



**COMMISSION FOR
RACIAL EQUALITY**

18th October 2005

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Dear E Goodman,

Many thanks for your letter to Trevor Phillips. Because of the huge volume of letters and emails Mr Phillips receives, he is not in the position to answer them personally. It is for this reason that they are referred to the Commission for Racial Equality's (CRE) Information Services department, who provide a response on his behalf.

In your letter you refer to Trevor's comments at the Conservative Party Conference, where he spoke about the need to develop a 'highway code' for multi-ethnic Britain. Below please find a quotation from this speech:

"We need a modern highway code for multi-ethnic Britain, our unwritten handbook for getting on with each other.

- Should councils print all their important documents in several languages to encourage participation, or is this encouraging separatism?
- What should we do about holy days which are not bank holidays for example? Should we put off that important meeting because it's Yom Kippur, even though only one of the people attending is Jewish?
- Are judges right to say that school uniform may not be compulsory for the devout – even though for some it is compliant with Islamic modesty?
- Is it really offensive to call someone 'coloured'?
- Are there any circumstances in which we sacrifice freedom of expression to protect the minority from ridicule?

We need to find ways of reaching a national agreement on some of these issues. We need to update our highway code of conduct to meet the needs of our multi-ethnic society.

That is why we welcome the Government's proposal for a Commission on Integration which will study these issues of principle. I hope it will address some of the everyday problems."

Trevor Phillips was in no way saying that freedom of expression should be sacrificed. Rather, he was calling for more debate in defining modern Britain and the acceptable codes of conduct.

Should you wish to read the entire transcript of his speech at the Conservative Party Conference, it can be found in the Media Centre section of the CRE website (www.cre.gov.uk).

I hope that this is helpful to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hattie Lamb', written in a cursive style.

Hattie Lamb
Information Service