

Alias	Age	Occupation	Interview Period
Alec Edwards	40	Civil servant	April 2012
Ben Bassett	37	Civil servant	April 2012
Connor Kershaw	51	Civil servant	April 2012
Daisy Mills (and her friend)	46	Civil servant	April 2012
Evelyn McWilliams	41	Council administrator	April 2012
Fred Toulson	68	School teacher	April 2012
Georgina Harris	35	Clerk	April 2012
Harriet Johnson (and her daughter)	83	Pensioner	April 2012
Lexie Browning	23	Student	April 2012
Jessi Bowen	27	Bartender	April 2012
Kieran Turner	65	Pensioner	April 2012
Lou Griffiths (and his wife)	59	Public official and unemployed	April 2012
Maisie Drake	23	Homemaker	April 2012
Norma Davies (and her friend)	63	Pensioner and activist	April 2012
Ollie Marks	30	Laborer	April 2012
Blake Johns	28	Tradesman	April 2012
Ryan Sampson	39	Public official and spokesperson	May 2012
Ashton Roberts	24	Artist	May 2012
Joel Lopes	25	Pub worker	May 2012
Sam Orwell	25	Unemployed	May 2012
Toby McEwing	22	Betting shop manager	May 2012
Nicki Josephs	22	Sales assistant	May 2012
Nancy Pemberton	59	Pensioner and activist	May 2012
Andy Dewhurst	31	Editor	May 2012
Pam Reed	51	Bartender	May 2012
Eleanor Hodgkins	72	Pensioner	May 2012
Poppy Moore	73	Pensioner	May 2012
Vincent Dogan	38	Unemployed and party activist	May 2012
Bryan MacIntosh	41	Computer technician	May 2012
Callum Everett	19	Unemployed	May 2012
Danny Drysdale	21	Railworker	May 2012
Emma Terrington	69	Pensioner	May 2012
Fiona Harrison	23	Florist and business owner	May 2012
George Carlisle	26	Mover	May 2012
Harry Carlisle	24	Mover	May 2012
Joe Fallon	19	McDonalds server	May 2012
Charlotte Jansen	18	Beautician	May 2012
Jade Jansen	30	Beautician	May 2012
<i>Margaret Hodge</i>		<i>Member of Parliament</i>	<i>May 2012</i>
Lucy Iverson	49	Tanning Salon Owner	June 2012
Kyle Downey	21	Unemployed	June 2012

Oscar Bradley	21	Forklift apprentice	June 2012
Paul Bibby	20	Plumber	June 2012
Luke Wilkinson	25	Flooring laborer	June 2012
Rhys Williams	23	Unemployed	June 2012
Sean Manning	22	Unemployed former drug dealer	June 2012
Terry Hammonds	18	Retail worker	June 2012
Theo Garrigan	32	Office cleaner	June 2012
Finn Peterson	26	Railworker	June 2012
Ewan Nickelson	22	Pipeline worker	June 2012
Hayden Thomas	28	Unemployed	June 2012

(one interview off the record)

Italics denote on the record without aliases (only prominent public officials)

Alec Edwards, 40, civil servant

The BNP is a protest vote. The White working class says that they haven't taken notice of the Council for years, particularly as the borough diversified.

The class system is reflected in the educational hierarchy. The current Cabinet is mostly public-schooled. Grammar, technical and secondary school was consolidated in the 1960s into comprehensive schools. By mixing levels, there is a concern for the dumbing down of classrooms.

Many children have stronger literacy skills than their parents when the children are only 10 or 11 years old. School is thought to be "gotten through", not engaged with by the White working class. What is called "prior attainment" of early education at age 5 is a big condition of achievement which dominoes to later achievement. Early childhood centers help with this.

Many White working class boys simply do not go to school. They don't enjoy going to school. And this is reinforced by parents with similar experiences.

"Excess income is no longer available to those seeking basic warehouse and manufacturing work. Market forces let rip and suddenly the White working class couldn't afford to go to football matches or get a pint at the pub. This changed the class structure, and a lot of people were left behind. Many of those people left behind live here.

The elephant in the room is democracy. The inclination in the UK is to look down on White working class people, immediately from the moment they begin to talk. Immigrants are also conditioned to look down on them too. People lacking money also lack confidence.

If the elected representatives have appropriate sentiments and are supportive of welfare programs we've come a long way. But there are local cultures that the central government does not recognize, and so you need local government. If the government doesn't speak the local language of the people there, then nothing is going to get done. Enforcement isn't everything. People have to believe in the laws.

Labour has lost many of their own constituencies. It's easy to find an immigrant and blame them to distract from the fundamental problems of disenfranchisement.

When you're sick, you need to be able to describe your symptoms to the doctor. But these people cannot describe what's happening to them. And like body parts, there are some ills that people don't want to talk about. The BNP feeds into this. They also don't want to talk about these symptoms. They'd rather blame others, totally representative of the people who vote for them. Access to housing. Access to school places. Access to jobs. Access to health services. The equivalent to private parts is immigrants. We are an island nation, so there is a natural aversion to people who wash up on our shores. They all get absorbed, but we have an inability to talk about it."

The influx of white Eastern Europeans irritated a lot of resentment in the 2000s, and the quick pace of change that they reflected.

There is an arrogance among the Labour Party. It's class-based. When things are achieved here, it's discounted. Class is deeply ingrained. Inferiority. Superiority. Preference. If a hypothetical Pakistani family went to Margaret Hodge, they would be listened to more closely than the hypothetical White working class family. Because it's easier. There is a vestigial guilt about the way people were treated in the British Empire, and that feeling has not been extended to our own.

In our society, we have a monarchy and superstructure, which views itself as possessive of certain status, previously given by God. There is a notion of authority by appointment and wise governance—a notion of central rule looking after people. Whitehall has a problem with local democracy because that dilutes their authority. The civil service is permanent, so they effectively work for the queen and don't believe in the ability of local, decentralized government. The arrogance of elite governors endures and local governance is the antidote.

When I was growing up, I was told not to express my Englishness. The Scottish could, but we were always meant to emphasize the union.

The borough's biggest businesses are in logistics and transport, along with some light manufacturing (fuel nozzles, beds, staircases), and crafts.

The recent riots, the iconic video of the victim initially helped by thugs who then mugged him took place in Barking. The Council did its best to defuse the outcry and association, as the perpetrators were from outside the borough. But there were still some disturbances,

as a few sporting goods and electronics stores were smashed in in the general opportunism of the moment.

The national cap on housing benefits means that Barking will be swamped by people seeking its low rents. But there is a vacuum in the borough. The cap is national without accounting for living costs in London, so it squeezes people.

Ben Bassett, 37, civil servant

Much of the borough was overflow from London's population growth in the 1920s and as a product of the "Homes for Heroes" program. The center is the Becontree Estate, which was built in the 1920s. There is now little evidence of these initial estates, because Barking is of older Victorian housing stock, but to the east are council blocks.

Manufacturing in the borough is light, cheap and in decline vis-a-vis the knowledge-based economy of London. There are some ideas to establish a recycling industry. The river is home to demolition companies, an electrical power station that produces a third of London's power, and Ford's severely cut factory. They still make lorry engines there, but the last car went off the lines in 2001 or 2002. Ford established themselves here *because* of the estates.

There are traditional, matriarchal families here. Jobs are passed down through generations, and nans, mothers and granddaughters retain their importance, as there is still a lot of intergenerational contact. In the past, they all just lived together.

However, there is a high rate of domestic violence, a high divorce rate, high teenage pregnancy, and higher numbers of children per family.

In the past, it was an exclusively Labour-run council that was very careful with money. It was very thrifty, and built reserves of revenue and government redistribution.

Today, LBBD has the worst levels of literacy in London and the second worst numeracy. There are fewer people with high qualifications, and more with low qualifications than elsewhere. The status of skills among LBBD adults is dire. It's a similar situation to the East End in the 1970s when the Bengalis moved in. But the world has changed. There are worse economic conditions, a changing economy, less social support and less welfare—creating a sense of distance. Achievement is thought not to be "for the likes of us".

The council has had difficulty persuading university-admitted students to take up their places. Once you got pregnant, you could expect a council house.

BNP councilors had as much support in 2010 as they had when they won 12 seats in 2005. Labour just mobilized their base against the BNP and Nick Griffin. Many BNP votes were old Labour types, feeling failed by the Blair version of Government. They don't know how to communicate their frustration, to express their disappointment.

Another flashpoint is applications for religious building permits. Protests against black African churches' desire to convert cinemas into chapels. There are also housing policy misunderstandings. Immigrants just rate higher on points.

There is public concern with "benefits culture." The new coalition policy puts a ceiling on housing allowances—a 26,000 cap on total government benefits. So many will move to cheaper regions, like Barking, crowding out locals. Rents are still low here and it will reduce capacity.

There is this question of how do we get back to the way things used to be. How do we recapture that Shangri-La from the 1920s when we moved to this green land from Newham and the East End? But even if you go back 10 years, things here have changed dramatically. We have witnessed some of the greatest demographic change in London.

Bureaucrats thought the BNP presence would raise or motivate the central government to invest in adult skills to reduce deprivation and ignorance. The money didn't come because of arrogance in Whitehall, and it was a political calculation to disable the BNP.

There was a concept of the "Dagenham child" that had a brain that functioned improperly. A declining manufacturing town, but in London. So there are "new communities" willing to go 10 stops to London to get ahead. Among the old communities, there are children who have never ridden the train. It's an insular world here. Meanwhile, among the immigrants, graduates are working in carparks.

Unlike the declining North, where the downturn appears to affect all together at once, here the White working class feel like they are in quicksand among other people who are pedaling out.

On Dagenham Heathway, The Church Elm Pub was "the local", but it was replaced by a library that is now frequented by upwardly mobile immigrants. Above it, private flats for rent. A way of life has changed.

Harmony House, a shelter for refugees and asylum seekers, has few windows that have not had rocks thrown through them. BNP-loyal houses behind it have enormous Union Jacks and crosses of St. George displayed in protest to delineate a no-go zone for ethnics.

There is enormous distrust of government by the White working class. It's often associated with social services, which removes children from parental custody.

Connor Kershaw, 51, civil servant:

[OFF THE RECORD]

Daisy Mills (and her friend), 46, civil servant

Labour still has the loyalties of the unions, leftover from the employees at the Ford plant.

A lot of people have decided that the Council favors immigrants. It's a very close community. So if a migrant moved into an estate, word would get around like a brushfire.

The Council insists that things are changing, but the White working class don't want things to change. If they could just stop time.

So many people worked at Ford, and it brought everyone together. 50,000 people before, they used to see each other at work every day. The factory was a hub. It was very hard work, but people look back through rose-colored glasses.

At Scraton Farms Social Club, they had a party in the fields for the Royal Wedding. They said it was the first time they had that kind of party in 15 years. The Council set aside 10 small grants to fund parties for St. George's Day. They received 11 applications, three of which were from people who were not of English descent.

Despite the elevated levels of domestic violence, people will not talk to the police about it. "I'll sort it out myself," they say. "We have to look after our own." It's very much an East End thing, distrust of authority. No one wants to be seen as a snitch.

Evelyn McWilliams, 41, council administrator

There were 12 BNP politicians on the 51-person Council from 2006 to 2010. Their status in power gave them the illusion of actually having an effect. Barking and Dagenham is generally thought of as a hotspot for such sentiment, and holding office legitimized their ideas. Since May 2010, they have been officially out of power, despite the support of 15,000 voters who now feel as if they are without representation.

Until 2006, this was a Labour fiefdom—the People's Republic of Dagenham. There was an element of complacency. Politicians just did things for voters without really consulting them. The BNP exploited this sense of abandonment, and the perception of a lack of consultation.

Simultaneously, upwardly mobile ethnics were moving out to Barking for the cheap housing here, joining other migrants from EU accession countries. After knowing your neighbors for 50 years, you suddenly had a Lithuanian, and Indian, and an African next to you in the space of nine months. You don't feel like you can talk to them, and you don't really like the smell of their food. Today 70% of kindergarten entries are black, minority or ethnic. White flight is a reality. People move from Inner London to Outer London to Essex and eventually will go into the sea.

What can we do to make Barking and Dagenham better? We asked that question in a survey in 2007. The most common answer was : “Make it like it used to be 50 or 60 years ago.” People could not conceive of progress coming from the future.

The original move to Dagenham was about stepping up from the East End. Having a garden and a house, with modern conveniences in the kitchen. There was an image of Barking as leafy and pleasantly away from London. Then came the White Flight.

One of the surprising things here is that people don't really go anywhere. Despite having this pulsing multicultural city, people in Dagenham don't like going anywhere else. They don't even go to Barking. It's quite a narrow frame of reference.

The vision of the Becontree Estate was one that allowed for self-sufficiency, with shopping parades and cul de sacs—which here they call “banjos”. There was no need for commuting.

Today there is a difficulty promoting social cohesion where there is so much turnover from street to street.

The aspirational psyche was strongly influenced by the prospect of finishing school at 14, working at Ford's, getting pregnant, and getting a housing benefit. Now the new economy rudely interrupted that way of life. Today people need to stay in school longer and improve. The ones who have the drive are the ethnic folks. The jobs are at Westfield in Stratford and they require higher skill levels that people don't have.

There is not a strong activist community among the White working class in Barking and Dagenham. After service cuts, where there were protests and riots at Town Halls across London, Barking was quiet. The Council did their best to mitigate the hit of the cuts, but there was still an effect—but little reaction.

The unions are smaller, less organized, and not very vocal. The Tenants and residents Associations are focused on a street or a few streets at a time, and they produce a few councilors. The Labour Party is present. There was the Whalebone effort to save Robert Jeyes Library from closure. The Royal Anglican March mobilized the EDL

Becontree Heath Islamic Centre on Green Lanes attracted interest. Permission was granted despite the Council's Development Control Board's decision not to recommend due to issues of parking, loss of rental units and crowding. This caused residents' responses of discomfort and hate mail to Councilors. Many of these people contacted the EDL and since then, the first Barking and Dagenham EDL branch was established. They like to have “a ruck and a shout.”

Fred Toulson, 68, school teacher

This borough was created artificially and occupied by people from Stepney Hackney who were looking for “new horizons.” These are people in a particular place who were encouraged to come out of their circumstances and become educated in their spare time by the church or the mining factory community itself. You don’t break away from your community, you just improve. The move to Barking and Dagenham was part of that.

In 1971, Barking and Dagenham had full employment. You could move from one job to another—from the print to the factory to the dig to the drill. There were close-knit families.

Mum always goes to school, if there’s any problem. If it’s major, then dad goes too and he sits there quiet-like. There is a strong sense of gender roles. But education was not as relevant to either. Adults did not have the benefits of a strong education system. In schools, there are boards dedicated to kids who graduated and went to uni. There was no history of higher education. Parents tore up one of my student’s coursework and told him he was a “boffin.” You’re ridiculed for being “too clever by a half,” or for being “a bit bookish.”

Endemic in British White working class society is a certain anti-intellectualism that is connected to a sentiment that some people were “born to rule” in the public schools. There was this sense that there was a ceiling for the “Dagenham child.” People are reluctant to change the status quo, until there’s a famine and then there’s a revolution. So where you come from creates certain expectations that exist for donkey’s years.

The class system in this country is not based on money. It’s based on the way you speak, where you went to school, legacy, where you were born. People will tell you it doesn’t exist. But it does. In the US, you can get by on a meritocracy of cash.

In the first class I taught in 1971, every single kid’s parents worked at Ford’s. Nobody left Barking and Dagenham. Ten years ago, there were no black kids in my school. The first immigrants were from Kosovo and Albania. Then came the rest.

Bureaucrats underestimate the improvements among White working class children. What’s missing is the relationship between teachers, who are always asked to jump through different hoops.

The children live in a very enclosed world and what they are exposed to is largely second-hand.

People feel second-class. The BNP was an expression of frustration. There was a feeling that other people out there were getting something for nothing.

Georgina Harris, 35, clerk

[redacted]

Harriet Johnson (and her daughter), 83, pensioner

It was a friendly place. Everyone knew each other, until all the bigots came. We got overrun by Indians, blacks, Lithuanians and Polish people and all that. Before that, it was a beautiful estate. It was reclaimed land. We used to have cows and horses walking down the roads.

Some of the councilors are good, but others only think of themselves and not the people they're supposed to. You can complain but it takes them three weeks to reply. They're always out of money. And when they do a job on this estate, the price they charge is chronic.

After 5:00pm, you can't walk around the shops [parade] because of the kids. They're hanging around and on drugs. There are gangs of white kids, Asian kids and black kids and they're always fighting. And the adults are just as bad as the kids. We have problems with rats in our houses, but you come to the shops and find a lot of two-legged rats walking around here.

I'm not prejudiced, but I think they should start taking care of the English people for once. I think that the National Front should come in for a bit. And I don't even like the National Front, but they'll level the estate out. In the council block over there, there's not one family of whites and there are English people who could use that home. In that section, it's all blacks. Then they open up all their [African] happy clappy churches. It's not a nice place to live. You want someone to look after their own, the English people first.

The ethnics won't mix. They don't—what's the word—integrate. It's not just whites who are prejudiced; they've got a chip on their shoulders too. They think you owe them a living. I know that Margaret Hodge put all the blacks and Indians here purposely.

How are there not enough school places for our kids? I fought for this country, and it ain't even our country anymore. You're not the priority. We've got everything here. Gays, lesbians—what do you call them?—bisexuals, prostitutes, pedophiles. This place is like Coronation Street meets East Enders and Holly Oaks all at once. You should go and get the black perspective, but watch your pockets.

It doesn't pay to be honest. I don't think the English people have got a future.

Lexie Browning, 23, student

That's why I don't vote. I don't believe in any of them. I've never liked any of them. The council promised me a fence, because all these people keep looking my bedroom window seeing me sleeping. But they took so long, we just had to do it ourselves. I've given up. I

don't feel safe here. I'd put my dog on one of them, but then they would just put him down.

The Council [bureaucrat] said, if you're not black, Asian, a lesbian or pregnant, you can't get a flat. I feel like I'm on the outside. I'm so depressed. I feel like I'm always begging.

Jessi Bowen, 27, bartender

The crosses of St. George were painted on by a bunch of regulars for the 2010 World Cup. You can't really have those flags up, because it's racist. If we can't even put our country's flag up. I think it's disgusting.

A lot of pubs are closing down because of anti-smoking laws, and the price of beer is going up. We tried to keep it low, but we just had to raise our prices too—from £2.40 to £2.80 for a pint. Some places are charging £3.80 or £3.90. We're a bit dearer than Wetherspoon's, but we're not allowed to do happy hour specials like them.

We don't really get strangers in here. It's a community in here, and don't get me wrong, we serve anyone, but all these guys are on the estate. It's like a family.

I'm not racist, but this country's covered by blacks and Bosnians. Some black people come in if there's football on, but they don't drink. Usually they just order a coke, but you know, this is a business.

Ten years ago, you could just walk down the street and leave your door open.

[Do you live here?]

Oh God no. I've moved away. I'm over in Goresbrook now.

I don't understand the politics. I'll have a listen to the lads' conversations, and sometimes chime in me self. I vote. BNP all the way. I just vote the way everyone else here does. If you're an English person and you can't get a house or claim benefits, and there are people who come over here illegally and they get everything.

Kieran Turner, 65, pensioner

This whole borough is Labour, but how is that possible? We did have a good Labour Party here, a good woman [Jo Richardson]. But that all changed with Margaret Hodge. They're all the same. A lot of people used to vote Labour around here. We had a good councilor here, Bill Barnes.

Of course, I vote. If you don't vote, you'll get that taken away from you too. People only really go into meetings when they want something done.

We had a community here, but they all moved out and the area got run down. When are they going to build? A lot of immigrants moved in, and now the buildings are full of them. Why don't you move them in with the politicians and see how they like it? Let them deal with our shit. I've got Russian neighbors upstairs. They've got two kids who are always making noise and playing their music. So I play my music too so that they can hear it. A bit of Elvis. A bit of classical.

But I'm not racist. Everyone is equal, but for money and work. You never see a poor landowner. But I never really go into their neighborhoods.

The White working class has had a lot taken away. It used to be the United Kingdom, but it's not that united anymore. And you can't shut the gates once they've been bouldered.

It's very strange. With the Olympics, they're pumping money into Stratford, but there are still poor people. What are they going to do? Money gets spent on things other than us. I heard Newham was trying to move their poor people to Stoke! I don't mind going half and half with the Council. I used to propose things to the Council, but they found it unacceptable, so I've lost interest. A lot of people don't vote, because it doesn't matter who gets in.

We used to live all together, and then these fucking Indians came in and the government says that *they* need to live together. What about us?

I wish they blew up the Channel Tunnel. It's a great achievement, but it should have gone to Ireland. The French just dump all their shit over here. They should have gotten the Olympics. They all want to call me European. I'm not European. I'm English. On surveys, I always write in "Other" because they don't have English listed. They have traveling Gypsy, but not English.

Sometimes I just want to pick up something and destroy it. But somehow I can't. And see, now I'm getting all angry. The rich get richer and the poor get poorer. It makes you want to explode.

What will pull this country together is our future king and queen [William and Kate].

That the hood ornament is still attached tells you what people think of this place [The Lighterman Pub].

Lou Griffiths (and his wife), 59, public official and unemployed

This borough was full of East Enders. People were very friendly. It was easy to settle in. People had come in after wartime, and the neighbors were good. There was a sense of

community, more so than it is now. Since about 2004 or 2005, there was change in the borough that came with the influx of other cultures. Goresbrook Ward was previously 5% foreign; now 50 or 60% of the ward is foreign. It was a massive change that happened too fast for people to cope with. There's a heavy Muslim population. Africans have flooded in. They don't seem to mix with the existing community. There's no infrastructure to deal with it, so everything got fragmented and that led to the BNP getting a lot of support. They never put enough libraries, schools, or community halls for people to mix.

We live in a multicultural society and I think that's good. But when it happened so quickly, the existing community feels threatened. In the 1960s when the West Indians came in, no one area was taken over and they mixed in. But the way we've been flooded, it inspires the animosity of right wing groups. It's a matter of adapting, but some of these people don't speak English or make any attempt to fit in.

Years ago, you used to look out for one another. People used to go around with a collection if someone died. A lot of the new communities don't want to mix in. I think we can learn a lot from each other, but they don't want to learn. Look at Dagenham Heathway. 60% of it are those African shops, and they don't sell nothing to anyone else. Immigration should have been stopped years ago, and now people are thinking the worst: 'They're taking our jobs' and things like that. Especially in the financial crisis. We don't go out hardly, and I can't get settled [financially]. This house is a rental, and we've been on the Council's [public housing] list for three years. We just had so much debt that we had to sell our old house before it got repossessed or fell apart around our ears!

People think councilors have some magic wand, but we're just advocates in the middle between them and civil servants. I can only pass on their requests to the departments who manage the budget. As time passes, there will be nothing there because of all the cuts. Some councils have been cut to the bone.

I've never been a political person. I only joined the party in 2007, when I joined Labour to protect our TRA from the BNP. I didn't understand much about politics, but I hate the BNP and the EDL. Some of their points are valid, but I hate the way they go about it with intimidation and violence. When they were in power, there was in-house fighting, they never turned up at the Council, and they didn't reply to people about casework.

You've always got your thugs and people who like to cause trouble, football hooligans. But a lot of people have a chip on their shoulder, or they bilk people who are gullible and weak-minded. A lot of people can't handle change at the level that it's happening. When things go wrong, they have to blame it on something. And in a lot of ways, the BNP is right. Immigration is out of control. Every building that is available gets turned into a Black church. You start to feel isolated. You don't understand the other culture, not like the young people who grow up with them. A lot of people have just given up making the effort. They're foreign and that's that. We've got families of all nationalities. Where I've lived, we've always had a black or foreign population. So I've been around them all the time.

There are just as many of our people who are abusing the benefits system as theirs. If you know how to take advantage of it, you'd take that chance too. If I told you that I can offer you a four-bedroom house with better living in Holland, you would up sticks and go too. Immigrants are just trying to improve their lives. And a lot of these people really want their children to have a good education.

I've been to one of them Muslim temples and they've always been very nice to me and my wife. The Africans always bring me back shirts when they go back to their countries. This one is a Nigerian catanga, but I've got one from Ghana, Zambia, all colors and styles. You've got to make them feel welcome too.

I felt further inside [the circle] 20 years ago, before I was even involved in politics. The community was more in touch even in bad times. But it's also how you meet people. Every country is changing. But here, we are an island and it depends on how much we can take. Are you going to end up with cities and towns that are all foreign? Southall is 90% Asian Muslim now. That doesn't create a healthy balance, and right wing groups will get stronger. Now some of those politically correct assholes would say that I'm being racist, but we do need a balance.

Government is the problem with this politically correct brigade, and that got worse when we joined the European market and all their human rights laws. We've been told what to do by other people and the government is not in touch with people in the street. No matter what you say, the government is going to do what they want anyway. The people at the top don't listen to you. They make out like they do, but they just go their own way.

People don't know who to turn to. There's no faith in any party. I can't do anything about it. Because you've got fragmented communities, people think that none of them are bloody good. So I can't be bothered to do anything about it. There's so much apathy in the white community, and those with any energy are voting B.N. bloody P. The blacks and Muslims are well heard, canvassing and door knocking, and they can hardly speak a word of English.

I agree that immigration has gotten out of hand, and the government has shut the barn door after the horse has bolted. But the BNP attacks the immigrants' people and culture, and it's not their fault. These people have been driven out of their countries, and we've let them come here without really being ready for them. I don't really shove it down anyone's throat. The BNP were telling immigrants that if they voted Labour, they would get deported. I love multiculturalism. It opens up the whole world. There's so much to learn.

Years ago, if you didn't like something, you'd go protest and march. But now, we have fragmented communities, so people don't pull together. You're lucky to see the odd letter in the newspaper. No one turns up for meetings. After years of no communication from the government, and people just assume that politicians are there to feather their own nest.

It's going to break soon. Something's going to give way, but will it be in a good way or will it lead to anarchy and more riots? I think you'll see more of them. It just takes a small spark. The younger generation just feels like they don't have a future. There's nothing there for them. There's no job security, benefits, and there's a lot of abuse. We don't have much contact with young people, because they don't have much interest in politics.

The richer people are getting richer. The private landlords are a nightmare. They charge the Earth, they'll cram five families into a one-bedroom, and they don't fix anything. They're taking the piss. You're seeing the divide between working class. But a lot of these landlords are immigrants! The influx blinds people to the inequality. Jobs are the vehicle of inequality. The Eastern Europeans control a lot of the crime, con games, and prostitution.

Maisie Drake, 23, homemaker

There's nothing to do now. It's so bad that my husband and I are thinking about moving out. There's hardly any place to hang out for the youths. It's just gone downhill. Companies will use any space available to build any sort of flat. There seem to be a lot more African shops that don't sell what I personally eat. We're overrun. Every little off license that gets shut is replaced by a 99p store or an African grocery. The schools are being overwhelmed. I don't really go out unless I need something. Me and my husband do struggle to get the baby food and nappies that we need. We have to buy the cheap stuff.

I think it's just the way that the economy's going right now. Everyone is fighting, and the customer has to breathe as well. Jobs have been harder to get. I struggled to get a job. My husband has also struggled to find a job. No one wants to train you up. My husband worked at Hyundai's on a temporary job, but they laid him off. He's a qualified chef, but places don't want someone overqualified.

Father-in-law: Wait til he's 40, and it'll be even harder. They'll say he's too old for the job.

The issue is the economy. They don't take no one from school anymore. Even Asda. The jobs are bad, the hours are bad, and the pay's bad. A lot of young people think that if they can't get anything decent, they'd rather just live off their job-seeker's benefit. I've been out of work since college because I like sitting at computers but, for those jobs, you have to be really qualified and not need training. And there are some people who can't get into uni or didn't get the grades. The companies can't be asked, and the government isn't helping. They should be putting money toward qualifications and courses. Otherwise, we have nothing to do and are just bored.

Young people want jobs and there ain't any and they're frustrated. Most of us want to work and we spent a lot of money on college. And we didn't get nowhere in what we

studied. All we have are jobs at Asda or Tesco. For jobs in tourism and leisure, I would have had to take two more years in college and three more in uni.

No one is listening to young people. Even my dad, you have to yell at him because he still lives in the past. It takes a long time for things to sink in. He doesn't see it from a younger person's point of view. He needs to go out and understand why it is so frustrating for young people. A lot of people want to finish school and get right into a high-paying job without working their way up. They get too bored doing the same old job without moving up the ladder. They think that everything will be all sorted when they finish school, and it's time to look for a job. But I found that's not life. I did do a couple weeks at Burger King, but it was too fast-paced and I earned too little money.

I think people have less money than they used to. The government can't be bothered, so why should the general public. The council's not willing to help or listen to young families. Nobody cares about the people in this borough. The housing here is going to people moving in from outside the borough, so there's no space. They don't see it from our point of view. They'll dump you in the most horrible place. I don't support any party. People just go and do what they want anyway. They're fighting amongst themselves.

People from other countries are taking priority because they need extra education and more things than us, so we're getting pushed away. They're not willing to help people who have trouble with learning disabilities. I think everyone should have a chance, but I don't feel like I've had a fair chance. They just look at your GCSE grads. They need to help us build our confidence up, help us practice interview skills. I'm drifting outward right now.

People that come from another country need a chance too. As long as my kids are happy, it's fine. There's nothing that they're going to do to stop immigration. The immigrants do often get our houses and our jobs, but so do a lot of English people. I try to teach my children not to be racist and that everyone deserves their chance. I do get annoyed with immigrants who have illegal driving licenses, or only speak in their language loudly on the bus. It could be a swear word about me, I don't know what they're saying.

Norma Davies (and her friend), 63, pensioner and activist

It's changed a hell of a lot and not for the good. It used to be very busy in the streets and shops. Ford's was down the road. It won't get back to the way it used to be, but we can try, to get people to open their doors. Back then, you could go out at night and parents didn't worry. The kids used to play in the streets and used to respect their elders.

The people have changed. You don't feel safe. Everyone used to look after one another, knocking on each other's doors. Since Ford's moved and May Baker's Tablet Factory shut, it's gone down. There are no jobs and that's why the children are hanging about in the streets. They've got nothing else to do.

People are selling up and moving out. The rates for shop rents are so high that it's not worth owning a business.

I feel right inside the middle. We are the heart of the community. We are the hub. Our phones don't stop ringing with residents calling about something or another.

The BNP harassed a black Labour activist outside a polling station back in 2010. "You black bitch. Go back to where you come from." She was born in Dagenham. You get good and bad in everyone. It's not their color, but what's inside.

The politicians listen, but there's no action. We've been saying that we need to have more police, but they've been cut back. Years ago, you could go to the Council and they would help. I blame the public as well though. If you don't vote, you shouldn't criticize. But people think that no matter who gets in [to office], nothing will get done. People are just treated as numbers, without compassion.

Ollie Marks, 30, laborer

Cockneys are pretty much extinct. I'm an Englishman without England. What does it mean to be English anymore? We've been invaded without any blood being spilled. All I hear are foreign languages and it makes me feel like I'm in a foreign country.

I feel like other people should have the same opportunities as us, but that we should come first. We should be in the center, but I feel like I'm on the outside, as far from the center as possible. By 2050, we will be the minority. And when I say I don't like that, I get labeled a racist. But I've got mixed race kids.

We have absolutely no say. The media tried to make us think what they want us to think. It's divide and conquer. We have no voice. Whether it's with prats like Nick Clegg or the EDL. I don't have a problem with people from a different country, but I do have a problem with people who don't show my country any respect.

If a black man talks like us and acts like us, then I think he's an Englishman. But these geezers who walk around with their trousers down their legs, talking like African Americans, saying things like "safe" and "blood"—they're not English. Some of them have been here for three or four generations. They were born here, never even been to Jamaica, but they claim it. My son has Caucasian hair, blue eyes, light skin. The only way you can tell he's got a black mother is that he's got a flat nose and big corry.

I can't do nothing. It's not down to us. It's those people in government, and when I ask myself why they do it, I just have to think it's something sinister. I don't believe in democracy. It's just a covert dictatorship.

The BNP and the EDL are going the wrong way about it, because they make race the issue. If they had their way, they'd fly my kid out of the country. But people think they're only joining them to get a voice.

Rude boys show how we're losing our culture and identity. If another World War happened, do you think these people would fight? Would they die for their country? They'd be on the first plane out. If the men who did die for this country in World War II saw our country today, they'd be rolling in their fucking graves. I'd rather speak German than pray on a rug five times a day.

Correct me if I'm wrong, but I think there's 1.5 million Muslims [in the United Kingdom]. If they could have shari'ah law, 90% would want it.

All working class people are poorer than they were because our wages went down. In the so-called recession, we got stung. The Conservatives don't give a fuck about us. They want the Poles in the jobs.

All the prime ministers have come out of Eton. Democracy is an illusion. The government are the puppets, the media are the stage, we're the audience. So who's holding the strings? The illuminati. The elite. The immigrants get all of the attention because it's part of a divide and conquer strategy.

I can't speak my views because there's no one left to listen to me. Once you're branded a racist, mud stick to you and you're done.

Blake Johns, 28, tradesman

Without sounding racist, the borough was fine til all the Poles and Africans came in. It used to be more English. You used to go down the road and say "Good Morning" to people. If you do that now, you'll get bloody stabbed. There's a lot of violence. I was mugged to me boxer shorts by a black gang in front of me parents' house. All thanks to that shithhead Tony Blair.

I'm not racist at all. I've got black cousins and nieces. But the Polish have been taking all of the work and running prostitution and drug rings. And my whole estate, which was all English, is now all foreigners.

I went to get my housing benefit and was asked if I was an immigrant, mentally ill, on drugs or fresh out of prison. When I said I wasn't, I was told to fuck off. I've lived in this borough for 28 years, and I don't get a place to live. A deposit for a one-bedroom flat is GBP 1500. Who's got a grand and a half? But someone comes in fresh off the Eurostar and gets whatever they want.

Poles will do my job for GBP 6/hour. If I took that, I'd end up owing more money than I'm earning. So you're better off on benefits. If you're paid GBP 200/week, you've got

100/week of rent, transport, utilities, food, TV license. Benefits pay 135/week without the bills. This country should be tougher. Then all these immigrants wouldn't come here. Everyone is on the dole, and when that's not enough, you just nick. It's hard work. The way out is robbing a bank or winning the lottery. There is no way out.

This isn't about being British-born. I've got loads of mates whose mum and dad came over in the 1970s. The Poles are six up in a house. I was talking to one geezer whose sister got a council flat after having a kid. But his uncles and cousins are there too, and they're all claiming benefits from inside the same flat. They're breeding us out.

Just eight or ten years ago, there was not one foreign person on this estate. Today it's 95% foreign and 5% English. You go to the council, and they just tell you to fuck off. That's why everyone in Barking Dagenham is drinking, drugging or thieving. It's easier to be a criminal than to live a decent life. I lived a normal life until I got depressed, and then when I needed help, they did shit. Even if you go to university, it's meaningless because there's no work, except proper hard work for minimum wage.

It doesn't matter who's in power. I don't vote, I don't see the point. When do you ever hear about those little clans or clubs making a difference.

I feel like a minority in my own country. This is England. But say you grab ten people from my town. Only one of them would be English. When I go out in Barking, I feel like I'm in a different country. I wish I was Polish. I'd get further in life. Being English, you get fuck all.

What else am I going to do? I've got no one else to spend time with. Where am I going to meet people? All my friends just want to drink.

Ryan Sampson, 39, public official and spokesperson

History shows that when there's an economic decline, people start trying to blame others. Two thirds of the borough has been sold under the right to buy program. For decades, this borough didn't change because we had Ford's, which gave people status and community stability. And everybody else revolved around that. At it's peak, Ford employed 50,000 people and then there were its secondary suppliers. So of the biggest housing estate ever built at the time, half of the borough depended on that. Between the right-to-buy program in the 1980s and the factory basically shutting in 2002, people looked around and said, "Wait a minute, the kids are grown, the house is worth lots of money, I'm getting a pension, let's retire, buy the house, and make a small fortune selling it off." So after decades of no change, in 2002, one in five families moved to Clacton, Canvey Island, Wickford, Chelmsford and other parts of Essex.

The people able to buy left the borough, and the newcomers were primarily black and Eastern European. It was an all-white neighborhood, known for being racist and having

enclaves of immigrants—neither of whom would talk about it. Heard this one before?
The history of Whitechapel happened all over again.

No one explained to the remaining people why this change was happening. Including the Labour Party. This all made space for the extreme right and their narrative.

The people left behind were poorly educated, because people were trained to work at Ford's.

If the BNP had put up enough candidates in 2005, they would have run the whole Council. No one realized the extent of the anger, dissatisfaction and loneliness.

And Labour was too busy blaming everybody else. The borough has two career politicians, not constituency politicians. They may not have woken up to it because they're too busy in Westminster, but what Labour needs is activism. People are feeling marginalized because the state is retracting along with the support system they've come to depend on. Benefits are getting cut full scale. This causes new anxiety and pressures, but also resentment. People have the view that people come off the boat and get everything.

The EDL is based on football hooliganism. Some of those people never grew up from the 1980s and the InterCity Firm.

Big business are the people who run this country. Every cabinet member is a multimillionaire. They haven't eaten egg and chips. They don't know what it's like to be on the housing list for four years, to not have the heating turned on, to not have enough money to support your children. We forgot to listen to the working class.

The Tenants and Residents Associations are as bigoted as the BNP. The federation is run by the same people who ran it 15 years ago. Just look at the names on the list of presidents.

Labour came from Christian working class values. We lost touch with the people who matter.

Ashton Roberts, 24, artist

As a white British person, I feel out of place. Out of place in my hometown. I used to think this place was the best place in the world. You could go out, just like the old East End. White people, we haven't got a community, whereas black people promote their togetherness with charities and pride. But we have no initiative to form a group and better ourselves. I believe the influx of immigrants has pushed us apart. And I'm not blaming them. If I were in their situation, I'd want to live here too. The government put them in and pushed us out.

You got different types of people. There are people like me who went to diverse schools, and are used to being around people of different backgrounds. But then there are people who are not used to it and need to be. And third, you got some who never met a black person in their lives.

I was not interested in the BNP because a lot of my friends are not white. My best mates have frequently been black. My girlfriend is black. She's Jamaican. And I hate that the BNP won't tolerate them.

I saw the EDL as a group that stood up for us, and didn't call us racist when we said what we believed. People of the same culture and class as me were standing up to terrorism and to groups trying to take our freedom away—like the people burning poppies and insulting the history of our country's victories over Fascism. I read about the EDL and saw that they're not exclusively for white people. One of the scouts, this black guy, asked me to stand up for my people. They said they fight extremist Muslims, but then I kind of realized that they were against extremist Muslims in general. At one rally, they threw bacon at the group "Muslims Against Crusades." I realized that we can't expect people to respect us if we don't respect them.

The BNP exploited us. They know we don't have a voice. They know the government doesn't give a shit about us. For 20 years, we haven't had a voice. But to get that voice, we have had to agree to be torn apart.

There's a new breed of white kid here now, and they're angrier. These kids don't even know what it's like to have a voice. But at school, they are now subject to reverse discrimination from teachers who are easier on black students because they are fearful of being labeled a racist. So now if there's a dispute, teachers always go harder on the white kid. If we were just an equal country.

The lowest of the low in this community are the traveler Gypsies, who are looked at with disgust. Then just above them, it's us. Then Asian people. Then black people. Then Eastern Europeans. And then comes the middle class, because they're still able to get away from it all. Multiculturalism—that idea is above everything else. They want it to look like everyone gets on. And the price to pay is that some of the worst places in Britain are White working class.

I know that if I'm dating a black woman, no one can call me a racist. There's a sense that people care about the other ethnic groups. I watched a children's group take about 100 BME kids to a water fun park. And I thought to myself, why don't they do that for us?

I genuinely feel like it's special when different people sing off the same hymn sheet. I think it's brilliant when black and Asian kids feel so close to my culture to make it part of their culture. But because of slavery and colonization, I have to feel guilty for something I've never even seen—something my ancestors could never afford.

There is a sense of obligation to support the EDL cause, as a litmus test for patriotism. Many of the BNP/EDL types use African American rap music as a way to express their struggle. I rap too, all my mates do.

White boys turn into rude boys because they have no other culture to look up to. Those are the only role models they see. That's who's on the [music] charts.

Joel Lopes, 25, pub worker

I've got neighbors from everywhere. The West Indians make me goat curry all the time. I'm not a racist. I fucking love goat's curry, pardon my language. But the principle of English families not coming first is just not right.

[OFF THE RECORD]

Sam Orwell, 25, unemployed

GBP 4.50 is not worth getting out of bed for. I can't pay bills with that. This country's gotten very strict, and it's short on second chances.

Toby McEwing, 22, betting shop manager

I want to move to Essex, where it's quieter, a little out of the way but still on the rail lines to London.

Immigration has let so many people into the country. And I'm not against some of them, but there's got to be a limit. I work with a lot of people from different backgrounds, and they deserve to be here.

I never used to get involved in the politics, but I just started looking into it. When I went and voted for the first time, I met Nick Griffin who was arguing for British jobs for British people, and I agreed with that. I also went to a demonstration against Muslims Against Crusades. I just thought the army is fighting to keep our country safe, and some people fail to appreciate that. It was what young people my age were talking about. I agreed with what the philosophy of British jobs for British people. I knew a lot of people out of work and wanted them to have a job.

The way it came together, there were a lot of people who got their votes counted because a BNP candidate got elected. For them to do that, it made me feel like what I voted for made a difference. Now that I've read into it, I follow UKIP. Brad suggested I look into them because he knew what I believed in. I joined them at a protest demanding an EU referendum in the United Kingdom. None of [the politicians] came out that day, but

David Cameron did hear us eventually when he backed down from the EU bailout. Little old UKIP made a lot of noise.

I don't believe we have a say because big parties are going to overrule the smaller parties. I want to believe that I have a say. I could get more involved in UKIP, other than doing something really illegal like climbing Big Ben. Sometimes that's necessary, because people can't get themselves heard. But not by harming anybody.

A lot of people have kids because they think that's their way out, their way to freedom. So they're not careful, and when they get pregnant, they know it comes with a council flat.

Nicki Josephs, 22, sales assistant

Young people today have nothing to do. They hang about, just being a nuisance. People used to do things like go to the wildlife preserve. We need a community center where kids can play sports and get involved. I don't think anyone knows where to turn. I got involved with the TRA when I got burgled. I don't think they have an impact though. It's more about the police. They said they'd circle more but we were let down. I think you need to get more young police officers so that youths don't feel threatened by them. My voice ain't big enough. You need money, and when parents don't have any, the kids get into more trouble, and the parents go into more debt to pay for that trouble. I think the government is interested, but they've got a lot on and not much money. They're paying a hell of a lot of money to house people in flats. It cost GBP 800 per month for my flat, and I pay GBP 7 a week.

I don't vote. I know that's how you get your voice heard, and it could make a difference, but I'm not interested. I'm a single mum, I'm not working in order to support my 2-year-old. So instead of doing nothing, I joined the TRA to contribute something to the community. I know that there are some things we don't get told. There are some things that are hidden. I think the government is at the center though. I'm certainly not, or things would change. Instead, they're getting worse. There's no respect anymore. Young people are on the outside. They can't speak out for what they want.

Immigrants are taking a lot of jobs and homes, living here and knowing that they can survive off of benefits. Like the guy downstairs, he's a drug dealer on the side. And half of the immigrants are the ones bringing up all them scams. Yeah there are English people doing that stuff too, but eight times out of 10 it's a black person on the news.

If there's a job interview and an immigrant doesn't get it, they'll say the employer is racist. I feel like they're taking our jobs, homes, and everything that the government is trying to do for English people, they're getting it first. Even though there might be more white people on the dole, it may be because white people can't get jobs from employers who are scared to be called 'racist'.

I'm not racist, but the solution is to get rid of [the immigrants]. But there's nothing I can do. If we could just boot them out... I have black friends, but you can't just keep the nice ones. The British population is becoming more and more about immigrants. They're more central to British society. The government and everyone is scared.

Nancy Pemberton, 59, pensioner and activist

Everything's gone straight to hell. It was a community back then. It was predominantly English. There was an Asian girl. And there was one black boy whose mother was a big, fat lesbian who didn't live the quietest of lives. But we always got on, and the English were the majority. It has always been diverse what with us living so near the river. But I remember when we went around the houses for a Christmas charity about 10 years ago, and I noticed all the black faces. Now it's a million times worse.

The immigrants who came in the 50s all worked, they learned the language, crunched in a small house until each of them could afford their own. They were English, or as English as could be. These people in the 1950s didn't expect something for nothing. They integrated. They didn't try to change us into Africa.

The schools used to be 90% English, and now they're 90% African. The Asians live more like we do, but the Africans are different.

And it's a fact that we are a minority. There's not a school in the borough that's not 80% ethnic. Nobody English moved into this borough. They only move out. It's gotten to the stage where, even queuing for the loo, it's a novelty when you meet an English person to speak to.

Now there's lots of money pumped into the borough in the name of community cohesion. I know the Muslims want a mosque here [in Thamesview], but they haven't contributed to society. They don't want to be involved in our community, in our society. The Africans take over everything and turn them into happy clappy churches. They're all keen to praise God, but then go back to their fiddles [benefit fraud] and push past you to board the bus. I think it's in their make-up.

English people think there's nothing to look forward to, so there's a lot of apathy.

A woman from Harmony House came to us preaching. She was a horrible creature, trying to tell us to sign a 'belonging charter' promising to welcome new people. I told her what to do with it. If I went to a new country, I wouldn't dream of not learning the language or living like the indigenous population. This ward would look like the 3rd world if we didn't do something about it.

I won't allow myself to feel on the outside of my society. But a lot of other people are scared. They feel intimidated. Our kids just wander around, not sure what to do.

Kids have always picked on difference—spotty, fatty, honkie, blackie. But I think the anti-racists have made it worse. They look for trouble. They construe everything as racist—like my union flag. But it's not racist; it's our country's flag and it's up for the Jubilee anyway. They'd say the same about the cross in the undertaker's window. These people are ruining our country. And we're the only ones who can be racist.

If I could just bring back Maggie Thatcher. She would never have let all this happen.

The EU is actually promoting migration to England. It's the best place for benefits. And we've already got enough of our own who are too lazy to get off their asses. I got off the train in Barking one night and there were dozens of Romanian women with children, and it's clear they had been on the nick. Vile people, Romanians. Then you walk outside, and it's so loud with all the halal shops and rubbish in the streets. We look like a suburb of Nairobi. They're trying to put things right now, but they can't. It's too late.

I write to the local paper, and have a go if I have a bee in my bonnet. I think that I have some power locally, and I know I have some friends on the Council. People come up to me and tell me things that are going wrong. They're mostly English, except for the neighbors next to me.

I think our government is terrible. The whole country wants to have a referendum about the EU, and David Cameron won't do it. We're being dictated by an unelected group of people about our own country. Germany wants to rule the world. We beat them in the war, but they're still coming.

I vote every time. Last time, I voted UKIP. Before that, BNP. Once BNP got in, I thought they'd work for the community, but they didn't. They're far too right wing.

England is a white nation, but it has a black dot in the middle of it, and it's spreading outward. With a lot of the children being half-cast, there won't be a purely white person left. Barking has always been working class, but there's a hell of a lot of history here. The King moved the capital at one point to Barking Abbey. Captain Cook got married at St. Margaret's. I thought the BNP would prove that they were a force, but a lot of them didn't even turn up for the Council meetings. I voted for them because I was just fed up. You couldn't see an end to the black faces coming in. I shouldn't be a minority.

If they spoke English, it would make a tremendous difference.

Andy Dewhurst, 31, editor

A working class person needs to work much harder than a middle class person to get ahead. You'll be offered more chances and get more feet in the door if you're well spoken and your parents know the right people. My dad knows the right people if you want to get into the timber supply business!

The working class aren't blameless because we would know more middle class people if we trusted them more than we do. But if someone speaks well, or wears a suit, people immediately think they're being judged.

You never class yourself as anything other than working class. You can keep whatever company you like, and have as much money as you'd like, but you'll always be a product of your working class roots. I wouldn't be surprised if Stelios [the former rags-to-riches CEO of EasyJet] called himself 'working class boy done good'.

Pam Reed, 51, bartender

We do have some horrible people here, and it's the foreigners. We've got a few black members who come to the club, but they came over [to the UK] in the 1960s. They're old school. People don't talk no more. Kids don't come to your house and have a sleepover. You used to always have friends around, kids parties, you know? All the people who were brought up here have moved out.

When you get off the bus, they don't say 'thank you' or 'excuse me'. But I'm not racist. I've got a grandson who's half-Sikh. My niece is seeing a black boy.

I've worked all my bloody life and I'm going into banks and seeing Africans come in with thousands of pounds in their hands, sending it back to Kenya or wherever they come from. And you wonder why we have a recession? Bleeding hard to work out. None of their money that they earn here is going back into our country.

It's the culture. Maybe they don't like us and don't want to mix with us. 'Cause you see them being friendly with their own people, but not one of them wants to talk to me. You know, I never thought of that.

Even the black club members don't like a lot of them. The Caribbeans seem to hate the Nigerians.

The fact is that they're here to earn their money, they send it back, and then they go back. The old stock came over here and settled here, but the new ones don't. So they don't respect our property, those bleeding foreigners. They should get to work here, but they should earn it and not have access to our bleeding benefits.

Back then, you had the Sikhs and the Pakis. They were workers. But the Lithuanians and the Romanians today are stealing. I wouldn't dream of going abroad and thieving. But we're so soft here. We'll catch them and then set them free so they can go and do it again.

The night clubs are filled with blacks and Eastern Europeans, going there to pick up young English girls with blonde hair. It's not like it used to be.

You can't do nothing. All us people moan about it, but we don't do anything because we'll be arrested and called 'racist'. Don't get me wrong. There are some nice ones, but not the majority.

The Government, the Council, they don't live around here. They don't see what's going on in our streets. They've got big houses out in the country. My friend paid rent and taxes all her life, but she would never get a council flat. Our kids get shoved to one side, so that teachers can focus on teaching the foreign kids English.

I voted for the BNP because I was sick of the Government, sick of them. I thought about it and we don't do anything about it. We should get together, but what can we do?

I know we're never going to be one culture. But Barking and Dagenham is a dumping ground for foreigners. It's not like the other boroughs. The Government says we're going to stop immigration. But they can't send someone back once he's torn up his passport.

Us white people don't get out of bed for work, and some of the foreigners will work for it. I think that's all wrong too. A job's a job, and all the boys on the dole should know that.

These new parties [like the EDL and UKIP], they're a waste of time. You can't trust nobody.

We're at the bottom of the list. We are on the outside.

You think to yourself, 'I'm paying for him.'

Whew! That feels better now!

Eleanor Hodgkins and Poppy Moore, 72 and 73, pensioners

EH: But where are they coming from, Margaret?

Hodge: Many are second and third generation immigrants. A lot of people have sold their houses and left Barking and Dagenham. Listen, you're never going to change it back again. All you can do is make it better for your children.

PM: But Margaret, they're in and they're out. Why do we let them do it?

Hodge: With the buy-to-let people, no one is buying who has a commitment to the community. But you can't control it. It's no one's fault: the Government, the Council, no one's. But you can recreate the community spirit.

PM: The smells from the houses will make you heave. And on the Heathway, there's too many strange stores selling odd meats and vegetables.

Hodge: Well, some people like it.

PM: Margaret, would you please live here for two or three weeks and see what it's like?

Hodge: I'm here pretty often... Listen, times have changed and we have to move on with them.

EH: I feel sorry for my grandkids.

Hodge: Look, we want good schools and jobs for them. What worries me is the 18-year-olds coming out of school or college with no work. That's the fault of the Tories and this Government with all their cuts.

PM: You would have made the same cuts.

Hodge: Not like this. Every young person would be employed, apprenticed or in training. Now come on, don't mope. You don't have it that bad.

PM: We're getting things taken away. I can't even get my eyes tested.

Hodge: Yes, you can.

PM: No, I can't.

Hodge: Yes, you can.

PM: No, I can't.

Hodge: Yes, you can.

PM: No, I can't.

Hodge: Yes, you can. Don't feel so cross.

PM: It makes me feel cross just to walk up the Heathway.

Poppy Moore, 73, pensioner

How can she tell us to make a change? How can we? We're pensioners. If our [English] shops are shutting, how can their [immigrants'] shops afford to open up? We could really do with a decent clothes shop. The politicians all go up there and say what they're going to do. But they never do it.

I voted BNP. I can't help it. They call them Nazis. But they're not. They're Britain for Britain. Labour sent them all down here and [Hodge] won't tell me where they come

from. I think they fiddled the votes, so that the BNP did not get one candidate in. Whoever is at the top. Barking and Dagenham has always been white working class, but the council was always for us. What did my grandparents work for? An Asian woman told me that I'm a racist. So I said, 'Well you made me one.' Why can't Margaret Hodge see the change in this place?

Vincent Dogan, 38, unemployed and party activist

The first thing that went through my head was to phone up the British National Party. I had an utter revulsion and hatred toward blacks. At the time, I wanted something Nazi, and through the whispers, I knew the BNP was that party. The party was like a second parent to me, a moral guide. Kids are very impressionable. The militarism, the racism, the hatred appealed to my anger. It channeled my emotions into something positive. Kids are very impressionable.

A couple of weeks ago, I was speaking to a priest and I said [joining the BNP] was all a waste of 20 years of my life. But he told me that it was not because the experience and thought processes that occurred and the way I feel since my departure has allowed me to look at things from a different perspective. There have been times when I nearly walked away from politics. But when you've been so physically and emotionally involved, to let it all go is easier said than done. As soon as I get involved in a discussion, the fire starts and the passion is there. Barking and Dagenham was my baby. Before me, nothing was happening here. [redacted] I kept coming back then, and maybe there's a deluded hope that I can make a difference again.

I didn't give a toss about the ideology. It was the hunger for power. It's the most overriding aspect of politics. Not money. Without power, you can't do anything, whether for good or bad. I gave my heart and soul to the BNP, but now it's full of pricks, misfits and degenerate people. Good people left because of what Nick Griffin did to people who once looked up to him. He betrayed all of us. He's guilty of treason to the people and the nation. All that hope has been flushed down the toilet so that he can secure his position as leader and money-grabber.

When I arrived in 2004, it was a sight for sore eyes. There just weren't as many ethnics living here as in Hackney then. The first thing I noticed when I came out of Dagenham Heathway Station was how white it was. And I told people here, 'You've got a nasty surprise coming your way.' I saw it as a political opportunity. The white demographics were vastly in favor of the BNP.

You talk about democratic failings, look here first. If you're not part of the [Liberal Democrat, Labour or Conservative Parties'] trick, you're not mainstream. It's a trick. They all agree on everything, except for the minutiae of tax. They all want to stay in Europe, allow migration, and destroy British industry.

We've lost our identity. When you've got whites walking around with trousers beneath their arseholes, listening to gangster rap and mimicking their physical mannerisms. I was in Tesco the other day, and I wanted to shake the cashier and tell him he's not one of them.

These days, you've got the Black Police Association and ethnic organizations like that. But when the native population wants to organize, it's construed as racist. That is a hypocritical double standard. People like David Duke; I'd like to speak to him someday.

I've heard of vote-rigging by Labour. If the BNP were involved in similar things we'd be just as bad as them. To use a line from 'Star Wars: Attack of the Clones,' Natalie Portman's character Padme says to Anakin: 'That sounds like a dictatorship.' He replies: 'If it works...'

Sometimes totalitarianism can do some good. We can take a little something from each of the different governing ideologies. I like the appeal of not being afraid to stand up for yourself. I find the militarism appealing. I don't want to invade Poland, but when I see the black and white images of 'Triumph of the Will', I think it's proud, forthright, unashamed, strident. The events that occurred after 1939, some might consider them aggressive nationalism. That's not what I would favor, because European nations shouldn't attack each other. [Despite my admiration,] that kind of fascism would not work here. To quote Mussolini, 'Each fascism finds its own identity.' To a young mind, it can be inspirational, but you have to change with the times.

The idea was a vision of what could be better than what we have. That's a triumph of the will. The way the BNP went about it was unprofessional, the electioneering. You don't win by sitting at a table and passing out pamphlets like we did here at the Heathway. You win by door knocking, talking to people.

I initially wanted to re-create the swastika, but that was borne by anger and resentment. In that way, the mugging was a blessing in disguise, because it got me angry and let me find the BNP. The militarism, the racism, the hatred appealed to my anger. It channeled my emotions into something positive. I would never have pulled a Brevik though, because I don't like prison food. It might sound weird, but I understand his ideology. I don't agree with what he's done because he killed some people that were completely innocent. Somebody should have channeled his political thoughts in a negative way. Do it through the ballot box. But there are some things I would do that would make Stalin blush. Politicians should be executed to leave an echoey hall of Parliament. There is a void to fill today. Ex-BNP members just need a little electoral success to get started again.

Militarism is about rebuilding the armed forces. People join it to recreate the 1930s, but that's misguided. The BNP was not about that. Its goal was to restore Britain to greatness. Since the British Nationality Act in 1946, this country has known nothing but problems. When the white birth rate is lower than the ethnics, you know things are heading down. The Luftwaffe's actions were small compared to our current demographic annihilation.

The immigration since 1945 was deliberately designed to change this country. People said that we needed them for post-war labor shortages, but that is a lot of shit. They just didn't want to pay proper wages.

[When asked how he was accepted given his Turkish Muslim heritage...] If the BNP had a problem with me, then that's their problem. I know what I wanted, and I wasn't going to let some fuckhead stop me. Sorry to put it in abusive terms, but sometimes an emotional response is useful.

The British identity will go the way of the Americans. But it will be Islamicized. Birthrates what they are, the fact is that the British people no longer look to the Church of England. Muslims are setting out to build masjids everywhere. If push comes to shove, they would want this country to be Islamic. [What about your Muslim family members?] I'm not sure. [Would you be in favor of repatriation, knowing that you would be on the boat too?] Possibly. I might go, because that would mean that my work here is done. I don't think the Titanic was big enough.

To destroy a people, you need to first destroy their identity. It can only be described as treasonous lunacy. 'For whom the Gods wanted to destroy, they first made mad.' We've been lied to, deceived; there are an array of weapons used against the British people to lower our wages to slavery. With the population removed, they can remove any threats.

The EDL is a beer-swiggung bunch of louts with no understanding of grassroots politics. They prefer to respond with riots, after which they receive all the blame.

[redacted] The Council's chief executive referred to the BNP as the 'elephant in the room'.

Bryan MacIntosh, 41, computer technician

My shop survives on repairs. We sell a few new computers and laptops, but most of our money comes from repairs. And that sums up the borough. People just want to fix things up to the way they are, rather than invest in something new.

With politics, there's no real difference for the likes of us. They're all in it for themselves. They don't want what's right for the country.

Callum Everett, 19, unemployed

Because the economy has been so bad, the prices have gone up and people will do anything to get a bit of money. They're putting taxes on everything, so people are robbing houses, selling drugs, and mugging just to get a tenner.

You can't do anything about it. Maybe you can elect someone to make it better. There was one candidate that was going to evict all the immigrants and give jobs to all the British people, but he lost. It's harder for me because [the immigrants] are coming over here to take our jobs, live here, and leave us with nothing. Their countries are proper poor, but now we are too. If they keep electing the same people, the rich will just get richer and the poor will get poorer.

We should both be treated the same. Instead, people look at you and judge you. But if you're wearing a brand new tracksuit, they'll think you got money. If you're different, that's when you get picked on. So people are joining groups just to defend themselves. If people are really poor or living on the streets, they get the shit kicked out of them. My mum said she ready a story about that in the newspaper. But the divide between the rich and poor is just how it's been. Everyone is against each other. It's all about postcodes: IG11, RM9, E3.

There are other ways to change things, but one person can't make a difference. They need to be funded. I don't vote, because I don't know how to and I don't want to get involved. But I would because I want someone who's going to help this country, not destroy it.

Unless you've got high qualifications, you're not going anywhere. The problem is that people are having kids at 15, 16 and 17, or getting involved in gangs. The system is fair to some people. It ain't fair to us though, because we'll get nicked just for suspicion. Even at the Job Centre, you've got to know the system. But people get intimidated.

Immigrants are against the system, just like we are. But we're not going to other countries, working for little money and nicking people's jobs. This is how they do it. They have babies here, so they can say they need to stay here to raise them.

Because everyone else was rioting over that boy who got shot, people thought, 'Why not? I might as well go out and riot too.' They see it on telly and want to be a part of it. Just to get free stuff, X-Boxes, PS3. People are being stupid. But even the police are doing dodgy things, like taking cannabis off of dealers and beating suspects. I reckon it's going to get worse. It ain't going to get any better. If it ain't changed by now, what going to make things change.

I just want a good life. Nice job, family, nice cars, a beautiful wife. But that's just a dream. I don't know anyone that has that though. Those who come close get it by robbing. I see the queen and the royals on telly with all the flashy stuff, and then I look at my pockets and think 'I want that.'

Danny Drysdale, 21, railworker

We all want the good life. But there aren't any opportunities out here. Not unless you're going to go for one of those talent shows, like Britain's Got Talent. I don't pay attention to the politics. I just take things day-by-day.

Emma Terrington, 69, pensioner

I'm a grackle [foreigner]. I came from Devon 22 years ago. Only a few families from back then are still around. My family are Cockneys from Wapping.

Over the last five years, three quarters of the houses were bought from the Council, sold them off, and the black and Asian people seem to have the money. We try to get them involved in the TRA, but they mostly just keep to themselves. I think it's cultural. They don't want to know. It's really odd. The couple next door, they're Barking born-and-bred, but they're Muslims and they don't want to join the Committee and integrate. It's peculiar. They keep their curtains closed all day, but how can they live in semi-daylight? They'll come out to our events though, like when we rent a bouncy castle.

I was living in the Gascoigne, but they moved in a lot of black single parent families. I hate to say it, but it's the truth. It's very quiet here. When Scratton Farms was built, they used to call it Hollywood because everyone found it posh. We're isolated, but I like it. The Council forgets about us societies, but then my husband gets on them.

In that social club, half the men are stuffing half the women, and half the women are stuffing half the men. I don't want to watch the drunkards perform or associate myself. I don't want to sound like a snob because I'm not above nobody. I'll talk to anybody. But they're commoner's muck. I've run rougher pubs, but I don't like their language and don't need that anymore. The Maxwell family runs the place. Dave has gotten away with murder twice.

Barking has been overrun by Eastern Europeans. The ones next door are living free thanks to social services, but they have a newer car than us, and are always dripping in gold. They're thieving.

What Enoch Powel said was right. Cheap labor's fine, but immigrants are taking all the work. If they do something wrong, the company can sack them too. But we have to let them in thanks to the EU. Immigrants will work hard because their jobs are less secure.

Perhaps I'm being unfair, but I haven't heard about the good ones. I don't think they want to integrate. They live differently from the way we do. We tend to hear about the bad ones, so I don't want to be racial, but they're different. They want to live here, but they want to bring their culture with them. I think we've just let too many in. We're a small country, and something has to give.

If more ethnics were born than whites, it would frighten me. There's no discipline or boundaries. There are no youth clubs, so there's nothing to do.

Fiona Harrison, 23, florist and business owner

I wouldn't call a random person 'nan' anymore. But that's what she was. Today, people have just moved in from different areas, and people just keep to themselves more. You used to know everyone from somewhere or from someone's family. The older people still know a lot of the other older people. A lot of people go on about them, but I see just as many rude English people in my shop. A lot of young people hang around, smoking, mucking about, stealing things from the shops. So, oh God, people trust each other less.

The shops around here used to sell more homemade things. Now they're—and I don't want to be racist, but—they're not English, and they all sell the same things.

In my family, my dad was never the easiest man to talk to. But my mum was, and she would always speak with Dad for me. My friends would often not speak to either of their parents much. Dads often don't have much time for their kids. Some parents are very forceful with their ideas on their kids, and don't give them a chance to form their own opinion.

It's easier not to work. When I was pregnant, I was entitled to much fewer benefits because I worked at the shop six days a week, and we took in too much money before overhead. When you work, you're just not getting as much. You're rewarded for not working. It makes people like me bitter. Some people just finish school and sign on [for welfare]. 'Well my parents are on them,' they say. We're paying for them to not work. That's how people look at it. You get more money when you're pregnant, and even more when you're partner is not living with you.

Say it bothered me enough to do something about it, I wouldn't know what to do. The only person I know in the borough that does this stuff is Margaret Hodge.

I don't see things getting better because nothing is changing. If they start to try to take more benefits away, there will be more riots. The mentality of people here is that they don't think much farther than they can see. They're not well educated. And neither am I really, but at least I listen.

The colored people do a lot of work in this country. And many have been here for years. People are supporting the BNP without knowing what they really stand for. They just want the colored people out.

The riots escalated because people had enough of how things are with the benefit cuts and job shortages. People are angry, and the problems so a lot higher than where they are.

George and Harry Carlisle, 26 and 24, movers

I'm not racist, but this used to be a nice community of English people, before all the Albanians and Africans came over. I don't know how they do it, really. They're really ignorant, but they come off the plane and open up shops straight away. They make their own communities and gangs. I hadn't really heard of stabbings until they were around. 80% of knifings are done by blacks. That's just a fact.

There's not a damn thing you can do about it. You just put up with it or leave. My mate got stabbed in the leg and back by four or five black guys. If it were the other way around, it would have been racist. This country's got an open gate. And the only people who can stop the problem don't see it. I'd rather go off benefits than feed someone else. Just because a dog is born in a barn, it doesn't make him a horse.

We're outnumbered in a town like this, we're overrun here. You look after your own first. Charity starts at home. My grandparents fought in the war, and thought that you got to put in before you can get out. They're here to rape our country, and when there's nothing left, they'll go home.

I was supposed to go door-to-door [for the BNP], but I just don't think I'll say the right things or do the job. I think I come across a bit ignorant, and I don't have all the right information to put out there. I might sound racist.

The majority of white English people here have given up. They have punched us into the sink so much that there's going to be a civil war. There's only so far you can go before there are riots and uproar. It's on a wobbly edge right now. There's no one else to talk to, to listen to us, to hear our story and take action.

The last bit of riots here had nothing to do with this. It was just a bunch of kids, looking for the opportunity to get new trainers. It was a bunch of mindless yobbers. It could be part of the frustration though. There's nothing for kids to do when they're out of school. In this world, everything looks so pristine on telly, nice and gold. Everyone wants a bit of that, but none of us are going to get it. And when you ain't got it, I was robbing and thieving warehouses and stores.

But I'm not going to join a bunch of idiots, just to get a pair of trainers. If it's about the right thing, I'll be there. Like when British soldiers returned home from the war, and a group of Muslims turned up to call them rapists.

People watch movies about gangsters and they drop their trousers, flip their caps up, sell a few bags of weed and think they're suddenly tough. Then they get a knife to make a name for themselves.

I think we fall outside, but we should be falling right in the middle. But we're not going back to the center without a fight, or we might as well go to another country. You just feel like you're not meant to be here. You feel like you're not wanted in your own country. I've grown up with it and this is my hometown.

It'll take one big thing to spark it all off. And once it starts, it ain't going to stop. You can feel the tension. It will be released, and in such a way that the whole country's going to have to do something about it. How long are people going to put up with it? I blame my parents and their generation because they just swallowed the change and accepted it. They just went about it the wrong way. They were pretty racist. It should not be about color; it should be about work ethic and the nature of the system. There was nothing constructive before.

We're not part of the EDL movement. We're all Barking and Dagenham and we stuck together. We were just talking about it in the pubs and in the community. I said, 'Yeah, I'll go out there too.' Everyone knows everyone here in the pub, so we talk about it.

My ideal is everyone working together. But how is that going to work when you've got eight different communities together? That wouldn't work anywhere in the world. I'm happy to go to work, pay my rent, get a girlfriend, and go out on weekends with my friends. Money is just a bonus. I just want the simple life, where hard work pays off, where you get out what you put in.

My nan is like my world. I don't know my dad, I don't talk to my mum. She's never really been there, after having me at 17. My nan is a proper, old-fashioned, East End lady. It's people like that who put this country together. She looks around and can't believe the sorry state we're in. My granddad would be turning in his grave. There were bombs all around, and my nan was getting up at 5am to get this country working. It's true what she says: this country can't support itself this way. We have enough bums here already without flying more over.

Unemployment stresses you out. It feels like shit. Everything's tight. Sometimes you get in such grief that it feels like there's no point in trying.

Joe Fallon, 19, McDonalds server

The riots are a way young people fight against their oppression by the ruling class. We feel like we don't have control. We're being ignored and stereotyped by the government as being in gangs. Rioting is a more direct way of releasing tension. If they do it in a civil way, then they're more likely to be ignored. How is working to make myself sufficient making me less self-sufficient? I want a society with more fairness between the different classes, where the richer people pay their share of tax.

My friend is basically homeless, but the government has told her, 'Tough'. They think she's your typical rebellious kid.

Charlotte and Jade Jansen, 18 and 30, beauticians

It's not fair how the classes are divided. With the economic crisis, loads of working class people lost their jobs, while bankers got bonuses. It's now really hard to find a job. I think the ladder to success exists, but right now, a lot of students are straight out of uni without opportunities. Still, I think if you try hard, and put your mind to it, you'll move up.

The riots weren't really hurting the government. They were destroying other working class people's stuff. It was just seizing the opportunity to steal stuff. Word spread via text message about meeting places. I ignored them.

Margaret Hodge, Member of Parliament

When I arrived in 1994, after all my work in the multicultural environment of Inner London, I was used to poverty and deprivation. But what hit me here was how white it was and how many great grandmothers there were.

The ones who are stuck here are the ones who can't move. The people who say to me, 'I can't get over the changes happening,' that's code for immigration. They really are at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder. Many are out of work. Low educational qualifications. No skills. They're being replaced by migrants. It is sort of cultural in that they are stuck in their dependency on Ford's as the employer, on the government to provide benefits, and on the local Council for housing. There is no ambition or aspiration. There is no sense of entrepreneurship.

I don't fit it right, you know. And they're suspicious of me. They respect me because I do the work. But I don't like the football. I don't go to West Ham matches. I don't go to the pub and get the pints. I'm not vitriolic, and demanding that every pedophile be hanged. My family is Jewish and we're middle class. It's not where you live, but where you spend your time.

Barking and Dagenham does not have the world's most capable authority. It's Tammany Hall. The Labour Party six years ago was old, white, male members of trade unions. Now it is diverse, multicultural people of different ages. A lot of my people are there. We built the Margaret Hodge brand, not the Labour brand, because Labour has been unpopular. The problem is that the old council is low-spend, low-rent, and the state is perceived to be the only provider, so they have failed to invest in any civil society infrastructure. This lot just don't get it. They don't fund the voluntary sector, full stop. There is no understanding of civil society, and public services are crap. I depend on grassroots politics now. It's all about connecting, engagement.

With white working class people, their politics start at their front door. They are very traditional. They are unchallenging of authority. They believe they should be in Council housing.

We are all racist. It's embedded in us. You can't blame [white working class constituents]. Immigration really impacts them, and that's what the BNP exploited: legitimate anxieties and a lack of investment in public infrastructure. But people don't understand the real BNP agenda, and a lot of the people have naturally Conservative views, with a capital C.

National politicians are petrified by race, so they try to avoid it. When they're forced to engage it, they address it in terms of immigration—something that they can't control—so they fail. When we close one route [of entry], immigrants pop up somewhere else. We were bloody stupid to pretend to be doing something. We need to just acknowledge that migration is a feature of globalization and that it is inevitable. But the people of Barking and Dagenham think it is unfair. And I also think it is unfair.

[Have you told that to your minority constituents?]

Yes, many agree with me.

I think that if you are an economic migrant, you should have to put in before you can take out. First when it comes to housing and schools, and then with health care and schooling. You'll lance the racism that way.

Lucy Iverson, 49, tanning salon owner

Loads of my clientele now come from Europe. They like to tan, and I'm grateful for that. That's the society we live in, so we need to live together. Older generations are set in their ways. Years ago, people found foreigners very intimidating, when they weren't working yet, and were sitting around in the town center. It was such a big influx all at once. It was not a gradual thing, you know.

Young people are getting frustrated about getting a raw deal with the work situation. I hear them moaning in my shop about the housing.

They're redoing the road here, and the Council asked the businesses what we'd like it to look like. I asked for CCTV, nice lighting, palm trees and flowers! We want it to look like the nice village it is.

Having a job, you're not out of the loop. It opens your eyes, especially when you're doing things yourself. You meet people from all walks of life. You're just more aware.

As a woman, there were very strong women who went through the war, and I think we inherited that strength.

The BNP was the only way to have a voice. It had nothing to do with being racist. We were just bursting at the seams. They ruffled a few feathers. And we did get a change of [national] Government in the end. But you know, Labour will always be here.

We still have that East End friendliness of saying 'hi' on the road. We're still here too. Other English people might have moved out, but we're not going anywhere.

Kyle Downey, 21, unemployed

Fuck the government. It's hopeless. People in power are going to stay in power. It's all rigged. They'll stay in power no matter what you say. So your vote is wasted. I've thought about getting involved. But before I figured out how I can make my point, things get already done.

The Government is squeezing everyone. Everyone's broke. And rioters wanted to do something about it. They were sending a message to the government saying 'You can't control us.' If everyone rose up, we'd outnumber them 10 to 1. I don't like how they'll say they'll do something when they come into power, and then do nothing. For the little man, there is no other way to put your message across than to hurt them or to hurt their profits. The world is either going to blow up or there's going to be a new world order.

I wish I had rioted too. These days, you got to have money to do anything. I'm not broke or anything. But it would have killed a few hours of my day, and I could have made some new friends.

The government is to blame. We have no opportunities, so the only way to make any money is by doing illegal stuff. Anyone from rich families have the chances. Unless you've got an IQ over 200, if you're from an area like this, you've got no hope.

Oscar Bradley, 21, forklift apprentice

The attitude of people toward each other, there's no respect. Politicians make me angry. It's a backward way of thinking about the community. They look out for themselves, and create services for rich people. If they lived out there with us, they'd experience what we go through.

The rich and poor are separated, and the middle people are on the other side. David Cameron concentrates on his type of people, the people who can afford decent homes. And the working class are left to do their own bit. I don't vote because I don't see what they do.

You need to blow something up. That's the only way England stopped. The last time was 7 July 2005. Either that or you commit a crime. It's about getting the attention of people at the top. The riots just proved that the underclass is more powerful than the upper class. We just don't work together. I think it was pure frustration and opportunism. Some kids were trying to take advantage of the situation, and showed how frustrated they are.

That just shows how if we did work together, we could take over. We need to work together to build a better life. But people are too busy fighting.

When I was doing (post-prison) community service, everyone was having a laugh and enjoying working together. But when it ended, the postcode wars start again and we are all rivals.

I've had a nice life at home. My mum is old-fashioned. She's very caring and always kicks me in the ass to get to work.

Paul Bibby, 20, plumber

I'm not racist but after the foreigner import came over, you don't really know everyone the way you once did. Even the English people lack respect now. Because all the foreigners created more anonymity, you can now get away with a lot.

It's one thing to talk about a council house; it's another to live in one. People think that you can get away with anything when it comes to benefits, that it doesn't affect your work ethic. There are no goals to go for, once you get on benefits. It's as if you've given up already. There are not enough people who want to advance. Life is too easy. Can you imagine life in the 1930s or 1920s? Everything today is given to you on a plate.

I'm working class, but then there is the bunch under us, committing crimes.

If you've got the effort and time, you can work your way up, and move into London. But most people just relax and have a beer. I'd rather have a nice, easy job, and see my friends on the weekend.

One of my mates from work got sacked for getting caught looting, and he was on the same wage I'm on. People think they have no chance of moving up except through the lottery. That guy had gotten the job through the "Youth Offenders" program. It's not worth it. I'm against crime. But there are a lot of people living a nice life from lives of crime.

If you were here in the 1960s, everyone was the same. Culture, religion, country, goal. Now you've got so much variety, people can't cope. Can you imagine 20 different wild animals in the same room? Those people in the 1960s had it harder. I work in council flats, and the standard of living there is not nice. They're struggling. In the 60s, there was no underclass because everyone had to work. Many of those people are members of today's underclass. I don't see how things are going to get any better. When the rich man starts to lose money, that's when people start to care.

Luke Wilkinson, 25, flooring laborer

People blame joblessness, but a lot of young people are lazy. It's too easy not to work.

We were brought up with different races. There were just as many nationalities in school as white British students. It's the parents who don't want to adapt.

I voted for the Tories because of family influence. Dad said it would be good for business.

A lot of demonstrations, people have nothing to do with it. They just jump on the bandwagon. The riots were a hit back for everything people were angry about. It was an excuse to break things. No one knew the victim [of the beating] personally. They see on the news that you can smash the windows of JD Sports and get a hooded jumper. They knew they'd get away with it.

I went straight out of school at 16 and into the family business. I'm from a Poplar family, that moved East for the cheap houses 25 years ago.

My mate's worked really hard, and without going to university, he's got what he wanted.

I don't think we have much of an effect on what's going on. Even if I were a teacher. In a selfish way, I just want to be the best that I can be. Trying to change things is a waste of time. I don't depend on the government for what I want to do, even though that contradicts my disagreement with the fee rises.

Even if I got really rich, I'd still have a working class mentality. I'd have a nice car and all that, but the people I'd get along with are here.

I can't get along with people from Chelsea. They look down on people who speak like us East End Cockneys. My mate from here started a job in Chelsea, and they are quite stuck up with him over there with all of his "Hello Darlin'!" I think that if I went for the same job against someone from Chelsea, they would get it because of the way I speak and the way I look. They wouldn't wear tracksuit bottoms. You're labeled a 'chav.'

Rhys Williams, 23, unemployed

People think that they're above jobs like cleaning. Most of the tension is between people on the far right and radical Muslims. People just don't like change.

I'm in 10,000 pounds of debt after one year of uni, and now I can't go back because of the fee rise.

I've signed online petitions, but I never went to any of the protests. I think it's a lost cause. Nothing would have come of it. In recent times, little has come of political activism. I don't think the little people are cared about.

I think if you want to do something and work hard enough, you can do it. Even if you're bad at school, you can do a foundation degree. I'm considering studying to be a paramedic or a teacher. But I have an interview to be a train engineer apprentice. As long as I earn a bit of money and don't work horribly unsociable hours. I really want to be a teacher, but the fees are too high.

It might help if I had a model to follow. There are some people who I admire, but just because I think they're cool people, like [musician] Frankie Ocean. None professionally. I've seen people in TV adverts, like [musician] Billy Bragg grew up in Barking. But I don't know anyone who's climbed up the ladder. There is [footballer] John Terry. That's the role model.

My sister married a school headmaster, and she has a middle class life. They have a cleaner in their house, and they moved to the South End. And the family, we joke how she's now middle class. But really, she's just done well for herself. Everyone who's from here always comes back from time to time.

Sean Manning, 22, unemployed former drug dealer

There are too many drugs, gangs and prostitutes.

We are the minority. How many white people do you see? Immigrants take the free money and free housing in all the tower blocks. It makes me feel helpless, because I can't do nothing about it. A few of my friends are different colors and I don't judge them. It's a small group of people who are ruining others' lives. I've had the chance to sell drugs too, but I can't because I have a 2-year-old son.

All I can do is look after myself and my family. Just sort myself out and be a good dad to my son.

People rioted because the police think everyone has a bomb or a knife on them. The police think that they can get away with hurting people. People are sick of it. They don't want to take it anymore, and that's how the younger generation lashes out. It's a message back.

The government runs the country. They manage telly and pollute people's minds. Everyone is worried about jobs and the recession. I had the opportunity to riot, but I didn't because of my son. Otherwise I would be with the people who were looting and trying to make money. That's all it's about. Because no one's got any.

In the underworld, there's a ladder. You start at the bottom, get a job, and put your mind to it. The real world is the same. It's just not as violent or dangerous. I'm trying. I don't give up that easy. I send CVs and phone numerous employers.

But I'm on the outside. I'm on benefits. I'm living with my brother. And you have to work your way inside. That's how it works. Look at [investor and television personality] Sir Alan Sugar. He started with nothing. But he's done it. He's made it. It's the mentality. Some people have the street mentality of drugs and robbery. Other people do it the proper way and work their way up.

Terry Hammonds, 18, retail worker

Normally people go out to work but it's really hard to find work. Most of the people here are rude, frustrated after a pint. There are tough tries, but once you've got an interview, you've got a shot.

In this area, the economy has jobs for Asians, while the English here do the labor. You go for an interview and most of the employers are Asians. Basically, they're discriminating against us, and we were here first. I have some training as a retail sales assistant. But when I've submitted my CV, I've been told that I can't apply because I'm not Asian. That's racist toward us. I feel like I'm beneath them. They walk around like they're higher than us, when we were the ones who welcomed them into our country. Everyone is really annoyed with it. I feel like I'm on the outside looking inside to the immigrants. We can't communicate with them. We can't do nothing. We just sit here and let it happen. Except when we vote. There's no other way to get your point across. When people come from a different country, the government gives them housing and other things straight away. White people have to wait and wait.

People come to the pub to have a rest from the outside. This is where they have their time together. They're just looking for a beverage and a chat with other Englishmen. They can't get that outside. Here, you can play darts, watch sport and talk. Outside, there are always gangs, and it's all black people.

People that work all their lives from the bottom of the ladder, they should get more from life. The people who never give up, the underdog. Some people make it there, but so many people give up halfway. They're lazy. They can't be asked. I've signed up for jobs and jobs and jobs, without response. But I keep going. You have to believe in yourself. I don't believe in the system. I believe in myself.

My dad was my role model. His first job was as a butcher at 16, and then he became a lorry driver who delivered all around the UK.

The riots were just about one boy who got killed in Tottenham, and they brought it over here and destroyed our stores and our way of life.

You don't see the future. But it's looking bad. I don't worry about it. I take one day at a time, and try to live it right.

You have to vote. It's just what you have to do. It's like a requirement. That's how you get one government out and get it back to how it was 80 years ago before there were black people, Asians, and immigrants here.

Theo Garrigan, 32, office cleaner

Diversifying Barking has only made things worse, because they're moving in the wrong people. For young males, if you're aged 18 to 25, your biggest problem is housing because you're not a priority. That's how the Council and the government think about you. It leads to crime. I just got out of two years in jail for actual bodily harm, fighting and theft. I've been in and out for more or less my whole adult life. I left home at 14 from a drug-addicted mother who was verbally abusive. I'm scared of my father.

If [the government] don't put you nowhere [to live], you're unstable. So you commit crimes to get money, so that you can buy drugs and alcohol in order to share it with people in exchange for living with them. I was robbing drug dealers just to live, and the council would not help. I've got a lot of willpower. I can just stop anytime. If the council had given me just a studio flat, I would have stopped everything. It was purely to live.

I'm fully trained in cleaning science. I have no problem with the job market. I know people are saying that the economy is fucked, but they're looking at the wrong jobs. They only look at the jobs that they want to do. Look for the jobs that no one wants to do, but that pay you the same wage.

The government means nothing to me. If the Queen died tomorrow, the only thing that would change in my life is the head printed on my bank notes. It's everyone out for themselves. As soon as we start getting involved, we get arrested. There's no space for vigilantes. I don't want to get involved.

I think if you're willing to work hard, you'll reap the benefits. If you're not honest, you don't get nowhere in life. If I were out [of prison] during the riots, I would have done it. I'm not sure I would have thrown missiles at Old Bill [police]. But I would have looted. If the Job Centre pays me GBP 53 per week and expects me to get by without committing a crime, it's just not possible. People wanted money. But the government imprisoned people for 14 months for stealing a pair of shorts. The amount it costs to put them away would have paid their benefits for twice that amount of time. You get three meals a day, showers, toothpaste, toothbrush, deodorant, free training and a bed to sleep in.

People don't care about other things. It's just money. It's what makes the world go round.

I want my sons and daughters to look up to me. And I know in my heart that I can move up the ladder. I don't care about what anyone else thinks of me.

Finn Peterson, 26, railworker

I went out [to the riots] for the fun. All my mates were out there, and I thought I'd join them. They were just bored. There's nothing to do but commit crimes. All the things that go on in Barking, Dagenham, Newham and Stratford. That wasn't doing something about the problems we face; that was making things worse than they already are. There was no point. It was just fun. Around Barking and Dagenham, all you need to know is that people are going to do what they want to do. Nothing is going to stop them.

I'm not there anymore. I live here, but I'm not with that lot, doing those things. I'm not in the game.

[redacted]

Ewan Nickelson, 22, pipeline worker

I don't think everyone has a fair shot. A lot of people don't want to work, but I've been working since I was 13 years old. I looked up to my granddad who owned his own business. I still look everyday on the Internet and hand out CVs. But no one gets back to me, and I've got quite a good CV.

I've got a different perspective to everyone else. I know I'm different. I look at a lot of people and think how do I get there. I'd love to do it fast, but I know that's not how it works. You've got to get educated, trained, and I was told to go to college. I think I have an equal shot like anyone else. My granddad was adopted, living in Ireland, and after working for someone, he started his own company.

A lot of people blame foreigners, but everyone's got an equal opportunity at the end of the day. And yeah, a lot of foreign people do get jobs over English people, but I have a lot of Asian and black friends. I was replaced by cheaper Polish painters, but my time will come. I get along with people. I was brought up with diversity.

And besides, there's nothing you can do about it except change the government. But I've never been into voting. No one's ever told me I should try it. The government listens to the things it wants to listen to.

A lot of people rioted for the free stuff, which is stupid because you're vandalizing your own country for trainers or rice. A couple of my mates asked me, but I earn my money to pay for them trainers. I think the others were upset that the government doesn't want to listen to people like us. Some people just want their neighborhood to get heard.

I'm not as important as the prime minister. There's a reason for people to be in power—like the illuminati. Then there are people that run their own businesses, people that have money, famous people. I've been brought up without much money and I've always wanted to have a job and have the things that my family didn't have. My dream is to one

day have my own successful business, to employ youngsters like me and teach them what I've learned. That moves you somewhere, toward the inside.

Hayden Thomas, 28, unemployed

They don't give a fuck about us, so why should we give a fuck about them. f and get everything they want. I don't blame immigrants for it. I'd do the same thing too if I could move somewhere where I got better pay and housing. That's what you want. That's what you fucking want, isn't it?

I know who she's talking to. You might know them, but that doesn't mean you like them. She's a shithead. I can't stand her. Who's that? I don't know that cunt. There's no unity because there's not enough of us anymore. There's more of them, and I think you just get used to it. You say 'alright' to them, but you're not going to say much more. If anything happens, you know they'll be there. You see them around. But I stick to me own. You've just grown up around here.

In the riots, most of them were cunts who don't work and wanted to go out and nick some stuff. Some of them had a message, yeah, but the rest of them who followed don't know what that message was.

The immigrants are outside past us, but yeah, the government doesn't know because they don't have to live with them. It might be different when they live next door.

Hard work doesn't pay off. When you work, your money doesn't go nowhere, does it? You move up and you get sent straight back down. There is no one who has done it, except footballers.