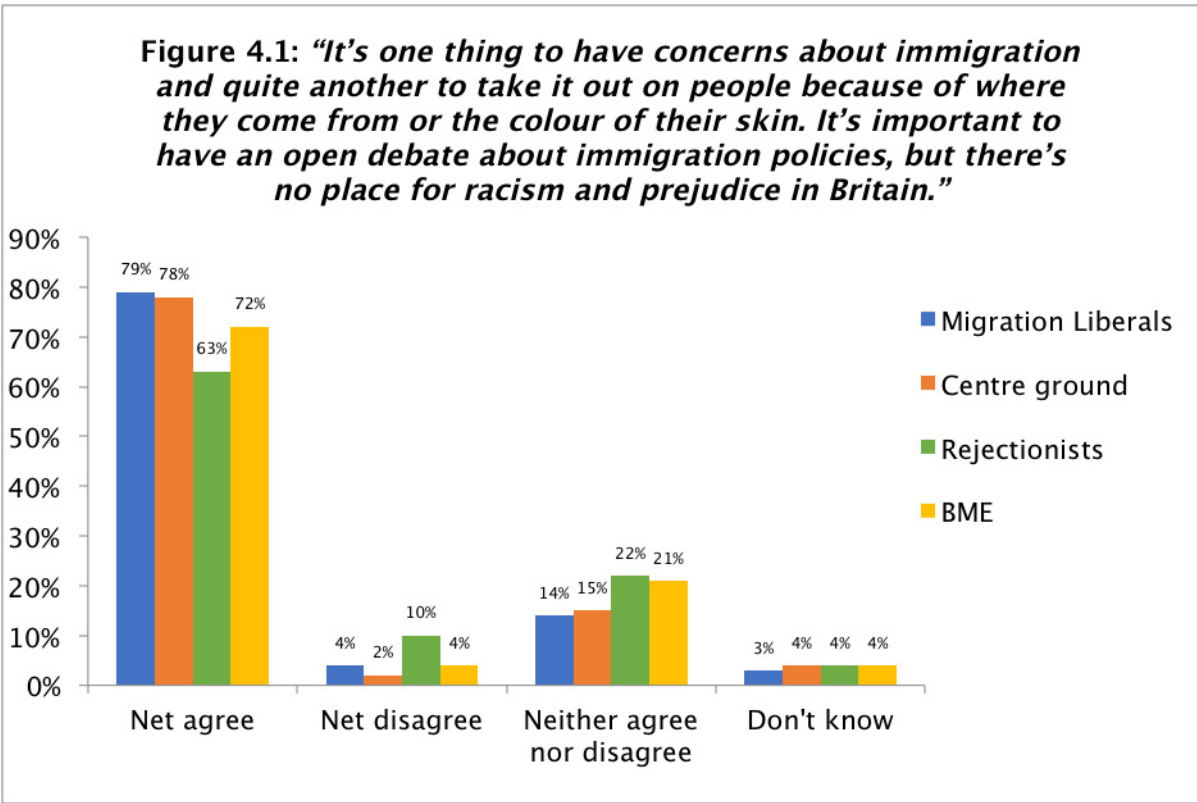
British Future's *Many Rivers Crossed* project tested five anti-prejudice messages that we considered would be persuasive with the centre-ground 'Anxious Middle' and into the 'Latent Hostile' audience while retaining Migration Liberal support. These messages were initially tested in focus groups, then later in nationally representative polling.



Message One

“It’s one thing to have concerns about immigration and quite another to take it out on people because of where they come from or the colour of their skin. It’s important to have an open debate about immigration policies, but there’s no place for racism and prejudice in Britain.”

This message is one that might be used when immigration is in the news; it could also be used in response to concerns that people raise about immigration. It starts by acknowledging legitimate public concerns about immigration. It is also active and states clearly what is permitted and what is not. Overall, 75% of people agreed with this message in a nationally representative survey⁸. When we looked at the impact of this message on different audiences, nearly four out of five Migration Liberals and the centre ground agreed with it, so it was successful in keeping broad support – while also securing agreement from nearly two-thirds of the tougher Rejectionist audience for an anti-prejudice approach (Figure 4.1).

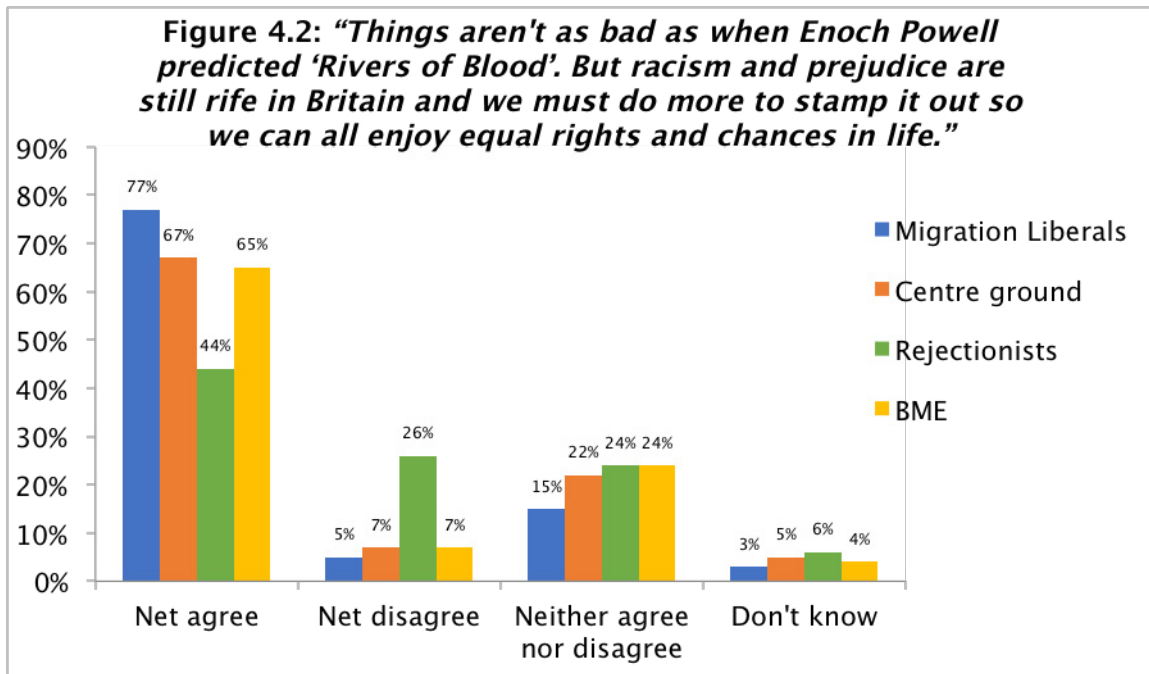


Source: Survation polling of 2,014 UK adults, March 2018.

Message Two

“Things aren’t as bad as in 1968 when Enoch Powell predicted ‘Rivers of Blood’. But racism and prejudice are still rife in Britain and we must do more to stamp it out so we can all enjoy equal rights and chances in life.”

Overall, 65% of people agreed with this message, including two thirds of the of the Centre ground or Anxious Middle group. The relative success of this message was almost certainly due to its acknowledgement that positive change has taken place, and its active call to ‘stamp it out’. It is more popular with Migration Liberal supporters, so could be used to mobilise; but fails to convince a majority of the Rejectionist audience.

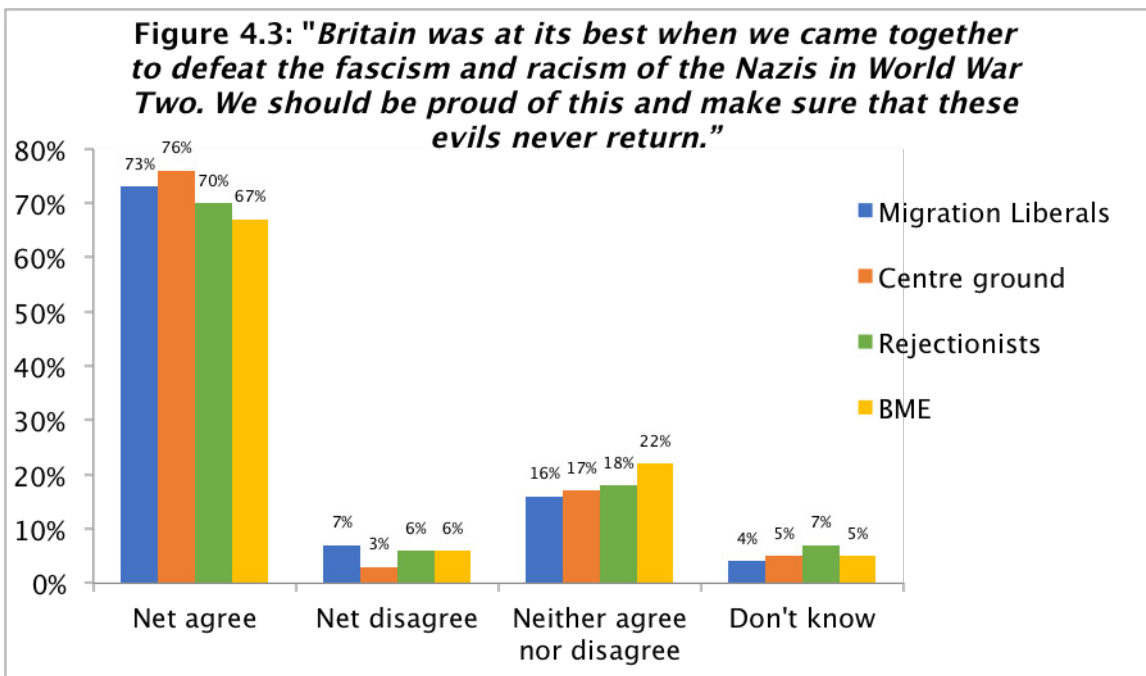


Source: Survation polling of 2,014 UK adults, March 2018.

Message Three

“Britain was at its best when we came together to defeat the fascism and racism of the Nazis in World War Two. We should be proud of this and make sure that these evils never return.”

Overall, three-quarters (74%) of people agreed with this message, with little difference in its impact between different audiences - from the most liberal to the most anxious about migration and diversity. It appeals to inclusive patriotism while taking a stand against racism and fascism. The success of this message is, however, dependent on people having a clear understanding of what constitutes racism and fascism.

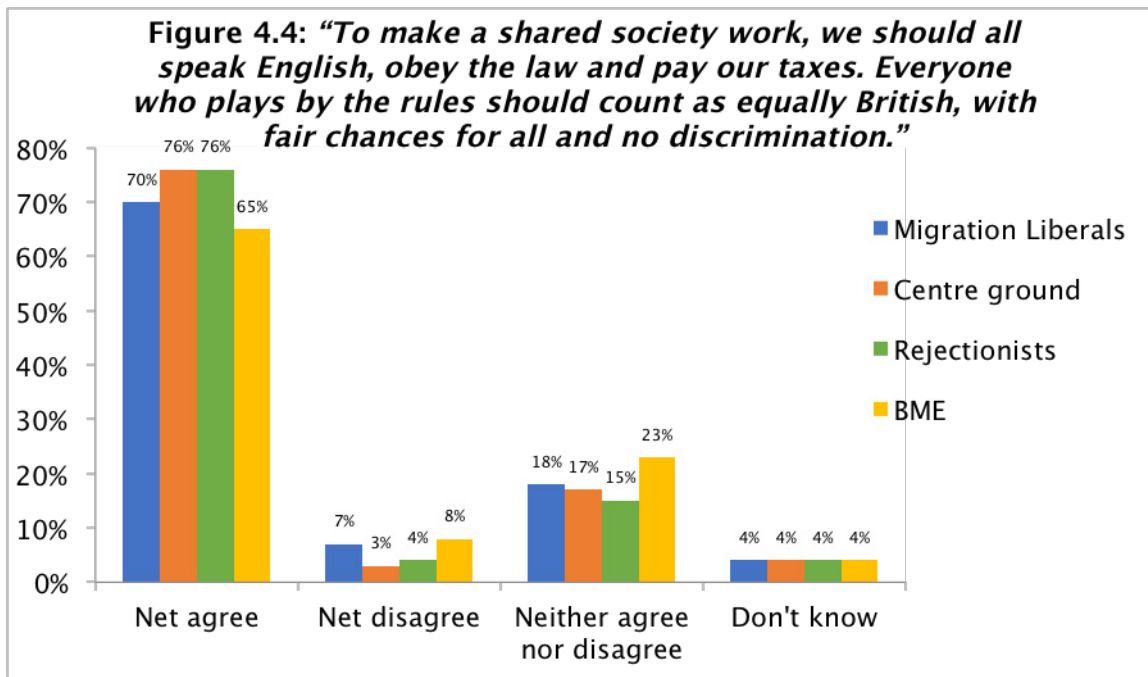


Source: Survation polling of 2,014 UK adults, March 2018.

Message Four

“To make a shared society work, we should all speak English, obey the law and pay our taxes. Everyone who plays by the rules should count as equally British, with fair chances for all and no discrimination.”

Some 75% of people agreed with this message, which could be deployed when integration or migration is a salient issue. Again, it is supported by all sections of society. It starts within the circle, by giving an acknowledgement of public concerns about integration – in fact we know that some campaigners have flinched slightly at how tough it sounds at first. But the message does not turn off liberal supporters among the public, with only 7% saying they disagree and 70% in agreement. Crucially, it concludes with a positive statement, that all are entitled to fair chances without discrimination, in a way that three-quarters of the most negative audience can still support.

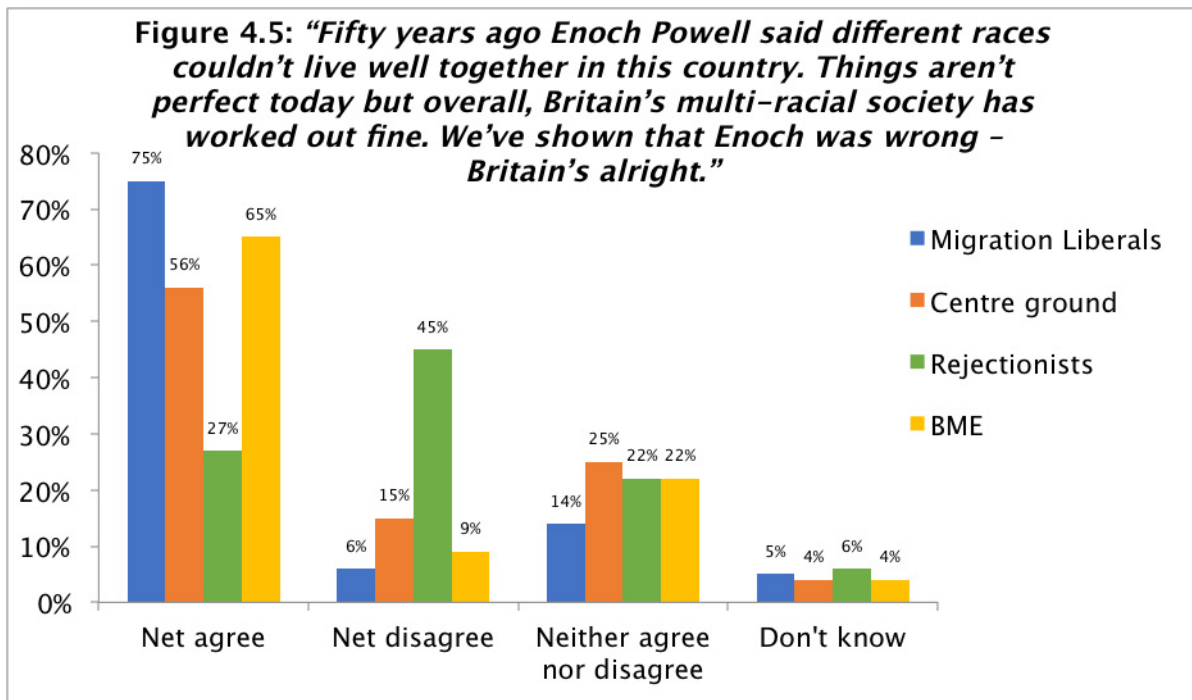


Source: Survation polling of 2,014 UK adults, March 2018.

Message Five

“Fifty years ago Enoch Powell said different races couldn’t live well together in this country. Things aren’t perfect today but overall, Britain’s multi-racial society has worked out fine. We’ve shown that Enoch was wrong – Britain’s alright.”

We expected this message to be successful with a centre ground audience, because it stressed the positive values of the majority. That prediction was wrong, with only 54% of people agreeing with this message and a big variation in its impact between different audiences. In the focus groups, people reacted negatively to the suggestions that ‘everything is alright.’ It is also a passive message. This shows how easy it is to be swayed by our own biases, and the importance of checking messages with people who hold different views to our own.



Source: Survation polling of 2,014 UK adults, March 2018.

Dealing with negative online comments

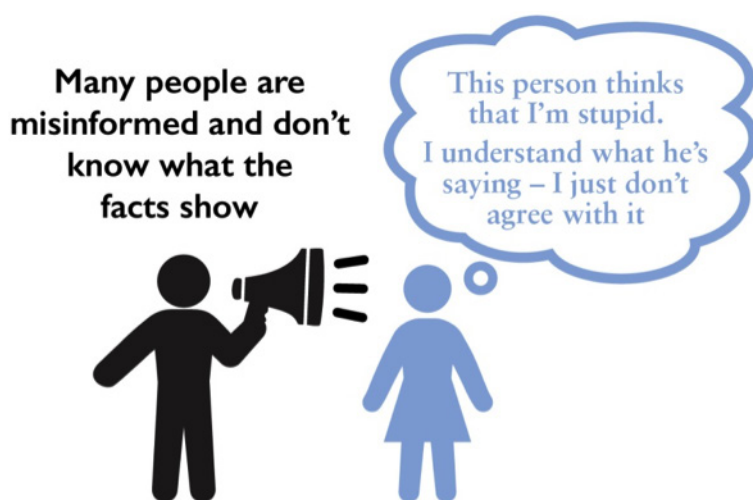
Online articles about immigration and diversity often attract negative, prejudiced or hateful comments. Targeting a ‘Latent Hostile’ audience in online anti-prejudice campaigns can also generate negative or hateful comments, as British Future found in its *No Place For Prejudice* Campaign on Facebook¹⁹.

It is worth giving some thought to how to deal with prejudiced or hateful comments posted online. In the *No Place for Prejudice* campaign, British Future received over 700 negative comments, although this was in the context of an audience of 7.3 million people. We decided to mute all offensive or prejudiced comments but to engage in dialogue with those who appeared engageable, including by linking to a blog offering a more detailed account of the rationale for the campaign.

A number of moderated local online forums have adopted the same approach, muting overtly hateful or offensive comments, but engaging in an online dialogue with those critics who appear to be more engageable.

Responding to fake news and local myths – without ‘myth-busting’

The prevalence of fake news and local myths, including those on social media, presents challenges to those working to combat prejudice. Some organisations have taken a ‘myth-busting’ approach, deploying facts in order to change people’s attitudes or to try to dispel harmful disinformation. But there is much evidence that myth-busting is an ineffective approach and, in some cases, actually reinforces the myth rather than dispels it. Studies show that most people only remember facts and statistics when they support their own internal narratives and views, a process known as cognitive bias²⁰.



Another problem with the ‘just give people the facts’ approach is that it offers a textbook example of *how not* to have an open conversation.

Facts are important, but merely dismissing myths and fake news as untrue in a leaflet or on social media is unlikely to be successful in changing people’s attitudes. However, some organisations have started to think about how they can respond more effectively to myths and fake news and challenge views that are untrue and harmful. Facebook, other media organisations and schools have now put more resources into helping people recognise fake news and understand ‘echo chambers’.

In the UK some civil society organisations and councils have started to think about how they respond to harmful local myths and rumours, without resorting to myth-busting. They have drawn on ‘anti-rumours’ campaigns that have been implemented in a number of European cities²¹. An anti-rumours strategy is a staged approach that comprises (i) identification of harmful local rumours (ii) analysis of their prevalence (iii) development of counter narratives, campaign material and methods (iv) training of ‘anti-rumours’ champions whose role is to challenge these myths (v) the campaign, which will mostly focus on face-to-face interaction (vi) reflection and evaluation.

‘Anti-rumours’ campaigning is a new approach. While some campaigns have been successful, others seem to have reverted to traditional myth-busting activities. There are also criticisms that some campaigns did not reach the audiences they need to persuade or that the anti-rumours strategy reinforced the myth it set out to challenge. Nevertheless, it is worth learning about this approach and looking at whether it could be adapted for the UK.

Help with social media

British Future’s *No Place For Prejudice* campaign was supported by Facebook’s Online Civil Courage Initiative (OCCI), which provided free Facebook advertising credit. This is worth exploring for anti-prejudice campaigners: one of the benefits of Facebook advertising is that it allows advertisers to target a very specific audience, based on demographics, geography and interests.

Such advertising does not have to be expensive: it is possible to spend £50-£100 and reach 10,000-30,000 people in a specific town or city. It also enables campaigners to ‘split test’ communications to assess which online content and message works best with different audiences. There is significant potential for cost-effective testing and learning through this approach. The OCCI is coordinated by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue, which also offers other support to civil society organisations working to combat extremism²².

Messengers matter

Seeking out messengers who will appeal to your target audience is also important. Charity activists are not always the best people to get a message across to centre ground or Rejectionist audiences. It is worth considering whose voice might be the best at reaching the target audience. Partnerships with other organisations not only extend the reach of a campaign but can bring new messengers too.

Footballers, from a range of ethnic groups, have been used as messengers in campaigns to stamp out racist chants at football matches. Campaigns such as Open Your Eyes to Hate and organisations such as Exit UK and HOPE not hate²³ have used the testimony of former members of far-right organisations in some of their campaign material which is targeted at those involved in far-right extremism. It is worth watching some of the videos made for distribution on social media by groups such as Exit UK and HOPE not hate, looking at the messages and messengers that they have used²⁴.

Bystanders: scope for public education

British Future's *Many Rivers Crossed* and *No Place for Prejudice* projects highlighted the anxieties that people face as bystanders to prejudice and hate crime. In the focus group discussions that informed these campaigns we presented a scenario where a Muslim woman sustained verbal abuse from a man in a public place.

Most people felt they should intervene, but some people were uncertain about what they should do and concerned about their own personal safety. In the *No Place for Prejudice* campaign, which depicted a similar scenario, we signposted people to a website page which offered guidance and links to other organisations²⁵. There is potential to develop this further, as there is very little easily-accessible information on what bystanders should do to help. The organisation Tell MAMA has run campaigns encouraging people to be 'UPstanders not BYstanders'; another positive example is the *Stand by Me* initiative by Communities Inc²⁶, based in Nottingham, which offers training and resources to empower bystanders to intervene and assist those who are victims of bullying, harassment or hate crime.

5. Putting it into practice – case studies

Case Study I: Remember Together

A national, proactive campaign that launched in 2018 and could be adopted locally.

Remember Together²⁷ aimed to deepen understanding among ethnic and faith minorities of their long historical connection to Britain, increasing belonging and an inclusive sense of British identity. It also aimed to reach people who feel more anxious and negative about diversity and the integration of ethnic and faith minorities in Britain. It utilised the national moment of the First World War centenary remembrance commemorations, in November 2018, to project a message of shared history and connectedness.

The project brought people from different backgrounds together to learn about shared First World War history, including the story of the 400,000 Muslims who fought for Britain in 1914-18. It also used elements of craft – jointly making giant remembrance poppies commemorating Commonwealth soldiers – as a shared activity that connected people and offered a powerful visual metaphor of the ‘Remember Together’ message.

A partnership with the Royal British Legion brought a new national audience for the campaign to complement inter-faith and local networks. The project also secured the support of politicians from all the main parties which further broadened its audience

Activity

- Three workshop events for children of different backgrounds were held in Bradford, London and Derby. A workshop for Imams and mosque staff was held in Birmingham, who then gave remembrance-themed sermons in mosques across the UK.
- Each event was filmed and used to tell this story of contact and shared remembrance. Facebook advertising ensured the films reached target audiences, particularly those who feel less positive about integration. Split-test opinion polling was used to assess the impact of the Remember Together films on people’s attitudes towards British Muslims.
- A broad coalition, including the Royal British Legion as well as faith leaders, NGOs and politicians of all parties, was built to support the project at launch and help widen dissemination of materials.

Outcomes/impact

- Remember Together launched with a joint letter in the Sunday Telegraph signed by a range of public voices including Mayor of London Sadiq Khan, Deputy Chair of the Conservative Party James Cleverly, the late Lord Paddy Ashdown and others, with an accompanying news story²⁷.
- Media coverage included the BBC Radio 4 *Sunday* programme, The Guardian, The i, Sunday Telegraph, BBC News online, Metro, a package on BBC *Look North* TV news, Jewish Chronicle, Eastern Eye and BBC Asian Network.
- Social media advertising (secured *pro bono* through the Facebook Online Civil Courage Initiative) targeted the key 'Anxious Middle/Latent Hostile' audience. Facebook reach was 330,000 with 70,000 engagements, together with over 104,000 Twitter impressions. The videos were viewed 84,000 times online.
- Survation research showed a **12 percentage point positive shift in attitudes towards Muslims** among those in the target audience who watched one of the Remember Together videos.



Imams learn about the Muslim contribution to WWI at a Birmingham Remember Together workshop.

Case study 2 – #WeAreAllBrummies

A hypothetical, localised case study reacting to a shock event

#WeAreAllBrummies'

This hypothetical case study sets out how an interfaith/inter-community response to an Islamist terrorist attack could project a persuasive message of unity.

Objectives

Secure broad local and national media coverage for a 'We are all Brummies' message that shows people of all faiths and ethnic backgrounds coming together to condemn extremism – from both Islamists and from the far right - and to tell a story of a city that will not be divided.

Message

We Are All Brummies. People of every creed and colour in Birmingham have come together to say 'no' to those who try to tear our city apart – both the terrorists who tried to murder our citizens and the far-right fascists who are trying to take advantage of this tragedy to stir up hatred.

Messengers

Coalition of faith leaders from all faiths; survivors of the attack (important); anti-prejudice NGOs; local MPs and Mayor of West Midlands (securing cross-party coalition); local councillors; trade unions; business leaders; the city's major football clubs; civil society; the city's universities; business owners affected by the attack; police, fire service, NHS, local armed forces regiments; local celebrities.

Activity

- Faith leaders and other key participants agree strategy and tactics quickly and agree who will liaise with media and spokespeople. Focus on delivering activity quickly, within news cycle and before competing (divisive) messages gain traction.
- Joint letter to local/national newspaper(s).
- Spokespeople briefed on key messages.
- One key iconic activity that is replicable locally and nationally – for example a human chain around the Bull Ring, Birmingham's iconic market and shopping centre, with coalition partners ensuring a broad range of participants with a strong Muslim presence.

- A ‘moment of silence’ when people join hands to coincide with the human chain moment, with satellite human chains around other West Midlands venues and nationally, in schools, workplaces, churches, mosques, temples and synagogues etc. – ideally bringing people from different backgrounds together.
- Social media short film clips of spokespeople and participants taking part and talking about why they are doing so.

This is just an example of the kind of approach, message and coalition that would be effective in such a situation – it may be that a more locally-rooted message and media activity would emerge from those involved. It is important that the response is, and is seen to be, authentically from the citizens of the affected place. People of Manchester coming together to sing ‘Don’t look back in anger’ and sporting the Manchester Bee symbol - as physical badges and on social media - was a good example of such a locally-rooted response after the 2017 Manchester bombing.



Faith leaders take part in #WalkTogether unity walk on the 10th anniversary of the 7/7 bombings in London.

Case study 3: Millwall response to racist chanting

A local, reactive response to hatred at a London football ground this year.

Millwall fans filmed racist chanting at an FA cup match against Everton in January 2019. This mobile phone footage was circulated on social media and picked up by the BBC and by print media. The same match saw fighting between rival groups of fans, with one person sustaining a serious knife wound. The FA launched an investigation which the club assisted. It is worth looking at the club's statement²⁸, which we have reproduced below. It clearly states that the behaviour is unacceptable before isolating the perpetrators from the majority of its supporters. However, the club did receive some criticism for using the words 'disappointed' and 'alleged' in the first paragraph of the statement, which for some people weakened what was being said.

"Millwall Football Club is aware of, and extremely disappointed by, a video circulating online displaying the alleged racist chanting during Saturday's victory over Everton.

The club will, as is commonplace following such incidents, work with all relevant authorities during investigations into the matter and look to identify individuals involved. Anyone identified and guilty of such abuse will be banned from The Den for life.

The club would like to place on record its gratitude to, and pride in, the vast majority of its supporters who gave their team outstanding backing throughout the match and who deserve to enjoy a memorable victory. They should be able to do so without being tarnished by behaviour they would find abhorrent.

Millwall Football Club has a long and proud record of anti-discrimination work and on top of this investigation will continue to work tirelessly, alongside the authorities, to eradicate all forms from the game."

Millwall's fans have a poor reputation, both for violence and racism. The club and Millwall Community Trust have taken steps to address the behaviour of some of its fans. It works with *Show Racism the Red Card* and *Kick it Out*, two campaigns that aim to address hate crime in football, as well as setting up its own *Millwall for All* cohesion initiative. Following the Everton incident, the club decided to close off a notorious section of its ground, where its hooligan supporters tended to congregate. It also increased policing and stewarding in this area and deployed additional police spotters. Advertising boards in the ground also reiterate that hate crime is unacceptable.

Case study 4: No Place for Prejudice

A national, proactive online campaign using social media to engage hard-to-reach audiences

This British Future campaign featured on Facebook and Instagram and was based on two illustrations of everyday street scenes, with the audience invited to engage and look closer to identify an isolated incident of someone experiencing hatred and prejudice. Each illustration incorporated one of two messages:

“Don’t turn a blind eye to prejudice. If you see it call it out.”

“There is no place for prejudice in Britain. If you see it call it out.”

We wanted to target the most anxious end of the Anxious Middle audience and also some of the ‘Latent Hostile’ rejectionist group: people who hold mostly negative views about diversity and lack confidence that we can make integration work²⁹. It is an important audience, some of which may be vulnerable to targeting by far-right groups. It is also an audience that is rarely reached by much anti-prejudice messaging. Using Facebook advertising, we targeted the campaign at non-graduates over 30 living in the North East and South West of England, characteristics which were reasonable proxy indicators of an audience more likely to include Anxious Middle and Latent Hostile groups. Some ads were also presented to more liberal audiences so we could measure differences. The online content also linked to a page on British Future’s website which explained what people should do if they witnessed hate crime.

The rationale for the campaign was to target this more anxious audience with engaging content that did not look like a typical, hard-hitting anti-prejudice campaign; to present a positive, everyday scene of Britain in which most people are not prejudiced but get along well; and to isolate those who do not adhere to anti-prejudice norms, encouraging the audience to call out prejudice if they see it.

The approach drew on findings from our Many Rivers Crossed research that looked at attitudes to integration and diversity in the 50 years since Enoch Powell’s ‘Rivers of Blood’ speech in 1968. The research also tested messages that might resonate with a more anxious audience, which we then used in the campaign.



British Future was offered support by Facebook's *Create v Hate* initiative for this project, which included an advertising agency to create the content and free Facebook advertising credit. This enabled us to reach a large audience.

With the help of this ad credit, the campaign reached over 7 million people, over a million of whom engaged with the content – a very high engagement rate (the non-profit average is 2%). We also found that the 'Anxious' target audience was more likely to engage with the adverts than the more liberal audience, as we had hoped. The campaign showed that it is possible to engage harder-to-reach audiences with the right content.



One upshot of targeting an audience that feels more negative about diversity is that we received a large number of negative comments – though in context, 700 negative comments from over 1 million engagements is a low rate. We chose to mute any offensive or prejudiced comments but to engage in dialogue with those who appeared engageable, including by linking to a blog offering a more detailed rationale for the campaign.

6. Conclusions

Over the last five years we have developed in the UK a clearer and more comprehensively mapped picture, of what the public thinks on key issues like migration and diversity, than in most other European countries. This understanding can be deployed to inform campaigns against hate crime and prejudice, to help them reach their intended audiences.

Anti-prejudice campaigns will need to make better use of this evidence base to help construct more effective communications that reach and resonate with the audiences they need to persuade: whether that is mobilising their base, reinforcing majority norms against prejudice or targeting those expressing prejudice themselves. We hope this report offers some guidance for doing so.

As we have stated, effective communication is only one aspect of the work that is needed to counter prejudice and hatred. But we hope that *Calling out hatred and prejudice* will be a useful resource for those who are using communications to help build better community relations. Do please share it with other organisations and individuals working in this space.

Our developing understanding of how to communicate against prejudice remains a work-in-progress and we do not claim to have all the answers. So we would be very interested to hear from practitioners who have put these or other ideas, about communicating on such themes, into practice. We would also be happy to discuss further any of the insights and advice contained in this report – and to keep a conversation going about how we can all make our communications more effective in combating prejudice and hatred.



Students from Eden Girls School and Walthamstow School for Girls in East London take part in Remember Together.

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- ²². More information at <https://www.isdglobal.org/programmes/communications-technology/online-civil-courage-initiative-2/>
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Acknowledgements and About British Future

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About British Future

British Future is an independent, non-partisan thinktank seeking to involve people in an open conversation which addresses people's hopes and fears about identity and integration, migration and opportunity, so that we feel confident about Britain's Future.

We want to ensure that we engage those who are anxious about cultural identity and economic opportunity in Britain today, as well as those who already feel confident about our society, so that we can together identify workable solutions to make Britain the country we want to live in.

British Future convenes or co-convenes a number of networks: on communications, on integration and on anti-prejudice strategy. These bring together those who are working in these important areas to share best practice and new research insights. They will also, we hope, build greater connectedness between local actors who are doing good work that does not get the attention it deserves, and with national organisations working on these themes. To find out more about these networks contact: info@britishfuture.org

British Future...

British Future is an independent, non-partisan thinktank engaging people's hopes and fears about integration and migration, opportunity and identity, so that we share a confident and welcoming Britain, inclusive and fair to all.

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