

# Equality and Diversity Newsletter



August 2009

## Editor's Introduction

Welcome to the Learning World Equality and Diversity Newsletter. The newsletter aims to communicate with all our teams on important topics and to make sure that everyone is kept fully up to date with new legislation and our policies and practices.



Learning World is an equal opportunities training provider and welcomes applications from females and minority groups working in the industry.

## Atheism

The word Atheism originates from the Greek "atheos", which means godless ("theos" means god and "a" means without). Most atheists believe in the existence of some kind of moral standards for human behaviour - that an individual's actions should demonstrate him or her to be a fundamentally good and moral person. Atheists do not actively despise any god, however they may detest what they consider to be religious hypocrisy, bigotry and intolerance. Atheism does not dictate an opposition to religious individuals but recognizes that good people from every creed can unite against inhumanity. Therefore, most atheists concede that there are good elements within religion, such as art and music, wisdom, charitable deeds and human fellowship.

The first well-known atheist was an ancient Greek called Diagoras, a poet and philosopher, who lived in the late 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C., and interestingly, the Greek playwright Aristophanes alludes to Diagoras in his play, 'The Clouds'.



Source:

[www.openparachute.wordpress.com](http://www.openparachute.wordpress.com)

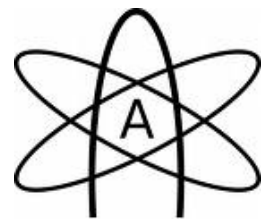
### The core principles of Atheism:

- ◆ Atheists believe that gods are human constructs.
- ◆ Some atheist acknowledge the value and truth in moral systems accompanying religions.
- ◆ Atheists do not wish to recognize the authority of a group who call themselves priests or pastors who set particular forms of obedience, such as dietary prohibitions, attendance at church or a temple, offering of material sacrifices, singing specific songs and regulations regarding how they should spend certain days of the week.
- ◆ Atheists do not see any evidence to suggest that a deity might actually exist.

### Quotes:

*"What I have done is to show that it is possible for the way the universe began to be determined by the laws of science. In that case, it would not be necessary to appeal to God to decide how the universe began. This doesn't prove that there is no God, only that God is not necessary."* - **Scientist, Professor Stephen Hawking (Atheist)**

*"Respect is about how to treat everyone, not just those you want to impress."*  
- **Entrepreneur, Sir Richard Branson (Atheist)**



The most common atheist symbol is the atomic symbol, which was chosen by the American Atheists in 1963. The lower part of the symbol is open ended, which refers to 'incompleteness' that is inherent in science. The letter 'A' in the centre stands for the first letter of the country where the American Atheists affiliated group is located - America. Many people associate this symbol with nuclear waste and it has not found general acceptance.

### Atheist Campaign

aims to encourage more atheists to "come out"  
[www.atheistcampaign.org.uk](http://www.atheistcampaign.org.uk)

### Atheist Pride Day

20th March 2009

### What is Atheism?

It's about thinking freely and feeling liberated.

# Learning World Equality and Diversity Newsletter

## The Multi-faith Festival Year – August 2009 to September 2009

**August 5**

**HINDU:** Raksha Bandan - this festival is when brothers, sisters and cousins show they care for each other by giving bracelets, sweets and presents to each other.



**September 22**

**PAGAN:** Autumn Equinox (Mabon) where thanks is given for the bounty of the earth and the need to share this to secure the blessings of the Goddess and God during the winter months.



**August 22**

**ISLAM:** Muslims around the world fast during Ramadan. They celebrate the time when the verses of the Qur'an were revealed to the Prophet Muhammad.

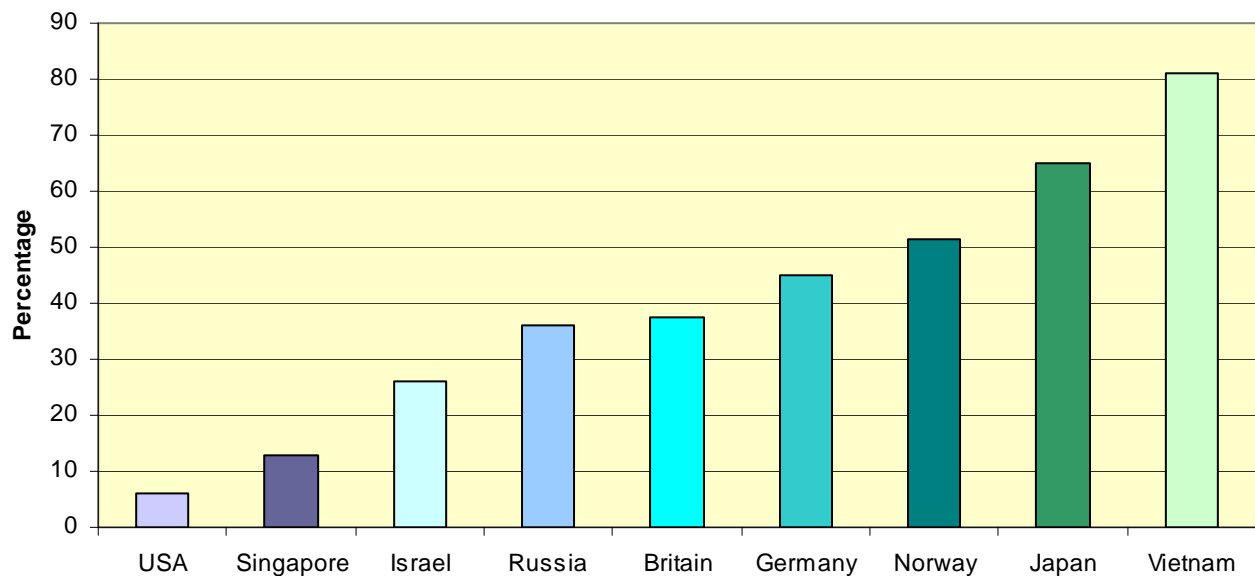


**September 28**

**JEWISH:** Yom Kippur is the most important holiday of the Jewish year. Yom Kippur means 'Day of Atonement' and no work can be performed on this day.



**% of Atheists, Agnostics or Non-believers in God (www.adherents.com)**



The chart above shows the proportion of atheist, agnostic or non-believers in nine countries. Approximately 21% of the worldwide population is either atheist or agnostic.

**What is an Agnostic?** A person who holds a middle ground between atheism and theism, who believes that the existence of God is a possibility.

**What is Theism?** A person who believes in the existence of at least one god. Theism can be focussed upon a single god (monotheism) or many gods (polytheism).



## Age Discrimination



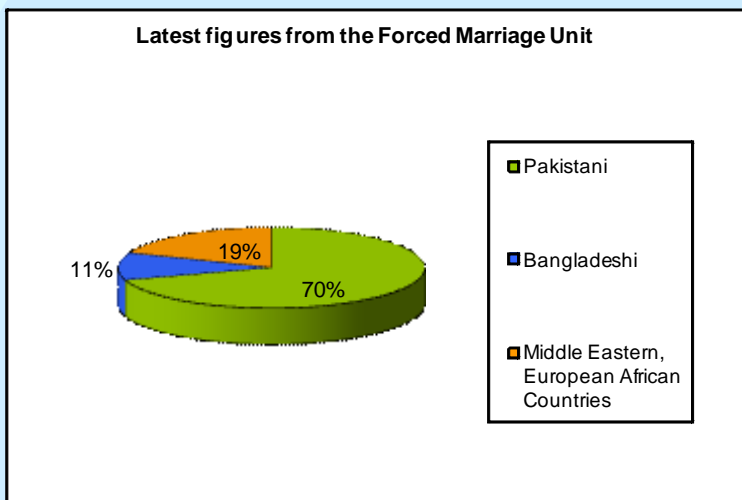
Michael Foster, MP  
Parliamentary Secretary,  
Government Equality Office  
[www.equalities.gov.uk](http://www.equalities.gov.uk)

On 29th June 2009 a consultation document on ending age discrimination was published by the Government. It aims to develop policy proposals to tackle discrimination in services and public functions.

*“Age discrimination is perceived as one of the most prevalent forms of discrimination today; at some point in our lives every one of us will be vulnerable to age discrimination. We need to do more to ensure that people are helped to stay independent for as long as possible, have equal access to services and are treated with the respect and dignity they deserve. The Government is determined to consign age discrimination to the past through a range of legislation and wider measures aimed at protecting people of all ages from discrimination, and helping to transform the ageist culture which has prevailed in our society for too long”*

- Michael Foster, MP

## Forced Marriages



### Forced Marriage Unit

Forced marriage is not solely related to Muslim or South Asian religions. Many cases involve the Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Indian communities, and increasingly involve Middle Eastern, Far Eastern, African, South American and Eastern European communities.

Figures released from the Forced Marriage Unit have revealed that:

- 14% of cases involve male victims.
- 86% of cases involve female victims.
- 14% of cases involve minors - (under 16 yrs old)

## How the Government is Helping



Delyth Morgan  
DCSF Minister for Young  
People and Families  
[www.dcsf.gov.uk](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk)

In 2007 the Government introduced the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act to help remove victims from a forced marriage and to protect people from being forced into marriage. A specialist unit (a joint body of the Foreign Office and the Home Office - the Forced Marriage Unit), has set up a helpline to encourage the reporting of suspected forced marriages.

It is currently the busiest time of year for the unit, as students leaving for the school holiday raise concerns with their teachers. Reported cases of forced marriages have nearly trebled since 2005, from 152 to 420, and these figures coincide with the publication of the Forced Marriage Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines, (published on 2nd July 2009), which offer guidelines to front line professionals to help them identify and protect children and young adults who are at risk of forced marriage.

*“As the end of the school year nears, it’s vital that we get the message out that forced marriage is totally unacceptable and where children are subjected to this practice, the impact on their education and their future is devastating.” - DCSF Minister for Young People and Families, Delyth Morgan*



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J	O	N	E	J	A	C	K	N	I	C	H	O	L	S	O	N

### Famous Atheists

- Find all the famous atheists from columns 1, 2 and 3 and mark them in the word search above.
- Find two additional Atheists within the newsletter and fill in the red boxes with their names.
- If you wish to be entered into a prize draw, please fill in the two missing names on the slip below, cut it out and hand it to the **Quality Team** no later than **30<sup>th</sup> September**. Your slip will be entered into a prize draw on 2nd October to win a box of chocolates.

<b>1.</b> Jodie Foster Katharine Hepburn Neil Kinnock Ian McKellen Bob Geldof Keanu Reeves Bruce Lee	<b>2.</b> Arthur Miller Terry Pratchett Ricky Gervais Bill Gates Woody Allen Lance Armstrong	<b>3.</b> Fidel Castro Billy Joel Gary Numan Eddie Izzard Paul Verhoeven Jack Nicholson
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Answers to the word search: The two missing atheists will be published in the next newsletter.



**Deadline:** Please hand this prize draw slip to the Quality Team by **30th September 2009**.

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Dept/Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Missing Name 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Missing Name 2: \_\_\_\_\_