

Equality and Human Rights Commission
Research report

Empowerment and confidence in the Equality Act 2010

Evaluating the impact of training by
Race on the Agenda

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Executive summary

Background

This report presents the impact evaluation of an Equality Act workshop administered by social policy think tank Race on the Agenda (ROTA), and a small qualitative study with the workshop participants. Our evaluation team of academics and policy researchers and analysts from the University of Greenwich and the Runnymede Trust worked in partnership to observe and evaluate the effectiveness of the Equality Act workshop, exploring whether it appeared to assist those individuals who participated, and their organisations, in tackling discrimination and prejudice. The evaluation was commissioned by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, to identify robust interventions that are effective in tackling prejudice, discrimination and identity-based harassment and violence.

The Commission wants to know ‘what works’ to tackle prejudice and discrimination in Britain. To know ‘what works’, it is essential that those organisations that are working hard to carry out anti-prejudice interventions are able to evaluate what they’re doing sufficiently well that others can be confident in the information and insights produced by project evaluations.

In July 2016, the Commission published its research report ‘Prejudice and unlawful behaviour: exploring levers for change’ (Abrams *et al.*, 2016). This publication set out the evidence in Britain on how prejudice relates to unlawful discrimination, and identity-based violence and harassment. The report identified a need for better evaluation of which anti-prejudice interventions are effective and why.

This wider project aims to ‘raise the floor’ on the evidence base of what works in effectively tackling prejudice and discrimination. The particular quantitative and qualitative approach we have taken to evaluate ROTA’s Equality Act workshop will contribute to that aim.

Aims of evaluation

Race on the Agenda (ROTA) is a social policy think tank that focuses on issues affecting people from ethnic minorities. One of ROTA's range of training activities is to deliver a two-day workshop on the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). This element of ROTA's ongoing work was the focus of our evaluation.

Through these workshops ROTA provides accessible and detailed information about what all organisations must do to comply with the Equality Act 2010, while also suggesting how organisations can meet or utilise the PSED. The legal framework of the Equality Act 2010 is used as a way of engaging workshop participants in a discussion on equalities issues, discrimination and existing prejudices. A key aspect of the approach is to make participants aware of the range, but also the similarity, of the issues faced by those who share specific protected characteristics. This makes participants aware of different types of prejudice, but also reminds them that many fall within the scope of unlawful behaviour and are therefore challengeable using existing legal frameworks.

The aims of this evaluation were to:

1. articulate in more detail ROTA's 'theory of change' to better understand what ROTA's Equality Act workshops were aiming to achieve and the mechanisms by which these goals were achieved
2. evaluate whether participants report taking action to monitor or implement issues related to the Equality Act 2010 or PSED
3. evaluate the impact of this training on the confidence that participants have in their knowledge of the Equality Act 2010 and PSED
4. evaluate the impact of this training on the confidence that participants had in their knowledge about the types of discrimination that are unlawful, issues faced by people with protected characteristics and the ability of organisations to effectively use PSED
5. understand how individuals experienced the training to contextualise the results.

Methodology

The purpose of our evaluation was to assess the impact of the Equality Act 2010 training workshops delivered by ROTA. To evaluate the potential effects of ROTA's workshop (particularly to understand how participants learned more about the Equality Act and the PSED, and what was effective), it was decided that the most appropriate methodology would be to combine 'participant observations' with surveys and semi-structured interviews. Specifically, the research methodology involved:

- observations of two separate two-day Equality Act workshops; we observed one as a pilot and then evaluated the main workshop. The first workshop was attended by 17 participants, the second by 15 participants
- interviews with participants (who had consented to interviews, and responded to follow-up requests) and the ROTA facilitator
- surveys administered to all participants before and after a two-day Equality Act workshop; a total of 28 questionnaires were completed.

An online survey was also sent to everyone on ROTA's private mailing list, who had previously shown an interest in its activities and events, and a total of 52 people responded. These online surveys were completed both by individuals who had taken part in Equality Act workshops (whether delivered by ROTA or some other organisation) and those who had not attended any form of Equality Act workshop. The latter group were therefore used to compare levels of confidence and knowledge about the Equality Act and PSED with the group who reported attending Equality Act workshops.

Results

The results from both the surveys and the interviews suggested that participation in ROTA's two-day workshop was associated with greater confidence in an individual's knowledge about key aspects of the Equality Act 2010, PSED, and the key rights and responsibilities associated with these. Participation in ROTA's Equality Act workshop was also associated with increased confidence in the types of discrimination that are unlawful, the issues faced by people with protected characteristics, and the ability of the individual's organisation to effectively use the PSED. These desirable changes were both 'within-individual' (participants increased in their confidence and knowledge from a lower level before training to a higher level after training) and 'between-individual' (those who participated in the workshops had

higher levels of confidence and knowledge than those who did not). Most importantly, there was evidence that taking part in the workshop was associated with an increased likelihood that the individual or their organisation had taken action to implement or monitor issues related to the Equality Act 2010.

1 | Introduction

Race on the Agenda (ROTA) is a social policy research organisation that focuses on issues affecting on people from ethnic minorities. Its policy priorities are health, education and criminal justice, and as an ethnic minority-led organisation, all ROTA's work is based on the principle that those with direct experience of inequality should be central to solutions to address it. ROTA's work is actively informed by the lived experiences of people from ethnic minorities and their organisations.

One of ROTA's ongoing training activities is to deliver a two-day workshop on the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). This workshop is open to individuals from public and not-for-profit organisations across England and Wales. It is also available to private organisations, but in practice most participants are from not-for-profit organisations.

The Equality Act 2010 was enacted to harmonise the anti-discrimination law and, ultimately, to strengthen the law to support progress on equality. The Equality Act 2010 also clearly specified who is protected under the legislation (people who share protected characteristics), and what forms of discrimination they are protected from. Similarly, the PSED stipulates that public authorities must have due regard for the need to eliminate discrimination, advance quality of opportunity and foster good relations. The Equality Act 2010 and PSED are powerful tools in tackling discrimination and prejudice.

This evaluation was commissioned by the Equality and Human Rights Commission to assess the impact of the workshop on specific outcomes, and in doing so contribute to a wider project to 'lift the floor' on the research evidence of 'what works' to address prejudice and discrimination.

Our specific aims were to:

1. articulate in more detail ROTA's 'theory of change' to better understand what ROTA's Equality Act workshops aim to achieve and the mechanisms by which these goals are achieved

2. evaluate whether participants report taking action to monitor or implement issues related to the Equality Act 2010 or PSED
3. evaluate the impact of this workshop on the confidence that participants have in their knowledge of the Equality Act 2010 and PSED
4. evaluate the impact of the ROTA workshop on the confidence that participants have in their knowledge about the types of discrimination that are unlawful, issues faced by people with protected characteristics and the ability of organisations to effectively use PSED to further equality
5. understand how individuals experience the workshop to contextualise the results.

Our evaluation was based on the hypothesis that ROTA's workshop will increase participants' confidence in their knowledge of the Equality Act 2010 and PSED, and this in turn will motivate them to take action, either individually or through their organisation, to both comply with, and hold other public or private bodies to, the terms of this legislation.

This is the first independent evaluation of the impact of ROTA's Equality Act workshop.

1.1 Summary of the intervention

Over the two-day workshop, ROTA provides accessible and detailed information about what all organisations must do to comply with the Equality Act 2010, as well as ways organisations can meet the PSED and use it, both to fulfil their own responsibilities and hold public sector organisations to account). The legal framework of the Equality Act 2010 is used as a way of engaging the workshop participants in a discussion on equalities issues, discrimination and existing prejudices. A key aspect of the approach is to make participants aware of the range, but also the similarity, of the issues faced by those who share specific protected characteristics. This makes participants aware of different types of prejudice, but also reminds them that many of these prejudices fall within the scope of unlawful behaviour and are therefore challengeable using existing legal frameworks provided by the Equality Act and PSED.

Our evaluation team observed two of ROTA's full two-day Equality Act workshops (see Methodology section).

Each workshop had three broad objectives that fed into the overall aims of this intervention:

- Increase participants' confidence and use of the Equality Act and PSED so that they are in a stronger position to challenge public sector organisations.
- Encourage participants to think about equality beyond the Equality Act, so that they understand prejudice and discrimination more broadly (and see the commonalities across different groups of people).
- Encourage large and small voluntary and community sector participants to network and collaborate in tackling prejudice and discrimination, and in holding the public sector to account in relation to its equality duties.

The intensive workshop is delivered and facilitated by a specialist practitioner from ROTA. Participants are predominantly from the voluntary and community sector, with a small number from private individuals and private sector organisations. There are typically about 15 participants per workshop group. Activities during the two-day Equality Act workshop include presentations (for learning and prompting discussion), question and answer sessions, and facilitated group exercises to share and discuss case studies.

At the end of the two-day workshop, the participants are reminded that they can contact the facilitator at any time with specific individual or organisational queries about both the PSED and Equality Act 2010.

1.2 Theory of change

A key goal of our evaluation was to articulate in more detail a 'theory of change' for how ROTA achieves its intended outcomes from this particular intervention, including tackling discrimination and prejudice more broadly. A theory of change maps out the links between a programme's key activities and inputs (the planned work) and how these steps lead to the desired goals or outcomes of the programme (intended results) (Nesta, 2009). This approach would not only help ROTA to refine and enhance the effectiveness of its Equality Act workshop but also to enable us to evaluate the model more objectively.

The theory of change chart (Figure 1) illustrates the links between inputs and activities and final outcomes in ROTA's Equality Act workshop. It identifies ROTA's long-term goals for the intervention (to empower the participating individual and/or their organisation to tackle discrimination and prejudice more broadly) and works

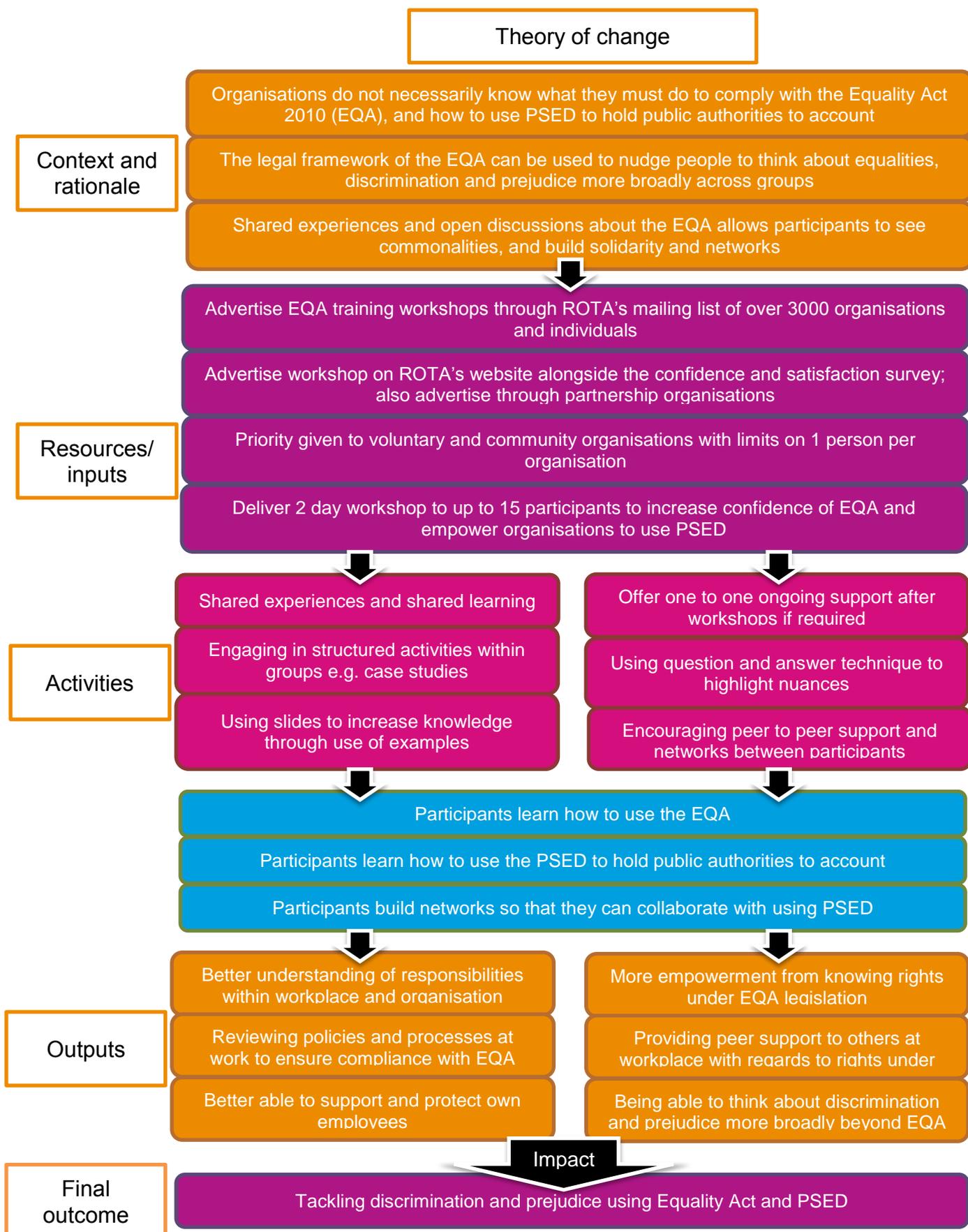
back from this to identify the steps that are a precondition for this knowledge and empowerment. It is particularly useful in that it identifies the links between activities (including engaging in structured activities in groups using case studies, and using a question and answer approach to highlight exceptions and nuances) and intermediate outcomes (for example, using the PSED to hold public authorities to account and reviewing policies and processes at work to ensure that they comply with the Equality Act).

By assessing the impact of these activities on specific outcomes, part of this theory of change can be tested through our evaluation with regards to both the learning process and what individuals have understood and learned from taking part in the workshop.

1.3 Assessing impact

A key limitation of some evaluations is the absence of an appropriate ‘counterfactual’ or ‘control’ group. By comparing the outcomes of a comparable group who did not take part in the workshop with those who did, an estimate can be made of the specific effect of the activity on particular outcomes.

Figure 1: Theory of change for the ROTA equality training workshop



2 | Methodology

The purpose of our evaluation was to assess the impact of the Equality Act 2010 training workshops that are delivered by ROTA. To evaluate this impact, however, we needed a more complete understanding of the potential intermediate outcomes of attending these workshops. We decided that the most appropriate approach to fully comprehend participants' experience of the ROTA Equality Act workshops was to adopt the 'ethnographic' approach known as participant observation. Participant observation is an approach in which the researcher is involved with the research participants, adopting their experiences to gain a closer familiarity with the material you are hoping to understand (Emerson *et al.*, 2011).

The ROTA Equality Act workshops run for two full days (9am to 4pm on both days) that are designed to complement each other. As part of our evaluation, we observed two full two-day training workshop sessions, one in December 2016 and one in March 2017. Observing the workshop in December 2016 was instrumental in helping us to better understand both the content and the nature of the delivery approach of each of the sessions over the two days. It was also an opportunity to articulate ROTA's theory of change, and in particular, understand how the delivery of workshop sessions could be understood to achieve the final outcome of tackling prejudice and discrimination (as outlined in Figure 1). The process was also essential to inform our development of a survey to quantitatively assess the potential impact of ROTA's Equality Act workshop.

We used an additional qualitative research approach in the form of semi-structured interviews with people who took part in the ROTA workshops. This helped us to understand their motivations for attending the workshop (important for potential upscaling), sense-test the theory of change, and give participants the opportunity to articulate their own understanding of the workshop's intermediate and longer-term impact. This was also an opportunity for us to explore in a more nuanced way whether – and in what ways – the workshops might have influenced a change in participants' confidence and attitudes. We carried out these interviews after

observing the workshop in December 2016, and also after the workshop in March 2017.

An important finding from relevant research is that one of the key factors associated with the desirable impact of interventions is ‘fidelity of implementation’ (Lipsey, 2009). This is the extent to which all participants receive the same ‘dosage’ of the intervention in terms of delivery and content. Attending the Equality Act workshop for a second time (in March 2016) gave us an opportunity to assess the extent to which there was fidelity of implementation.

The most important aspect of our evaluation was assessing the impact, or the extent to which ROTA’s Equality Act workshops could be demonstrated to be tackling prejudice and discrimination. Impact was assessed by running two separate administrations (of the same survey), one online and another before and again after ROTA’s training workshop in March 2017.

We worked with ROTA to send a link to an online survey (using the online survey platform SurveyMethods) to all individuals and organisations on ROTA’s email list. This survey covered topics such as awareness, knowledge, motivations and intentions in relation to the Equality Act 2010 and PSED. The email list included people who had previously attended a ROTA workshop, as well as those who had enquired about training but did not attend, or who were registered to attend but sent apologies. Those who enquired and those who registered but did not attend were considered to be part of the counterfactual or control group, as well as those who had not received any relevant training generally. The fact that some individuals may have expressed an interest in or actually registered for ROTA’s workshop suggests that they have some motivation to attend equality training generally, and therefore a potential key difference between the intervention participants and comparison group – motivation to learn about the Equality Act 2010 – might be minimised.

We also carried out the same survey among all the participants before the two-day ROTA Equality Act workshop we observed in March 2017, and again immediately after it finished. These surveys were used to examine short-term ‘within-individual’ changes in each person’s confidence in their knowledge of the Equality Act 2010 and PSED.

2.1 Analytic approach

Interviews and workshop observations

The qualitative data for our evaluation came from two waves of individual one-to-one interviews (a mixture of telephone and face to face) and our observation of the two-day Equality Act workshops on two occasions. Our analysis of this data was iterative in nature, and included a number of opportunities to scrutinise and explore the data.

We used a thematic analysis approach when analysing the qualitative data, using categories that emerged from our observations in the workshops as well as categories that emerged from the data itself. This involved:

- key themes and findings drawn out of the interviews using a ‘grounded theory’ approach of systematic, yet flexible, guidelines for collecting and analysing qualitative data (Charmaz, 2014)
- a ‘framework analysis’ approach (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994) involving thematic analysis that allowed us to look for similarities across the interviews
- findings that were sense-checked (comparing findings and interpretations with other researchers) and tested within our own evaluation team during internal meetings
- robust triangulation. The combination of data sources collected for the entire study enabled robust triangulation of the evidence, drawing on multiple perspectives to produce a comprehensive picture of what works to increase the confidence, knowledge and empowerment of individuals and/or organisations in tackling prejudice and discrimination.

Participant and wider surveys

Analysis of the quantitative data we collected through the surveys was done using ‘t-tests’, comparing the results of those who reported receiving training to those who did not (among both online questionnaires completed by people on ROTA’s email list and pre-training workshop participants). We used multivariate techniques to test the robustness of the results.

Paired-samples t-tests were used to compare the results of those who completed questionnaires before and after ROTA’s Equality Act workshops.

We developed a series of research questions to guide the impact evaluation. These were designed to meet the following aims:

- Evaluate whether workshop participants report taking action to monitor or implement issues related to the Equality Act 2010 or PSED
- Evaluate the impact of the workshop on the confidence that participants have in their knowledge of the Equality Act 2010 and PSED
- Evaluate the impact of the workshop on the confidence that participants had in their knowledge about the types of discrimination that are unlawful, issues faced by people with protected characteristics and the ability of their organisations to effectively use PSED (either for their own adherence to it or to challenge others).

These research questions were as follows.

1. Did those who attended a workshop on the Equality Act and PSED perceive greater confidence in their knowledge of these after completion?
2. Did attending a workshop increase their perception of the importance of equality law?
3. Did attending a workshop increase confidence in the individual's understanding of the key rights and responsibilities of their organisation in relation to the Equality Act?
4. Was attending a workshop associated with an increased knowledge of the types of discrimination that are unlawful?
5. Was attending a workshop associated with greater confidence in the understanding of issues faced by people with protected characteristics?
6. Was attending a workshop associated with an individual having greater confidence in their organisation's ability to use the PSED?
7. Was attending a workshop associated with a greater likelihood of undertaking specific actions related to the Equality Act (for example, key rights and responsibilities, accessibility, reasonable adjustments)?

3 | Results

3.1 Interviews

A total of eight interviews were conducted with ROTA Equality Act workshop participants, and the specialist practitioner who facilitated both workshops, after the first (pilot) and second workshop. The participants consisted of four women and three men: two White British women, two Black British men, one Black British woman, one British Asian man and one British Asian woman. The facilitator was also a British Asian woman.

Table 1: Demographics of those taking part in participant interviews

	Male	Female	TOTAL
Black British	2	1	3
British Asian	1	1	2
White British		2	2
TOTAL	3	4	7

3.2 Participant and wider surveys

Surveys were completed by 67 respondents. Of these, 28 separate questionnaires were completed as part of the evaluation of the two-day Equality Act workshops delivered by ROTA on 6 March and 13 March 2017 (15 questionnaires before the workshops started and 13 after they finished), and 52 were completed online (by a wider group who did not participate in the two workshops evaluated for this study but were on the ROTA email list). This meant there were 65 responses (13 pre- and post- workshop surveys and 52 completed online) that could be used to examine the change in confidence in knowledge of the Equality Act 2010 and PSED as a result of workshop training (whether delivered by ROTA or other organisations). The theory of whether relevant training has an impact on people's confidence and knowledge of

the Equality Act was tested, as well as whether this was influenced by participant characteristics.

Description of overall survey sample

This sample includes those 67 individual respondents who were surveyed after taking part in one of the ROTA Equality Act training workshops assessed by the evaluation team and those surveyed through the broader online survey of people on the ROTA email list.

Demographics

- More than 58 per cent of the respondents reported working at non-government organisations (NGOs), with about 19 per cent coming from large public sector organisations. The remainder came from large private sector (six per cent) and small public sector organisations (three per cent).
- Just under 70 per cent of the sample were over 40 years old.
- Over 70 per cent of the sample were women.

Figure 2: Age of sample

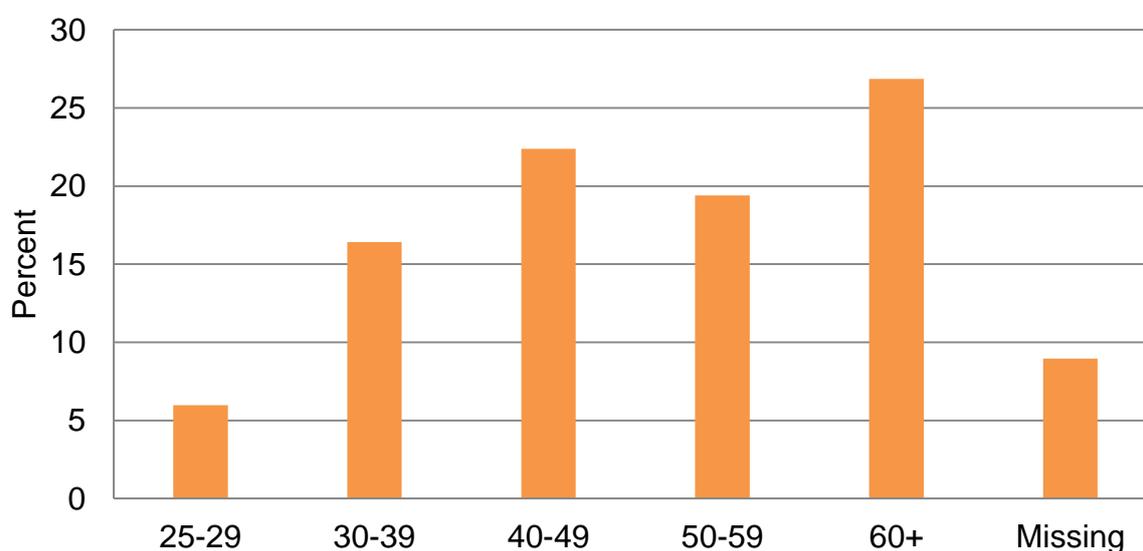
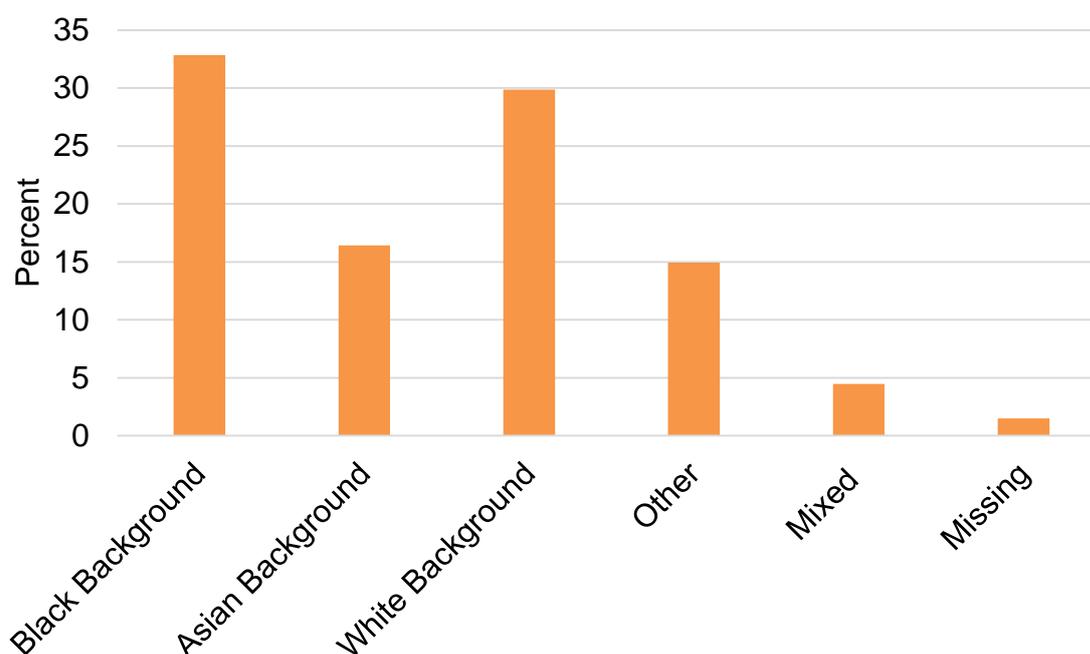


Figure 3: Ethnicity of sample

- Survey respondents identified as being from over 24 ethnic groups in total. These were categorised into: Black background (African/Caribbean/Black British), Asian background (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi), White background (White British, White Other), Other (Turkish, Chinese, Latin American) and Mixed (any Mixed background). Respondents of Black background were the most prevalent (33 per cent), followed by those of White background (30 per cent).
- Over 88 per cent of the sample identified as having protected characteristics.
- Over 64 per cent of the sample had previously received some training on either the Equality Act 2010 or PSED. Most of this training (72 per cent) had been delivered by ROTA.

3.3 Training workshop survey administration

The typical way that interventions addressing prejudice and discrimination are evaluated is to conduct surveys with participating individuals before an intervention, and then again after it has finished. In this way ‘within-individual’ change can be examined. The benefit of this approach is that there is increased confidence that any differences observed are not because of pre-existing but unmeasured differences between the individuals who received the intervention and those who did not. For example, the desirable effect of training may actually be the result of an unmeasured variable (such as motivation) that actually explains the difference between those who

received training and those who did not. By surveying the same individuals both before and after the training, the impact of these unmeasured variables can be mitigated, because the same unmeasured variables will be represented in both the before and after groups. We adopted this approach with the individuals who attended ROTA's Equality Act workshop in March 2016.

To ensure like was being compared with like, only those individuals who completed the surveys both before and after the intervention were included in these analyses (n=13). However, we also extended the survey to people on ROTA's email list to include a control group as well as to widen the sample if possible.

Description of workshop survey sample

This sample includes those 13 individuals who were surveyed before and after taking part in one of the ROTA Equality Act training workshops assessed by the evaluation team.

Demographics

- Most of the individuals were working at NGOs (seven participants), with others representing large public (three), large private (two) and small public organisations.
- Of the 13 individuals, seven were aged over 40, and four were between the ages of 25 and 39. Two individuals declined to give their age.
- Most of the participants (10 out of 13) were women.
- Seven participants were from Black backgrounds (Caribbean, African and Black British), three were of White background, two were of Asian background, and one was Other.

Of the 13, six had previously had equality training but more than two years prior to the ROTA workshop.

3.4 Research questions

The two waves of quantitative data (online surveys, training workshop surveys) and the qualitative data (participant and facilitator interviews) were used to answer the research questions. Responses were recorded using a five point Likert scale, with a score of 1 being the highest and 5 the lowest.

Did people who attended a training workshop on the Equality Act 2010 and PSED perceive greater confidence in their knowledge of these after completion?

The combined survey results (based on the 65 respondents) revealed that those who had received relevant training (from either ROTA or another organisation) rated the confidence they had in their knowledge of the Equality Act 2010 as significantly higher than those who had not received training (mean score (M)=2.3, sd=1.0 compared to M=3.1, sd=1.0, $t=3.3$, $p<.002$, $d=-.83$). They also reported significantly greater confidence in their knowledge of PSED (M=2.5, sd=1.0, compared to M=3.3, sd=1.0, $t=3.0$, $p<.004$, $d=.77$). In addition, those who attended ROTA's workshop rated their confidence in knowledge of the Equality Act 2010 and PSED as significantly higher after the training (M=3.3, sd=1.0, compared to M=2.0, sd=0.4, $t=4.3$, $p<.0001$, $d=1.7$).

The qualitative study also revealed that the participants found the intervention empowering, and reported that their confidence in using equalities legislation had increased through attending ROTA's Equality Act workshop:

'Very confident what the Equality Act and PSED means' (Asian British woman)

'I thought the workshop was really empowering.' (Black British man)

This suggests that, to the extent that greater confidence in a person's knowledge of the Equality Act 2010 and/or PSED is associated with tackling discrimination and prejudice, training – and specifically ROTA's training workshops – is desirable for addressing these issues.

Did attending a training workshop increase perception of the importance of equality law?

Interestingly, the survey results showed that there was no difference in the perception of the importance of equality law between those who had received training and those who did not (M=1.5, sd=0.6, compared to M=1.5, sd=0.72, $t= 0.47$, n.s.). As scores were already high before the training, this suggests a ceiling effect where it is difficult to detect raised scores. There was also no significant difference in the ratings of the importance of equality law when surveyed before and after the workshop (M=1.6, sd=0.8, compared to M=1.3, sd=0.6, $t=1.1$, $d=.44$). This suggests that training was not associated with the individual's view of the importance of

equality law. However, participants who attended the ROTA workshops reported that this had given them a deeper understanding of the Equality Act 2010:

‘I benefited from a better understanding of what the Equality Act entails.’
(White British woman)

Overall, the results suggested that both the survey respondents and the interviewees viewed equality law as an important instrument, whether they had received relevant training or not.

Did attending a training workshop increase confidence in the individual’s understanding of their key rights and responsibilities for their organisation in relation to the Equality Act 2010?

The results of the combined surveys revealed that participants who had received relevant training were significantly more confident in their understanding of the key rights and responsibilities of their organisation with regards to the Equality Act 2010 and PSED (M=2.2, sd=0.8, compared to M=2.8, sd=0.8, t=3.3, p<.002, d=.84). Moreover, participants who attended ROTA’s workshops in particular were more confident in their understanding about their organisation’s key rights and responsibilities in relation to the Equality Act 2010 and PSED after the two-day intervention (M=3.0, sd=0.9 compared to M=1.9, sd=0.6, t=4.6, p<.0001, d=1.8).

The qualitative interviews supported the survey findings, but also revealed the different ways that participants felt more confident in their knowledge:

‘Confidence about the act itself; the application of it; identifying other resources which can support you ... Even have the confidence to challenge large public organisations. I didn’t have this confidence before the workshop.’
(Asian British woman)

Was attending a training workshop associated with an increased knowledge of the types of discrimination that are unlawful?

The survey analysis also showed that individuals who reported having received relevant training reported significantly higher levels of confidence in their knowledge about what types of discrimination are unlawful (M=2.1, sd=0.8, compared to M=2.9, sd=0.7, t=3.7, p<.0001, d=.95). Completing ROTA’s workshop was associated with a significantly increased confidence among participants in their knowledge about what

types of discrimination are unlawful (M=2.9, sd=0.9 compared to M=1.7, 0.5, t=4.5, p<.0001, d=1.8).

The interviews with the workshop participants reiterated this boost in knowledge and level of confidence:

‘Yes, I feel more confident in what [the Equality Act] entails.’ (Asian British man)

Was attending a training workshop associated with greater confidence in the understanding of issues faced by people with protected characteristics?

Individuals who reported having received relevant training (from either ROTA or another organisation) reported greater confidence in their understanding of the issues faced by people with protected characteristics (M=2.4, sd=0.8 compared to M=3.1, sd=0.8, t=3.3, p<.002, d=.84). Completing ROTA’s workshop was associated with an increased confidence in participants’ understanding of issues faced by people with protected characteristics (M=3.1, sd=1.0 compared to M=1.8, sd=0.4, t=3.5, p<.004, d=1.4).

‘Very confident what the Equality Act and PSED means’ (Asian British woman who attended ROTA’s workshop)

Was attending a training workshop associated with an individual having greater confidence in their organisation’s ability to use the PSED?

Individuals who had been trained (by either ROTA or another organisation) reported increased confidence that their organisation would be able to effectively use PSED (M=2.6, sd=0.9 compared to M=3.1, sd = 0.9, t=2.2, p<.032, d=.57). Completing ROTA’s workshop was also associated with increased confidence that a participant’s organisation could effectively use PSED (M=3.2, sd=0.8 compared to M=2.1, sd=0.8, t=3.7 p<.03, d=1.4).

The qualitative interviews also revealed that participants had not only gained more knowledge about the Equality Act 2010 and the PSED from the workshop, but also felt that they were in a stronger position to challenge public authorities with the equalities legislation:

‘As a voluntary sector organisation, I now know it’s my role to challenge public authorities about their equality duties.’ (White British woman)

Was attending a training workshop associated with a greater likelihood of undertaking specific actions related to the Equality Act 2010 (for example, key rights and responsibilities, accessibility, reasonable adjustments)?

Of the 40 individuals who reported receiving training from ROTA, 23 reported that they, or their organisation, had recently reviewed their equality and diversity policy or carried out other actions related to the Equality Act 2010. This was compared to only six out of the 21 who reported that they had not received training. This difference was statistically significant (chi squared =4.6, $p < .03$, $d = .67$).

While the individuals who had attended the ROTA workshop in March 2017 were not yet in a position to assess their likelihood of undertaking specific actions related to the Equality Act 2010 (because there was not enough time lag between the workshop and interviews due to a short suspension of the project), the qualitative interviews with participants from the ROTA workshop in December 2016 revealed that they had gained a more nuanced understanding of how they could utilise the equalities legislation in the workplace:

‘It activated my thinking and made me more acutely aware of what my responsibilities are; and what employees can do to protect themselves and to bring a case about discrimination. It’s really helpful to know all that as an employer but also in terms of looking after your employees.’ (White British woman)

Overall, the results suggested that the ROTA workshops were associated with significantly greater confidence in knowledge about key aspects of the Equality Act 2010, PSED, and the key rights and responsibilities associated with these. Training was also associated with increased confidence in understanding the types of discrimination that are unlawful, the issues faced by people with protected characteristics, and the ability of the participant’s organisation to effectively use PSED.

Perhaps most importantly, there was evidence that relevant training was associated with an increased likelihood that the individual would report that their organisation was acting to implement or monitor issues related to the Equality Act 2010. This does not mean that the training was a direct cause of participants taking more action (it could be that the training made the participant more aware of Equality Act or PSED issues), but, statistically speaking, it was associated with participants being more likely to take action to monitor or implement issues relating to the Equality Act 2010.

While these findings suggest that training workshops on Equality Act 2010 and PSED may be related to these desirable outcomes, it was considered important to explore alternative explanations. For example, it is possible that these desirable outcomes were not the result of training, but were actually because individuals with certain characteristics (such as women) were more likely to undertake training and were also more likely to have higher levels of confidence in the Equality Act 2010 or PSED. We therefore undertook a series of analyses to explore this possibility¹. The results consistently showed that training (but not age, gender or ethnic group) was significantly associated with the various measures of confidence in knowledge about the Equality Act 2010, PSED, key rights and responsibilities, types of discrimination and issues faced by people with protected characteristics, and in the individual's perception that their organisation had the ability to effectively use PSED.

3.5 Contextual results

We examined the qualitative evidence from the interviews in depth to gain insight into why the ROTA intervention may have had the impact that was identified through the survey evidence. We found a number of themes.

Motivation to learn more and develop networks

The interviews revealed that some individuals had come to the ROTA workshops to gain a better understanding of responsibilities within their workplace or organisation, while others were more interested in gaining a better knowledge of their personal rights under legislation. Some viewed the workshops as an opportunity to meet others working on similar issues.

'Needed to understand what I was experiencing better so I could hold my employer accountable' (Asian British woman)

'We do a lot of programmes for people from diverse audiences and we want to meet their needs.' (White British woman)

'I wanted to be around people that were discussing race at work ... I don't get that opportunity at work.' (Black British man)

¹ Logistic regressions were used to compare those in the highest categories (for example, very good or good, and very confident or confident) versus the rest, controlling for age, ethnic group and gender.

This suggests that while their specific motivations varied, generally participants shared an overall motivation to learn more about this area and to develop supportive networks. This might suggest that the intervention may not be so successful if it is delivered to a non-voluntary or less motivated audience.

Training appealed across the spectrum of pre-existing knowledge

The workshop participants had different levels of pre-existing knowledge about the Equality Act 2010 and PSED. This variation in knowledge was reflected in the results of the surveys, with participants reporting their level of knowledge was 'little to none' prior to any equality training. Some had received relevant training previously but did not feel it had adequately informed them. Those who already had an adequate understanding of the legislation felt the training was basic in its remit.

'Had some knowledge but not much. Had some about protected characteristics. Only knowledge though work is e-modules; not very good compared to ROTA.' (Asian British woman)

The interview with the ROTA facilitator revealed that she was very much aware of this variation in knowledge, which is why she ensured that she covered 'both the basics and the detail' in her presentation. Interviews with the participants reflected that this approach worked for most of them:

'The remit of it, was quite simple. It was just to talk very much about the nuts and bolts of the Equality Act.' (Black British man)

Of course, this approach was not able to be all inclusive, and those participants who had more knowledge about the Equality Act 2010 and/or PSED felt that the workshop 'could have gone much further'.

Facilitator delivery and creating an open forum

The facilitator's delivery style was rated highly by the participants of the ROTA workshop. Participants particularly appreciated the facilitator's efforts in ensuring they fully understood the legislation by not just giving broad overviews.

'The examples she used helped me to understand better. She was also very supportive – answered questions during break. Even said after workshop you can still email her.' (Asian British woman)

‘I didn’t know it was going to be so good though, how she wanted us to really understand with examples.’ (Asian British man)

The majority of those interviewed also appreciated the space that was given to individual participants to explore implications of the training in different contexts. The facilitator’s availability during workshop breaks, as well as being an ongoing resource, was appreciated.

‘[The facilitator] said we can always come back, so I feel comfortable about going back to her for more advice if we need anything more.’ (Black British man)

‘Brilliant style of presenting’ (Black British man)

However, not all participants valued the space to explore individual cases, and perceived this approach as a digression that took time away from what they wanted to get out of the workshop.

‘The only thing that I found a little bit difficult was quite often people would bring up things that were actually quite irrelevant.’ (White British woman)

Qualitative evidence of effect

Overall, it was clear that the participants found the training empowering and felt their confidence to use equalities legislation was increased. Participants felt they had benefited from:

‘... confidence about the act itself; the application of it; identifying other resources which can support you ... Even have the confidence to challenge large public organisations. Didn’t have this confidence before the workshop’ (Asian British man)

‘It increased my knowledge; I’m really applying some of what I have learnt since then.’ (Black British woman)

Participants also reported that ROTA’s workshop had taught them about their own rights under the Equality Act and their organisation’s duties as an employer, as well as (where relevant) their role as a representative of a voluntary and community sector organisation:

‘It helped me to draw the line that I will not tolerate discrimination.’ (Asian British woman)

‘It activated my thinking and made me more acutely aware of my responsibilities; and what employees can do to protect themselves and to bring a case about discrimination. It’s really helpful to know all that as an employer but also in terms of looking after your employees.’ (White British woman)

‘As a voluntary sector organisation I now know it’s my role to challenge public authorities about their equality duties.’ (Asian British man)

The degree to which people felt they could implement change or carry out concrete actions following the training depended on their role and institution. A range of possible actions were identified, including: reviewing internal policies, rethinking how to meet the needs of diverse groups, sharing knowledge and raising awareness among staff, and challenging public sector decision making. A number of participants were keen to invite ROTA to their organisation to deliver the training internally. There was also a sense in which people felt the knowledge was useful in a personal capacity in ensuring their rights and those of their networks were fulfilled, but also in fulfilling their responsibilities at work or through volunteering.

Interestingly, participants felt that the training was a necessary but ‘not sufficient’ condition for tackling prejudice and discrimination.

‘It’s a step that needs to be taken as part of that process. It puts something in place so that there is a structure and an understanding, but then it’s about how well it’s applied.’ (Black British man)

‘No of course not, but it’s a start.’ (White British woman)

Participants appeared to appreciate the difficulty of achieving this goal (tackling prejudice and discrimination), pointing out that it would be difficult to deliver training that took ‘into account all contexts’ that would allow participants to ‘challenge and hold to account how things are done based on the legislation’.

Finally, participants were asked what, if anything, was missing from the workshop and what more would have been helpful in terms of them gaining more confidence and knowledge about the Equality Act 2010 and PSED. Opinions varied, based on pre-existing knowledge, with those with more knowledge highlighting that in-depth

working examples, such 'court decisions' and 'successful use of legislation to influence policy or decisions at work', would have been useful to understand nuances and caveats within the equality laws. Some participants also reported that they would have liked 'more around PSED because I don't know our rights at work enough', and a few felt that there was 'not enough on positive action or affirmative discrimination'. One participant observed that it would have been particularly useful to have 'more on contract compliance and employment law, because contracting out services/outsourcing is increasing at a rapid rate'.

4 | Conclusions

Our evaluation's results suggest that ROTA's Equality Act workshops are associated with greater confidence in knowledge about key aspects of the Equality Act 2010, PSED, and the key rights and responsibilities associated with these. ROTA's workshops are also associated with increased confidence in understanding the types of discrimination that are unlawful and the issues faced by people with protected characteristics, and the ability of the individual's organisation to effectively use PSED. Perhaps most importantly there was evidence that training was associated with an increased likelihood that the individual or their organisation had taken action to implement or monitor issues related to the Equality Act 2010.

As with all research, this evaluation has limitations that are important to consider when reflecting on confidence in the results. The sample included across both the quantitative and qualitative parts of this study was relatively small and this limits the generalisability of the results. It is possible that the key results observed could actually be because of some unmeasured difference between those who attended the ROTA workshop and those who did not. For example, greater levels of education could make people both more likely to attend training and more confident in their knowledge about the Equality Act 2010 and PSED. Only a randomised controlled trial with a larger sample could reliably demonstrate that any later differences in confidence and knowledge were the result of training. This would be a desirable next step, especially as this could be accomplished by randomly allocating those who express an interest in ROTA's Equality Act workshop either to attendance at an actual training session or to a waiting list for a future session. Comparing results between these two groups (actually attending versus waiting list), could draw much more confident conclusions about the impact of the workshop.

This evaluation was delivered to a very tight timeline and thus the follow-up, or the time after the workshop in which the impact was assessed, was very short. The ROTA Equality Act workshops may increase confidence, but possibly only for a short time after taking part. However, this possibility is mitigated to some extent by the

findings of the online survey, in which individuals who had previously attended ROTA workshops (at various times) had greater confidence than those who had not.

Related to this, future research should explore to what extent the self-reported confidence in knowledge of the Equality Act 2010 and PSED, and self-reports of behaviour (taking action at work), translates into actual behaviour that tackles prejudice and discrimination. This could be accomplished using triangulation (that is, asking others at that individual's workplace).

While the findings of this evaluation are positive, it is important to remember that this is only one evaluation, and replicability, or repeating the evaluation, would significantly increase confidence in the ROTA Equality Act workshop's impact. Ideally, this evaluation should be repeated in an identical way. It would also be desirable to replicate the evaluation but vary the intervention by having a different workshop facilitator. This would allow for an assessment of the extent to which the results can be attributed to the actual content of the workshop, and the extent to which the effects are the result of having a skilled facilitator.

Overall, the results of this evaluation suggest that the impact of ROTA's Equality Act workshops is promising, in that they are associated with increasing participants' confidence in their knowledge about the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty. They are also associated with increased reports of actions taken to address discrimination. Future research should attempt to replicate these results.

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