

A practical guide to

Stop and Search Community Monitoring Network

August 2009



Working together for a safer London

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1. Background

The MacPherson Report into the death of Stephen Lawrence¹ made 70 recommendations intended to provide greater public scrutiny and control of policing, establish rights for victims of crime and extend the number of offences classified as discriminatory. Four of these recommendations were specifically aimed at ensuring that the use of the powers of stop and search were applied in an unbiased way.

Recommendation 60 states:

'That the current powers of stop and searches are required for the prevention of crime and should remain unchanged.'

Outcome:

The use of the powers for stop and search have been maintained during the period and have remained under regular joint review of the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) and the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) in London to ensure that stop and search powers are applied in an appropriate and intelligence led way.

Recommendation 61 was more defined for implementation and states that:

'That the Home Secretary, in consultation with Police Services, should ensure that a record is made by police officers of all "stops" and "stops and searches" made under any legislative provision (not just the Police and Criminal Evidence Act). Non-statutory or so called "voluntary" stops must also be recorded. The record to include the reason for the stop, the outcome, and the self-defined ethnic identity of the person stopped. A copy of the record shall be given to the person stopped.'

Outcome:

The MPA established a Recommendation 61 Working Party in 2004, following a phased implementation across all boroughs in London and the publication of a MPA Scrutiny Report into MPS Stop and Search Practice. This was a multi-agency group and included community representatives, elected representatives, third sector organisations, the MPA and the MPS. The Working Party developed the policies that enabled the police to implement Recommendation 61, to ensure that all stop and accounts and stop and searches are fully recorded and that the recommendation was fully complied with.

In 2004 the MPA also established a multi agency Stop and Search Review Board. During the period, until completion of work in the summer of 2008, the Review Board undertook a comprehensive review of all stop and search work undertaken by the MPS.

Recommendation 62 states - to monitor the stop and search practice:

'These records should be monitored by Police Services and Police Authorities and reviewed by the HMIC on inspections, with the information and analysis being published.'

¹ The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report/Report of an Inquiry by Sir William McPherson of Cluny

Outcome:

Stop and search records have been consistently monitored and reviewed by the MPA and the MPS in conjunction with stop and search Community Monitoring Groups (CMGs). CMGs comprise community representatives who review the use of the stop and search powers and support local officers to retain trust and confidence of the communities they serve.

The MPA has established and maintained a London regional Community Monitoring Network (CMN) Forum for borough-based groups and operational officers to voice concerns, share good practice and take part in consultation processes to assist the MPS in the way they conduct the practice. Specialist officers within the MPA and MPS support and guide these monitoring activities.

Recommendation 63 sought to ensure public awareness of their rights when stopped and searched:

'That Police Authorities be given the duty to undertake publicity campaigns to ensure that the public is aware of "stop and search" provisions and the right to receive a record in all circumstances.'

Outcome:

Throughout the period the MPA and MPS have worked in partnership to ensure that the community is aware of stop and search practice, and have developed publicity campaigns to inform the community of both the process and their personal rights. An education pack, including a DVD and training information, was published in the summer of 2008. Over 2000 copies of this DVD have now been circulated to Youth Offending Teams, schools, local authorities and other public bodies.

2. London regional monitoring

- 2.1. As a development of Recommendation 62, the London regional CMN Forum was established. The involvement of local communities in the monitoring and review of the use of stop and search powers is essential to the success of policing in London. This enables an up-to-date understanding of the delivery of this area of policing and a proactive response to improvement in delivery.
- 2.2. The primary aim of monitoring is to enable local communities to advise and inform their local police about their experience of street intervention, especially around stop and search. Community monitoring has been introduced to improve the confidence of the public in the way the police employ stop and search operations in their communities. In order to influence this important area of policing it is necessary to have an effective system of monitoring what the police are doing and why. For this reason, the MPA recommended that CMGs were put in place in all 32 boroughs.
- 2.3. Borough stop and search CMGs are sub groups of Community and Police Engagement Groups (CPEGs) or Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs). However, where a sub group is not established, stop and search is a standing agenda item for discussion at CPEG and IAG meetings.

3. Terms of Reference for the MPA Community Monitoring Network (CMN) Forum

- 3.1. The MPA has established the CMN Forum which offers the opportunity for CMGs, communities and agencies to discuss practical issues and hear from experts on the latest matters related to the area. The Forum reports directly to the MPA's community and multi-agency Stop and Search Working Group which acts as the senior communications and development group for stop and search monitoring.
- 3.2. The Terms of Reference of the CMN Forum are to oversee the implementation of the recommendations of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry and to work with the police to ensure that there is effective development and delivery of borough-based stop and search which is regularly reported to the MPA. To do this by:
 - Scrutinising the progress of CMGs and monitoring their impact and progress across London, through the receipt and interpretation of data, reports and presentations;
 - Scrutinising borough performance on stop and search (management/supervision);
 - Identifying emerging issues to be progressed through the MPA or the Home Office, and to provide reasonable solution to community CMGs;
 - Identifying borough success and good practice to be communicated internally and externally to the public by ways of networking CMGs;
 - Providing a central forum for CMGs and the MPS to promote best practice through debate and discussion in support of improved accountability;

- Providing guidance and assistance to the public/community groups on development and sustainability of CMGs;
- Bringing issues to the attention of the MPA or MPS Senior Management Teams, community groups, and other key stakeholders; and
- Acting as a first point of call for resolution of stop and search issues and complaints.

4. Structure of the CMN Forum

4.1. Membership

Membership of the CMN Forum is intended to reflect statutory and community interests for London.

Normally the group will have representatives from:

- Greater London Authority (GLA)
- Government Office for London (GOL)
- Borough commander (one per Division)
- London councils
- Independent Advisory Group (IAG) and Youth IAG
- Black and minority ethnic (BME) group community representatives
- Community and Police Engagement Groups (CPEGs)
- Black Londoners Forum
- CMG chairs or representative from the 32 boroughs
- Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs)
- Interested groups/associations
- Black Police Association (BPA) and Youth BPA (VOYAGE)
- MPA officers from all units.

4.2. Chair

The chair will be two nominated community representatives to act as co-chairs with the assistance of MPA Officers. The MPA officers will have responsibility for:

- The coordination of the CMN Forum and secretarial support; and

- Reviewing and resolving practical and technical issues raised by CMN Forum members. However, when issues are unresolved at this level, the matter will be referred to the MPA Stop and Search Working Group.

4.3. Frequency of meetings

The frequency of meetings will depend on the support the CMGs require and how often urgent issues would need to be addressed.

- Proposed schedule – 3 meetings per year

4.4. Agenda format for the CMN Forum

Each meeting of the Forum should follow a common agenda (i.e. introduction, matters arising and actions, AOB, etc) but should also include the following:

- Verbal five minute update from two boroughs (a quick update report provided ahead of the meeting) followed by questions and answers;
- Verbal update from MPA/MPS on new or emerging policing matters or issues; and/or
- Focus Item based on emerging policy/legislation or issues.

4.5. Priority issues for consideration at meetings

- Police data on stop and account and stop and search activity;
- Community responses to stop and search activity;
- MPA/MPS communications;
- Proposed operations/initiatives which may impact upon borough stop and search activity;
- Complaints to police through partner organisations and the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC);
- Third Party Reporting of complaints, particularly regarding the use of stop and search activity;
- Impact of use of other legislation, e.g. Section 60², Section 44³ stop and search;
- Stop and search impact on role of police officers in schools/truancy issues;
- Tension indicators in the area;
- Training and networking; and
- Operation Blunt 2 – detection of and prevention of knife crimes.

² Section 60, Criminal Justice & Public Order Act 1994

³ Section 44, Terrorism Act 2000

4.6. Tenure of co-chairs

The co-chairs are expected to facilitate the Forum for a period of two years and will step down at the end of that term. The name of the next co-chairs will be announced at the last meeting.

The new co-chairs are expected to take on the role with assistance from MPA officers on the date scheduled for the Forum in the New Year.

The roles and responsibilities of the co-chair are set out below.

4.7. Roles and responsibilities of co-chairs

The co-chairs are community voluntary representatives who are probably chairs of their CMG. They are independent of the MPA and represent the 32 borough CMGs across London.

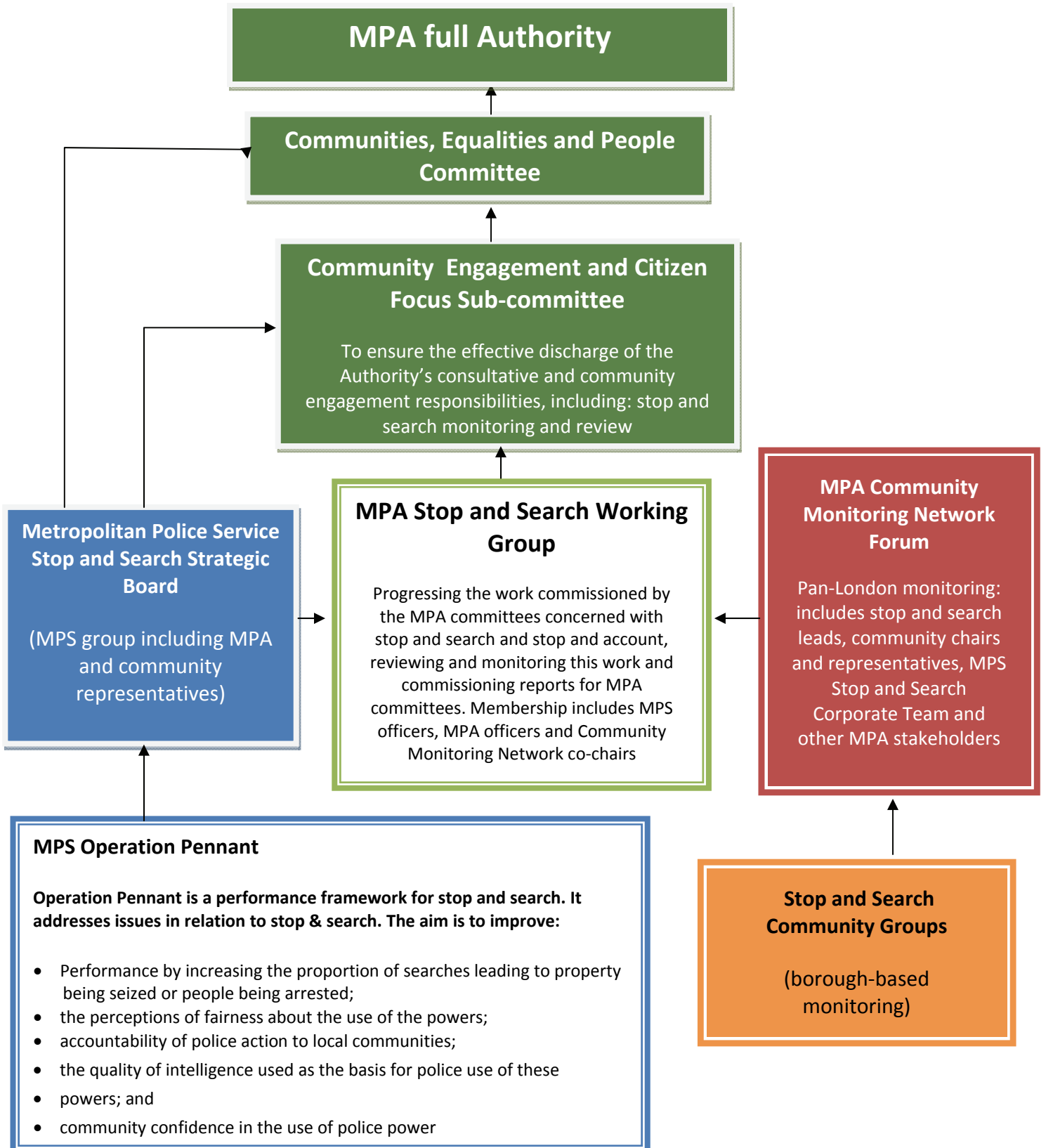
In all cases the MPA stop and search officers will work around the co-chairs' availability, recognising external commitments (such as full time employment, child care, etc.). The functions expected to be carried out by the chairs include the following:

- To participate in development of an agreed agenda with MPA officers;
- To chair the Forum in a structured and orderly manner by ensuring decisions/actions are agreed by all members;
- To ensure that each member of the Forum has an equal input to allow for constructive feedback;
- To represent the forum at MPA, MPS, British Transport Police (BTP) strategic stop and search meetings and others (such as seminars, conferences, etc.) and provide feedback to:
 - I. MPA Stop and Search Working Group
 - II. MPS Operation Pennant
 - III. MPS Stop and Search Strategic Committee
 - IV. BTP Stop and Search Monitoring Meeting
 - V. Any other that is relevant for to stop and search community monitoring;
- To work with MPA officers to provide support for boroughs having problems sustaining the monitoring process (networking⁴); and
- To manage the forum activities to the extent agreed to on appointment as co-chair.

⁴ Either by visiting the borough concerned or suggesting the chair from an existing, fully developed CMG attends and provides guidance or shares best practice

Appendix 1: Stop and search CMG reporting structure

Stop and search committee flow chart



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