

Adult Hair Discrimination Experiences.

All comments are responses to the below question and are based on UK adult experiences of hair discrimination. This file is to be used for evidence and learning about the severity and proliferation of Afro hair discrimination. The comments are taken from the School Hair Survey of 1000 UK adults, supported by De Montfort University. The survey was originally focused on education experiences but respondents were also asked about their general hair discrimination experiences. This extraction is just about adult experiences, including the workplace. The grammar is predominantly left as it was written during the survey.

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Q9 9. Have you ever been offended or had a negative experience towards your Afro-textured hair?

1. At work I was ask what happen to your hair it's all over the place
2. Been asked why did you cut all your hair off and go natural, I liked you Better with straight hair, or comments like 'what are you gonna do with that 'fro? as if it weren't okay to just wear my Afro.
3. People always want to touch your Afro hair or stare
4. I have locs and people sometimes make rude comments about how it looks or make assumptions that I am an aggressive strong political sister.
5. Went to a job interview and they told me my ponytail was " too out there", unlike Becky who had the same style as me. Guess who got the job.
6. Said it was nappy
7. Why is your hair tough and messy
8. Just things that 'were not meant to be offensive ' but were. Your hair is so noisy, it's so wiry, it's weird/funny.
9. People telling me my hair looked much better when straightened. The implication being that when it is not straightened is looks bad
10. Non black people, always trying to touch my hair, or make comments: how do you deal with your hair? It's so much I couldn't deal with my hair like that. I would also get comments from friends and family that have more mixed textured hair. The saying "pretty hair"
11. People have attempted to touch my hair. It's offensive to me because this assumes a sense of ownership over my body. Other black women have referred to natural styles in the professional space as being unprofessional
12. Questions at work regarding my hairstyle
13. It looks like wool. How do you wash it? Is it clean? It feels hard. It looks like a sponge.
14. White people aiming to/ daring to touch my hair
15. I was laughed at. People would always touch my hair which is a violation
16. Even recently in an Opera in Glyndebourne a wigs department lady looked petrified at touching my hair (now locked) and daunted at having to style my hair.
17. Told to straighten as it was 'neater and more presentable'

18. Comments that reflect ignorance towards natural Afro hair
19. Telling me my hair is frizzy, or 'big' or puffy or just mentioning it, why is it an issue?!
Even now this is still a thing people think they need to have an opinion on.
20. Some comments comparing it to pubic hair or that "it looks dirty"
21. Had my boss tip water on my hair for "fun", to see what will happen. Been called a golliwog, had my hair pulled. Had my hair played with because it's so "fascinating"
22. Messy, bushy, dry, no hair
23. My ex-husband is white when our child was born he said "I'm so glad she's got "normal" hair. Your hair's so restrictive" hence the ex status
24. Working in offices with relaxed hair at the time, was then singled out as my hair being acceptable. Came in post big chop and the attitude changed so much, my appearance was then questioned, then described as more masculine (I've always had athletic build). Haters. I'm cute.
25. corporate standards
26. When wanting to go natural I cut off my relaxed hair (straight hair) to start all over again. People just chose not to say anything which made me feel uncomfortable
27. From other black people commenting negatively on afro hair in natural state suggesting it is something that needed fixing
28. My peers didn't understand my hair type and remained ignorant
29. Unwanted touching
30. Called names relating to my hair many, many times.
31. Getting told my hair was messy etc
32. Called names 'in jest' as a kid... having to tone it down for the workplace
33. At times you wonder if the query is out of curiosity or blatant racism
34. Comments that it's messy and people expecting me to get my hair the same as a white or Asian persons texture.
35. General ignorance lack of understanding
36. My hair is curly so I don't face the same discrimination that many of our women with afro textured hair do but I have had some ignorant comments about my hair over the years with people saying they prefer it straight, referring to it as frizzy etc.
37. When people love to tell me "Oh I prefer your hair like before (with a weave etc) rather than more afro looking styles even of the are extensions eg braids
38. And people touching without asking!!
39. I was asked by my African work colleague (because at this point I had gone natural) whether my partner found me attractive with "that hair" & why I didn't "do something with it". Sometimes the worse prejudice comes from your own. I would also wear extensions with blonde colours & my hair would never mix, I was once told I embarrassed the company at work because my hair was poorly blended (I Worked for a hair company)
40. Touching my hair without permission saying it felt like soft wool
41. White people touching my hair without permission - so rude!
42. Family criticising my locs as being untidy .
43. My dad took me to have my hair straightened (curly perm) when I was 15. When I older I cut it short and went natural - black and white professionals asked me why. Which made me keep it short. I'm very stubborn. My natural hair is a lovely texture.
44. People wanting to touch my hair unnecessarily or commenting on its texture as "woolly "
45. Unwanted touching. Unwanted comments. Fake or conditional "approval" .

46. Called nappy
47. When I had done the big chop a manager asked me if I “was okay up there”. Possibly suggest the only reason my hair would be like that would be because I had an illness. It was ignorance above anything else.
48. Told unprofessional, or wild etc.
49. Work: Asked if I ever wanted straight hair, people touching my hair, being told by white people 'they like when black people have natural hair/ wear updos' (like I needed the validation).
50. A very unkind person said I have n*gger hair
51. Whites and other black people would react negatively by commenting on how big, untamed, negative texture
52. Told my braids were inappropriate
53. Constant inappropriate questions or too much attention at work
54. When wrapped I was asked if I was working Voodoo
55. People telling me it looks messy or unprofessional
56. When applying for a job it was hinted that I needed to put my hair in a certain way as they company had very prestige clients.
57. By ignorant people who ask silly questions like what's it like to have Afro hair as if it's a curse when it's not. I love my natural hair.
58. white people touching it saying how lovely it is
59. I recall not having a work contract extended. The day I was due to leave I had coincidentally had my hair straightened. One of the directors commented that I should have done it before as maybe I would have fit in better if I had.
60. People telling me my hair is weird or horrible, people telling me I should straighten my hair, strangers touching my hair without permission
61. Meeting non blacks who would want to touch my hair
62. I got told my hair was as hard as steel wool (for cleaning cooking pots and pans).
63. Described as “nappy” or perceived that I cannot do much with it. And that I'm not as desirable with it.
64. I only received compliments about my hair when it was straightened. I had my afro out on occasions and told I look like a lion, or my hair was like sheep wool.
65. Ironically, from black male friends. They let me know that they preferred my hair straighter or in extensions. I have also had white male colleagues let me know that they preferred my hair when it was blonde.
66. People pulling it, or saying that my hair doesn't look appropriate for a professional environment
67. Once, a man at my workplace told me he preferred my hair in box braids than in its natural afro state. Another time a guy told me my hair looked like a "bush".
68. I WAS TREATED DIFFERENTLY WHEN MY HAIR WAS IN ITS NATURAL STATE
69. When I have my hair in its natural state I have had white people (including friends) ask me whether I have ever considered a weave, how long it would be if I relaxed it or simply say they prefer it braided. When I have had my natural hair in twists in a professional context strangers have tried to touch and play with my hair. This includes in a toilet after a lady came out of the stall and hadn't yet washed her hands.
70. I had someone tell me it was a distraction
71. At times when I have changed my hairstyle people feel that they have the right to touch my hair.

72. Hair described as monkey hair or wire
73. Been told that my hair is nappy and needs taming.
74. My first and second Jobs the English and Italian employer wanted me to change my hair because an Afro didn't fit the look of their business
75. My hair was called course and described as woolly it hurt at the time
76. Called rough head
77. From European people want to "pat" and touch my hair
78. White people wanting to touch it. Black people commenting on my "picky" head
79. I was asked if my hair can be rubbed for luck. I have been asked to touch my hair, if I wash it my hair and comments that I don't wash it frequently enough.
80. A white male refer to my hair as not normal .
81. Made to feel like afro hair is dirty and abnormal
82. Being asked "what happened to your hair?" "Why is it like that?"
83. I don't feel negative towards it but I have had people treat me like I am not human or ugly because of it

(Hair Equality [Report](#) 2019)