

MPA SCRUTINY OF THE MPS PERFORMANCE AND PRACTICE IN STOP AND SEARCH

TERMS OF REFERENCE

FEBRUARY 2003

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background: The Need

The overview and scrutiny function of the MPA ensures that the Authority and the MPS are publicly held to account for their decisions. The scrutiny responsibility also ensures open and transparent decision-making and democratic responsibility for the policing of London's diverse communities.

The terms of reference of the Equal Opportunity and Diversity Board (EODB) of the MPA include the responsibility to consider "areas of performance which have a specific impact on diversity issues; propose the development of performance indicators and target setting in areas of diversity issues, and to consider areas of diversity where new or improved performance monitoring is required".

The disproportionality of stop and search rates certainly has an impact on diversity issues. It might be regarded as the single most important indicator and contributor to the corroding of trust and confidence in the police amongst members of London's diverse communities.

Black and minority ethnic people in London are more at risk than whites in experiencing police stops and searches.

Black people were eight times, and Asians were three times, more likely to be stopped and searched than white people according to the most recent national statistics released by the Home Office.

According to MPS data, the stop and search rates of Blacks in London increased by 30% between the years 2000/02 and 1001/02; for Asian people by 41%, while for whites it only increased by eight per cent. In other words, the rates of disproportionality have been increasing dramatically.

Experiences of unfair, disproportionate treatment triggers a spiral of distrust and further erodes the consent of those being policed. It also triggers more suits

against the MPS. Settlement as a consequence of inappropriate police behaviour surrounding stops and searches, are continuing to occur. These are having a direct impact on the public purse.

The Race Relations Amendment Act (2000) places a statutory duty on both the MPA and MPS to remedy the issue of disproportionality. To delay or avoid doing so could potentially leave both institutions open to court action.

While the MPS is implementing, through various mechanisms, the recommendations of the Macpherson report on the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, including through the work of its Fair Practice Monitoring Group, the Stop and Search Working Group, the Disproportionality Working Group and the phased implementation of recommendation 61, the particular responsibility remains, for the MPA to address the central issue of racial bias in policing practice. This is where the crisis of community confidence resides.

At its meeting of 9 January 2003 the EODB adopted the recommendation to proceed with a formal policy review and policy development scrutiny of the MPS performance and practice in "stop and search".

2. STATEMENT OF OUTCOME

Through the Equal Opportunity and Diversity Board (EODB) of the MPA, the expected outcome of this scrutiny is to: -

- Consider the impact of MPS performance in stop and search on diversity issues;
- Propose performance indicators;
- Consider areas where improvement is required and
- Publish a report, with recommendations for implementation by the MPS and MPA.
- Highlight wider issues that may arise for other organisations, including the Home Office, for example.

3. OBJECTIVES

Specifically, the task of this scrutiny task will be to focus on four particular aspects of stop and search in order to influence changes to the current MPA policy and practices which lead to continuous disportionality and contribute to gaining increased public trust and confidence in stop and search as a policing tool. Earlier in the process the four main aspects were agreed by EODB and reported to COP as

- The use of profiling in stop and search
- Use of stop and search data to inform police intelligence
- The cost effectiveness and efficiency of stop and search
- The uses of stop and search performance data to inform and engage communities

3.1 To assess the impact of race

To determine whether, and in what ways, race might impact upon MPS practice resulting in the disproportionality of Black and minority ethnic people in stop and search rates

Specifically, the scrutiny could explore:

- The usefulness of residential population figures as a measure of populations available to be stopped or searched
- the grounds for suspicion that lead police officers to carry out a stop and search
- the most common grounds used for stop and searches
- the extent to which police intelligence informs the use of stop and search
- the extent to which stop and searches are made on the basis of discretion/intuition
- the factors that lead police officers to use the powers of a stop/search on the basis of discretion /institution
- the extent to which training, including the MPS CRR and stop and search training programmes impacts positively on the levels of disportionality
- whether geographical patterns of stops and searches reflect local crime patterns

- the quality of the information and intelligence given to operational officers
- whether certain behaviours, attitudes or activities by people of different racial groups are likely to increase police suspicion/intuition that leads to stop and search
- whether certain activities are likely to attract greater level of attention by police officers that may lead to being stopped and/or searched
- managerial effectiveness of stop and search

3.2 To assess what use is made of stop and search data

Specifically, the scrutiny could explore:

- the extent to which the findings from stop and searches inform police intelligence
- the use that is made of this information and how it is used
- the direct correlation between arrest rates and the judicial disposal
- whether the systems for providing officers with intelligence information are monitored and evaluated for effectiveness
- the reliability of suspect description given to operational officers
- whether protocols exist for obtaining and using suspect descriptions in ways which maximises their reliability
- the quality of training given to call-handlers
- the quality of the searches that are made and whether these focus on more serious crimes and more prolific offenders
- the weight given to searches for minor offences
- the rate of detection to the rate of searches carried out

3.3 To identify the costs effectiveness of stop and search

Specifically, the scrutiny could explore:

- what are the direct financial costs and indirect costs in terms of public trust and confidence?
- the positive outcomes that stop and search achieve?
- whether the measure of public trust and confidence outweighs the reported negative impact and influence of disportionality of stop and search on black and minority ethnic communities

- whether the cost of stop and search as a key policing tool outweighs the cost of achieving trust and community confidence in the police
- whether the MPS should be overly concerned about public trust and confidence given the given the reported success as a policing tool
- whether comparators exist with disportionality in other areas, such as auto crimes/ burglary etc.

3.4 Good Practice Models

To identify good practice models of public awareness and discussion on stop and search practice.

Specifically the scrutiny could look at:

- Examples of good practice that are already underway, such as in Lambeth, Westminster and Hackney
- Changes needed to improve trust and confidence.
- How widely is stop and search supported in the community?
- Changes needed to improve trust and confidence.
- Samples of a communication strategies in place specifically to inform the community on stop and search

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Composition of the Scrutiny

The scrutiny will comprise:

- Research: to inform the panel, develop a shared basis of knowledge and set out the issues of interest. This will comprise
 - Desk research
 - Studies and reports
 - o Interviews
 - Questionnaires
- Evidence hearing sessions: for the panel to investigate further the issues of concern.
 - A fixed panel membership comprising MPA members and external representatives will be selected.
 - Sessions will be confidential (not held in public).
 - Selected people will be *invited* to attend to give evidence.
- Public consultation: to obtain feedback and views on emerging issues, initial findings and recommendations.
- A final report to be approved by the MPA at its full Authority meeting.

4.2 Scrutiny Timeframe

It is proposed that the scrutiny is conducted in four phases, beginning in February 2003 and concluding, with the publication of the report, in March 2004.

Having considered the complexity of the work that will need to be carried out, and the availability of scrutiny panel members, it is proposed that it would be better to have a longer timescale, and deal with the issues in some depth, rather than work within the tighter timeframe that was originally proposed. The tighter timeframe would present difficulties for a few of the key members that have already been approached to sit on the panel.

Phase One – February – May 2003	Phase two June – September 2003	Phase Three October to December 2003	Phase Four January to March 2004
Status and Desk research to inform the next phase of the scrutiny.	Evidence gathering and hearing meetings	Public consultation and engagement,	Analysis, conclusions and recommendations with resource implications.
Initial Panel meeting to agree scope/individuals/organisations to be invited to the first set of meetings.	Analysis of phase one research and emerging issues	Further evidence hearing based on issues arising from the consultation and initial research analysis	

4.2.1 Phase One - desk research

Some initial work has been done in this area, and is attached as a background document for members' consideration. It could also be used as an introductory paper for Panel members and those that may be invited to give evidence to the scrutiny hearing.

Due to the complexity and the potential sensitivity of the subject of the scrutiny, it is proposed that the EDOB uses a slightly desk research different process from that used by the two previous scrutinies. The following are proposed:

1. Home Office Review. The Home Office has carried numerous researches on policing and stop and search. It is therefore proposed that the Home Office be invited to contribute to the scrutiny by providing an overview of the recent UK research on stop and search. Paul Quinton has already been approached to assist with this area of research, but further discussion to confirm this is still required.

- 2. **Review of MPS Projects/Research projects**. Status report from the MPS on the outcomes of all project/working groups work carried out stop and search and disportionality over the past three five years.
- Cost/Benefit Analysis of Stop and Search. An efficiency and effectiveness review be considered to identify the cost/befit of stop and search as an effective policing tool for reducing crime and achieving public trust and confidence
- 4. Learning from the Experts. The scrutiny would need to generate a much greater awareness of the concepts of racism and how they play out within the context of policing. This would update and expand upon the specificity of Macpherson's analysis of institutional racism and the potential impact upon stop and search rates.
- 5. It is proposed that some of the recognised best thinkers in the country 2 or 3 eminent scholars and experts in the field of race relations, working in different disciplines, be invited to prepare a 10-15 page summary, with references, in a popular style, addressing the four aspects of the scrutiny.
- Names to be considered include Paul Gilroy, Tariq Madood (Bristol), J Young (Middlesex, M. FitzGerald (LSE), B Bowling, B. Parekh (Hull), H. Ouseley, and J. Solomos.
- 7. **International Perspective.** To gain the added level of credibility that may be needed, a parallel preliminary literature review of the international literature could be carried out. This could focus particularly on the North American experience regarding stop and search disproportionality, identify causal factors, and programmes and services that have been initiated to address them.

Outputs:

 Publishable documents compiling the analysis of the above authorities that could be placed on the MPA Website and be the subject of a press conference by the EODB

Timing and Costs:

- ii) It is projected that the above tasks could be accomplished within an 8- 12 week timeframe
- iii) An honorarium could be offered to each of the external researchers that are invited to develop papers.

4.2.2 Phase Two - Panel meetings and evidence hearing

It is anticipated that 6 - 8 evidence hearing sessions will be held. These will be 2-3 hours in duration with either groups or individual evidence givers heard at each session.

The chair of the panel will be the Chair of the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Board

Specific questions for each evidence giver will be prepared as the scrutiny progresses

Evidence will be reported anonymously to maximise openness and honesty in evidence giving.

Panel Membership

The following individuals have been contacted and invited to membership of the Panel. Some are yet to confirm. A significant factor will be the timescale of the scrutiny, the frequency of the meetings, and whether they are convinced that the outcome of the scrutiny will have credibility, particularly in gaining public trust and confidence.

MPA Members

Cecile Wright - Chair R. David Muir Peter Herbert

Lynne Featherstone

Toby Harris

Community Members

Sir Herman Ousley

Althea Smith – Chair Southwark CPCG Mr John Grieve - formerly Head of the

MPS diversity directorate

Reverend Nims Obunge - Haringey

Peace Alliance

Action Group for Irish Youth (AGIY)

All community members have been contacted and are generally in agreement, subject to confirmation about timescale and the level of work required.

Advisors to the Panel

MPA and MPS staff with expertise in the key aspects of the scrutiny will be available to provide advice to panel members throughout.

Interviews and Evidential Hearing

These will be agreed at the initial meeting of the Panel; however, the following list is provided as a guide for the Panel's consideration:

Police

Senior Managers

Borough Commanders

Diversity Directorate representatives

Diversity Training Staff (including Associate

trainers)

Police Association representatives, including the BPA

Traffic Police

Territorial Police

Independent Advisory Group representatives (local and MPS)

Community

Young People (Youth Parliament

representatives

Youth Offending Teams
Members of the

Damilola Taylor Centre) Mr and Mrs Lindo

Stephen Lawrence Trust

Newham Community

Project

CAPA

Southall Black Sisters

Academics/Organisations

Home Office – Policing and Reducing Crime Unit

Marion Fitzgerald & other academics of repute in the subject area

1990 Trust

Mayor's Office

4.2.3 Phase Three - Community questionnaire and public consultation

The public consultation phase will comprise surveys, interviews, focus groups and public meetings to explore:

- Attitudes towards stop and search
- Experiences of stop and search
- Attitudes to policing arising from stop and search experiences
- Discussion on findings from the evidence hearing sessions.

In addition to the evidential hearing, it is proposed that a questionnaire is developed that would seek the views of a wider range of community members. This could be coordinated through a partner organisation such s the 1990 Trust, Black Londoners Forum or others, that could carry out this work on behalf of the Authority. Details on the content of the questionnaire will be informed by the research analysis, and evidential hearings. The MPA has already developed some good working relationships with media organisations such as KISS FM, Choice FM and others that are likely to attract listeners that are most likely to be affected by Stop and Search. A public campaign about the scrutiny and the questionnaire could be promoted through these organisations. Other community radio stations that are listened to by a wider range of young people could also be asked to assist with the campaign.

The outcome of the questionnaire analysis would inform the development of the final report.

4.2.4 Phase Four – Analysis report development and publication

The learning from the previous scrutinies indicates that a great deal of members' involvement is required in drafting the report.

Panel members will need to agree the timescale for this early in the process.

Research and Reports

Status report

MPS to provide

- an outline of current practice and guidelines
- improvement actions
- review and monitoring activity
- training
- intelligence methodology and practice
- suspect profiling methodology and practice
- good practice

Audit of Research

A wide amount of research exists on the issues being explored. An audit of this home office and community research will be carried out and the main findings and facts outlined in a report.

Cost effectiveness model

A study is to be carried out on the cost effectiveness of stop and search. The study will identify:

- a) direct costs e.g. staffing hours, data processing, monitoring and reporting etc.
- b) Indirect costs e.g. complaints, lack of co-operation and trust etc.
- c) Opportunity costs i.e. if stops and searches were not carried out, what other activity or deployment could be made if any
- d) Outcomes e.g. arrest rates, judicial disposal rates arising from the stops and searches
- e) a measure of efficiency e.g. stop and search cost per arrest

Approval of Final Report

The Equal Opportunities and Diversity Board will be kept apprised of progress and agree the specific details of the scrutiny e.g. panel membership, timetable etc. The final report will, however, be signed off by full Authority.

A small project advisory group will be set up to advise upon development of the scrutiny

Resources

1x Project Manager:21 hours per week (MPA)

Commissioned researchers

Public Consultation consultant

Administration and note taking: 7 hours per week (MPA)

Panel attendance: 6 – 8 evidence hearing sessions (3 hours each)

Project Advisory Group: MPA/MPS

Costs

An estimated budget of £15,000 should be set aside for the scrutiny.

5. BACKGROUND

5.1 MPS Initiatives

The MPS has certainly started to address many of the problems associated with the disproportionate impact of stop and searches.

Data on an ethnic basis has been gathered in the MPS since 1992 – three years ahead of the statutory requirement of Section 95 Criminal Justice Act 1991. In 1995 the MPS established a working group, with representatives from the CRE, NACRO and the Home Office, to review the use of the power. The working group made a number of recommendations and embraced leadership, training, ensuring fairness and legality and improvements to management information. while the working group wrestled with the socio-economic variables, it concluded that no analysis of the data was likely to establish or refute racial discrimination.

The MPS took the work of the group further forward in 1998 by establishing seven pilot sites around London.

Other initiatives undertaken by the MPA have included a two-month consultation programme with communities across London, in conjunction with a national campaign by the Association of Police Authorities, informing people about their rights when stopped and searched by the police.

The MPS is one of seven police forces across the country selected by the Home Office to participate in the phased implementation of Recommendation 61, of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report regarding the most effective methods of recording stops (either manually or through the use of mobile technology) and methods of collating a stops database.

In addition, the MPS Fair Practice Monitoring Group is developing a central monitoring and analysis function that includes stop and search.

The MPS, in addition to the Stop and Search Working Group, has in place a Disproportionality Working Group co-chaired by Cressida Dick and Lee Jasper.

With efforts aimed at improving the managerial and operational effectiveness of stop and search practice, there is a need for a comprehensive status report and review of the progress of present MPS initiatives. It is an essential part of the background for the Scrutiny.

In addition, a complementary piece of background information that is important for the Scrutiny to consider is the results and findings of recent research and evaluations undertaken by the Home Office, HMIC, academia, and others on stop and search practice.

5.2 An Unfinished Agenda

The recommendations of the Lawrence Inquiry were piloted and evaluated by the Home Office Police and Reducing Crime Unit. The evaluation however, concluded that on their own, the implementation of the recommendations were unlikely to produce sufficiently positive outcomes in relation to fairness and community confidence in stops and searches.

The MPA is still left then with the question of addressing the widening differential impact on ethnic and racial minorities of stops and searches. This is still perhaps the most important causal factor damaging healthy police-community relations.

As the HMIC Review "Policing London: Winning Consent" (2000) notes, the MPS has been left with the consequential difficulties of trying to "remove the sting from the nettle that has proved too painful for the grasp of the police service for too long".

A number of factors have been put forward in attempting to draw the sting from the nettle – to rationally account for some of the disproportion. For example, even if police stops and searches were completely free of racial bias, some minorities, it is argued, would continue to be over-represented in suspect profiles because Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups have higher than average proportions of young people, higher than average unemployment rates and are more available in the pedestrian population in crime "hotspots".

However, the Macpherson report was critical of the attempted rationalisation of the data by the MPS in arguing social, economic, demographic and other factors to mitigate the figures on the face of the record:

"Nobody in the minority ethnic community believes that the complex arguments which are sometimes used to explain the figures for stop and search are valid... Attempts to justify the disparities through the identification of other factors, whilst not being seen vigorously to address the discrimination which is evident, simply aggravates the climate of distrust".

The public, particularly the visible ethnic minority public, was "in no mood to suffer tortuous explanations".

The sting in the nettle still needs to be grasped.

5.3 The Impact of Race on MPS Practice

A number of elements have been identified to describe the "discrimination which is evident".

A number of theories and factors have been put forward to explain why the overrepresentation of Black and minority ethnic people in police stop and searches is largely a result of police practices that treat individuals differently according to race. Some of the ways by which race impacts MPS practice that have been identified include:

Racist stereotyping among police officers.

The first issue pertains to concerns regarding racist attitudes and behaviour of police officers. The majority of Londoners, consulted during the HMIC Review, "Winning Consent" expressed concerns regarding the significant disproportionality that was "in the majority view, singularly attributable to racist stereotyping among police officers. The latter view was predictably and understandably predominant amongst the visible ethnic minority public". Although extensive racism among the people is often alleged and anecdotal evidence of significant incidents have been offered, documented evidence for this assertion is relatively slim.

In other words, it may not be so much a discussion regarding the completeness of the objective evidence but rather the need to recognise the primary importance of public perceptions, which is the major determinant of public trust and confidence that needs to be addressed.

Another perspective on this sensitive issue, as to whether police officers are more likely to betray racist tendencies is the suggested need to focus attention, not so much on the personal beliefs of police officers, but on a developed culture and value system within the police organisation. While research suggests that white police officers are no more prejudiced than whites generally, and with those in similar social and economic circumstances, the daily experience of police officers may provide reinforcement for racist stereotyping. As a result of work experience whereby police officers are exposed to an extremely selective cross-section of the population, an attitudinal bias toward Black people may creep in.

Is there a tendency for officers to develop, in part by working experience overtime, strong feelings and beliefs as to attributes of individuals based on factors such as appearance and racial background? Are there police practices

that, when taken collectively, can and do produce a bias in behaviour which produces unequal treatment of individuals of different cultural or racial background?

Socio-Political Factors:

Another causal factor to disproportionality in stop and search rates that has been suggested is the influence of the larger social and historical context. The policing of London's Black, ethnic minority communities cannot be divorced, it is suggested, from the way in which society at large these communities. The attitudes of the police are a reflection not only of the current social views of Blacks, but also of the historical attitudes of the white minority. The consequence of this is that the police are more likely to mistreat individuals who are stigmatised by the dominant society. These individuals are more likely to be subjected to small or gross indignities and mistreatment at the hands of the police.

Those who are advantaged exert influence on the definition of criminal behaviour and the nature of policing priorities. They are not likely to define as criminal those patterns of behaviour in which they engage or when they do (such as white collar crime), it is likely to be not only more difficult to detect and prosecute than the "street" crimes committed by less advantageous people but a low police priority.

It is the intersection of social and racial stratification with police ideology, that is, through police planning priority setting and practice, that creates the conditions for disproportionate and unfair treatment. In any encounter, but especially street encounters between the police and the public – a person's behaviour is influenced by one's perceived location in the society's system of social stratification. If a police officer is unable to separate their office from their own self-concepts, they may perceive challenges to their office as challenges to themselves. Using colour, age, appearance, language and other behaviours, the police officer may have stereotyped the main actor as someone who is a representative of the community and the values it represents. And they may

consequently feel that the actor is more deserving of suspicion, of being stopped and searched for an alleged transgression of community standards. Relations between the police and Black, ethnic minorities are then influenced by the structural features of a society in which opportunity, rewards and constraints are unequally and unfairly distributed. Within the context of the criminal justice system, which promotes the interests and values of the dominant society, the police contribute to the criminalisation of marginalised individuals by selectively perceiving and responding to deviance. A contributing factor, then, to disproportionate stop and search rates, according to this analysis, might be the influence of the socio-political context in which the police operate.

Racial Profiling and over-policing:

A third explanatory factor put forward for disproportionate outcomes in stop and search rates is the issue of racial profiling. 'Racial profiling' by police is generally understood to mean the consideration of race when assessing criminal suspiciousness. Racial profiling thereby determines with whom and how to intervene in an enforcement capacity.

Those whom the police target as suspects in London, as the most recent research by Marian FitzGerald et al (Policing for London, 2002) shows, are young, Black, working-class men.

'Over-policing' refers to the extent to which police use discretion in the surveillance of a community and the apprehension of people within that community. Is the police presence more intense, for example, in communities that are more densely populated by Black and ethnic minorities? Is the police presence more noticeable at any event involving Black people? Are business establishments, such as clubs owned, managed or patronised by Black people under more frequent police surveillance?

The result of 'over-policing' or 'racial profiling' translates into an increased probability of getting caught for breaking social rules. In other words, the over-

representation of Black people in the criminal justice system is caused, not by differences in criminal behaviour, but by differences in rates of stop and searches and the consequently increased probability of being caught when they do break the law.

Institutional Racism:

The long-held perceptions and experiences of Black people in London (and confirmed by Macpherson), that one of the reasons for the number of accused Black people being totally out of proportion to their numbers in the total population is – not so much 'racial profiling' any formal or official manner – but the more insidious nature of informal police priorities and actions.

Institutional racism means the social processes – these informal priorities and action – that produce racial inequality in decisions about people and the treatment they receive. It is revealed by specific consequences that indicate differential decisions or unequal treatment. Institutional racism refers to institutional customs, procedures and practices that produce different outcomes.

It is, therefore, important to identify and combat the institutional priorities and arrangements that have differential outcomes based on race.

Differential Notions of Police Accountability

Another contributing factor that has been suggested for disproportionate stop and search outcomes are different notions of accountability. Rather than having a democratic notion of accountability – to a political process and to the diverse community – this analysis suggests that the police are sometimes seen as preferring to derive their legitimacy and authority from a general acceptance of the laws and regulations they enforce, the values they stand for, the morality they are supposed to support and the order they maintain. It is toward this process of upholding legally defined standards that the police feel they are accountable. It is within this broader framework that they feel they directly represent the "common good". It is a discourse of accountability to upholding the laws of the land rather

than an accountability and responsiveness to the multiracial public they serve. This differing notion consequently may encourage a tendency to diminish or ignore the racial component and impact of police practise.

The "Urban Chaos" Scenario:

The idea of chaos and crisis in every area of London life is a media image that the police – in vainly trying to cope with the overwhelming demands of a society in turmoil – are unlikely to refute or dispel in their requests for more resources and autonomy.

Terrorism, the war on drugs, the explosion of gun crimes, the focus on "street" crime, the swamping of London by asylum seekers – all these issues contribute to the image of Black, ethnic minorities as being a major cause in the public mind of this turmoil and therefore as subversive and unwanted elements in society. Race has become a causal factor in the public in the increase of violence and disorder. In identifying the culpable villains, disproportionate stop and search is obviously justified.

In moving the agenda forward, Macpherson saw the need for further analytical work to determine the solution to a problem that is acknowledged as complex by different strands of opinion. HMIC (2000) also recommend that independent research be commissioned to investigate:

- What meaningful proportionality should look like?
- What are the prevailing conditions in officers' minds that leads to a "reasonable suspicion"?

A major part of the initial research needed to inform the work of the scrutiny is therefore to address and assess the validity of the above, and other concepts that have attempted to explain how the influence of race impacts on disproportionate stop and search rates. Such research will provide the opportunity to identify, expand up, validate or counteract some of the above identified potential areas of race biases in police practice and to identify areas to address them.