Disproportionality in the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)

FINAL REPORT

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DISPROPORTIONALITY[1]
IN THE
METROPOLITAN POLICE SERVICE (MPS)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We were unable to find any work that had been done to discover and quantify hard evidence one way or another of disproportionality across the police service.

CRE Formal Investigation of the Police Service of England & Wales (2005)

Introduction

The issue at the centre of this research is the existence of racial disparities in the activities of the MPS. In spite of the wide-ranging diversity strategy set in place following the Report of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry (1999), the organisation continues to be a target for criticism regarding its treatment of black and minority ethnic (BME) groups and individuals both within and outside the MPS. Attention has consistently focused on the disproportionate number of BME citizens who bring complaints against the MPS, generally in relation to the use of the stop and search power. More recently, high profile cases have highlighted apparent disparities in the handling of internal discipline and misconduct matters involving BME officers and staff. Although responsibility for internal disproportionality has been levelled at the Directorate of Professional Standards (DPS) in particular, a series of review inquiries identified a more general problem of poor management of BME staff within the MPS. The criticism and scrutiny to which the MPS has been subjected notwithstanding, there remains a paucity of research evidence to refute or substantiate allegations of widespread disproportionate treatment. As well as allowing speculation and concern to continue, this lack of evidence also prevents the organisation from developing strategic solutions to ethnicity-based disproportionality and associated problems.

Background to the research

The research was commissioned by the DPS in September 2004 as part of an on-going review of its functions and processes in anticipation of the recommendations of the

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[1] The term 'disproportionality' is applied to situations in which figures for particular groups are out of proportion with their representation in a given population. For the purposes of the research, *external disproportionality* occurs when the number of BME citizens who bring complaints against the police is out of proportion with their numbers across the Metropolitan Police area. *Internal disproportionality* occurs when the number of BME personnel (police staff and police officers) is out of proportion with their numbers in the MPS workforce.

Morris Inquiry[2]. The commissioning brief specified two distinct pieces of work: one that looked outward, at *external disproportionality* as evidenced by the disproportionate number of complaints against the police emanating from black and minority ethnic (BME) community members; and one that looked inward, at *internal disproportionality* as evidenced by the disproportionate number of BME officers and staff who are subject to complaints and discipline procedures. The brief underlined the necessity of developing strategic solutions to address these issues.

In response to the commissioning brief, we produced a flexible research design with the capacity to adapt to the findings of inquiry reviews as these became available. At the same time, we undertook to produce interim findings that could feed into the DPS's own review of its structures and activities.

Focus of the study

The central focus of the research was developed following wide-ranging consultation with senior academics and police leaders (serving and retired). A comprehensive literature review also fed into the consultative phase of the research programme. At the end of this process it was clear that, to date, academic attention has focused on exploring the causes of external disproportionality, particularly in relation to the use of the stop-and-search power. By contrast, little sustained attention has been paid to internal disproportionality, either by academia or the police service. At the same time, the publication of the Morris Inquiry Report focused attention upon perceived shortcomings in the management of internal investigations within the MPS.

Following consultation with the research sponsors and the submission of an interim report, the decision was made to focus the research on internal disproportionality. The external element remains in the form of a statistical analysis of complaints data spanning an 11-year period (1994-2004). Internal disproportionality is explored using a range of research methods including statistical analysis, documentary data analysis, focus groups and interviews.

Research design

The research design combines quantitative and qualitative methodologies in order to provide a broad and comprehensive picture of ethnicity-based disproportionality in the MPS. The use of a combination of methods also minimises the impact of any bias in particular data sources or investigators (Creswell, 1994). Our research programme consisted of the following:

- A quantitative review of data relating to external and internal complaints intended to provide a broad picture of the nature and extent of disproportionality over the period 1994-2004.

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[2] The Inquiry Report was released in December 2004. However, its key findings in relation to professional standards and the management of complaints and discipline procedures were disseminated prior to publication.

- A literature review synthesising the findings of recent academic research and a series of high-profile inquiries into disproportionality and professional standards within the MPS and the wider police service[3].

- A series of focus groups with BME officers and staff. These groups explored issues associated with police officers and staff from different ethnic backgrounds (black, Muslim, Sikh). A total of 25 officers took part in five focus groups held in London during 2005-2006.

- An interview study of first-line managers, middle managers and BME staff that followed up issues identified in the focus groups and sought to establish how individual management styles impact on police staff and team members.

Key research questions

The consultative phase of the study highlighted three potential drivers of disproportionality:

- Community driver (i.e., liked to family, peer, and related pressures that are located outside the police organisation)

- Organisational driver (i.e., linked to the culture and organisation of the MPS)

- Managerial driver (i.e., linked to the behaviour of police managers and supervisors)

On the basis of this first consultative phase, together with the review of the relevant literature, we identified three key research questions:

> To what extent is internal disproportionality attributable to pressures located outside the MPS?

> How far does the culture and organisation of the MPS contribute to the disproportionate involvement of BME staff in discipline and misconduct procedures?

> To what extent is internal disproportionality a product of unsatisfactory line management and supervision?

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[3] The key reports consulted during this phase of the research were *The Virdi Inquiry Report* (2001); *The Case for Change: People in the Metropolitan Police Service: Report of the Morris Inquiry* (2004); Thematic Review of Race and Diversity in the Metropolitan *Police Service (The Ghaffur Report)* (2004); *Review of Police Disciplinary Arrangements (The Taylor Report) (2005)*; *The Police Service in England & Wales: Final Report of a Formal Investigation by the Commission for Racial Equality* (2005).

Research methods

The study employed four key data collection methods: quantitative analysis; documentary (file) data analysis; focus groups; and interviews.

Quantitative analysis

Our quantitative data analysis sought to investigate the distribution and characteristics of external and internal disproportionality within the MPS. The analysis drew on public complaints data for four years (1994; 1999; 2001; 2004) and internal complaints data spanning the years 1994-2004. The data was used to explore the following questions:

- Does disproportionality exist, and if so, is it uniform across ethnic groups and London boroughs?

- What are the characteristics of MPS personnel who are the subject of internal complaints?

- What are the individual and situational characteristics of the external and internal complaints that generate disproportionality?

Documentary data analysis

In order to gain an insight into the internal investigation process in the MPS, we undertook analysis of 112 internal investigations files. The files were randomly selected on our behalf by the MPS and included cases involving white and BME personnel. The use of an indirect research method such as analysis of data archives in addition to more direct methods such as interviews enhances the validity of research findings by providing what is termed 'methodological triangulation'. The main purposes of this stage of the study were to establish whether there is any ethnicity-based difference in the nature and conduct of internal investigations.

Focus groups

Focus groups are small, structured discussion groups with selected participants and a moderator (Litosseliti, 2003). What distinguishes focus groups from other types of group interview is the use of interaction between participants to generate research data. Group members are encouraged to talk to one another and comment on others' views and experiences. Focus groups allow researchers to explore participants' differing perspectives and priorities within a given social network or cultural context. Importantly for our purposes, focus groups examine the way in which accounts are developed, challenged and changed through social interaction and in accordance with group norms.

Focus groups are not representative or generalisable; they give an indication or illustration of key aspects of the phenomenon under discussion rather than a complete picture. They are also inappropriate as a tool for the in-depth examination of individual life stories and experiences, which is why they are often combined with other data collection methods.

In our focus groups we sought to understand the perspectives of individuals from a range of ethnic backgrounds on the issue of diversity and disproportionality in the MPS. The groups were held in meeting rooms in MPS buildings in central London and ran for approximately 90 minutes. The participants were identified via our contact in the Diversity Directorate. They came in their own time and received no form of compensation for their involvement in the study. The groups were moderated by one of the research team; another team member took written notes but did not participate in the groups. All the groups were taped using an audio-recorder.

Interviews

Interviews were the second key source of qualitative data in the study. It was important for us to gain a sense of individual experiences and perceptions, but at the same time we wanted to be able to make comparisons across the interviews. We therefore developed a semi-structured interview protocol that outlined the key questions to be asked but left room for the exploration of additional topics where these arose.

We carried out a total of 50 interviews during the research period. The interviews were carried out at a range of locations across the MPS area. All the interviews except one were taped using an audio-recorder and transcribed by a member of the research team.

Findings

The quantitative data confirmed the existence of external and internal disproportionality in the MPS. BME citizens do bring complaints against the police at rates that are out of proportion with their representation in the local population. BME police officers and staff are subject to discipline and misconduct proceedings at rates that are out of proportion with their numbers in the MPS workforce. However, the picture is a complex one, with variations in disproportionality occurring over time and in different locations within the MPS area. The quantitative data findings are discussed in a subsequent chapter.

The qualitative study focused on the three drivers outlined above. Below we outline briefly our findings in relation to each of these drivers.

Community drivers

We found no evidence supportive of a link between community factors and disproportionality. Quantitative data analysis did not reveal any association between ethnicity and distinct patterns or types of misconduct. Our analysis of internal investigation files also failed to uncover any evidence of differential vulnerability to corruption and misconduct among individuals from different ethnic backgrounds. In interviews, informants from a range of ethnic groups rejected the hypothesis that some BME officers – specifically, those from Asian backgrounds – might be placed under family or community pressure to engage in corrupt behaviours. On the contrary, we were told, the structure of family life within some Asian communities places officers under considerable pressure not to do anything that will bring their families into disrepute. It

may be of course that in a few cases, such as those identified in the internal report described above, Asian officers are drawn into misconduct in order to appease family or community members. However, on the evidence of this study, there is no reason to believe that community factors play more than a marginal role in the generation of ethnicity-based disproportionality.

Organisational drivers

Issues at the institutional level coalesce around three interlinked themes:

- The organisational culture of the MPS
- The management of BME officers and staff
- The diversity agenda

Organisational culture

Recent academic and related literature on diversity, disproportionality and professional standards, associates internal disproportionality with the organisational culture of the MPS. The study reinforces this link, particularly with regard to the continuing dominance of a culture of blame. While all officers and staff, regardless of their ethnic background, are likely to be disadvantaged by a culture that is insufficiently 'people focused', it seems that BME officers and staff are particularly vulnerable in the face of the overdependence on bureaucratic procedures that prevails within the MPS. It is important to note that this 'blame culture' is not the exclusive preserve of the professional standards department. While the structure and operation of DPS were viewed negatively by a number of our informants, there was a clear perception that the people-management strategies employed by the Department are those of the MPS and the wider police organisation.

Management of BME personnel

The persistence of a culture of blame has repercussions for those tasked with the management of BME personnel in the post-Lawrence era. The high profile currently accorded to diversity within the MPS has engendered a widespread feeling that those who 'get diversity wrong' will be left to take the fall, and take it in isolation. This has created a paradoxical situation in which some managers attempt to protect themselves from accusations of discrimination and unfairness by combining a vocal commitment to an ethos of 'equal treatment' with a tendency to formalise issues that arise in relation to BME officers and staff.

The diversity agenda

Linking both these issues is the Met's diversity agenda, developed following the publication of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report in 1999. The organisational response to the Macpherson Report is widely-regarded as successful, particularly in relation to operational policing. Informants from all ethnic backgrounds expressed satisfaction with the Met's improved performance in relation to key areas such as critical incident management and victim support. However, it seems that these achievements

have yet to be matched in the internal arena. The organisation is not perceived as setting a sufficiently clear strategic or practical agenda in this regard, leaving middle and first-line managers struggling to mainstream diversity into everyday planning and performance matters.

Management issues

The key issues at the management level centred on the following:

- The team management skills of first-line supervisors
- The support offered to supervisors by senior management
- The diversity agenda

First-line supervisors

The study confirmed the association between line management and disproportionality that has been identified by Morris (2004) amongst others. In addition to specific issues around the supervision of BME officers, we found a level of uncertainty with regard to more general people management skills.

Managers from a range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds described an atmosphere of fear and tension around issues involving BME personnel. White supervisors and managers expressed a lack of confidence in relation to the needs of BME officers and staff; most found it difficult to identify organisation-wide training or development programmes that would help them to recognise and deal effectively with disproportionality. The theme of management fear and uncertainty also arose in focus groups with BME officers. At the same time, supervisors and middle managers were not always adept at describing their management style at a more general level, and there was a widespread tendency to associate successful management with personal ability and experience rather than with organisational support mechanisms or management training.

Senior management

While many first-line supervisors and middle managers feel well-supported by senior management, we were told that race and diversity issues constituted an area that not all senior leaders seemed comfortable with or competent to advise on. This links back to the organisational culture of the MPS as discussed above. Senior officers are felt to be as vulnerable as anyone else to the blame culture that pervades the service. It is widely believed that senior managers are keen to keep their distance from complex and potentially career-threatening issues such as accusations of racism and/or sexism. Whatever the truth of this assumption, it clearly has negative consequences for middle managers and supervisors who find themselves confronted by discipline issues involving BME officers and staff.

Middle managers and frontline officers alike regarded diversity as a key component of routine police work. There is, however, a lack of clarity about the internal management of diversity. Strategy for embedding and reinforcing organisational imperatives on diversity have yet to be implemented at team level. Managers did not manifest a coherent understanding of the link between the organisation's diversity agenda and everyday management practices. Rather they tended to describe a 'laissez faire', or reactive attitude toward issues of workforce diversity and equality: several informants remarked that their default strategy involved 'leaving people to get on with it'. While there is a place for such a 'hands off' attitude, in an ideal world it would be balanced by a more proactive, preventative approach towards staff management.

Conclusions

The study suggests that the MPS has made gains in diversity since the Lawrence Inquiry reported in 1999. However, our findings also indicate the following:

- The current diversity strategy within the Met does not command the confidence of staff at all levels of the organisation and is poorly-understood by front-line officers.

- Ethnicity-based disproportionality is not recognised as a strategic priority in the MPS.

- The prevailing 'blame culture' in the MPS contributes to internal disproportionality.

- DPS is associated with the blame culture and regarded negatively by BME personnel who find themselves subject to internal investigation.

- Existing training in the area of personnel management is not meeting the needs of supervisors.

- Managers contribute to internal disproportionality through inappropriate and/or differential treatment of BME officers and staff.

- Middle managers and supervisors are not confident that they will receive senior management support when dealing with issues with a diversity element.

- Diversity issues are perceived to be important, but highly sensitive. Open dialogue is rare, especially middle managers and frontline officers.

Recommendations

Our recommendations focus on the organisational and managerial drivers distinguished above.

At the organizational/cultural level:

> ➤ The MPS should repackage its commitment to diversity, focusing in particular on its relevance within the organisation.

> ➤ The recognition and eradication of disproportionality should be made a strategic priority.

> ➤ DPS should develop guidelines for the identification of disproportionality within discipline and misconduct procedures.

> ➤ The MPS should provide 'safe spaces' for the promotion of open dialogue on diversity matters.

> ➤ Management training across the organisation should seek to develop the 'soft skills' of personnel management.

At the supervisory/management level:

> ➤ Senior managers should set the vision for a practical and unambiguous commitment to diversity, and to the robust support of junior colleagues.

> ➤ The training and development of first-line managers should focus on people management skills including conflict resolution and effective communication.

> ➤ Diversity training should enhance the ability of managers to connect diversity to everyday management practice, and to address the needs of a diverse workforce.

> ➤ There should be greater consistency in relation to staff issues that are dealt with at the lowest management level, and those that are referred to formal procedures.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Social research does not take place in a vacuum. The purpose of a literature review is to relate a study to existing literature on a topic and to provide a benchmark for comparison with other findings. Our study drew on two key information sources. These were a series of recent, high-profile inquiries into professional standards and race and diversity issues in the police service, and empirical studies carried out by academic researchers. While the inquiry reports deal with issues around internal disproportionality, academic research has largely focused on external disproportionality, specifically in relation to the use of the stop and search power.

One of the most striking findings to emerge from the review of the literature was the lack of concrete information regarding the extent of disproportionality. This is not a problem for the MPS alone, but applies to the police service nationally. Although extensive data sets exist, little systematic analysis of the figures has been undertaken. As a consequence, much of the commentary on disproportionality is based on speculation and anecdote rather than on research evidence. In addition, because some of the key inquiries (specifically, Morris, Taylor and the CRE) occupied overlapping time-frames and released interim findings, they reproduce one another's findings, sometimes reinforcing conclusions based on information supplied to the review panels by single individuals.

The review threw up issues that coalesced around our three central concerns: namely, the contributions of (a) police organisational culture; (b) management and supervision; and (c) external or community issues; to unjustifiable disproportionality. Two further themes are relevant to the current study. One is the effectiveness of the MPS's approach to the management of difference. The other concerns the culture and functioning of professional standards departments.

The perils of police culture

Racist (and sexist) attitudes have been identified with police occupational cultures the world over (Chan, 1997; Waddington, 1999; Reiner, 2000). Academic research has explored the implications of the white, macho, police culture for a range of organisational issues, including initial training, and the recruitment, career progression, and retention of BME officers. To date, however, little attention has focused on a possible link between police culture and internal disproportionality.

Racism and discrimination

Recent inquiry reports are less reticent about the contribution of the organisational culture to disproportionality within the police service in general and within the MPS in particular. A principal way in which police culture could contribute to internal disproportionality would be via institutional and other forms of racism. The reports do contain a number of references to discriminatory elements of process and practice. The Virdi Report (2001) notes that an employment tribunal held in August 2000 found that PS Virdi had been subject to racial discrimination in relation to four matters: the failure to interview him in the same informal manner as a white female officer who was also a suspect in the case; the taping of PS Virdi during a personnel interview; the use of a

specialist team to search his house; and his arrest and suspension on insufficient evidential grounds. PS Virdi himself believed he had been discriminated against by a white investigation team, some of whom, he alleged, were 'very close' to possible suspects in the case.

In another high profile investigation discussed in the Morris Report (2005), Superintendent Ali Dizaei, backed by the National Black Police Association, alleged that he had been discriminated against on racial grounds. Having reviewed the evidence, the Morris Inquiry team concluded that the issue of race discrimination 'remains live' and should be examined as part of a full review of Mr Dizaei's case. However, both the Inquiry team and the IPCC seem inclined to regard Mr Dizaei's treatment largely as a product as the MPS's broader difficulties in managing difference within the organisation.

The Morris Report does conclude that on the basis of statistical and anecdotal evidence, BME officers are subject to discrimination and disproportionate treatment on the grounds of race. The CRE Report is more cautious, identifying a 'widely held perception' but 'little hard evidence' of the disproportionate treatment of BME officers. Rather than attributing disproportionality to deliberate discrimination on the part of racist individuals, most of the reports place responsibility on the prevailing organisational culture.

A culture of blame

The Met is consistently identified as an organisation dominated by a 'blame culture' (Virdi, 2001; Morris, 2004; Taylor, 2005). Blame culture is characterised by unnecessary bureaucracy – what Virdi (2001) describes as a 'slavish adherence to rules' (p.77) – and by a corresponding lack of interest in 'people matters' (Morris, 2005). Taking into account the responses of MPS personnel, the Virdi Inquiry panel concluded that the MPS emerged as an organisation that appeared to have little interest in its staff. At the same time, the bureaucratic nature of the blame culture is seen by Virdi and others to have particularly negative consequences for BME people; indeed, to be, on occasion, tantamount to institutional racism.

For the Virdi Panel, reporting in 2001, the MPS was simply too inflexible for a 'post-Lawrence police culture' (p.77). The shortcomings of the prevailing blame culture are perceived to be particularly apparent in the organisation's handling of grievance procedures and internal investigations. Both Taylor (2005) and the CRE (2005) implicate police organisational culture in a national failure to maintain staff confidence in grievance procedures. The CRE Report suggests that there is a widespread belief that racist officers are ineffectively dealt with by the service 'within a dominant white police culture' (p41). At the same time, bringing a grievance against a police colleague is seen to be at odds with the occupational solidarity that lies at the heart of police organisational culture. For the CRE this culture is 'not consistent with the requirements of modern ethical policing' (p.178). Those who invoke the grievance procedure are liable to be isolated by their peers, and may even fear for their careers.

Communication and process

The Morris Inquiry (2005) took detailed evidence from a number of individuals involved in the investigatory process. The Inquiry Team concluded that officers under

investigation find themselves in the middle of a convoluted, adversarial process that is out of tune with the mission and values of the MPS. At the same time, however, Morris also acknowledges the MPS' assertion that the model of communication used by the DPS is identical to that employed in the rest of the organisation. Rather than being out of kilter with the prevailing culture, therefore, it may be that the DPS is simply a starkly visible manifestation of the organisation's less desirable qualities.

All the major reports referred to above call for the replacement of the blame culture by a more transparent, 'person-centred' approach based on learning, development and improvement. For Morris, developing what he calls 'the right culture' is a crucial element in the revitalisation of the MPS:

> Structure and systems alone will only go so far in moving an organisation forward. The prevailing culture must be one which is outward-looking and inclusive.
> The Morris Report (2005), p.191.

Management and supervision

All the recent inquiry reports draw a link between poor or unconfident management and internal disproportionality. Two key issues are identified in the reports. First, the failure of line managers and supervisors to deal effectively with matters that touch on race. Second, the failure of those higher up the management chain to provide robust support to first-line supervisors and managers involved in issues with a racial dimension.

Unsatisfactory people management is identified as a problem by the Virdi Report (2001). Respondents commented that BME officers who bring complaints receive less management support than white complainants and are more likely to be ostracised by colleagues when so doing (p.73). This is echoed in the Ghaffur Report (2004), where it is further suggested that managers refer complaints involving members of BME groups to the DPS because they are fearful of accusations of racism.

Formalisation and retreat

Submissions from senior managers and others to the Morris Inquiry (2005) describe two distinct ways in which management failings contribute to disproportionality. The first echoes Virdi and Ghaffur above, and refers to matters of borderline seriousness. Faced with such cases, it is suggested, unconfident managers will take refuge in formal disciplinary procedures – 'push it upstairs' (Morris, p.111) – in an attempt to absolve themselves from personal responsibility and, by implication, blame. The second involves even less serious, often minor performance issues. It is alleged that managers draw back from confronting BME officers about minor matters, thereby depriving them of the professional learning opportunities enjoyed by their white colleagues and leaving them vulnerable to involvement in more serious infractions at a later date. As DAC Roberts put it in his submission to the Morris Inquiry: 'We either let down our minority officers by failing to administer "tough love" or we retreat into the safety of formal processes' (p.110).

Taylor (2005) regards this tendency among line managers to refer conduct matters to more senior officers or to professional standards departments as a key source of race-based disproportionality.

> It is this aspect (possibly more than any other issue) that leads to claims of a lack of consistency or proportionality of treatment.
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> The Taylor Report (2005), p.20.

The CRE Report placed the same emphasis on the competence of managers in its national investigation of the police service. It draws on the Ghaffur Report (2004) in its description of unconfident line managers who are especially wary of dealing with matters involving BME officers. The CRE concludes that managers lack competence as well as confidence in this respect, and are inclined to 'freeze in the headlights' (p.16) when confronted with such issues.

Dealing – and failing to deal – with difference

The academic literature also touches on the failure of managers to deal effectively with a diverse staff group. A report for the Home Office by Quinton and Miller (2003) into the effectiveness of the new police misconduct procedures noted that supervisors and line managers tend to use their own working rules and definitions in the handling of misconduct cases, particularly in the early stages of the disciplinary process. While this is indicative of flexibility, it could also lead to differential sanctions being used in similar cases.

A study of the career progression of BME and white police officers found that BME officers were slower to be promoted than white officers with similar age and length of service profiles. Reviewing structural or organisational contributory factors, the inquiry found a failure among managers to resolve difficult issues involving BME officers: 'a general perception was that managers were more concerned with avoiding confrontation than they were with giving open and honest appraisals' (p.41). It seemed that in their desire to avoid conflict with BME officers, some managers failed to provide open and realistic assessments of individuals' performance and capabilities, leading to raised expectations and incomprehension when promotion and other career goals are not realised.

Senior management support

In addition to highlighting a lack of confidence and/or competence among more junior management levels, the reports also distinguish a perceived lack of support from senior managers for officers who have to deal with difficult issues with a diversity dimension. However, there is a dearth of examples in relation to the specific issue of race-based diversity. The Morris Report (2004) states that the panel 'received evidence' about such a lack of senior support, but the example given relates to a gay officer. Elsewhere in the Report, senior managers are identified with a general tendency to avoid conflict. The comment from an officer interviewed at a London Police Station that 'some managers are always rowing for shore' prompts the inquiry team to call for the development of managers' ability to make what they describe as 'difficult people management decisions' (2004: 194).

External factors and 'community pressure'

A third suggested source of internal disproportionality focuses attention on BME individuals and communities. This is a sensitive and controversial area, raising questions as it does about distinct patterns of corruption and misconduct among BME officers and staff. Unlike the police organisational culture and management deficiencies, the contribution of differential vulnerability to unethical and corrupt behaviour to disproportionality is not one that has received a great deal of attention in inquiry reports or other published sources.

Ethnicity and vulnerability to corruption

An unpublished source of information about a possible link between ethnicity and vulnerability to misconduct is a report produced by the MPS' anti-corruption command on behalf of the DPS. In light of the adverse publicity generated by the leaking of the report to the press in June 2006, it is perhaps worth describing the genesis of this document. In April 2002, the DPS tasked the MPS's Internal Consultancy Group (ICG) to undertake a statistical analysis of complaints data in order to investigate the relationship between complaints and officer ethnicity. The analysis was updated in November 2003[4]. Key conclusions were that disproportionate numbers of public complaints were recorded against black officers, and that black, Asian and other minority ethnic officers were disproportionately involved in internal investigations.

On the back of this analysis, the DPS commissioned a senior Asian officer from the anti-corruption command to look into the involvement of officers from visible ethnic minorities (VEM) in misconduct and corruption. The report drew on intelligence received by the ICG.

Although there could be many explanations for the statistical data produced by the ICG, the report addresses itself to the contribution of cultural identity to vulnerability to corrupt behaviour. There is a specific focus on Asian officers (although the author notes that some issues will be of relevance to personnel from other cultural backgrounds).

Based on a sample of intelligence reports, the author outlines three sets of factors that impact on the lives of Asian officers. These are the significance placed on loyalty to close and extended family members ('family values'); financial assistance to and from extended family and friends ('financial responsibilities'); and the integrated and complex nature of social networks within Asian communities ('social networks').

While these factors are not necessarily conducive to corrupt behaviour, the author suggests that they render officers vulnerable to involvement in misconduct. The report contains the example of an Asian officer who took possession of a fixed penalty notice issued to one of his relatives by a probationary constable. However, the report also contains examples of officers who resisted pressure to intervene on behalf of family members and friends. In addition, while the author makes the controversial claim that 'some VEM officers are engaged in certain types of wrongdoing by virtue of their background', he also suggests that some intelligence reports may be based on

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[4] *Statistical Analysis of Complaints in Relation to Ethnicity.* Prepared by Angela Emery and David Dibble, Internal Consultancy Group. 12th November 2003.

misperceptions about the lifestyles of Asian officers and about the risk they pose to the organisation.

Police corruption and the social context

There are, as indicated above, few references to a link between disproportionality and community or family pressure in the research literature. Family and peer disapproval or lack of support has been linked to reasons why BME people don't join the police in the first place (Holdaway and Barron, 1997). Stone and Tuffin's (2000) study found a range of concerns among BME respondents around police work. A small minority made reference to being placed under pressure to reveal sensitive or confidential information to community members; however, this was not a phenomenon that was confined to policing. An Asian woman revealed that she had been put under such pressure whilst working as a doctor's receptionist.

A Home Office report produced by Miller (2003) drew on interviews with investigators, analysts and other professional standards staff in order to examine the origins of police corruption. A key finding of the study was the connection between corruption and non-occupational factors such as personal circumstances, opportunity, and what the author calls the 'broader social and cultural context'. Police Standards Unit (PSU) intelligence suggested that the most common form of corruption is the leaking of information from sources such as the police national computer (PNC) and other police service databases. The report concluded that the majority of cases involving corrupt individuals (as opposed to organised groups) were associated with social networks outside the job. These might be family members or friends, or people who frequent the same gyms, pubs, clubs or even garages. Other non-work factors including relationship issues, financial difficulties and problematic drug and alcohol use featured in the backgrounds of some corrupt officers. On the basis of these findings, Miller (2003) suggests that police officers should receive training and guidance regarding the risks they are likely to face outside the job. However, no special association was made in the report between such 'community pressures' and officers from BME backgrounds.

The management of difference

Several commentators discuss disproportionality in the broader context of the MPS's approach to diversity. Ghaffur (2004) suggests that the Met operates an essentially reactive diversity strategy. One result of this strategy is 'initiative fatigue', whereby managers respond to crises by generating reams of initiatives that are not systematically evaluated and, as a consequence, difficult to sustain. Ghaffur (2004) advocates a more co-ordinated strategic approach that attempts to synthesise local and national initiatives and maintains diversity as a core strategy.

Whilst recognising that the MPS has made many advances since the publication of the Macpherson Report (1999), the Morris Report (2005) concludes that the MPS has yet to bring its implementation of the diversity agenda internally up to the standards it has achieved in operational policing. Echoing Ghaffur above, the Report suggests that a focus on multiple initiatives has led to a dilution of the central diversity message. As a result, there is no common understanding of diversity within the organisation, and a lack

of commitment at the lower levels. At the same time, the emphasis on the importance of getting diversity right has left managers fearful of getting it wrong.

Both Virdi (2001) and Ghaffur (2004) make reference to what is described in the former as a 'post-Macpherson reaction' (p.31) that has resulted in the over-scrutiny of BME officers, placing them under pressure and creating the impression that they are treated as 'special cases' rather than in line with their skills and experience.

Professional standards and disproportionality

There is, perhaps not surprisingly, a focus in all the inquiry reports on the extent to which internal disproportionality may be attributed to undesirable working practices within professional standards departments. There is broad criticism of rigid and unwarrantedly adversarial procedures: these potentially affect all officers, but are seen to impact disproportionately on BME personnel. In the time that has elapsed since the inquiry teams were carrying out their investigations, there have been significant changes to the structure and operation of DPS. As a consequence, a number of the observations made in the reports are of historical rather than current interest. They remain useful, however, for the light they shine on the culture of internal investigations and of the wider MPS.

Many of the criticisms levelled at DPS in the Morris Report (2005) relate to the culture of the Directorate and are based on submissions from individuals and staff support associations including the NBPA. The Report's key message concerns the separation of professional standards from its roots in the military courts martial system. The inquiry team received 'overwhelming evidence' of dissatisfaction with DPS, which was variously described as 'archaic', 'closed', 'untouchable', 'cumbersome', 'legalistic' and 'like a runaway train'. In relation to the national context, Taylor (2005) describes such criticisms as 'common currency'.

As discussed above, unconfident first-line supervisors and managers who formalise interventions with BME team members are one possible source of internal disproportionality. Taylor (2005) notes that upward referral is inevitable in a climate in which racist or other discriminatory elements are by definition aggravating factors that constitute serious misconduct. In drawing a link between professional standards and disproportionality, Taylor suggests that the presence of a race (or gender) element in a case raises the stakes for investigators, who can feel under pressure to mount very thorough and sometimes high level investigations. A less sympathetic description of this process was submitted to the Morris Inquiry by the Metropolitan Black Police Association (MBPA):

> At the very heart of the representations made over the years by the MBPA has been the belief that a disproportionate number of black and minority ethnic personnel have been subject to investigation by the Department of Professional Standards (DPS) and, once that investigative process had been commenced, that the DPS would pursue black and ethnic minority staff by means of an excessive and disproportionate use of resources within an over-rigorous and highly subjective processes [sic] of investigation.
>
> The Morris Report (2005), p.112

The reports make a clear case for claims of disproportionate responses in high profile cases such as those of PS Virdi and Supt Dizaei. However, it has yet to be shown that such responses are commonly experienced by BME officers who are subject to internal investigation. Nowhere in the literature is it suggested that DPS bears full responsibility for the disproportionality problem, nor would this be a logical assumption to draw. DPS functions as a secondary service provider; that is to say, it commences investigations into internal matters only after these have been formally referred to the Directorate. It can therefore do little to affect the *quantity* of intelligence it receives about BME personnel, although it does, of course, decide on the steps that are taken to investigate the activities of identified individuals. Understanding how and in what circumstances cases are referred to the DPS is therefore crucial to an understanding of the overrepresentation of BME officers and staff in internal investigations.

QUANTIFYING DISPROPORTIONALITY IN THE MPS

This section presents the results of our analysis of MPS databases for the period 1994-2004. The data were transformed using SPSS (a widely-used statistical analysis software package).

Internal disproportionality

We analysed a total of 11 internal complaints data files for the years 1994-2004. Each file contains administrative information (such as the date on which the case was reported or recorded); information about the individual complained about (such as rank, date of joining the MPS, unit/division); the result of the allegation; and any action subsequently taken against the complainee. Our analysis focused on the following:

- Allegation-based data
- Complainee-based data
- Borough-level data

Measuring disproportionality

Frequency tables and graphs are used to illustrate internal disproportionality at complainee and borough levels. Since disproportionality requires that the proportion of BME complainees is higher than the proportion of BME personnel in the MPS workforce, disproportionality cannot be tested for without information on the ethnic breakdown of the MPS.

The odds of internal disproportionality were calculated by comparing MPS workforce figures with the complaints information for the corresponding year (see Figure 1a). Odds equal to one imply the absence of disproportionality; odds greater than one indicate that a particular ethnic group is reported at a rate that is out of proportion with their representation in the MPS workforce. In the analysis we were searching for *statistically significant* differences; that is, differences that are sufficiently large and calculated on a sufficiently large sample so as to render them (95%) unlikely to be the result of chance.

Analysis of complainees

For each year analysed, the number of internal complaints exceeded the number of complainees. While the majority of complainees received a single complaint, multiple complaints were filed for roughly a quarter of complainees.

Disproportionality over time

No disproportionality is indicated for white personnel, or for those who fall into the 'other' ethnicity category in 1999. However, for black and Asian personnel throughout the five-year period, and for 'other' ethnicities from 2002, we find disproportionality in the number of internal complaints. For black personnel, the likelihood of receiving an internal complaint was close to double their representation in the MPS workforce in

2004. In 2003, Asian personnel had the highest odds of being internally reported, an escalation to 2.2 from 1.25 in 2001.

The picture provided by these data is not straightforward; however, it does suggest that internal disproportionality has increased since 2002, particularly among Asian police officers and staff. The risk of being subject to an internal complaint is higher for both Asian and black personnel, though the results for the period are not uniform.

- Risk of internal complaint for black personnel significantly higher than for white in 1999, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, *but not 2000*

- Risk of internal complaint for Asian personnel significantly higher than for white 1999, 2002, 2003, 2004, *but not 2000, 2001*

- Risk fluctuates more over time for black and Asian personnel than for white

Complainee characteristics

We analysed a range of characteristics associated with complainees. These included:

- length of service
- age
- allegation type
- gender

Length of service

It is clearly possible that disproportionality may relate to experience in policing. Our analysis shows that mean years in the MPS do vary significantly between ethnic groups. The mean number of years in the Met of white complainees was higher than that of BME complainees for the period 1999-2004. At the same time, length of service shows much more variation among BME complainees than among white. Taking 2004 as an . example:

- White complainees mean years' service = 9.1 to 10.5
- Black complainees mean years' service = 2.8 to 7.1
- Asian complainess mean years' service = 2.6 to 6.3

In practice, this high rate of variability among BME personnel means that receiving an internal complaint cannot be reliably predicted based on years of service.

Age

In general terms, it might reasonably be argued that the young tend to behave with less caution than older people. If BME complainees are on average younger than their white counterparts then this might shed some light on the reasons for disproportionality. The data show that the mean age of complainees differs significantly across ethnicity in 1997.

and from 2000 to 2004. Again, however, the results over time are not uniform. Internally reported Asian personnel were five-to-six years younger than white complainees from 2000 to 2003, and eight years younger than black complainees in 2003. In addition, the mean age at first allegation among BME complainees varies significantly more than that among white complainees in 1996 and from 1998-2003. BME complainees fall into two broad types: those who are approximately the same age as their white counterparts, and those who are nearly a decade younger. The reasons for internal reporting of officers of any ethnicity in their mid-30s could include cynicism, fatigue, or over-confidence. The disproportionate reporting of younger BME personnel is harder to explain and requires further investigation.

Allegation type

There is no direct relationship between allegation type and ethnicity. However, given the above findings in relation to age, we looked at the association between allegation type and three age groups (29 and younger; 30-34; and 35 and older). There was a significant association between age and allegation type for the years 1996; 1998; 1999; and 2001-2003. This indicates that different allegation types are associated with different age groups. 'Failures in duty', the most common allegation type, increases with the age of complainees. For other allegation types the picture is more mixed, with 'corruption' and 'racial discrimination' showing an increase with age for some years but not others.

Sex and ethnic group

Perhaps surprisingly, men and women were not reported for different allegation types. However, in 1994, 2001, 2003 and 2004, internally reported black female personnel were twice as numerous as reported women in the other ethnic groups. Since the women were not reported for different allegations to other female complainees, these results are difficult to explain and require further investigation.

Borough level analysis

In order to examine borough level differences, we identified the station and subsequently the borough in which complainees had been located at the time of the complaint (see Figures 4-15).

Distribution of disproportionality

Our analysis shows that it is possible to identify boroughs that are associated with exceptionally high internal disproportionality. The majority of disproportionately reported BME personnel in the 11-year period under study come from a total of ten boroughs:

- Richmond-upon-Thames
- Barking & Dagenham
- Camden
- Hackney

- Hammersmith & Fulham
- Harrow
- Tower Hamlets
- Kingston-upon-Thames
- Havering
- Redbridge

Among these boroughs, four stand out in terms of their contribution to disproportionality during particular periods:

- Barking & Dagenham (1997, 2003; most recent figures show black complainees at 40% of total)
- Hammersmith & Fulham (2000 for Asian complainees; 2001 black complainees 50% of total)
- Harrow (1998, 2002; most recent figures show Asian complainees at nearly 40% of total)
- Kingston-upon-Thames (2003, 2004, with Asian complainees at 100% and nearly 40% respectively).

With the exception of Hammersmith & Fulham, the boroughs that contributed the highest number of complainees of all ethnicities were not associated with internal disproportionality.

Gender and disproportionality

Gender-based disproportionality is not the object of this study. However, it is also possible to identify boroughs that manifest exceptionally high disproportionality among women complainees during the period under study:

- Barnet (1995: women more than 65% of complainees)
- Merton (1996: women 100% of complainees)
- Hammersmith & Fulham (1997: women 40% of complainees)
- Bromley, Kingston-upon-Thames (1999, 2001: women 40% of complainees)
- Kensington & Chelsea (2002: women 40% of complainees)
- Bexley, Kingston-upon-Thames (2004: women 40% of complainees).

Three boroughs (Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington & Chelsea, and Kingston-upon-Thames), were associated with high proportions of BME and female complainees.

External disproportionality

Although external disproportionality was not the major focus of the study, we tested for this phenomenon by comparing the proportion of ethnic minority complainants (as recorded in MPS public complaints files for 2001) with the proportion of ethnic minority residents across London boroughs (as recorded in the 2001 census).

Distribution of disproportionality

In 2001, whites filed complaints at a slightly lower rate than their proportion of the population across London (see Figure 1b). The same was true of Asians, with the exceptions of Barking & Dagenham, and Bromley. By contrast, at least as many blacks as their population share filed complaints across London, with the highest disproportionality occurring in Havering, and to a lesser extent in Barnet, Harrow, and Kingston-upon-Thames.

External disproportionality, like its internal counterpart, showed variation over geographical areas. Complaints received from black males were more than double their representation in the population, with the exceptions of Barking & Dagenham, and Newham. In Havering, the number of black male complainants was some 14 times that of their proportion in the local population (see Figure 2). By contrast, the odds ratio for white males was approximately one across London. The odds for Asian males are in proportion with their representation in the population with the exceptions of Barking & Dagenham, Richmond-upon-Thames, and Bromley. Therefore, the lower than expected proportion of complaints generated by whites and Asians is largely attributable to women in these two groups (see Figure 3).

Complainant characteristics

Black complainants filed on average one more complaint than other ethnicities. Black complainants tended to be younger than whites by some 2-4 years. They also form the majority of student complainants, and of complainants reporting complaints in relation to 'stop and search'. More black complainants were involved in complaints that emanated from street incidents than other ethnic groups. Asian complainants too were younger than whites in the years 2001 and 2004. Their most commonly reported incidents were ones that took place in their home or at their place of work.

Complainant ethnicity

In exploring the interaction between the ethnicity of complainant and complainee, we found a tendency for Asian citizens to complain about Asian personnel more than they did about individuals from other ethnic groups. In 1994, Asian citizens made a significantly higher number of complaints against black and Asian MPS personnel than against white. No significant difference was recorded in 2001 or 2004, although Asians still complained more about Asian and 'other' personnel in these years. In 1999, black and 'other' MPS personnel received significantly more complaints from black complainants than did whites or Asians.

Age and ethnicity

It is possible to distinguish population sub-groups that display substantial levels of external disproportionality.

- Black males over 20 years old in most London boroughs

23

- Black females in Barnet, Harrow, Richmond-upon-Thames, Kingston-upon-Thames, Wandsworth
- Asian males generally and over 30, in particular in Barking & Dagenham, Richmond-upon-Thames, and Bromley
- Asian males in their late 20s in Kingston-upon-Thames and Barnet
- Asian male teenagers in Camden and Kensington & Chelsea
- White males of 30-44 in Harrow and Richmond-upon-Thames
- White males in their late 20s in Kingston-upon-Thames
- White males in their early 20s in Barking & Dagenham, Bromley, Croydon, and Greenwich
- White male teenagers in Barking & Dagenham, Richmond-upon-Thames, Kingston-upon-Thames, Lewisham, Sutton, Islington, Hounslow

Summary

The focus of this analysis was racial disproportionality in relation to internal complaints. The results indicate that internal disproportionality exists and is on the increase, particularly in relation to Asian personnel. In addition, it is clear that disproportionality varies significantly across boroughs within the MPS area. Future borough-level investigation might focus on within-borough concentrations of disproportionality. Further investigation of individual officer characteristics (including ethnic group, borough characteristics, and their interaction) could provide a clearer picture of the reasons underlying internal disproportionality.

The quantitative study shows that external disproportionality occurs at differing levels of severity for black adult males across London. The phenomenon is localised among black females and Asian and white males with regard to age group and including teenagers. Havering presents the highest external disproportionality for black complainants by some way. The boroughs that contribute most to external disproportionality for a mix of ethnicities (including whites) and age groups are Barking & Dagenham, Richmond-upon-Thames, Kingston-upon-Thames.

MANAGING DIVERSITY: PERSPECTIVES ON THE ORGANISATION

This section examines respondents' views on the MPS's response to diversity. Although this is clearly an important area in itself, our aim was to explore the links between the organisation's diversity agenda and unjustifiable internal disproportionality. Respondents' understanding of diversity is presented here, together with their perceptions as to the progress the organisation has made since Lord Macpherson's publication in 1999 of the Report of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry.

Diversity and the MPS

As a political and organisational term, diversity is now ubiquitous in multicultural Britain. For the police service, diversity is not merely the name of a concept or agenda to be harnessed to the eradication of racial and other inequalities; it is also the challenge of achieving equality goals in the widest sense in all its organisational processes and operational activities. The Macpherson Report (1999) produced an extensive list of recommendations intended to assist the police service in examining its diversity policies and practices and redressing both individual and organisational failings.

In response to Macpherson, the MPS has implemented a range of initiatives and reforms aimed at promoting equality both in external service delivery and internal staff management. Among these initiatives are mandatory, organisation-wide community race relations training, the development of the Family Liaison Officer role, the establishment of the Diversity Directorate, a detailed and consistently reviewed Race Equality Scheme, and a range of Commissioner's Focus Groups examining issues of concern to minority groups and individuals within the MPS.

Demographic data indicate that the MPS is a different police service from the one that existed when Macpherson reported in 1999. As of March 2006, the overall strength of the MPS in terms of officer numbers was 30,870.67. Of this number nearly 20%, or 6,131.66 are women. Nearly 7.5%, or 2,285.65, are black or minority ethnic officers. The organisation works closely with over a dozen staff associations to represent and address the needs of its diverse workforce. The mission of the Diversity and Citizen Focus Directorate has expanded to include not only a strand team on race (and ethnicity), but also teams focusing on internal support and service delivery issues directly concerned with matters of age, faith, gender, disability and sexuality.

There is much here to indicate progress in a positive direction. At the same time, the MPS's failure to meet its (admittedly ambitious) recruitment and retention targets for black and minority ethnic personnel, together with the constant drip of negative publicity around its treatment of BME officers, suggest that the Morris Inquiry team was right to suggest that the diversity message has yet to permeate the organisation in its entirety.

Progress since Lawrence

In focus groups and interviews we discussed the extent to which the MPS had made positive progress in its treatment of diversity issues. With few exceptions, respondents felt that the MPS was a more tolerant and ethnically sensitive organisation than it was ten years ago. Most attributed this to success in meeting recommendations for reform set out

in the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report. It was suggested that, prior to the Macpherson Report, the MPS's response to diversity had been principally effective at the level of 'lip service', and was largely driven by the actions of a few committed individuals. The comments of one BME PC suggest that the organisation has come full circle: 'I don't think the Met is doing much wrong now; the problems are down to individuals'. BME respondents who had been in the job for a decade or more offered anecdotal accounts of racist slurs and 'jokes' that had once been part of their everyday experience but would now be considered unacceptable.

Success – or different problems?

As indicated above, respondents were in broad agreement that the MPS has made positive gains with respect to diversity. There were consistent descriptions of progress in relation to service delivery and community engagement. Key successes in the diversity area included family liaison, interaction with minority ethnic communities, and an organisational commitment to tackling racial and violent crime, homophobic crime, and domestic violence. However, several respondents referred to the existence of 'new problems' that had been thrown up by the diversity agenda. These new problems seemed largely to be an effect of the organisation's success in rendering overt racism unacceptable. Having, in a sense, removed this 'top layer', the MPS appears to have revealed further, more complex problems that present the diversity agenda with a new set of challenges. As one white male DI explained, 'It's much more difficult to find open prejudice, but the organisation doesn't do well with what's below the surface.'

Keeping it real: rhetoric, reality and diversity

Focus group discussions about diversity yielded surprising levels of frustration, irritation and lack of engagement among participants. While the majority of respondents acknowledged that the MPS had developed a more effective response to diversity issues in the last decade, there was a lack of belief in the ability of the organisation to sustain and build on its successes. In particular, the communication of the diversity message was seen to be mired in political correctness; it was not the substantive issue, but rather the saturation of diversity rhetoric that created a palpable sense of fatigue among these officers.

The key messages from focus group respondents were that the diversity agenda seemed more concerned with words than action; that it had been imposed from above rather than representing the needs of minority individuals or groups; and that it lacked specificity and direction. A Sikh officer commented:

> I think diversity was something that came about post-Lawrence. It was a word that buzzed around a lot. But it never became entrenched in what we do. It's just become a little box.

Owning the agenda

In answer to the question 'What comes to mind when you think of the Met's diversity strategy?', a black female police staff member remarked, 'We're going to be force-fed another idea that we didn't have a part in'. She continued:

> It's not constructive, is it? It's all put together. You put together these situations of all these different people, fighting to be accepted, and then diversity rears its ugly head and you're going to be taught how to speak to people. We've all been there and sat quietly.

The lack of ownership of the diversity agenda was common to respondents across the focus groups. Among BME officers this seems to make itself felt most profoundly when they themselves are required to take part in diversity training. Participants in the Sikh group were unanimous in their perception that they were being judged against a conception of diversity that did not reflect their lived experience. One male officer in the group felt that he had received a low mark for diversity awareness on a promotion exam because he had given accounts of real experiences. Another said:

> We only get marked on *their* understanding of diversity, not on *our* understanding or our experiences with diversity. Yet we have to actually live it on a day-to-day basis, hour-by-hour basis, where we can't take off our skin and be someone else. (emphasis added)

An unwelcome emphasis?

A different emphasis emerged in one of the Black officer groups, in which discussion focused around the tendency of the diversity agenda to impose an unwelcome (and growing) emphasis on their identity as black police officers. Here, the organisation is a source of irritation not for misrepresenting lived experience, but rather for misjudging the extent to which all its BME employees feel defined by their ethnic identity. These are the words of two officers who spoke directly to the issue:

> All my life I've always been just me. My colour was never an issue for me until I joined the Met....I joined the Met to be a police officer, not a black police officer. But you can't run away from it. You become quite conscious of your colour, whereas before you weren't.
>
> Black PC, female

> There's lots of people that want to label themselves, but I think when we turn up at work we're police officers. And who we are away from work is irrelevant. But I think it's almost like it's following us into the workplace somehow. Everywhere you go, you wonder: 'Am I getting this reaction because I'm me, or because I am a black police officer'?
>
> Black DC, male

Diversity in the real world

Feelings of alienation from the diversity agenda were not confined to BME respondents. White officers too expressed frustration about the lack of fit between the official line on diversity and the experiences of frontline officers. They drew particular attention to the perceived failure of senior officers to focus on 'real world' issues as opposed to rhetoric and 'big words'. This is a white male PC with less than five years service:

> People get sick of hearing about diversity, of seeing it in the papers all the time. People get tired of hearing these senior officers talking all the time who don't know what it is like on the ground for those of us who have to get on with the job.

Echoing the sentiment, a white female detective sergeant with over fifteen years service called for the organisation's diversity agenda to be reassessed and repackaged:

> The agenda has gone off. People are tired of hearing about it. The word and the whole agenda need to be repackaged. To manage diversity problems, senior officers need to go back to the real world. Provide practical information. Don't use big words. Figure out what upsets people, what do they like? What do they need to solve their problems and meet their needs so that they can get on with the job? Stop talking and listen to your staff as well as to your community.

The comments of these respondents suggest that the MPS has had more success in convincing its workforce of the value of diversity in external communications than in internal ones. As noted above, respondents identified a range of positive gains in the areas of service delivery and community engagement. However, they were less forthcoming in relation to successes at the organisational level. Officers were clearly most comfortable discussing and defining diversity when they conceptualised the term in relation to core street-level, team-based policing functions. There was significantly less constructive understanding as to how diversity operated and influenced – or should influence – internal workforce matters, including internal disproportionality. In fact, the vast majority of respondents, regardless of age, rank, gender or ethnic identity, were wholly unaware that BME officers were disproportionately represented in DPS discipline and misconduct investigations.

A loss of direction?

Some respondents felt that while the MPS had moved swiftly to put many of the Macpherson recommendations into practice, its response within the organisation was largely reactive and rhetorical. Several suggested that the MPS has lost direction on diversity and resorted to 'brushstroking' critical issues rather than addressing problems in a thorough and systematic way. This is a black male PC:

> If you look back at things that came out from the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, that was all about how investigations were conducted, how families were dealt with. And it wasn't about making sure you called people the right name. It was about making sure that you provided an appropriate service, and it moved away from that. And I don't know

where these phrases come from, either...You can't brushstroke issues; you have to deal with people as they are. Just because you're calling them 'black and minority ethnic' doesn't mean the job is done. The end product has to be useful to the organisation as a whole. And it has to be useful to the staff and to anyone who comes into contact with the people, because otherwise it's just words.

From confrontation to complication

The combination of an emphasis on the importance of language and a lack of specific direction around internal organisational goals seems to have left many people feeling unequal to the task of communicating with colleagues who do not share their ethnic background. While many respondents deplored this situation, there was a widespread perception that any change would have to come from the top of the organisation:

> We seem to have made it particularly complicated, the organisation as a whole. There are white officers who are afraid of approaching Sikhs or approaching Hindus or approaching black people. We seem really to have missed the trick on that. No-one is reining that back, saying, 'All right, we have a level-playing field. All you've got to do is treat everyone with respect'.

<div align="right">Black police officer, male</div>

Not surprisingly, perhaps, some respondents expressed a preference for a pre-Lawrence era, which they saw as characterised by a more transparent and negotiable (if rough-and-ready) atmosphere of confrontation and challenge.

> When I first joined, the police service was a police force. There was a certain amount of getting used to how people were. You got used to confrontation. If you didn't like it, you challenged it. You would deal with it. You'd go up to someone and say something. And although we are now trying to create this culture where the managers can say 'this sort of behaviour won't be tolerated', actually the management is still not equipped to be able to deal with that. Problems just grow and grow.

<div align="right">Black police officer, female</div>

This officer's depiction of the unreformed police service might not reflect the experience of other BME officers, but the theme of the imposition of a politically-correct veneer onto a largely uncomprehending organisational culture is one that recurred across the focus groups and interviews. The effectiveness of managers in responding to the demands of this new culture is discussed below.

Summary

It seems that an unintended consequence of the MPS's success in dealing with institutional and other more overt forms of racism has been to uncover a previously

hidden layer of issues that appear to require different solutions. In brief, these issues involve the maintenance of the integrity of the diversity agenda in an atmosphere of heightened sensitivity (or 'political correctness'), and second, the need to mirror the commitment to community engagement with a commitment to the operationalisation of diversity *within* the MPS.

THE USUAL SUSPECT? POLICE ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

It is widely acknowledged that the UK police service is characterised by a 'blame culture' that emphasises the allocation of responsibility and blame over the resolution of conflict and dissent. Rather than enabling people to learn lessons when things go awry, a culture of blame penalises honest mistakes as harshly as deliberate wrong-doing. The resulting environment is one in which innovation is discouraged and risk aversion thrives.

Blaming the blame culture

The impact of the blame culture on managers and supervisors is discussed below; here we are primarily interested in the organisational dimension of this phenomenon. In both interviews and focus groups it was revealing to see how consistently management decisions that impacted negatively on BME officers were attributed not to individual skills deficits or deliberate discrimination, but rather to pressure exerted by the organisation via the prevailing blame culture. The impression given is of a hydraulic process in which individual managers are unable to bring their agency to bear against an indomitable organisational culture.

It is certainly true that the organisational culture of the police service is both distinctive and pervasive. However, it is also likely that the officers we spoke to – managers and frontline officers alike – were more comfortable attributing what are essentially management failings to the organisation rather than to individuals. Hence the PC quoted below stops short of holding an individual responsible for the treatment of his average black African officer ('minor things will be picked up'; 'seen as doing crap'). The same impression was given by first-line supervisors and middle managers talking about more senior leaders:

> You'll find yourself with no support if the problem is seen from above as involving a racially aggravated issue.
>
> White acting inspector, male

'Seen from above' is another distancing phrase that locates responsibility in some faceless upper realm of the organisation. These comments suggest that it will take more than the improvement of individual manager performance to alter perceptions of the prevailing culture within the MPS.

Racism, discrimination and mistrust

Much has been written about the racism that is endemic in police organisational subcultures (see, for example, Reiner, 2002), and the now-infamous 'Secret Policeman' documentary revealed in the starkest possible way what a difficult place the police service can be for members of minority ethnic groups. Unsurprisingly, all the focus groups and individual interviewees commented on this aspect of the MPS's organisational culture. Although ethnic identity was not regarded as the only, or even the most significant, factor in this respect (a black female police officer said that she felt her membership of a faith group created more distance between herself and her colleagues), there is clearly a perception that a prevailing white masculine subculture remains covertly suspicious of anyone who varies from the norm. These are two BME officers:

I think there is a culture within the police, very subtle, very difficult to detect where if you are part of the great body of the police and you want to do things slightly differently, the rest of your colleagues get a little bit uncomfortable. 'Why isn't he joining in? Why isn't he coming out to the pub? There is a little subtle thing going on because you don't fit. You don't come in and do what everyone else does.

<div style="text-align: right">Black male police officer</div>

People do mistrust you because you are not the same as them.

<div style="text-align: right">Black female police staff member</div>

The experiences of Asian personnel

If such an atmosphere of suspicion exists around difference, it could contribute to disproportionality in the number of intelligence reports generated about BME officers. This link was not made by these black officers; however, respondents in the Muslim and Sikh focus groups drew more explicit connections between ethnic identity and disproportionality. Officers in both groups described scenarios in which they had been disciplined in a different manner, or to a dissimilar extent, than white officers involved in similar behaviours. A Muslim officer explained that his line manager had contacted him by email to inform him that he was to receive a three-month driving ban. He subsequently received a written warning in connection with the same incident. The officer maintained that some months prior to this, two white officers in the same position had been seen in person by their line manager and received an informal warning.

Other respondents in these groups felt that there was an organisational reluctance to provide Asian officers with specialist training opportunities such as response driving courses. At the same time, these respondents suggested, Asian officers were reluctant to take such matters forward, or to complain about any form of unfair or discriminatory treatment, for fear of being seen to 'play the race card' or to invite hostile responses from colleagues. An Asian officer explained: 'You don't challenge the schoolboy culture in this organisation. You would get penalised in an indirect way. It's more of an unspoken rule that to make an allegation against a senior officer would come back to haunt you'. These comments echo submissions to the CRE Inquiry that described how BME officers who invoke grievance procedures are regarded as betraying the code of solidarity that is a key tenet of the organisational subculture.

Black respondents' views

The views expressed in the Muslim and Sikh focus groups differed from those expressed in the Black groups and by BME officers who took part in individual interviews. Participants in the focus groups for black officers and police staff did identify (as indicated above) a mistrust of difference in the Met; however, they also expressed a level of impatience with the Met's diversity agenda and with the assumption that the Met is a racist organisation. A black female police officer exclaimed that she had joined the Met to be a police officer, not a black police officer. A black female police staff member in the same focus group dismissed the concept of institutional racism, saying that she had never understood what the term meant. This statement met with general agreement in

the group, with the exception of a black male officer who worked in the Diversity Directorate, and attempted (not without difficulty) to explain the meaning of institutional racism to his colleagues.

Similar sentiments to these were expressed by black officers in individual interviews. Asked about the impact of race and gender on her work as a police officer, a black female police constable replied: 'Race has no effect on my day-to-day work. I have no time to bring race or gender into the scope. I don't feel a racial element on the job'. A black male officer described institutional racism as a 'problem of the past'. The officer, a PC with three years service, indicated that he has yet to 'see, hear or come across' institutional racism. Another black male PC expressed a very similar sentiment:

> There are always rumours about the Met being racist, et cetera. Minorities are still underrepresented; however, the Met may not be at fault. I haven't experienced any overt racism and I don't see any racist processes in existence now.

The words 'overt' and 'now' may be significant here. The black officer who described the subtle rejection of difference that characterises police organisational culture also told a story about the culture that prevailed during the early years of his service. He explained how he had arrived at a new posting and identified his new partner. This (white) officer greeted him with the words: 'I hate fucking black people', to which he responded 'Me too'. They had gone on to work together reasonably successfully for three years. This anecdote, like others we were told, equates the past with a racism that was overt and therefore easily identified and either challenged, or, as in this case, otherwise neutralised. By contrast, the present is equated with a mistrust of difference that lies beneath the surface and eludes attempts to draw it out and put a name to it.

The culture of DPS

The Morris Inquiry Report devoted a significant amount of attention to the culture and operation of DPS. It recommended fundamental changes to the role and remit of DPS based on a range of criticisms and negative perceptions of its structure, culture and operation. A substantial number of submissions from individuals and staff associations described DPS as a maverick department, untouchable and unaccountable. It was alleged that DPS operated beyond the bounds of criminal investigations involving members of the public and with scant regard for the welfare of individuals under investigation.

When the topic of professional standards arose in the focus groups, there was a marked difference in the responses of those who had been subject to investigation and those who had not. Officers who had been investigated echoed the criticisms made by individuals who described their experiences of DPS to the Morris Inquiry panel. One Sikh officer commented: 'Who investigates the investigator? DPS has an inordinate amount of power to end someone's career. There appears to be no accountability on the part of investigators'. While this officer did not associate his treatment with racism, another officer in the same group maintained that he had been subjected to a disproportionate investigation because of his ethnic identity. For the second officer, DPS paid lip-service to the Met's diversity agenda whilst mounting unfair investigations against BME officers.

There is too much focus on the word 'diversity', but they don't do what they need to do, which is deal with the evidence. Discipline is used as a lever to manipulate where they want them to go – 'we'll find something' …Why, for example, are more blacks and minorities stopped and searched? The link is racism.

Whatever the circumstances of this particular case, it is clear that for some BME officers, the negative experience of investigation is associated with an organisational failure to implement the diversity agenda and to tackle institutional and direct racism.

The experience of investigation

Participants who had direct experience of DPS investigation described those experiences with near uniformity. These officers characterised the investigative process as painfully slow and intrusive. The combination of excessive lag time and rare updates from investigators and case managers left the officers feeling as though they had been found guilty without proper enquiry. One respondent discussed a colleague who had undergone a death in custody investigation lasting over six years, after which the officer received a single e-mail from DPS dismissing all charges. An Asian officer said he believed DPS attempts 'to stitch police officers up' and depicted the investigative process as an isolating and lonely one.

You don't feel that anyone is there for you. I haven't been charged with anything, yet I come into work and discover details of the case have been leaked. People look at me differently. I feel as though everyone around me knows more about my personal life than I do.

When asked whether race played a factor in his internal investigation, the officer replied: 'Race has a bearing. I feel just a little bit unwelcome. It's a feeling in my gut; that because I am Asian, I am investigated more closely, more rigorously and have more to prove'. Other BME officers expressed similar anxieties. While the officers we interviewed did not always connect anxiety of DPS investigation with racial or ethnic discrimination, it was clear that the officers believed their BME identity translated into disproportionately greater scrutiny within the investigative process.

Explaining disproportionality: DPS or MPS?

The Morris Inquiry quite properly based many of its conclusions on submissions received from individuals with experience of DPS investigations. By contrast, the majority of people to whom we spoke, in groups or individually, had no personal experience of professional standards investigations. Among these respondents we found very low awareness of internal disproportionality, and responses, on learning of its existence, ranging from surprise and even amazement to resignation. On being asked to speculate as to possible explanations for disproportionality in internal investigations, none of these respondents mentioned the culture or operating standards of the DPS, focusing instead on discriminatory management practices and the blame culture of the wider organisation.

I didn't know the Met had a disproportionality problem, but I'm not surprised. Minor things will be picked up if they are done by a minority officer, and a record is made up. Let's say you have a black African officer with a strong accent who does average work, and you have a white British officer who is also doing average work. The white officer will be seen as doing okay, whereas the black officer is seen as doing crap, or not given a break, and might have other officers going out with him on patrol.

<div align="right">Black male PC</div>

The Met is still intensely political and very much a blame culture. This prevents people from making decisions because you don't know if you'll be supported. There is still a fear of dealing with BME performance problems at a local level because supervisors don't feel supported from above.

<div align="right">White male DI</div>

Summary

We found a range of views about the association between the culture of the MPS and disproportionality. Among some individuals, there is a clear feeling that the mistrust of difference remains a key feature of the organisational culture, and that BME personnel are likely to be treated differently – and less favourably – than their white colleagues on a day-to-day basis. Others felt that too much was made of the significance of ethnic identity and were indignant at what they saw as the unwarranted labelling of the Met as a racist organisation. Respondents varied too as to whether they located responsibility for discrimination and disproportionality with the organisational culture, or with racist individuals, or both. It was notable that the Muslim and Sikh focus groups expressed different, more negative views than the black groups. This could be indicative of a genuine difference in attitudes; alternatively, it might be a reflection of group dynamics or of the presence within the groups of individuals with experiences of internal investigation.

THE MANAGEMENT DIMENSION

The Morris Inquiry Report (2004) dwelt in some detail on the contribution of managers and first line supervisors to disproportionality. Based on the evidence they received, the Inquiry panel concluded that managers are fearful of issues involving diversity. Lord Harris's vivid claim that when it comes to diversity, 'the rabbit is frozen in the headlamps' seems to have gained broad acceptance; however, the voices of these petrified creatures do not appear in the Report. As part of the interview study, we talked to managers and supervisors about their roles, their management styles and their attitudes towards diversity and disproportionality.

Fear of diversity

In their examination of the management of difference within the MPS, the Morris Inquiry Panel concluded that 'managers are fearful of issues of diversity and lack confidence in managing situations where difference is an issue' (2004:100). Unsurprisingly, perhaps, few of the managers we spoke to openly admitted feeling personally unequal to the task of managing diverse teams. Rather, they tended to distance themselves from the issue whilst acknowledging that it was a problem for others:

> I think most supervisors believe there is more of a need to formalise rather than informalise proceedings with BME officers. I think the opposite. I believe you should start on an informal basis and then go on to a formal proceeding if needed.
>
> White male DS

When talking at a general level, most of our respondents reinforced Morris's conclusion:

> Managers can get frightened when they are challenged [by a BME officer], because accusations only gather momentum if they're forced...

> People are uncomfortable dealing with BME staff because it adds an extra dimension.

> Managers are afraid to manage certain groups of people. The 'name tag' gets in the way.

> Because managers are aware of what a racist claim can do to their careers, most supervisors behave with this knowledge at the back of their mind.

> I think some people fear doing what they need to do because a witch hunt begins with some of this if the wrong thing gets said.

> Managers are afraid to discipline those [BME officers] who under-perform and ignore problems until they explode.

> People are frightened. They don't want to say the wrong thing.

One white male inspector was more candid about his own concerns regarding the management of BME officers in his team. When discussing the findings of the Morris Inquiry, this officer said he 'agreed wholeheartedly' that he was nervous about approaching BME officers over performance issues, and that it was common both for him and for other managers to feel isolated and 'out on a limb' at such times. At the same time, he expressed frustration at what he perceived as the tendency of BME officers to sidestep the normal channels of communication and seek support from senior BME officers. Given his comments about his uncertainty about dealing with such issues himself, this is perhaps understandable behaviour on the officers' part, but clearly it fuelled his doubts about his own capability as a manager and mentor.

These managers have clearly internalised the message about the crucial importance of diversity awareness, but rather than helping them fulfil their roles they have been de-skilled in managing the very people that the diversity agenda was intended to assist. They have been told what they must not say, but are less certain about what they should say – or do – when approaching the management of BME team members. Much of what we heard adds weight to Morris' concern that BME officers are deprived of the opportunity to benefit from the constructive criticism and support that their white peers receive. As one white manager explained:

> If people are concerned about a performance issue and want to reprimand a BME officer, they will hesitate. I think they are likely to cave in.

Letting them get on with it

At the same time, some of the evidence we heard suggests that the concerns managers articulate in relation to the supervision of BME officers point up a more general deficiency in the skill set of some line managers. It seems likely that some individuals are promoted not for their people management skills, but for their capability as police officers. Like the Morris Inquiry Panel, we heard a lot of good things about managers, but also some criticisms. Many managers, it seems, excel in some parts of the role but are less adept in others: specifically, what one might call the 'soft skills' of management.

One interviewee explained that his manager was very good at problem-solving, but less good at empowering his team to solve problems for themselves. When asked to articulate their management style, many interviewees struggled to move beyond generalisations; others frankly admitted that they didn't really have one. A white male inspector whose team included one black officer, one Asian officer, and five women, felt that supervision would simply add to his officers' burdens: 'They don't need discipline and management – they've got enough on their plate'. This 'hands-off' management style was described by several of the longer-serving male officers to whom we spoke.

> I believe in a laissez-faire management style. My officers manage them-
> selves and get on with the work. They can always come to me if they
> need something.
>
> White male DS, 24 years service

> I have a loose framework for managing people; I let them get on with the job.
>
> White male Sergeant, 23 years service

> I'm not a micro-manager; I believe in encouragement and not being authoritarian and letting my officers get on with it.
>
> White male DS, 23 years service

Transformational women?

Interestingly, none of the women managers we spoke to made reference to this 'letting them get on with it' style of management. Rather, they emphasised listening, openness and communication.

> My leadership style is transformational: I like to get people involved, encourage views, be open to disagreement.
>
> Senior BME female officer, 22 years service

> My style is to be very straight and open with people. I want to know the tiny details. You've got to understand how people act and what's causing them to do certain things. The key skills are communication, communication, communication! You also have to have a strong leadership style, good decision-making skills, the ability to listen and the ability to mediate problems.
>
> White female inspector, 25 years service

> Good management is fair management: getting to know your people, being open-minded, being a good listener and ensuring that opportunities are in place for every member of your team. When goals aren't met, it's important to ask why before jumping to conclusions – is this a behaviour problem that's been in effect from the start?
>
> White female sergeant, 15 years service

> Some people have different needs. As a supervisor, you have to temper your language. Make sure people understand what you say and how you say it. We label things too easily.
>
> White female DS, 15 years service

While it isn't clear that these principles are always put into practice (one of the managers quoted above also talked in a general way about managers' fear of 'certain groups of people'), it is striking that at least in their talk, the women laid a greater emphasis on the 'soft skills' than did any of their male colleagues.

Keeping it formal

Our respondents confirmed Morris' second concern with regard to the overuse of formal processes in relation to the conduct of BME officers. Managers talked about 'falling back on the rule book' because of a concern about being held to account for their actions in response to issues involving BME team members.

> We have to make sure that if we discipline this person, we have to do it exactly by the book. Anyone who's subject to performance issues, we have to make sure the case is watertight because of the perception that there's going to be some fall-out. You're going to end up in an argument with the organisation.
>
> White male inspector

This type of management response was discussed at some length in focus groups with BME officers and staff. Most of the participants were aware of Morris's conclusions and were, unsurprisingly, quite critical of managers, regarding this behaviour as betraying an inappropriate level of concern for their careers. One black female police staff member commented that 'managers are being careful; they're looking out for number one at the end of the day'. A black female police officer in the same group described the process whereby the invocation of formal procedures leads to an escalated or disproportionate response.

> They're scared of rocking the boat with the organisation; they have a fear of being seen to do something wrong to a black officer, and then a fear that they have to ratchet it up in order to make it worthwhile.
>
> Black police officer, female

What do managers want?

All the managers to whom we spoke expressed some level of concern about dealing with diversity-related issues in the workplace. We asked them about the problems they faced in their roles, and asked what would help to resolve some of these dilemmas.

A key issue for first-line supervisors is how to create a space for the resolution of potentially difficult performance issues with staff amid the hurly-burly of everyday policing. As one DS told us:

> The [sergeant's] role is awful. There isn't sufficient staff. The phone rings all the time with another problem. We are understaffed and most of my time is spent fixing problems. A problem arises, and I have to deal with it. It's a knee-jerk reaction.

Unlike most policing tasks, the management of sensitive staff issues cannot be effectively approached reactively. Managers need to be in on-going communication with their team members, and to identify problems at an early stage; a difficult task given the nature of the role. Respondents highlighted two relevant issues when discussing unmet needs in this area: support from senior officers and the organisation, and training opportunities.

A support vacuum

Issues around staff performance and discipline can be complex and sensitive. When it comes to dealing with these difficult issues, however, line managers feel that they are on their own.

> Where is the assistance available to you as a line manager?
>
> White male DS

> As an inspector, no-one's going to tell me what I should be doing.
>
> White male inspector

Most of the time, these managers felt competent to deal with the challenges presented by the supervisory role: both with its hectic, reactive nature, and with the sense of isolation that accompanies any management position. However, when faced with problems or issues with a racial dimension, these officers suddenly become aware of their structural vulnerability. A white male sergeant commented: 'You'll find yourself left with no support if the problem is seen from above as involving a racially aggravated issue'. A white female sergeant explained that supervisors feel 'out on a limb' when confronted by 'big problems'.

These comments take us back to the culture of the MPS, and its perceived preference for bureaucracy and blame over resolution and learning. Asked about sources of support for line managers, a white male DS replied:

> There is no real support. Guidance comes in the form of a large rule book.

There was a strong feeling among respondents that diversity was insufficiently understood throughout the Met. One white inspector described the current understanding of diversity as a bell curve, with a huge group of people in the middle not really being aware of the problem – including some senior people. Another referred to 'a mixed picture'.

It might have been anticipated that the Met's Diversity Directorate would function as a source of support for managers dealing with diversity issues. However, while people were aware of the work of the Directorate, most did not see it as fulfilling a supportive role in their everyday work. There was a general feeling that the Directorate was out of touch with operational policing. One respondent described it an 'an education centre'. Another said simply that the Directorate 'have forgotten what frontline policing is like'. It was suggested that, despite the presence of some very good people, the Directorate did not have a good reputation across the service: 'it's as though the Directorate is lost in the wilderness – there's no real agenda'.

Training

Training is a second potential source of support for line managers. Diversity training has been a key factor in the Met's diversity agenda, and respondents spoke in positive terms about some of the training packages that were developed in response to the

recommendations of the Macpherson Inquiry. However, there was a sense that the community race relations (CRR) training that had been an entirely appropriate response to Lawrence was insufficient to meet current and developing needs. Where training doesn't address problems that commonly arise in the workplace, its effects are shortlived. A white inspector described his response to the diversity training he had attended.

> For me, a lot of that was – yes, it raises awareness, but at my age you fall back on your tried and tested methods.

Managing diversity within the workplace

Respondents made a clear distinction between CRR training and training that focused on diversity in the workplace. For some people this was simply 'diversity training'; others made direct reference to 'internal training'.

> Internal police training is poor in general. There has been some community race relations training, but diversity training hasn't been the focus of attention.
>
> White male DI

> Training could also be redone. There was a lot of community race relations training after Lawrence. But now we need something else.
>
> White female sergeant

What respondents appear to mean by 'internal training' is training that would help them to deal with the practical, everyday issues around diversity. We were struck by the fact that while most managers were able to name the six branches of diversity, they faltered when describing the relevance of this concept to their everyday work. One respondent suggested that it wasn't training, so much as consultation that was required. Several respondents commented on the multiplicity of programmes that had been rolled out since Macpherson, and there was criticism in relation to a perceived lack of overall co-ordination and vision.

> There has been a great advancement on these issues for the Met since I joined in 1982, but there are still huge issues on the diversity front. Sometimes officers will express discomfort, and it's a training need. We have to provide full understanding [of diversity], but the organisation doesn't really know how to do that.
>
> White male DS

People management skills development

Another aspect of the training question was training to do the job of managing. The inquiry reports highlight the difficulties managers encounter in dealing with issues with a diversity dimension. However, there seems to be a skills gap for some people around the broader management role, specifically in relation to communication and support; what tend to be thought of as the 'softer' skills of managing.

To do this job you need experience of the actual subject matter, good communication skills, a sound and logical approach, being aware of issues. The Met doesn't teach you how to do that.

<div align="right">White male DS</div>

The Met needs to give managers confidence by providing a toolkit for dealing with these issues. It needs to train managers to manage people and not just tasks. A 'people management' course would be a good first start.

<div align="right">White female sergeant</div>

Training for a new kind of officer

A third issue concerned the make-up of the workforce in the modern MPS. Respondents talked about a younger workforce that was unaware of the history of race and diversity issues in the organisation; officers who might not be familiar with the ins and outs of the Lawrence Inquiry and would perhaps not even have heard of the Scarman Report. These new young officers are seen to present challenges for both training and management. Not only are they too young to be aware of the complicated history that underpins the development of the diversity agenda in the Met, their values and attitudes to the job may bring them into conflict with the organisation. A senior female BME officer suggested that officers between the ages of 18 and 30 tend to have what she called 'a distrustful attitude towards the organisation'. She commented that 'younger officers don't realise that you're a police officer 24/7; there are issues with ethics and behaviour'.

Summary

A number of the comments we heard suggested that white managers don't necessarily lack the skills they need to deal with the issues that arise with BME officers. Much of the time, according to their evidence, these issues are the same ones that arise with white personnel: lateness, childcare arrangements, procedural infringements. What holds them back is not the problem per se, but the fear that in addressing it they will cause offence, perhaps provoke a charge of racism, or, at the very least, communicate their inadequate grasp of diversity. In other cases, however, it seems that the diversity message has altered what managers say without transforming what they do. Training that focused squarely on the management of diversity within the workplace might address some of these issues, although this would be unlikely to succeed if it were not accompanied by changes in the culture of the organisation.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Since the publication of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report in 1999, the Metropolitan Police Service's management of internal and external diversity matters has become a key measure of its success. In London the diversification and transformation of the MPS post-Lawrence has proceeded in the face of public, parliamentary and organisational scrutiny. Much of that scrutiny has been concerned with the identification of racism and other forms of discrimination, and their removal from police organisational culture and occupational practice. That the MPS has progressed admirably along these lines, particularly in implementing key recommendations from the Lawrence Inquiry, became clear in the course of our research. However, the study also demonstrated that the difficulties inherent in the promulgation of diversity throughout the police organisation are not amenable to unreflective, once-and-for-all solutions.

At the centre of the study is the existence of racial disparities in the activities of the MPS. We used both quantitative and qualitative methodological techniques to ascertain the nature and extent (including causal and contributing factors) of disproportionality within external complaints and internal investigations of MPS police officers and staff. In consultation with the research sponsors and stakeholders, our primary focus became the disproportionate involvement of black and minority ethnic personnel in discipline and misconduct procedures.

In the preliminary stage of the study we identified three possible sources or drivers of disproportionality: a community driver, an organisational driver, and a managerial driver. No evidence was found to link unjustifiable disproportionality with behaviour deriving from community factors, familial background or cultural mores. By contrast, organisational culture and management practice were consistently associated with the disproportionate representation of BME personnel among investigated officers. While we found nothing to indicate widespread or wilful discrimination in the data files we examined, interviews and focus group discussions provided a myriad of examples that speak to dilemmas in the management of difference within the MPS. We have discussed these issues at length in the body of this report. They include a perceived lack of focus and direction with regard to the organisation's diversity agenda; the existence of an organisational blame culture; systemic communication failures and training needs; a failure of senior leadership to set strategic priorities and provide support to mid and junior-level officers in reaching them.

There was a strong sense among white and BME personnel alike that in seeking to achieve race and diversity equality within the organisation, the MPS 'moved on' since the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry. Almost none of the officers we spoke with, of any ethnic background, described recent instances of overt or direct racial discrimination. However, a predominant and recurring theme throughout the study was the tendency of the MPS to pay 'lip service' to racial and other (in)equalities without actually identifying or implementing mechanisms by which such inequalities might be redressed. An Asian officer described the problem during a one-to-one interview: 'I don't come to work each day feeling as though I am a victim or that other people want to discriminate against me. But as an Asian officer, I always feel a little bit outside the group. There is a small part of me that just doesn't feel *safe*' (emphasis added).

Safety featured as an important touchstone in the research interviews with white and minority ethnic officers; the idea of 'safety', or its absence, speaks immediately to the priorities and preoccupations of these officers and staff. For white personnel, this typically took the form of fear of repercussions emanating from accusations of racism. For black and Asian officers, there was a generalised concern about the implications of falling outside the 'predominantly white, predominantly male' culture of the organisation. This was a reason commonly given by BME officers as to why minorities might be placed under greater scrutiny during internal investigations, or why the number of minority officers still did not compare with white colleagues in terms of promotion to senior ranks. And yet, despite its considerable effects on these officers, whether these were focused around fears of 'getting diversity wrong' or of 'falling outside of the norm', we were told time and again that race and diversity matters are not traditionally discussed on the job. In the words of a white PC: 'Diversity is a very sensitive issue in the Met; it's best not to go there'.

The irony of the statement is that the MPS must 'go there' and has, we were also told, made significant progress in doing precisely that. It seemed to us at the conclusion of this study that one might take a 'glass half full' or a 'glass half empty' approach to the issue of diversity and disproportionality within the MPS. We incline towards the former. Clearly some serious problems remain; however, the Service's current difficulties are in some senses at least a product of its success to date in raising the profile of ethnicity-based diversity. The tragic death of Stephen Lawrence quite rightly highlighted the urgent need for improvement in the Met's response to the minority ethnic communities it serves. Now, however, it is time for the organisation to match that improvement in its internal processes and practices.

The challenge for the future lies in the creation of an MPS that promotes open dialogue on diversity issues and constitutes a safe working environment for officers and staff of all ethnic backgrounds. And the key to this, as in so much in policing, lies in robust and visionary leadership at all levels of the organisation. There is no room here for exhaustive discussion of the ways in which leadership might be developed to address the issues described in this study. The leadership literature contains some key messages that we have distilled into a brief 'crib sheet' (see Appendix 1). However, the development of people management skills among first-line supervisors is, we believe, key to the promotion of a 'safer space' for the discussion of diversity in its widest sense. A second priority is the replacement of the existing culture of blame with a culture that embraces learning and promotes communication and dialogue within and between police ranks. For this to be achieved, senior managers need actively and openly to involve themselves in the recognition and eradication of disproportionality and related inequalities. Borrowing from public service organisations that train employees at all levels to recognise their leadership potential, we suggest that the MPS develops an agenda for the management of diversity and disproportionality that encourages managers at all levels of the organisation to commit themselves to the recognition of 'leadership moments' in their day-to-day interactions with colleagues and team members (see Appendix 2).

Conclusions: Diversity at the Centre of the Policing Agenda

Leadership in policing with respect to diversity means placing diversity issues at the centre of the policing task. There have been a number of notable achievements in this area, particularly in the operational arena. In some areas there remains room for

improvement; at the same time, new issues have come to the fore and these must be addressed if the rate of progress is to be maintained. The conclusions that follow could form part of a leadership paradigm for the future management of diversity and disproportionality in the MPS.

- *Developing a Learning Culture*
  The MPS has accepted the need to move away from an organisational culture focused on the allocation of blame. The next step is to match its rhetorical commitment to the development of a learning culture with the practical steps and structural changes that will bring this about.

- *Restructuring Professional Standards*
  DPS has been associated in the past with the least desirable elements of the blame culture. Its successful restructuring as a preventative department will be crucial to the establishment of an alternative occupational culture for the MPS.

- *Clarifying the Approach to Diversity*
  The term 'diversity' requires clarification, particularly in relation to internal issues such as the management of police officers and staff. The term is perceived as rhetorically valuable but vague, diffuse and largely unconnected to specific police practices and organisational strategy.

- *Dealing With Internal Disproportionality*
  The identification and management of internal disproportionality has not yet been established and recognised as a strategic priority throughout the MPS.

- *Meeting Management Training Needs*
  Existing training and development opportunities are not meeting the needs of all first-line supervisors. In particular, some supervisors feel that they do not receive sufficient training to prepare them for effective personnel management.

- *Managing BME Personnel*
  There is a heightened sensitivity around the management of BME officers and staff that can result in differential treatment and may contribute to internal disproportionality.

- *Encouraging Open Dialogue*
  Issues of workforce equality, particularly around race and diversity, are seen to carry 'high priority' status, yet are at the same time widely construed as sensitive and 'contentious'. Open dialogue on race, diversity, disproportionality, discrimination and racism (institutional or otherwise) is particularly rare at middle management and frontline officer levels.

- *Supporting Middle Managers*
  Front-line supervisors and middle managers perceive a 'support vacuum' where diversity issues are concerned. Supervisors and managers are not confident that those who find themselves dealing with performance matters

involving BME personnel can rely on the robust support of senior management.

Recommendations

We have divided our recommendations in line with our distinction of organisational and managerial drivers.

At the organizational/cultural level:

> To counter inertia and reinvigorate interest in the diversity agenda, the MPS should repackage and reprioritise its commitment to diversity matters. The emphasis of this initiative should be on the relevance of diversity to effective communication and working practices *within* the organisation.

> The eradication of disproportionality should become a strategic priority at every level of the police service. Borough level information relating to external and internal disproportionality should be disseminated and its implications discussed with all staff.

> DPS should devise and disseminate to its investigating officers and internal case managers guidelines for identifying disproportionality within discipline and misconduct procedures. When identified, internal as well as organisational support (such as the Diversity Directorate) should be utilized to redress the disproportionality.

> The MPS should develop 'safe spaces' as a tool for engaging individual concerns and sensitivities, and for the promotion of honest communication and open dialogue on diversity, performance and management issues.

> Training and development opportunities at all management levels should include best practice management models for everyday communication and interaction with staff. Regular skills development courses should be available and should seek to enhance critical 'soft skills' and the effective identification of individual staff member needs.

At the supervisory/management level:

> Senior managers need to set the vision for a practical approach to diversity and the eradication of disproportionality at borough-level. This should include a strong and unambiguous commitment to engaging with rather than avoiding issues that have a diversity dimension, and to the support of colleagues who encounter such issues in their work.

> First-line managers and supervisors can only implement this vision if they have the tools for effective people management. A review of the training and development of first-line managers should form part of a revitalised commitment

to diversity, with a particular focus on people management skills such as team leading; conflict resolution; decision making; and effective communication.

> To achieve genuine internal gains with respect to diversity, the conceptual and rhetorically valuable understanding of this term must be connected to police management practice. Complex issues should be regarded as opportunities for positive change. To effect this, first-line managers and supervisors should receive training that will assist them to recognise and address the specific needs of officers and police staff from BME and other diverse communities within the MPS.

> Discretion remains at the heart of frontline policing, but effective line-management requires uniformity and parity in relation to performance and discipline issues. There should be an unambiguous distinction between problems that can be dealt with informally at the lowest management level, and those that should be referred to formal procedures.

Figure 1a

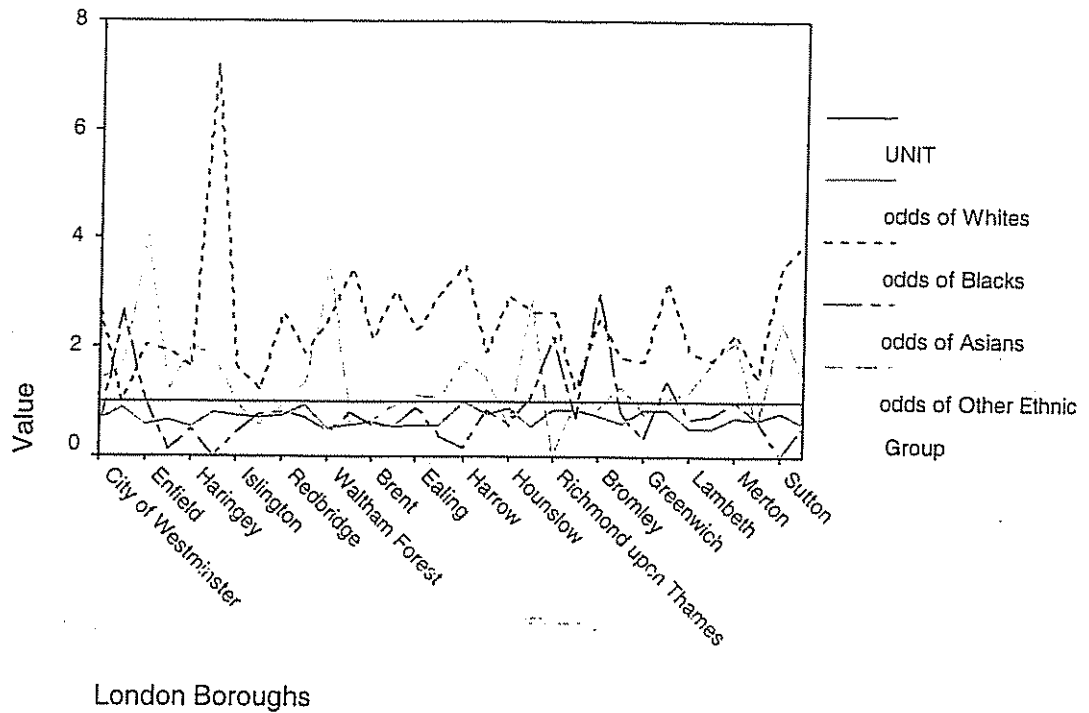Odds of Metropolitan Police officers or staff receiving internal complaint
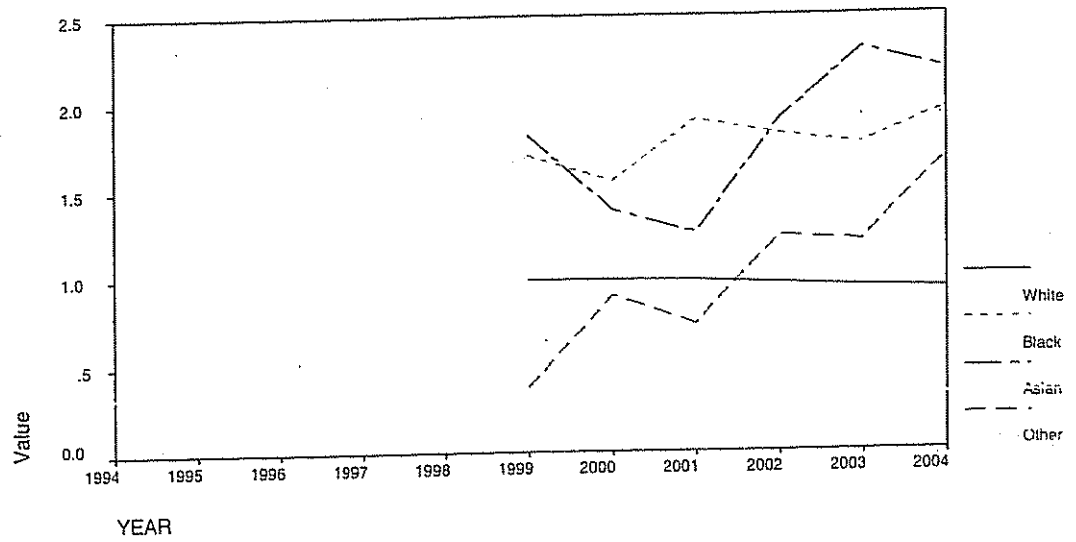
Figure 1b

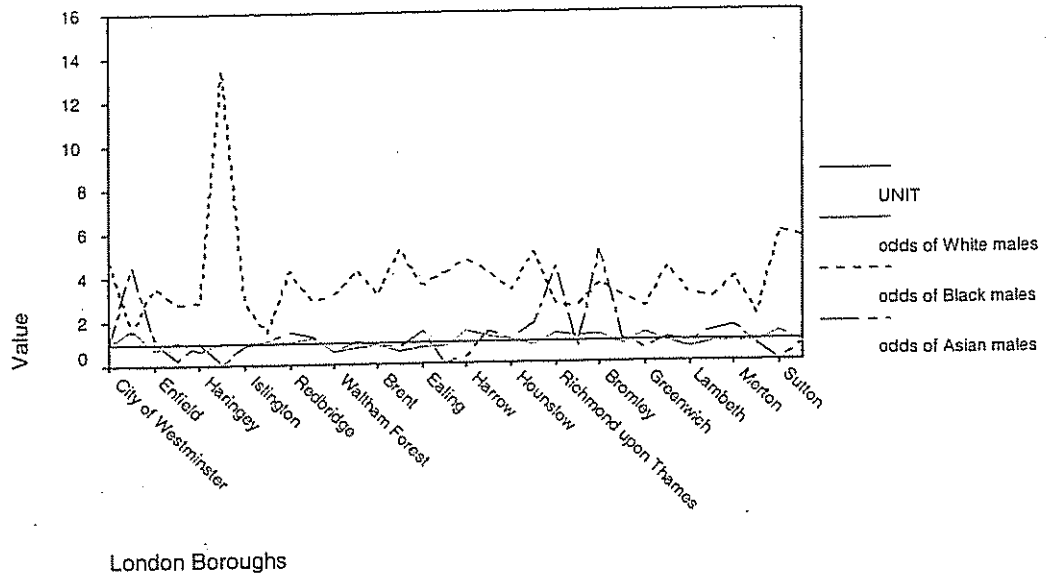Odds of external disproportionality by ethnic group of 2001 complainants
across London boroughs

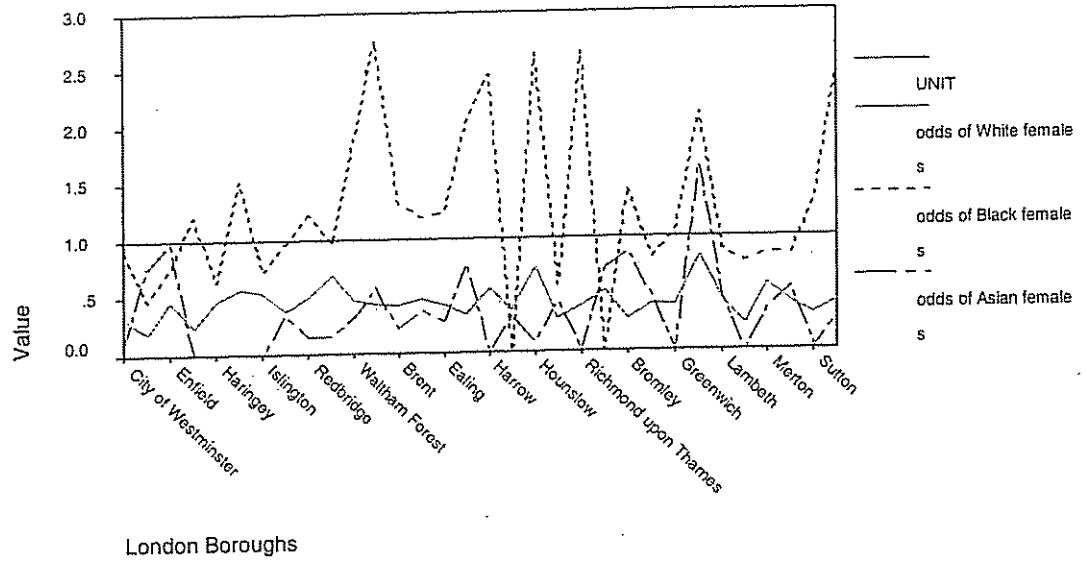| 1 | City of Westminster | 12 | Barnet | 24 | Bromley |
2	Barking & Dagenham	13	Brent	25	Croydon
3	Enfield	14	Camden	26	Greenwich
4	Hackney	15	Ealing	27	Kingston-upon-Thames
5	Haringey	16	Hammersmith and Fulham	28	Lambeth
6	Havering	17	Harrow	29	Lewisham
7	Islington	19	Hillingdon	30	Merton
8	Newham	20	Hounslow	31	Southwark
9	Redbridge	21	Kensington and Chelsea	32	Sutton
10	Tower Hamlets	22	Richmond-upon- Thames	33	Wandsworth
11	Waltham Forest	23	Bexley		

Figure 2

Odds of external disproportionality by ethnic group of 2001 male complainants across London boroughs

1	City of Westminster	12	Barnet	24	Bromley
2	Barking & Dagenham	13	Brent	25	Croydon
3	Enfield	14	Camden	26	Greenwich
4	Hackney	15	Ealing	27	Kingston-upon-Thames
5	Haringey	16	Hammersmith and Fulham	28	Lambeth
6	Havering	17	Harrow	29	Lewisham
7	Islington	19	Hillingdon	30	Merton
8	Newham	20	Hounslow	31	Southwark
9	Redbridge	21	Kensington and Chelsea	32	Sutton
10	Tower Hamlets	·22	Richmond-upon- Thames	33	Wandsworth
11	Waltham Forest	23	Bexley		

Figure 3

Odds of external disproportionality by ethnic group of 2001 female complainants

1	City of Westminster	12	Barnet	24	Bromley
2	Barking & Dagenham	13	Brent	25	Croydon
3	Enfield	14	Camden	26	Greenwich
4	Hackney	15	Ealing	27	Kingston-upon-Thames
5	Haringey	16	Hammersmith and Fulham	28	Lambeth
6	Havering	17	Harrow	29	Lewisham
7	Islington	19	Hillingdon	30	Merton
8	Newham	20	Hounslow	31	Southwark
9	Redbridge	21	Kensington and Chelsea	32	Sutton
10	Tower Hamlets	22	Richmond-upon- Thames	33	Wandsworth
11	Waltham Forest	23	Bexley		

Figure 4

Percentage of Asian, Black and White 1994 complainees across boroughs, non-borough units and outside MP area
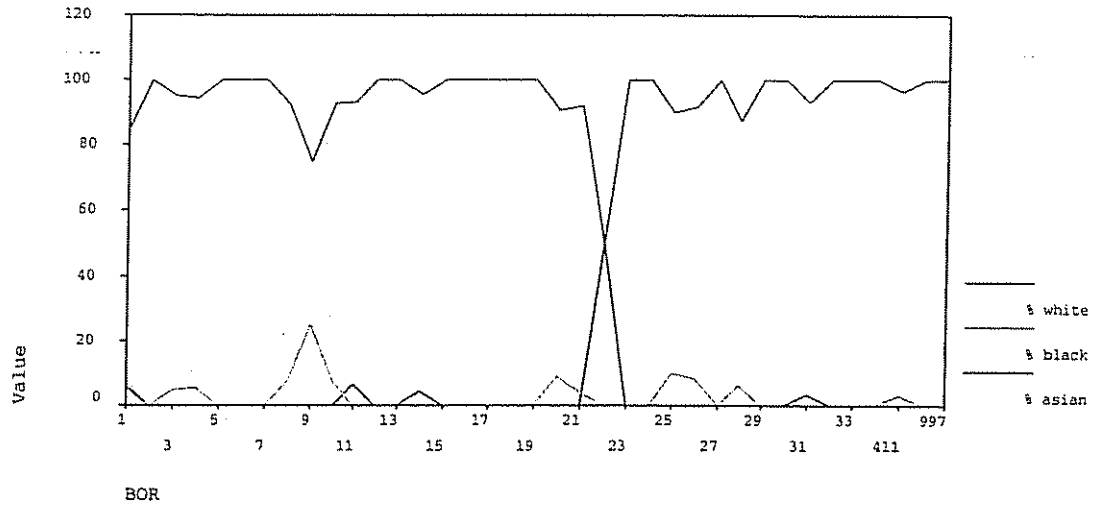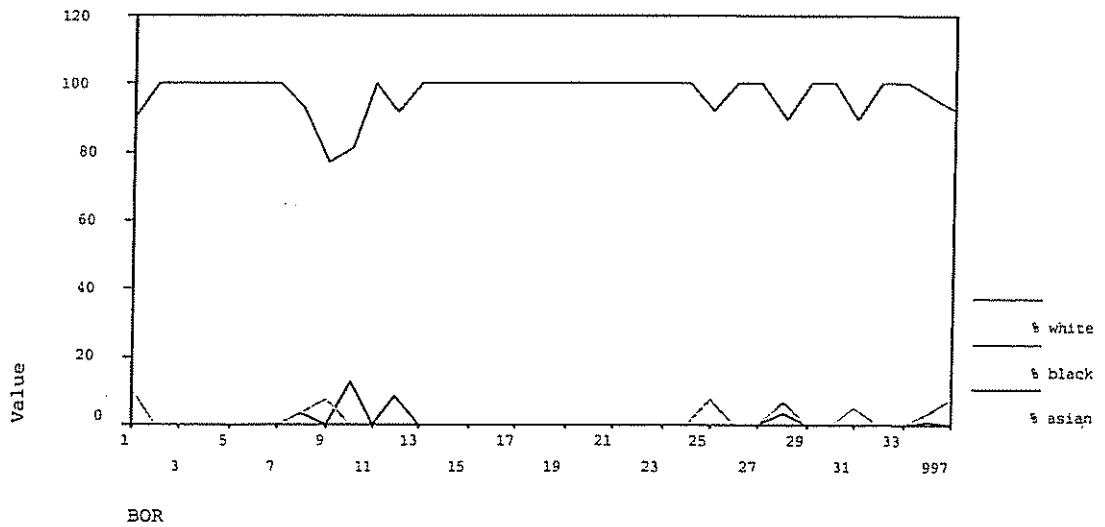

Figure 5

Percentage of Asian, Black and White 1995 complainees across boroughs, non-borough units and outside MP area

1	City of Westminster	13	Brent	25	Croydon
2	Barking & Dagenham	14	Camden	26	Greenwich
3	Enfield	15	Ealing	27	Kingston-upon-Thames
4	Hackney	16	Hammersmith and Fulham	28	Lambeth
5	Haringey	17	Harrow	29	Lewisham
6	Havering	18	Heathrow Airport	30	Merton
7	Islington	19	Hillingdon	31	Southwark
8	Newham	20	Hounslow	32	Sutton
9	Redbridge	21	Kensington and Chelsea	33	Wandsworth
10	Tower Hamlets	22	Richmond-upon- Thames	34	Non-borough Units
11	Waltham Forest	23	Bexley	411	Special Operation Units
12	Barnet	24	Bromley	997	Outside MP Area

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Figure 6

Percentage of Asian, Black and White 1996 complainees across boroughs, non-borough units and outside MP area
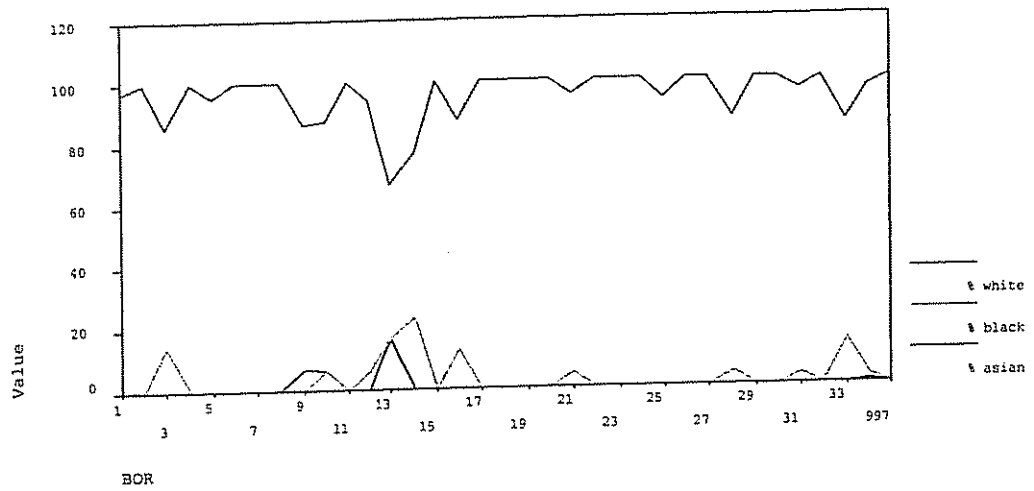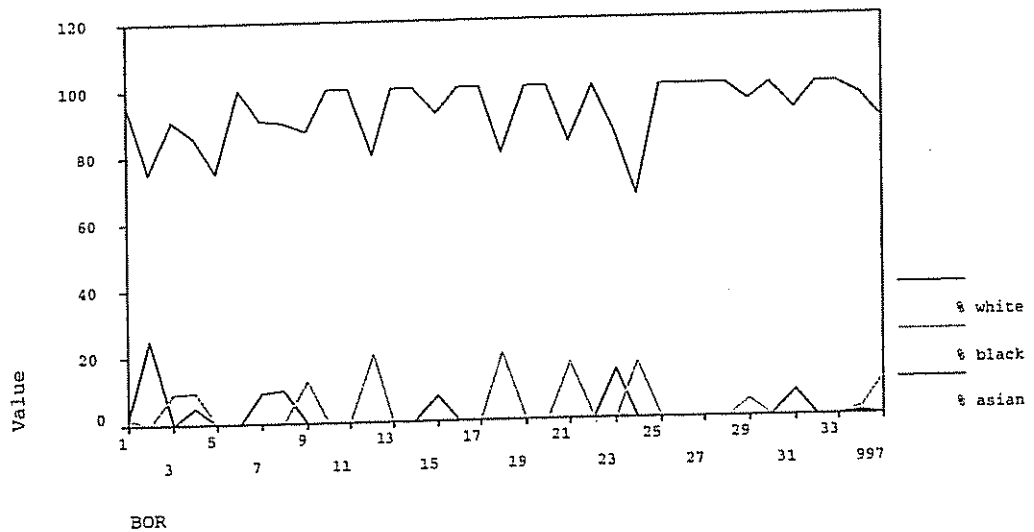

Figure 7

Percentage of Asian, Black and White 1997 complainees across boroughs, non-borough units and outside MP area

1	City of Westminster	13	Brent
2	Barking & Dagenham	14	Camden
3	Enfield	15	Ealing
4	Hackney	16	Hammersmith and Fulham
5	Haringey	17	Harrow
6	Havering	18	Heathrow Airport
7	Islington	19	Hillingdon
8	Newham	20	Hounslow
9	Redbridge	21	Kensington and Chelsea
10	Tower Hamlets	22	Richmond-upon-Thames
11	Waltham Forest	23	Bexley
12	Barnet	24	Bromley

25	Croydon
26	Greenwich
27	Kingston-upon-Thames
28	Lambeth
29	Lewisham
30	Merton
31	Southwark
32	Sutton
33	Wandsworth
34	Non-borough Units
997	Outside MP Area

Figure 8

Percentage of Asian, Black and White 1998 complainees
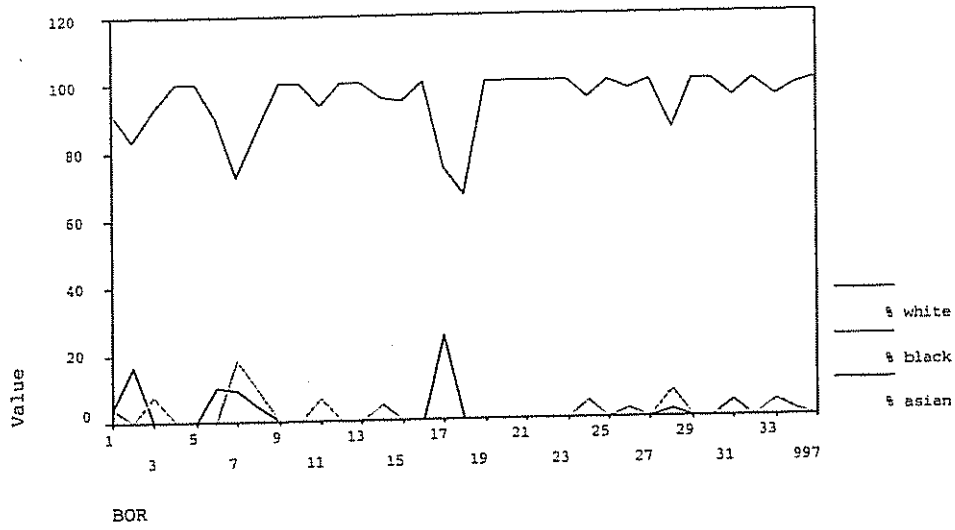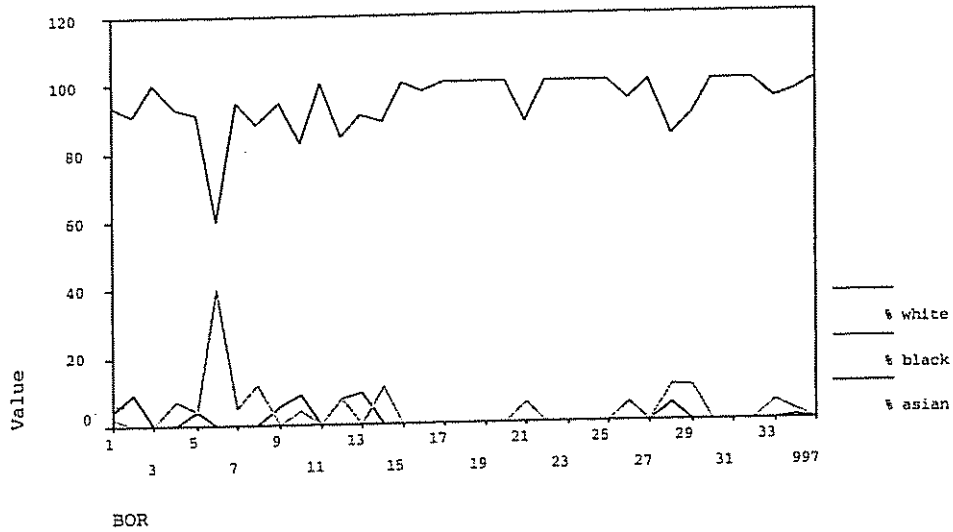across boroughs, non-borough units and outside MP area

Figure 9

Percentage of Asian, Black and White 1999 complainees
across boroughs, non-borough units and outside MP area

1	City of Westminster	13	Brent	25	Croydon
2	Barking & Dagenham	14	Camden	26	Greenwich
3	Enfield	15	Ealing	27	Kingston-upon-Thames
4	Hackney	16	Hammersmith and Fulham	28	Lambeth
5	Haringey	17	Harrow	29	Lewisham
6	Havering	18	Heathrow Airport	30	Merton
7	Islington	19	Hillingdon	31	Southwark
8	Newham	20	Hounslow	32	Sutton
9	Redbridge	21	Kensington and Chelsea	33	Wandsworth
10	Tower Hamlets	22	Richmond-upon-Thames	34	Non-borough Units
11	Waltham Forest	23	Bexley	997	Outside MP Area
12	Barnet	24	Bromley		

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Figure 10

Percentage of Asian, Black and White 2000 complainees across boroughs, non-borough units and outside MP area

Figure 11

Percentage of Asian, Black and White 2001 complainees across boroughs, non-borough units and outside MP area

1	City of Westminster	13	Brent	25	Croydon
2	Barking & Dagenham	14	Camden	26	Greenwich
3	Enfield	15	Ealing	27	Kingston-upon-Thames
4	Hackney	16	Hammersmith and Fulham	28	Lambeth
5	Haringey	17	Harrow	29	Lewisham
6	Havering	18	Heathrow Airport	30	Merton
7	Islington	19	Hillingdon	31	Southwark
8	Newham	20	Hounslow	32	Sutton
9	Redbridge	21	Kensington and Chelsea	33	Wandsworth
10	Tower Hamlets	22	Richmond-upon- Thames	34	Non-borough Units
11	Waltham Forest	23	Bexley	997	Outside MP Area
12	Barnet	24	Bromley		

55

Figure 12

Percentage of Asian, Black and White 2002 complainees
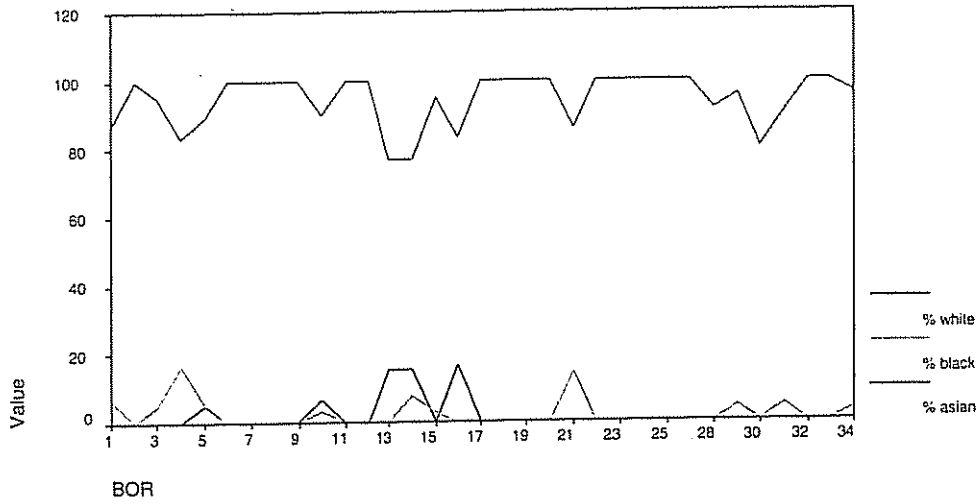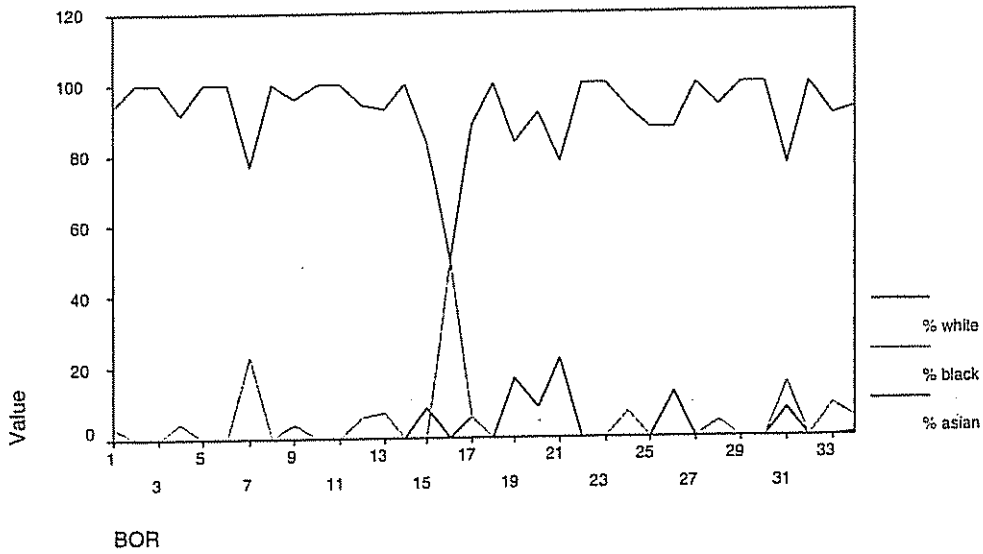across boroughs, non-borough units and outside MP area

Figure 13

Percentage of Asian, Black and White 2003 complainees
across boroughs, non-borough units and outside MP area

1	City of Westminster	13	Brent	25	Croydon
2	Barking & Dagenham	14	Camden	26	Greenwich
3	Enfield	15	Ealing	27	Kingston-upon-Thames
4	Hackney	16	Hammersmith and Fulham	28	Lambeth
5	Haringey	17	Harrow	29	Lewisham
6	Havering	18	Heathrow Airport	30	Merton
7	Islington	19	Hillingdon	31	Southwark
8	Newham	20	Hounslow	32	Sutton
9	Redbridge	21	Kensington and Chelsea	33	Wandsworth
10	Tower Hamlets	22	Richmond-upon-Thames	34	Non-borough Units
11	Waltham Forest	23	Bexley	997	Outside MP Area
12	Barnet	24	Bromley		

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Figure 14

Percentage of Asian, Black and White 2004 complainees
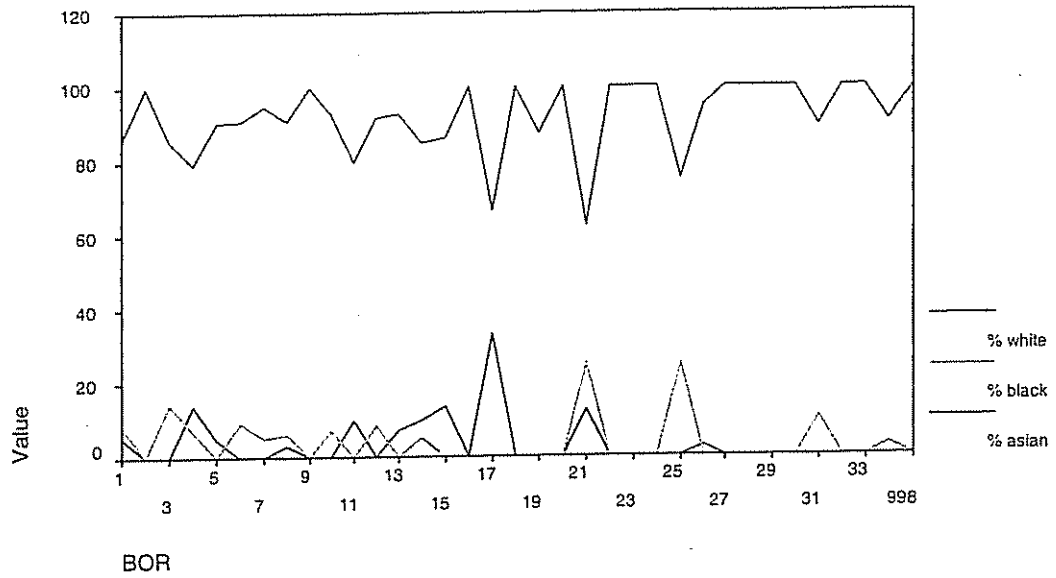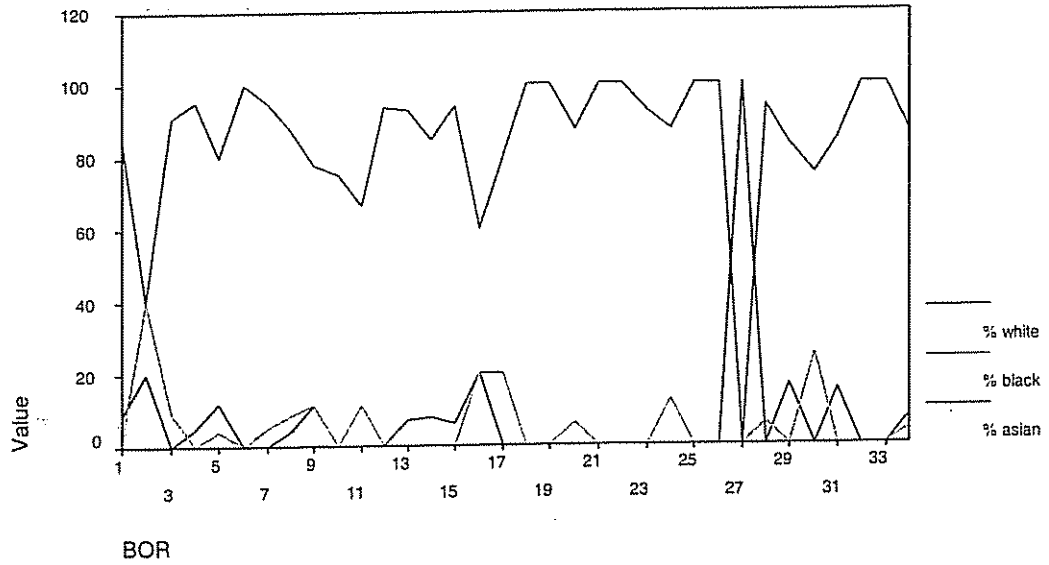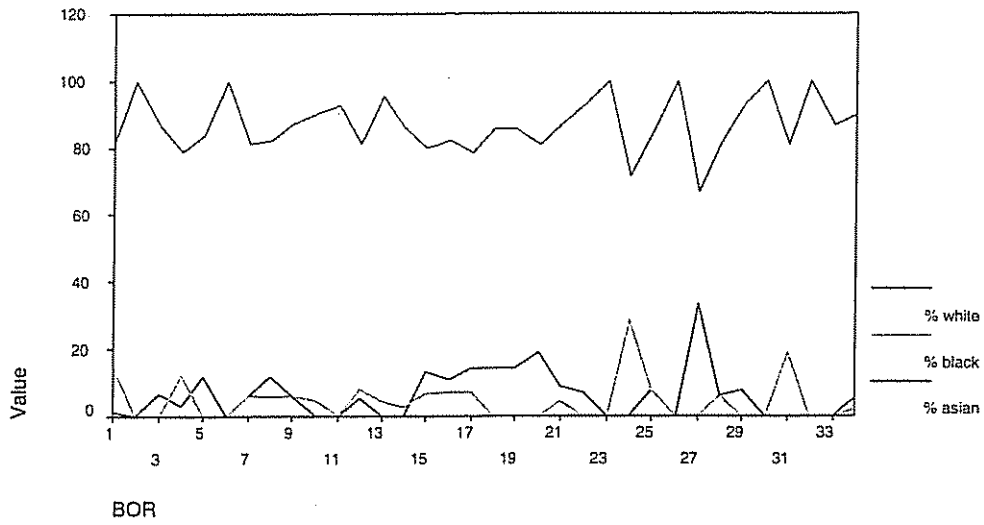across boroughs, non-borough units and outside MP area

1	City of Westminster	13	Brent	25	Croydon
2	Barking & Dagenham	14	Camden	26	Greenwich
3	Enfield	15	Ealing	27	Kingston-upon-Thames
4	Hackney	16	Hammersmith and Fulham	28	Lambeth
5	Haringey	17	Harrow	29	Lewisham
6	Havering	18	Heathrow Airport	30	Merton
7	Islington	19	Hillingdon	31	Southwark
8	Newham	20	Hounslow	32	Sutton
9	Redbridge	21	Kensington and Chelsea	33	Wandsworth
10	Tower Hamlets	22	Richmond-upon- Thames	34	Non-borough Units
11	Waltham Forest	23	Bexley	997	Outside MP Area
12	Barnet	24	Bromley		

Table 1

Percentage of complainees across boroughs, non-boroughs and outside MPS area

BOROUGHS	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
City of Westminster	9.4	5.8	12.3	9.3	7.3	6.7	5.0	5.1	5.7	8.7	10.2
Barking & Dagenham	.9	1.0	1.3	.8	.9	1.5	.5	.7	1.3	.7	.5
Enfield	3.8	4.3	2.5	2.1	2.0	1.6	3.5	1.7	1.1	1.6	2.0
Hackney	3.2	2.1	.9	4.1	4.2	3.8	3.0	3.9	4.6	3.1	4.4
Haringey	2.2	2.1	4.2	.8	1.2	3.1	3.1	3.9	3.3	3.7	3.4
Havering	1.4	1.4	1.3	.6	1.6	.7	1.2	1.2	1.7	.7	1.6
Islington	1.4	2.1	1.8	2.1	1.7	2.6	2.5	2.2	3.2	2.9	2.1
Newham	4.9	5.6	2.2	1.9	3.3	2.3	1.8	4.2	5.1	3.5	2.3
Redbridge	.7	2.5	2.7	3.1	.6	2.5	2.6	4.0	1.3	1.3	2.1
Tower Hamlets	2.5	3.1	2.9	1.6	.8	3.1	5.0	1.2	2.2	1.2	2.8
Waltham Forest	2.7	1.2	2.2	.8	2.3	1.0	2.0	1.5	1.6	1.3	1.9
Barnet	2.2	2.3	3.1	1.0	1.7	1.8	2.8	2.9	1.9	2.2	5.0
Brent	1.4	5.0	1.1	4.3	1.2	1.5	2.2	2.4	2.2	2.1	2.9
Camden	4.0	1.9	2.3	2.7	3.4	1.2	2.2	4.0	3.2	1.9	4.8
Ealing	.7	3.5	1.6	2.5	2.9	1.4	6.8	2.0	3.5	2.4	2.0
Hammersmith and Fulham	.9	1.4	1.4	1.0	.8	5.3	1.0	.3	1.0	1.5	3.8
Harrow	3.4	3.1	.5	.6	.6	1.0	.5	2.9	.5	1.5	1.9
Heathrow Airport	.5	1.0	2.5	1.0	.5	.4	.8	.7	.5	.9	.9
Hillingdon	1.3	.6	.7	2.1	1.4	.5	1.3	1.0	1.3	2.8	2.8

Table 1 (continued)

Percentage of complainees across boroughs, non-boroughs and outside MPS area

BOROUGHS	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Hounslow	2.0	.8	1.8	1.8	.8	.4	2.2	2.0	1.7	2.4	2.8
Kensington and Chelsea	4.5	1.6	4.0	3.5	.9	4.6	1.2	1.5	1.3	1.6	3.1
Richmond-upon-Thames	.7	.6	.7	.4	.8	.7	1.3	.8	.8	1.3	1.9
Bexley	.2	.2	1.3	1.4	1.1	1.4	.5	1.9	.5	1.9	.8
Bromley	1.8	2.5	.9	1.2	3.1	1.0	1.5	2.4	.5	1.2	.9
Croydon	1.8	2.5	2.9	4.1	1.9	1.1	2.2	1.3	1.3	.9	1.7
Greenwich	4.3	1.7	3.6	2.9	6.2	2.5	2.6	2.7	6.0	1.8	1.2
Kingston-upon-Thames	.2	1.0	.5	1.2	.6	.5	0.0	.8	.3	.1	.4
Lambeth	2.9	5.6	4.3	2.7	7.6	2.6	2.0	7.7	4.3	4.7	2.1
Lewisham	2.0	.8	2.0	3.9	1.6	1.4	3.8	1.0	2.1	.9	1.7
Merton	1.1	.6	.2	.6	1.4	1.0	.8	1.0	.5	.6	.3
Southwark	5.2	3.7	5.1	2.5	3.3	4.2	3.5	2.2	3.0	1.9	2.8
Sutton	2.0	1.2	.9	1.8	1.6	.8	.7	1.0	1.1	.6	.8
Wandsworth	2.3	1.9	1.3	2.1	3.3	2.5	1.3	1.9	1.6	1.6	2.0
Non-borough Units	18.6	22.9	21.7	25.9	27.1	32.3	28.8	26.1	29.5	34.5	19.8
Outside MP Area	3.1	2.5	1.4	1.8	.5	1.1	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0
Unknown location	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	.5	.0	.0

APPENDIX 1

Practical Leadership: Lessons from the Literature

- Leadership is only effective when the ground has been prepared in advance.

- Expertise and empathy command respect and provide a leadership example to team members.

- No-one can truly lead who cannot put themselves in the other person's shoes.

- Leaders take responsibility for anticipating needs and avoiding crises.

- Leaders constantly ask themselves:
    - What do the people on my team need?
    - Why do they think they need it?
    - How can I give it to them?
    - Every organisation has its quota of bendable rules: should I find one for this occasion?

- Leaders determine where to draw the line and make it stick.

- Self-analysis allows a leader to be 'real'. Leaders ask themselves:
    - What is my particular expertise?
    - What are my strengths and weaknesses?
    - What is my personal self-improvement plan?
    - How am I doing?

- True leaders create organisations that support the cultivation and exercise of leadership.

APPENDIX 2

The Leadership Moment: The Frontline Police Leader

Defining the Leadership Moment within a particular organisation means deciding what matters most to that organisation and determining what is required for success. The same is true for the frontline police leader. Taking that first step and deciding what matters most is where you start. To do this effectively, the frontline leader must consider the daily and long-term challenges he or she encounters. What are the barriers? Why do those barriers exist? Who or what created them? Are they structural outgrowths from the institutional framework of the department or team? Are they personal, resulting from personal limitations such as a lack of knowledge, motivation or imagination? Articulating the barriers to 'a better way' is the first step in recognizing where problems exist and coming up with effective solutions.

Every leader encounters challenges, and every leader is forced to make tough choices. That is what sets leaders apart – their job isn't easy. The difficult decisions do not go away; the tough choices must get made. Leaders do not shy away from these situations because every problem is an opportunity to see the situation from a different angle, to invest creativity and imagination for the purpose of meeting goals and enhancing the status quo. What, then, are problems? They are, in fact, moments for leadership.

Leaders attack problems by seeing them as opportunities for positive change. To make any kind of change, you have to be absolutely committed to reaching your goal. Start by knowing what you are working with. What resources do you have? What can help you solve a problem and get you to your goal? What tools are in your arsenal?

Problems come in all shapes and sizes. Some are easily solved; others require greater investment, whether in terms of time or additional resources. Solving a problem should always begin with 'owning' it. Take responsibility for problem solving. Be accountable. Step up to the plate. Make the problems yours. Lead!

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