

# Race in the Construction Industry Research Report

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# **Race in the Construction Industry Research Report**

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## Executive summary

- More sectors of the economy appeal as sources of employment to non-white ethnic minority people than they do to white people. This is also true of the construction industry (the Industry), though it ranks as the third least appealing sector to non-white ethnic minorities, with less than half (45%) considering it to have appeal.
- People from non-white ethnic minorities are less able than white people to spontaneously recall specific trades within the Industry, instead using catch-all terms such as 'residential building'. This suggests lower levels of awareness of the employment opportunities in the Industry.
- Non-white ethnic minorities are slightly more likely than white people to consider construction work to be skilled, but slightly less likely to view construction jobs positively.
- People from non-white ethnic minorities are more inclined to think that construction fails to appeal (40%) than suspect the Industry of placing employment barriers to non-white ethnic minority applicants (36%). Mixed-race people and black people are less convinced. These two groups generally hold more negative views of the Industry as a whole. This may account for at least some of the lower numbers of non-white ethnic minorities in the Industry.
- Racism is thought to occur in the Industry. Three in ten suspect that the Industry shows more examples of race discrimination than other sectors of the economy.
- Non-white ethnic minorities in the social grades D/E (working class/those at the lowest levels of subsistence) are much more likely than their white counterparts to believe that the Industry discriminates against them. This may reduce the number of manual non-white ethnic minority entering the Industry.
- The data provides a number of mixed messages and inconclusive outcomes. It indicates where perceived problems within the Industry are, but it does not fully explain them.

# **1 Introduction**

## **1.1 Background**

On 30 January 2009 the Equality and Human Rights Commission launched an inquiry under section 16 of the Equality Act 2006 into race in the Industry. For the first quarter of 2008, only 3.3% of those employed or self-employed in the Industry were from non-white ethnic minorities, compared with 7.9% in the total active working population. The inquiry's purpose is to look at the causes of the under-representation of non-white ethnic minorities in the Industry.

As part of this process, the Commission asked ICM Research to do primary research on public opinion among non-white ethnic minority and white workers towards employment in the Industry. The research would inform the wider formal inquiry.

## **1.2 Aims of the research**

The essence of the research was the perceptions of working-age non-white ethnic minority people and white people towards the Industry. It sought to answer a number of questions, including:

- what the appeal is of working in the Industry compared with other sectors of the economy
- whether there is an awareness of the employment opportunities within the Industry
- what the perceived image is of the work and the Industry
- whether key barriers to employment can be identified
- what the levels of concern are about potential discrimination and racism, and
- whether people from non-white ethnic minorities hold views different to those held by white people and whether this contributes to under-representation in the Industry.

## **1.3 Methodology**

To understand whether or not people from non-white ethnic minorities choose to avoid construction employment, a control sample was required. ICM did two telephone surveys: one among people from non-white ethnic minorities aged 16–64, and another among white people aged 16–64.

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The research among white people aged 16–64 was done between 15 and 17 May 2009. A total of 652 interviews were completed.

The research among non-white ethnic minority people was done between 11 and 19 May 2009. A total of 1,002 interviews were completed and the results have been weighted to the profile of all non-white ethnic minority people aged 16–64.

The non-white ethnic minority sample was drawn from a database of over 10,000 people. The database has been built by ICM over seven years. All members have been interviewed on a nationally representative telephone omnibus which ICM runs twice weekly (and which was used for the sample of white people). At the end of each omnibus interview, ICM asked people if they would be willing to speak to them again. If they were willing, they were added to the database.

The advantage of this technique is that because respondents were initially selected in a random and representative way, every subsample was also, in theory, representative. As such, the database of non-white ethnic minorities is theoretically representative of non-white ethnic minorities living in the UK.

### **1.4 Profile of the sample**

Both surveys were based on a number of demographic quota controls which were designed to produce a representative sample of the relevant age 16–64 population. In theory, these quotas should make sure that unweighted and weighted data closely matched each other. However, research projects typically have difficulties reaching members of the population who can be less open to research than others, for example people from younger age groups. To correct differential refusals within the sample, a rim weighting matrix was applied to make sure that the profile of each sample exactly matched that of the overall population. The weighted demographic profile therefore conforms to the breakdown shown in Table 1.

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**Table 1. Weighted demographic profiles**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Non-white ethnic minority sample (%)</b>	<b>White people sample (%)</b>
Male	49	50
Female	51	50
<b>Age</b>		
16–24	25.1	17
25–34	28.1	22
35–44	23.9	23
45–54	14.3	21
55–64	8.6	17
65+	–	–
<b>Region</b>		
North east	1.3	5
Yorkshire and the Humber	7.0	9
East Midlands	5.9	7
Eastern	5.7	10
South east	8.5	14
London	44.8	10
South west	2.4	9
Wales	1.3	5
West Midlands	12.8	9
North west	8.1	12
Scotland	2.2	10
<b>Racial group</b>		
White	–	100

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Mixed race	14.6	–
Asian/Asian British	50.5	–
Black/Black British	24.8	–
Chinese	5.3	–
Other ethnic group	5.0	–

(– result not available)

### 1.5 Interpretation of the data

Remember that a sample of 1,002 non-white ethnic minority adults (and 652 white adults) aged 16–64 – not the entire target population – was interviewed. So all results are subject to sampling tolerances, which means that not all differences are statistically significant.

However, the variation between the sample results and the ‘true’ values (if everyone in the population had been interviewed) can be predicted from knowledge of the size of the samples and the number of times answers are given. The confidence of this prediction is usually 95%; that is, the chances are 95 times out of 100 that the ‘true’ value will fall within a specified range. Table 2 shows the predicted ranges for different sample sizes and the percentage results at the 95% confidence level.

**Table 2. Predicted ranges for different sample sizes and the percentage results at the 95% confidence level**

Sample size	Sampling tolerances (the allowable amount of variation) applicable to percentages at or near (%)		
	10% or 90% +/-	30% or 70% +/-	50% +/-
100 interviews	5.88	8.98	9.8
250 interviews	3.72	5.68	6.2
500 interviews	2.63	4.02	4.38
1,000 interviews	1.86	2.84	3.1

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For example, with a sample size of 1,002 interviews where 50% (the worst-case scenario with tolerances) give a particular answer, we can be 95% certain that the 'true' value will fall within the range of 3.1% from the sample result.

When results are compared between separate groups within a sample (say, between the white sample and the non-white ethnic minority sample), different results may be obtained. The difference may be 'real' or it may occur by chance (because a sample rather than the entire population has been interviewed). To test if the difference is a real one; that is, if it is 'statistically significant', we again have to know the size of the samples: the percentage giving a certain answer and the degree of confidence chosen. If we assume the 95% confidence level again, the differences between the results of two separate groups must be greater than the values given in Table 3.

**Table 3. Sample differences**

<b>Sample sizes to be compared</b>	<b>Differences required to be statistically significant at or near (%)</b>		
	<b>10% or 90% +/-</b>	<b>30% or 70% +/-</b>	<b>50% +/-</b>
100 and 100	8.3	12.7	13.9
200 and 200	5.9	8.9	9.8
500 and 500	3.7	5.7	6.2
652 and 1,002	3.0	4.5	4.9

## 2 Main report

### 2.1 To what extent does the Industry appeal as a potential source of employment?

Most business sectors are more appealing to non-white ethnic minority people than they are to white people. This includes the Industry, where 45% of non-white ethnic minority people and 42% of white people think of it as appealing. Table 4 shows the appeal of employment in specific sectors.

**Table 4. The appeal of employment in specific sectors**

	Appealing (%)	Unappealing (%)	Net difference
<b>Education</b>			
Non-white ethnic minorities	84	15	+69
White people	70	29	+41
<b>Health</b>			
Non-white ethnic minorities	79	21	+58
White people	65	35	+30
<b>Business services and public administration</b>			
Non-white ethnic minorities	71	28	+43
White people	54	45	+9
<b>Transport, communications and utilities</b>			
Non-white ethnic minorities	66	33	+33
White people	60	40	+20

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<b>Finance, insurance and real estate</b>			
Non-white ethnic minorities	63	36	+27
White people	40	59	-19
<b>Retail</b>			
Non-white ethnic minorities	60	39	+21
White people	51	48	+3
<b>Manufacturing</b>			
Non-white ethnic minorities	48	50	-2
White people	45	55	-10
<b>Wholesale</b>			
Non-white ethnic minorities	46	50	-4
White people	40	59	-19
<b>Construction</b>			
Non-white ethnic minorities	45	54	-9
White people	42	57	-15
<b>Agriculture, forestry and fishing</b>			
Non-white ethnic minorities	35	62	-27
White people	47	52	-5
<b>Mining</b>			
Non-white ethnic minorities	15	80	-65
White people	13	86	-73

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The Industry appears well down the list of appealing sources of employment for both people from both non-white ethnic minorities and white people. Out of the eleven economy sectors specified, construction was the third least appealing among both groups, ahead of only mining, and agriculture, forestry and fishing.

Overall, just less than half (45%) of non-white ethnic minority people and four in ten white people (42%) think that construction employment is appealing, but in both cases more (54% and 57% respectively) consider it to be unappealing. Furthermore, among the people from non-white ethnic minorities for whom the Industry does appeal, few of them (14%) consider it to be 'very' appealing; with 28% saying it is only 'quite' appealing.

When it comes to viewing construction employment opportunities negatively, more non-white ethnic minority people hold 'strong' feelings of rejection rather than 'weak' feelings: 30% consider employment opportunities to be 'very' unappealing as opposed to 24% who consider them to be 'quite' unappealing.

More male non-white ethnic minorities (54%) than female (36%) consider construction employment to have a general appeal, but there is no variation in response when it comes to age. Some people might assume that it would be of interest to younger people, particularly those who are yet to start a structured career path. However, that is not supported by the data; with construction employment appealing to fewer people from non-white ethnic minorities aged 16–24 (43%) than it does to their 45–64-year-old counterparts (47%). It is slightly more appealing to white people aged 16–24 (49%); both in comparison with people from non-white ethnic minorities aged 16–24, and with white people aged 55–64 (45%). However, neither of these differences are significant.

Social and economic grade, however, correlates strongly with the appeal of construction employment. There is a consistent and significant increase in this as affluence declines. Table 5 reveals that only four in ten (39%) people from non-white ethnic minorities of social grade A/B (upper middle class/middle class) consider construction employment to be appealing, but this rises to 52% among people of social grades C2 (skilled working class) and D/E (working class/those at the lowest levels of subsistence). A similar pattern emerges among white people, with the score rising from 37% among white people of social grades A/B to 55% among people of social grade C2 before falling back to 48% among people of social grades D/E.

**Table 5. The appeal of construction employment by social grade**

<b>Percentage of people who consider construction employment to be 'appealing'</b>				
	<b>A/B (upper middle class/middle class) (%)</b>	<b>C1 (lower middle class) (%)</b>	<b>C2 (skilled working class) (%)</b>	<b>D/E (working class/lowest level of subsistence) (%)</b>
White	37	38	55	48
Non-white ethnic minorities	39	42	52	52

Ethnicity also produces some variation in response. Just over half (52%) of those people from 'other' ethnic groups think that construction is appealing, with Asian people (49%) and black people (47%) having similar views. However, these findings are all statistically significantly higher in people from mixed race (31%) and Chinese (25%) backgrounds. In the latter two, a strong majority find the Industry unappealing (69% and 73% respectively).

Religion may have a minor and specific impact on the appeal of construction employment. Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs are fairly equally split but it is (non-white ethnic minority) Christians, and particularly non-religious people, who most consider construction employment as unappealing. In total, 69% of non-religious people find it unappealing, as do 57% of non-white ethnic minority Christians.

## **2.2 Awareness the Industry work opportunities**

Most survey respondents were aware that there are numerous types of employment in the Industry. Four in five (82% of non-white ethnic minority people and 88% of white people) could name at least one construction trade, with 2.9 and 3.1 trades mentioned on average.

However, there is an interesting divergence in awareness between non-white ethnic minority and white people. More of the former (but not a significant amount) were aware of catch-all terms such as 'residential building' (35% v 29%) and 'non-residential building' (19% v 12%), but were less aware of specific named trades such as 'plumbing', 'electrics' and 'carpentry'. Indeed, fewer non-white ethnic minorities were aware of the top four most frequently mentioned trades than their white counterparts. Knowing the catch-all terms, combined with not knowing

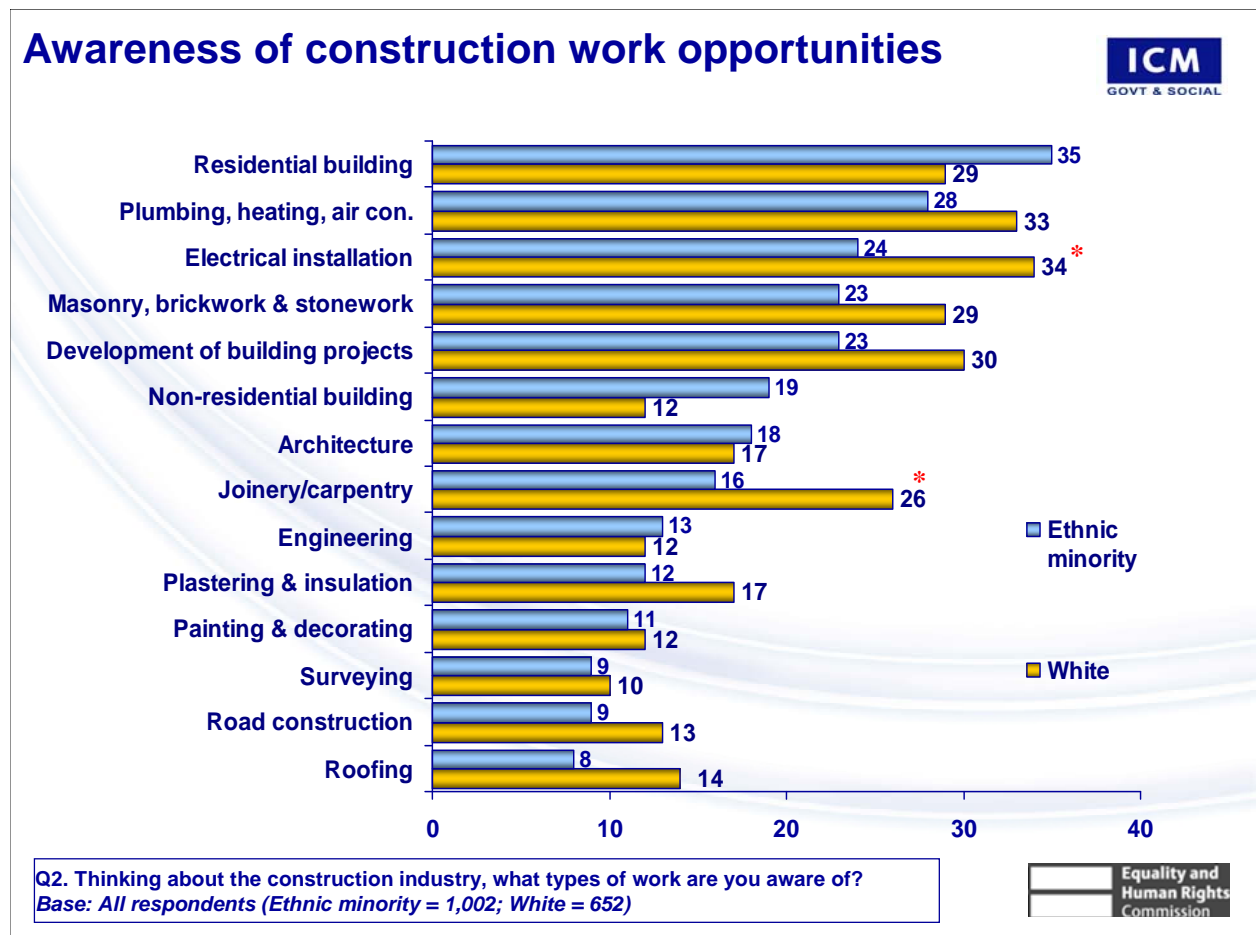
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specific (requested) types of work or trades might reveal a lower level of understanding of the nature of construction work among non-white ethnic minorities.

Chart 1 shows that ‘residential building’ is the most stated term among non-white ethnic minorities, but comes in third among white people. Although ‘non-residential building’ is only mentioned by 19% of non-white ethnic minority people, this is still seven points higher than among white people.

‘Plumbing’, ‘heating’ and ‘air conditioning’ are the leading specific trades mentioned by non-white ethnic minority people (28% v 33%). ‘Electrical installation’ is mainly mentioned by white people (24% of non-white ethnic minorities, and 34% of white people: a statistically significant difference in awareness levels). ‘Masonry’, ‘brickwork’ and ‘stonework’ is the next most mentioned trade (23% v 29%).

**Chart 1. Awareness of construction work opportunities**



<sup>1</sup> A red \* denotes a statistically significant difference

## **2.3 Construction work: skilled or unskilled?**

Not mentioning specific construction trades does not, however, prevent people from forming impressions of the level of skill required for employment positions. There is consistent evidence to suggest that most people (80% of non-white ethnic minorities and 85% of white people) think that work in the Industry is skilled, with only a few (16% of non-white ethnic minorities and 13% of white people) thinking it is unskilled. However, a majority (51% of non-white ethnic minorities and 60% of white people) think that construction work is 'quite' skilled rather than 'very' skilled (28% v 25%).

Non-white ethnic minorities aged 16–24 are more likely to think that the work is skilled (85%: significantly higher than the 75% of 45–64 year olds who think so). This might suggest that young people from non-white ethnic minorities are put off the Industry by the perceived level of skill that is required. However, this is undermined by the control sample result, where an even higher incidence of young white people think that construction is skilled (88%).

The perception is consistent across non-white ethnic minorities, with those saying that the Industry work is skilled rising only to 85% among 'other' ethnic groups, and only falling as far as 78% among Asian people. There are no variances in gender, social grade or religion, suggesting that the impression of the Industry as 'skilled' is consistent.

## **2.4 Is the Industry viewed positively?**

Just less than a majority (49%) of non-white ethnic minority people view construction jobs positively (11% 'very' positively and 38% 'quite' positively). Only one in five (19%) view it negatively; with most viewing it 'quite' (14%) rather than 'very' (5%) negatively. This is similar to working-age white people, with 51% viewing it positively and only 12% negatively.

Given that the Industry is the third least-appealing industry to work in, we might conclude that non-white ethnic minorities have no real objections to most of the main sectors of the economy as possible sources of employment (except mining and agriculture, forestry and fishing). If only one in five non-white ethnic minority people view the Industry negatively, we might assume they do not generally rule out specific sectors of the economy, and so there must be other factors in the low numbers of non-white ethnic minorities working in construction.

It should be noted that some specific non-white ethnic minorities are more likely than others to view construction negatively. They include

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older non-white ethnic minority people (25% aged 45–64: statistically significantly higher than the 14% aged 16–24), black people (24%), and social grades D/E (24%). Those who think that construction work is unskilled are more likely to view it negatively (39%) than those who consider it to be skilled employment (17%). However, this group is relatively small and makes up only 3% of all non-white ethnic minorities. This largely rules them out as a core group avoiding construction employment.

### **2.5 Does the Industry fail to appeal or are other factors at work?**

Lower awareness of construction trades among non-white ethnic minority workers may explain the low numbers of them working in the Industry, but it is difficult to tie this in with the general negative views that put them off construction employment. Respondents were asked to consider whether there was less appeal for non-white ethnic minorities, or whether other there could be other factors.

When made aware of the low numbers of non-white ethnic minorities employed in the Industry, people from non-white ethnic minorities were, on balance, still more inclined to think that construction does not appeal to them, rather than that the Industry was doing something – consciously or unconsciously – to prevent them from getting employment. Overall, four in ten (40%) felt the lack of appeal was the primary factor, although almost as many (36%) did feel that something else was at work, and that non-white ethnic minorities were being denied employment somehow. Black people were most likely to hold the latter view (44%): statistically significantly higher than the 32% of Asian people who agreed (while 30% of Chinese people also felt this was the case, this was not statistically significant). As already mentioned, black people were more likely to view construction employment negatively, and if they also feel that the Industry prevents their employment we can perhaps understand why. Although this finding does need to be cautiously reported, the data might suggest that black people are more likely than others to have some form of grievance that dissuades them from considering the Industry as a source of employment.

Many white people are not as convinced that this might be the case. A statistically significant lower figure of 27% suggests that non-white ethnic minorities are prevented from gaining access, with nearly half (47%) believing that the Industry does not appeal to non-white ethnic minorities. The nine-point gap on the 'prevention' measure is a significant difference in response between white people and non-white ethnic minorities.

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There is a strong link between negative views of the Industry and views that the Industry prevents non-white ethnic minorities from entering it. Overall, 49% of those with a negative impression think the Industry puts up barriers to employment. It is worth noting that those who have a negative view of the Industry are disproportionately represented by people with disabilities (14% v 8%). It may be that some members of this group hold a negative impression not because of perceived racial discrimination, but because of a failure to meet disability anti-discrimination laws.

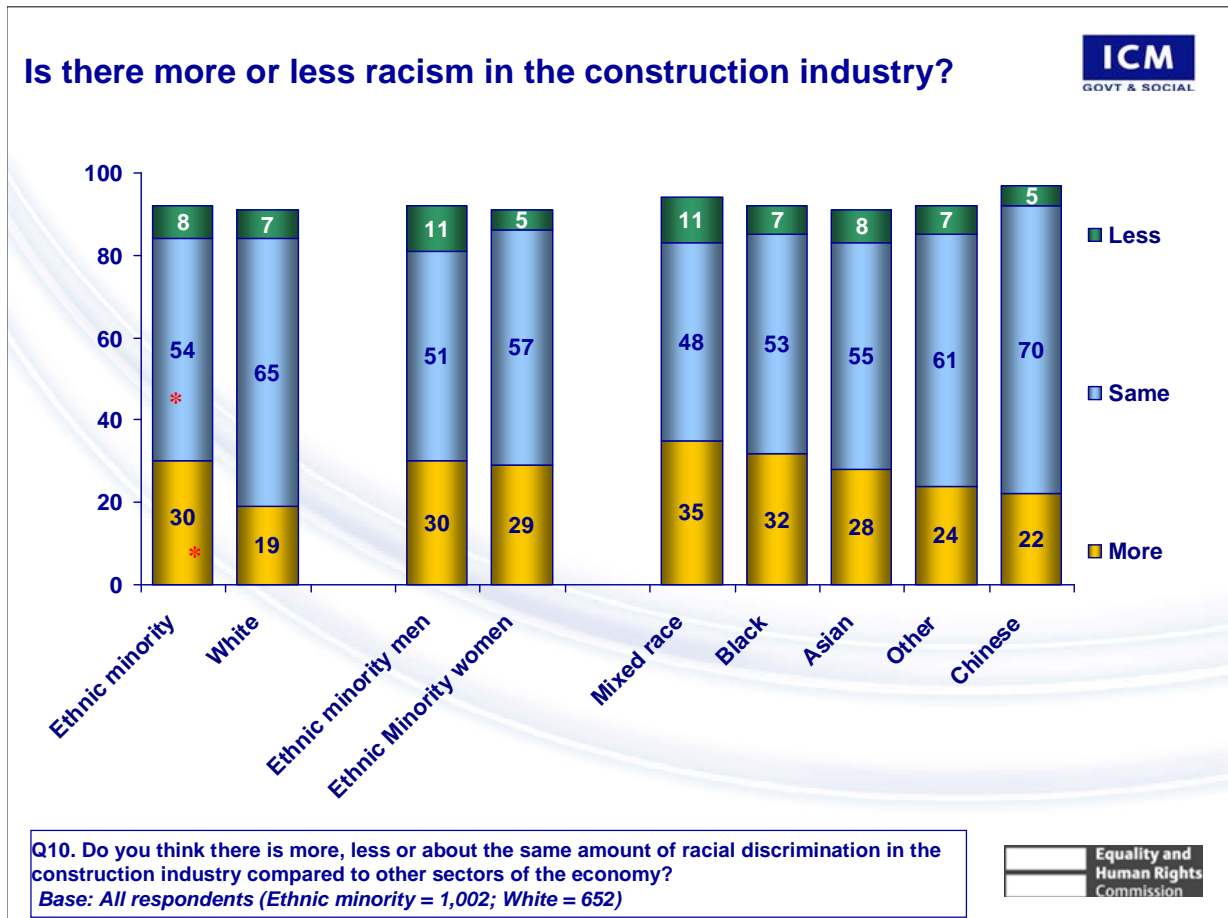
### **2.6 The perceived level of racism in the Industry**

Respondents were asked whether they felt that there is more, less or the same amount of racial discrimination in the Industry than other sectors.

There is clear evidence to suggest that many people – both white people and non-white ethnic minorities – do think that the Industry is more prone to race discrimination than other sectors of the economy. Overall, three in ten (30%) non-white ethnic minority people believe this to be the case, with only 8% saying there is less. One in five (19%) white people think there is more race discrimination than elsewhere, with 7% saying there is less.

There are differences between ethnic groups and their views about the level of racism in the Industry. Of all the non-white ethnic groups, more mixed-race people believed there is pervasive discrimination in the Industry. Overall, 35% of mixed-race people stated there is more racism in the Industry than elsewhere, compared to 32% among black people, and less than three in ten among Asian people, Chinese people and other groups (28%). Chart 2 shows the result of respondents' views of this.

**Chart 2. Is there more or less racism in the Industry than other industries?**



2

<sup>2</sup> A red \* denotes a statistically significant difference

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There are few subgroup variations to be found. The belief that there is more racism in the Industry than elsewhere slightly rises with age, but there is no variation by work status, disability or religion. Social groups A/B (35%) are significantly more likely to think there is more racism in the Industry than social groups D/E (22%), and the impression of those who view the Industry negatively is (again) supported by the belief that discrimination is rife (48%). Other than that there is a high degree of consistency in the data.

A corollary question was also asked to identify the perceived discrimination in the Industry, and on this matter more statistically significant differences emerge between the views of non-white ethnic minorities and white people. The majority of both groups agree that the Industry is dominated by white British people, although a significant 63% of non-white ethnic minority people believe this compared with 52% of white people. More non-white ethnic minority people 'strongly' agree with this (37%) than they 'tend to' agree (27%), suggesting that this is a well-established belief.

Mixed-race people (74%) and black people (74%) are statistically significantly more likely to believe this to be true than Asian people (56%) or 'other' racial groups (56%). Religion is also a factor, with Christians (72%) and Muslims (60%) significantly more likely to agree the Industry is dominated by white British people than Hindus and Sikhs. Those with negative impressions of the Industry strongly believe this (77%).

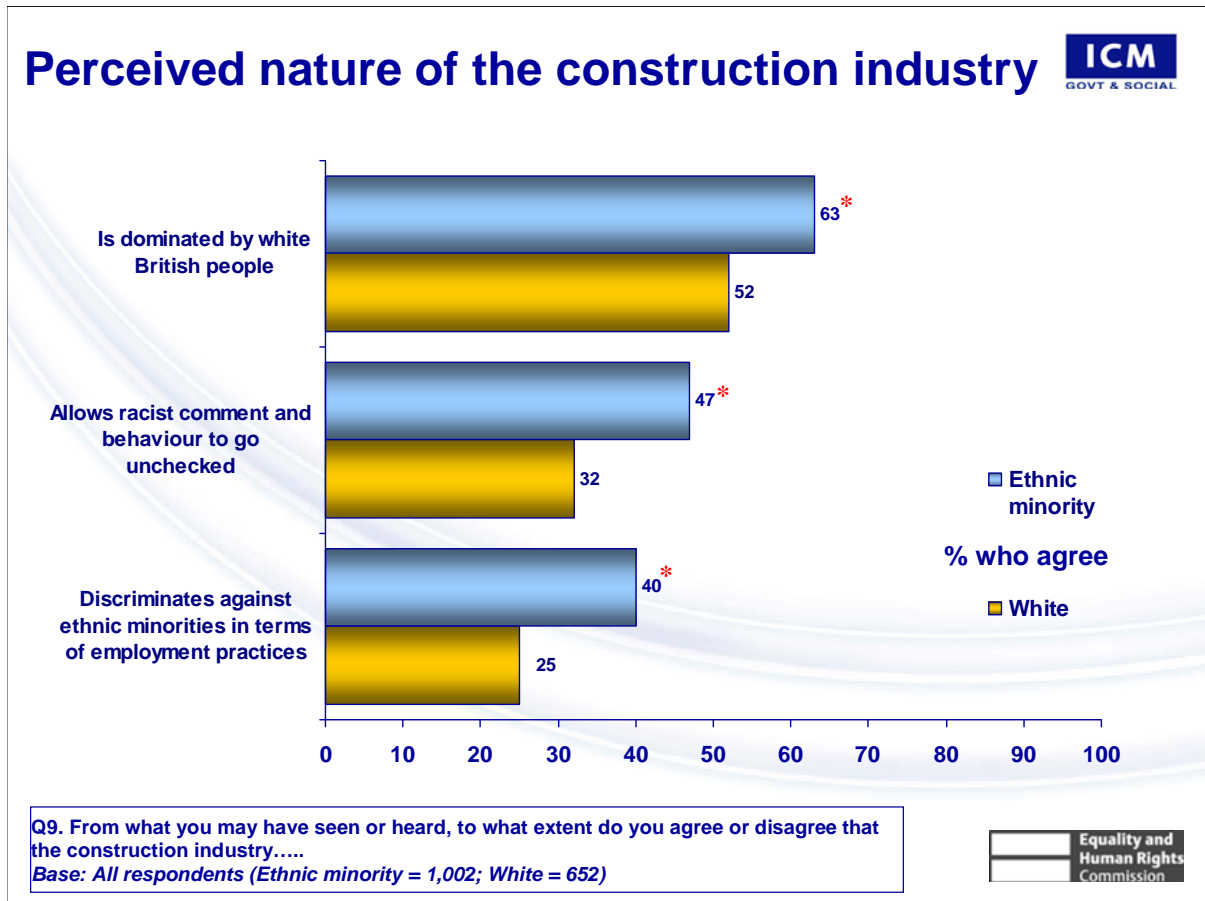
There is no majority agreement that racist comment and behaviour go unchecked, but 47% of non-white ethnic minority people think this is the case; a significantly higher score than the 32% observed among white people. It rises, however, to 57% among non-white ethnic minority people aged 45–64, and 59% among 'other' religious backgrounds, and 66% among those who view the Industry negatively. Non-white ethnic minorities who would not encourage others to enter the Industry think that racist behaviour goes unchecked (61%).

Finally, four in ten agree (40%) that the Industry discriminates against non-white ethnic minorities in terms of its employment practices, compared with only 25% among white people. This 15-point gap is statistically significant. Once again, older non-white ethnic minorities were most inclined to agree (51%) and interestingly in this case, the social grades D/E (46%) were significantly more likely to agree than all other social grades. Here we might find some explanation for lower recruitment among non-white ethnic minorities. The comparative figure for white people from social grades D/E is only 28%, and although the 18-point gap is just statistically insignificant, it does suggest a belief that

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might automatically result in fewer non-white ethnic minorities believing it worthwhile applying for training and unskilled jobs in the Industry (which could, of course, lead to more skilled positions). Chart 3 shows respondents' perceptions of the Industry.

**Chart 3. How the Industry is perceived**



3

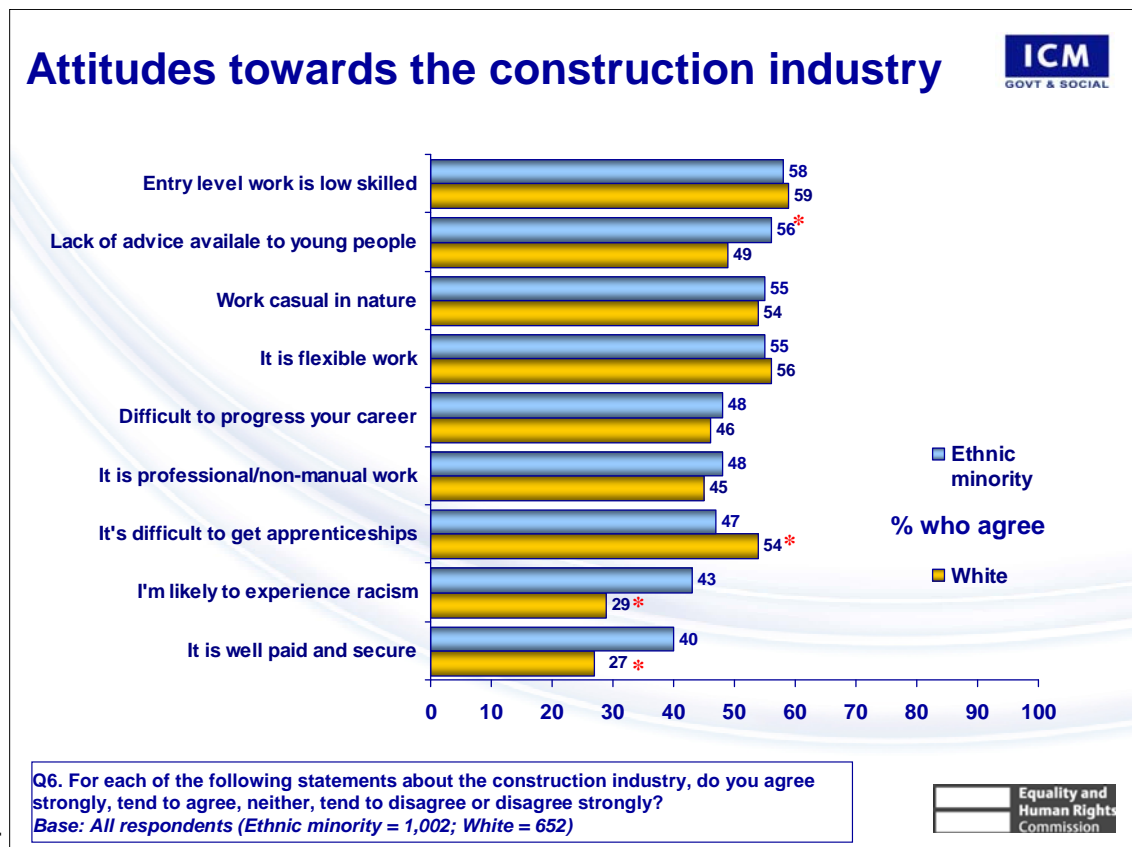
<sup>3</sup> A red \* denotes a statistically significant difference

## 2.7 Attitudes towards the Industry

There can be little doubt that most people recognise certain aspects of construction work: it is often physical in nature, it is often outdoor work, and that some positions require a large amount of training and skills. On each of these three variables, at least four in five non-white ethnic minority people and white people agree.

However, attitudes differ in each of the next five most agreed with variables, as shown in Chart 4.

**Chart 4. Attitudes towards the Industry**



Firstly, there are fewer people from non-white ethnic minorities who believe construction work may be dirty (69%). This is significantly lower than the 83% of white people who believe it to be true. However, it is doubtful that this could explain the low numbers of non-white ethnic minority people working in the Industry. If anything, it is likely that the reverse is true: lower awareness of the dirty nature of the work might lead more people to apply for construction jobs.

The figure rises significantly to 85% among mixed-race people, and to 77% among black people. This is consistent with earlier findings, and

<sup>4</sup> A red \* denotes a statistically significant difference

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suggests that these two groups may have generally negative impressions of construction work which make them less inclined to consider employment in the Industry.

Secondly, non-white ethnic minorities were significantly more likely to agree (in a negative sense) that construction is white male dominated (67% v 56%), that there are a lack of visible role models (65% v 56%), and that contacts are needed to get in the Industry (62% v 52%). On a more positive note, they are significantly more likely to agree that there are lots of creative opportunities within construction (66% v 55%).

There are a number of other variables to note. Non-white ethnic minorities (56%) are significantly more likely than white people (49%) to agree that there is a lack of advice for young people, something that people from non-white ethnic minorities aged 16–24 (60%) particularly agree with. However, only 47% of non-white ethnic minority people believe it is difficult to get apprenticeships, compared to 54% of white people. Therefore, non-white ethnic minorities think that they suffer in comparison to white people when it comes to learning about construction opportunities, but paradoxically they believe that practical experience for young people is available.

Finally, four in ten non-white ethnic minorities (40%) agree that construction is well paid and secure, which rises to 45% among black people. This contrasts strongly with the negative view of the Industry by black people. It seems likely that some negative views have built up if they are powerful enough to overcome the perception among some black people that considerable remuneration is available within the Industry.

Only one in four (27%) white people consider construction employment to be well paid, which is statistically significantly lower than the non-white ethnic minority score. We might consider such a finding to be counter-intuitive: if white people believe the Industry is badly paid, then why do so many white people, and so few people from non-white ethnic minorities, work in it? Perhaps the answer is the significant 14-point gap between the amount of non-white ethnic minority people (43%; rising to 53% among black people) who think they would experience racism, and the corresponding amount of white people (29%). It might just be that enough people are put off by the idea of pervasive racism that they could not consider employment in the Industry.

If this is true, then we might wonder how these views of the Industry develop. Non-white ethnic minorities and white people gave similar responses on this survey. General observations (76% and 73% respectively) were the primary source of their views, followed by media

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impressions (63% and 68%) and direct contact with the Industry (60% and 61%). Slightly fewer (57% and 53%) know construction workers personally. In other words, impressions are formed from several sources, and it would be impossible to separate the effect of one from another. In support of this claim, black people respond in a similar way to the average, indicating that their negative impressions of the Industry are not formed by one type of influence over another.

## **2.8 Methods of increasing the numbers of non-white ethnic minority workers in the Industry**

This report has focused on identifying reasons for the lower numbers of non-white ethnic minorities working in the Industry. Respondents were also asked whether they would encourage others from non-white ethnic minorities to enter the Industry. Three-quarters (75%) of non-white ethnic minorities, and four-fifths (83%) of white people would encourage others to pursue a career in construction. Mixed-race people (72%) and black people (73%) would also encourage it as a career. This does not seem to suggest that people view the Industry as fundamentally racist or view the Industry as being undesirable.

There are a number of things non-white ethnic minorities and white people think could be done to get more people from non-white ethnic minorities into the Industry:

- More courses and training (47% and 52% respectively)
- More advice from schools' careers advisors (46% and 39% respectively)
- The Industry raising awareness of its profile (44% and 37% respectively), and
- Minimum numbers of apprenticeships for non-white ethnic minorities (44%: statistically significantly higher than the response from white people of 30%).

## **3 Conclusions**

The survey data is inconclusive. There are a number of mixed messages, similar responses between non-white ethnic minorities and white people, and some inconclusive outcomes which make it impossible to pinpoint why there are low numbers of non-white ethnic minorities working in the Industry. Yet it is perhaps the fact there are few differences between white people and non-white ethnic minorities which should be the focus of attention. In particular, we can conclude that the Industry is relatively unappealing to both white and non-white ethnic minority people, with only mining and agriculture, forestry and fishing being less appealing. Construction is not an industry which appeals to the majority of people, irrespective of race.

However, the data does indicate significant differences in attitudes towards a career in construction. Most notably, there are three things which stand out:

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1. The awareness non-white ethnic minorities have of the types of employment available in the Industry is lower than that of white people. Unaware of available opportunities, they cannot apply for them.
2. Black people and mixed-race people are more likely to have negative views that influence other black and mixed-raced people. They find the Industry less appealing than others, and are more likely to think that racist behaviour is prevalent in the Industry. The views of these two groups could go some way to explaining the lower numbers of non-white ethnic minorities working in the Industry.
3. There is a suggestion that unskilled people (social grades D/E) from non-white ethnic minorities are less likely to consider construction than white people. The research provides no explanation for this, but if it is true that the supply line of unskilled non-white ethnic minority workers is disproportionately limited then this will affect the whole construction industry over time. If we can assume that the unskilled become skilled over time, then eventually they will rise up the Industry ladder. However, if potential entrants look elsewhere and non-white ethnic minority people have career ambitions which are not available in the Industry, then negative perceptions about the Industry as a whole will be reinforced; that is, that there are few non-white ethnic minority workers in total, few role models, and non-white ethnic minority workers in the Industry find it difficult to progress. This will contribute to a view that racism is prevalent.

## 4 Appendix

### Questionnaire results

Q1 First of all, to which of these racial groups do you belong?

	<b>Ethnic minority aged 16–64 (%)</b>	<b>White aged 16–64 (%)</b>
Mixed race	15	–
Asian or Asian British	50	–
Black or Black British	25	–
Chinese	5	–
Other ethnic group	5	–
White	–	100
Don't know	–	–

(– result not available)

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Q2 And to which of these racial groups do you belong?

	<b>Ethnic minority aged 16–64 (%)</b>	<b>White aged 16–64 (%)</b>
<b>If mixed chosen</b>		
White and Black Caribbean	4	–
White and Black African	2	–
White and Asian	3	–
Other mixed	6	–
<b>If Asian or Asian British chosen</b>		
Indian	24	–
Pakistani	14	–
Bangladeshi	5	–
Other Asian	7	–
<b>If Black or Black British chosen</b>		
Caribbean	13	–
African	10	–
Other Black	1	–
<b>If Chinese chosen</b>		
No further questions	–	–
White	–	100

(– result not available)

## Race in the Construction Industry Research Report

Q3 What religion do you belong to?

	<b>Ethnic minority aged 16–64 (%)</b>	<b>White aged 16–64 %</b>
Christian	32	58
Islam (Muslim)	22	–
Hindu	14	–
Sikh	5	–
Jewish	–	–
Other	10	3
None	14	36
Don't know	–	–
Refused	3	3

(– result not available)

Q4 Which of the following categories in the groups below describe your status?

	<b>Ethnic minority aged 16–64 (%)</b>	<b>White aged 16–64</b>
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	49	50
Female	51	50
<b>Age</b>		
16–24	25	17
25–34	28	22
35–44	24	23
45–54	14	21
55–64	8	17
65+	–	–

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<b>Tenure</b>		
Own outright	18	22
Own with mortgage	45	49
Council rent	12	9
Housing association rent		3
Private rent/other	25	17
<b>Working status</b>		
Full time (30+ hours per week)	48	54
Part time (9–29 hours per week)	19	17
Unemployed	8	6
Not working: retired	2	6
Not working: looking after house/children	6	15
Not working: disabled or ill	1	
Not working: student	13	6
Other	3	3
<b>Social group</b>		
A/B (upper middle class/middle class)	38	38
C1 (lower middle class)	27	28
C2 (skilled working class)	12	16
D/E (working class/those at the lowest levels of subsistence)	17	18
<b>Adults in household aged 18+</b>		
One	19	
Two	44	
Three	20	

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Four	9	
Five+	6	
<b>Children in household</b>		
No	50	60
Yes: aged under 5	21	16
Yes: aged 5–10	23	14
Yes: aged 11–15	16	14
Yes: 16–18	9	10

(– result not available)

Q5 Do you have a long-standing physical or mental health condition or disability that has lasted or is likely to last 12 months and which has a substantial adverse effect on your ability to carry out day-to-day activities?

	<b>Ethnic minority aged 16–64 (%)</b>	<b>White aged 16–64 %</b>
Yes	8	8
No	90	89
Don't Know/refuse	3	3

## The Industry

- Ask all aged 16–65

Q1 How appealing or unappealing would you say each of the following sectors of the economy are as potential sources of employment?

1: Appealing

2: Unappealing

	<b>Ethnic minority aged 16–64 (%) (1 and 2 respectively)</b>	<b>White aged 16–64 (%) (1 and 2 respectively)</b>
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	35 / 62	47 / 52
Mining	15 / 80	13 / 86
Construction	45 / 54	42 / 57
Manufacturing	48 / 50	45 / 55
Transportation, communication and utilities	66 / 33	60 / 40
Wholesale	46 / 50	40 / 59
Retail	60 / 39	51 / 48
Finance, insurance and real estate	63 / 36	40 / 59
Business services and public administration	71 / 28	54 / 45
Health	79 / 21	65 / 35
Education	84 / 15	70 / 29

## Race in the Construction Industry Research Report

Q2 What types of work in the Industry are you aware of? Please say as many as you know.

	<b>Ethnic minority aged 16–64 (%) (1 and 2 respectively)</b>	<b>White aged 16–64 (%)</b>
Residential building	35	29
Plumbing, heating and air-conditioning services	28	33
Electrical installation	24	34
Development of building projects	23	30
Masonry, brickwork and stonework	23	29
Non-residential building	19	12
Architecture	18	17
Joinery/carpentry	16	26
Engineering	13	12
Plastering and insulation	12	17
Painting and decorating	11	12
Road construction	9	13
Surveying	9	10
Roofing and sheet metal work	8	14
Rail construction	3	4
Floor laying and floor work	3	6
Glass and glazing work	3	6
Concrete contracting	1	3
Excavating and foundation work	1	1
Wrecking and demolition	1	2
Other	–	–

## Race in the Construction Industry Research Report

None	7	4
Don't know	11	8
Average Mean mentions	2.5	3.08

(– result not available)

Q3 Do you think that work in the Industry is:

	<b>Ethnic minority aged 16–64 (%)</b>	<b>White aged 16–64 (%)</b>
Very highly skilled	28	25
Quite highly skilled	51	60
Neither skilled nor unskilled	5	5
Quite unskilled	5	3
Very unskilled	2	1
A mixture: some are skilled and others are unskilled	6	5
Don't know	2	1

## Race in the Construction Industry Research Report

Q4 As a potential source of employment for people from non-white ethnic minorities, do you view the Industry very positively, quite positively, neither positively nor negatively, quite negatively, or very negatively?

	<b>Ethnic minority aged 16–64 (%)</b>	<b>White aged 16–64 (%)</b>
Very positively	11	10
Quite positively	38	42
Neither	30	33
Quite negatively	14	9
Very negatively	5	3
Don't know	3	3

Q5 Relatively few people from non-white ethnic minorities seek or gain employment in the Industry. Would you say this is because the Industry does not appeal to people from non-white ethnic minorities or because there is something about the Industry itself which prevents non-white ethnic minorities joining?

	<b>Ethnic minority aged 16–64 (%)</b>	<b>White aged 16–64 (%)</b>
The Industry does not appeal	40	47
The Industry prevents them	36	27
Both	4	3
Neither	7	8
Don't know	12	16

## Race in the Construction Industry Research Report

Q6 For each of the following statements about the Industry, do you agree, nether agree nor disagree, or disagree?

1: Agree

2: Neither agree nor disagree

3: Disagree

	<b>Ethnic minority aged 16–64 (%) (1, 2 and 3 respectively)</b>	<b>White aged 16–64 (%) (1, 2 and 3 respectively)</b>
It is physical and manual work	88 / 5 / 6	89 / 5 / 5
It is outdoor work	78 / 10 / 11	81 / 9 / 9
Positions require a lot of training and skills	77 / 8 / 12	79 / 8 / 11
It is potentially dirty work	69 / 9 / 21	83 / 6 / 10
It is a white male dominated environment	67 / 9 / 22	56 / 13 / 29
There are lots of opportunity to be creative	66 / 7 / 23	55 / 10 / 34
There are a lack of visible role models	65 / 9 / 20	56 / 17 / 23
Contacts or a network are needed to get in the Industry	62 / 10 / 23	52 / 14 / 31
Entry level work is low skilled	58 / 10 / 25	59 / 12 / 26
There is a lack of advice available for young people seeking to enter the Industry	56 / 9 / 25	49 / 14 / 30
The work is casual in nature	55 / 13 / 29	54 / 12 / 31
It is flexible work	55 / 11 / 28	56 / 13 / 28
It is difficult to progress your career	48 / 14 / 29	46 / 18 / 32
It is professional/non-manual work	48 / 12 / 36	45 / 13 / 39

## Race in the Construction Industry Research Report

it is difficult to get apprenticeships	47 / 15 / 24	54 / 14 / 24
I am likely to experience racism from colleagues	43 / 19 / 30	29 / 21 / 45
It is well paid and secure	40 / 15 / 38	27 / 12 / 58

**Q7** Would you encourage another person from a non-white ethnic minority group to pursue a career in the Industry?

	<b>Ethnic minority aged 16–64 (%)</b>	<b>White aged 16–64 (%)</b>
Yes	75	83
No	21	14
Don't know	4	3

**Q8** Which of the following do you think would do most to increase the number of non-white ethnic minority recruits into the Industry?

	<b>Ethnic minority aged 16–64 (%)</b>	<b>White aged 16–64 (%)</b>
More courses and training	47	52
Careers advisors providing more information in schools	46	39
The Industry raising its profile and increasing awareness of itself	44	37
Providing apprenticeships and training for minimum numbers of non-white ethnic minority people	44	30
Real equal opportunities when applying for jobs	39	43
Taking stronger action against those who discriminate on grounds of race	36	41
Telling people from non-white ethnic minorities about	24	16

## Race in the Construction Industry Research Report

opportunities		
Other	–	1
Don't know	1	4

(– result not available)

Q9 From what you may have seen or heard, to what extent do you agree or disagree that the Industry: 1: Agree strongly

2: Neither agree nor disagree

3: Disagree strongly

	<b>Ethnic minority aged 16–64 (%) (1, 2 and 3 respectively)</b>	<b>White aged 16–64 (%) (1, 2 and 3 respectively)</b>
Is dominated by white British people	63 / 16 / 18	52 / 22 / 23
Allows racist comment and behaviour to go unchecked	47 / 19 / 22	32 / 25 / 36
Discriminates against ethnic minorities in terms of employment practices	40 / 21 / 26	25 / 29 / 38

## Race in the Construction Industry Research Report

Q10 Do you think there is more, less, or about the same amount of racial discrimination in the Industry compared with other sectors of the economy?

	<b>Ethnic minority aged 16–64 (%)</b>	<b>White aged 16–64 (%)</b>
More	30	19
About the same amount	54	65
Less	8	7
Don't know	8	10

Q11 Which, if any, of the following have influenced your view of the Industry?

	<b>Ethnic minority aged 16–64 (%)</b>	<b>White aged 16–64 (%)</b>
General observations	76	73
Impressions gained from TV, radio, film, newspapers or the internet	63	53
Coming into contact with the Industry by having work done	60	61
Knowing someone else who works in it, for example family or friends	57	68
Working in it	25	27
Other (specify)	5	2
None	5	5
Don't know	–	1

(– result not available)

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