

Home Affairs Committee

Oral evidence: [The Macpherson Report: twenty years on](#), HC 1829

Wednesday 15 May 2019

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Members present: Yvette Cooper (Chair); Kate Green; Tim Loughton; Stuart C. McDonald; Douglas Ross.

Questions 114 - 147

Witnesses

I: Witnesses A, B, C and D, representatives of organisation 2
Witnesses E and F, representatives of organisation 3
Witnesses I, J, K, L, M and N, representatives of organisation 1
Witness G, representative of organisation 4
Witness H, representative of organisation 5



Examination of Witnesses

Witnesses: Witness A, Witness B, Witness C, Witness D, Witness E, Witness F, Witness G, Witness H, Witness I, Witness J, Witness K, Witness L, Witness M, Witness N.

Q114 Chair: Welcome to you all. Thank you so much to all of you for coming here. We appreciate it. I am sorry we ended up having to rearrange the location at quite short notice because we had a debate on serious violent crime in Parliament that was called this afternoon that many of the members of the Committee needed to speak in. Thank you, we appreciate it.

What I thought we should do, just at the beginning, is we will all go around and introduce ourselves. We wanted to hear from you and to have this is because of the inquiry we are doing into the Macpherson Report 20 years on, which looked at the relationship between the police and communities, issues around racism in policing and a whole series of different things 20 years ago. We had another report 10 years on, and we wanted to look at it again.

I am Yvette Cooper. I am the Chair of the Home Affairs Select Committee. We are a cross-party Committee. We have MPs from different parties. I am from the Labour Party but our Committee is mixed. Our Committee looks at all sorts of different issues around Home Affairs as well. So that is me.

Elizabeth Hunt: My name is Elizabeth. I did manage to speak to a few of you just before the meeting. I head up the staff team for the Committee.

Tim Loughton: I am Tim Loughton, the Conservative MP for Shoreham and Worthing in Sussex. I have been on the Home Affairs Committee for an awful lot of years. In a previous existence, I was the Minister for Children and Young People so I did a lot around youth services and things. I also chaired the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Children and we did an interesting study about two or three years ago—some of you may have contributed to it—about the relationship between young people and the police. We produced a good report, which led to the Home Secretary making some changes to the way the police and young people interact, particularly around stop and search and things like that. It has been a quite big issue for a while.

Douglas Ross: I am Douglas Ross, the MP for Moray in the north of Scotland. I was elected in 2017 and have been a member of this Committee since then. The only other thing I want to say is that this is not my phone charger. I am using it, but just in case anyone thinks the brightly coloured shiny blue charger is mine, it is not.

Witness E: My name is E. I am from the [organisation 3]. That is pretty much it.



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Witness F: My name is F. I am a peer facilitator at [organisation 3] as well.

Stuart C. McDonald: My name is Stuart. I am an MP from the Scottish National Party, SNP. I represent the constituency of Cumbernauld, just outside Glasgow. I was elected in 2015 and have been on the Committee here since then.

Witness J: My name is J. I am a youth support worker at [organisation 1] based in [location].

Witness L: My name is L from [organisation 1].

Witness I: My name is I and I work with [organisation 1].

Witness N: My name is N and I am the director of [organisation 1].

Witness K: My name is K, I attend [organisation 1].

Witness M: My name is M and I am from [organisation 1].

Witness D: My name is D and I am from [organisation 2].

Witness C: My name is C and I am also from [organisation 2].

Witness B: My name is B and I am from [organisation 2] from [location].

Witness A: My name is A and I am also a part of [organisation 2].

Kate Green: I am Kate Green. I am a Labour MP in Greater Manchester. I have been on this Committee for only a few months but I was on the Justice Select Committee, which also looks at criminal justice issues, for about 18 months before.

Witness H: My name is H. I am a mentor. I run a drug awareness and substance misuse programme and I am also the vice-chair of [organisation 2] between Scotland Yard.

Witness G: My name is G and I am part of [organisation 4], in [location].

Q115 **Chair:** Thank you very much. Before we start, because there are three different organisations, please tell us a little bit about [organisation 1], [organisation 2] and [organisation 3]. We had hoped to do this at [***]. I do not know who wants to kick off and just tell us very quickly about the organisation and what you do.

Witness N: [Organisation 1] is an organisation to empower young people and communities to live free from violence. We deliver one-to-one peer support, peer emotional support and guidance to young people who have been victims of serious violence. We also deliver programmes that are focused on personal development, legal empowerment and social action to empower young people.



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Q116 **Chair:** How many people do you have involved?

Witness N: That is a big question. We deliver different types of programme. We are embedded [***] where we support up to 100 young people for our [***] programme but we also deliver bespoke programmes across the education and criminal justice system. We deliver programmes in [***], and some other places across the country too.

Q117 **Chair:** Do you have a rough estimate of how many young people in a year?

Witness N: Across our bespoke programmes, we support thousands of young people in the education system. Our criminal justice programme is a bit smaller, the cohorts, so up to 100; and then our local programme up to 100 as well.

Q118 **Chair:** And [organisation 2]?

Witness D: [organisation 2].

Chair: I have [***] down as well.

Witness D: We are an organisation based in [***]. We are funded by MOPAC. We are trained facilitators, so we go into youth offending teams and we deliver workshops around conflict management, leadership and mediation. We also go into secondary schools and colleges delivering workshops around CSE, FGM, stop and search, and we have also trained a few police officers in that area. We do loads of work. I can't think—I am just stuck.

Q119 **Chair:** Do you have any rough idea about how many young people you work with?

Witness D: There is a lot.

Q120 **Chair:** Thank you. [Organisation 3]?

Witness E: [Organisation 3] is based in [***], and we work with kids from, say, 11 to 14. What we do is we provide workshops for them just to educate them about work in the future. Also we joined up with a few people called street doctors. What happens is we teach them how to save a life. If anyone gets stabbed or shot, or just know how to protect the person before the ambulance comes. That is what we do. We just set up a few programmes for kids and try to keep them steady in the right direction.

Q121 **Chair:** Thank you. And [organisation 4]?

Witness G: I am one of the young people that [organisation 4] helped out. I got my security badge, SIA training, from there. They donated money towards me getting a training and they do a lot of work around [***]. That is it.

Witness H: I'm with an independent organisation, a charity called [organisation 5]. For one of our mentor programmes, we are funded to



work with over 200 in the next two years. In terms of my drug programme training, I reach all young people and staff. I could not put a number on it.

Q122 Chair: Thank you. We are going to take a written transcript of the discussion but the only names that will appear will be Witness E or Witness F and so on. If we are asking any questions that you are not comfortable with you do not have to answer anything. We will remove from the record any information that could be used to identify someone. If you have said something that is identifying, that would be removed as well. If you want to come in on anything, let me know.

The questions we have been looking at as part of looking at the Macpherson Report 20 years on is: what has changed in the relationship between the police and young people; what has changed between police and relationships with different communities, different BME communities and so on; and how do you feel about things at the moment? If anybody wants to start the discussion by saying how you feel about policing in your community at the moment and what you feel the relationship is between young people and the police and how that is working at the moment. We are also doing—because I am conscious that some of you are doing projects around violence reduction—a simultaneous inquiry on serious violence and knife crime and issues as well. We are interested in your thoughts on that but the main thing we wanted to ask you about today was about the relationship with the police.

Witness G: The relationship the police have with the young people is not good, really. I feel like the police are desensitised to emotions of young people or anyone that they are stopping because the way they treat them it is, like, their dignity is gone after the stop and search thing. They do not talk to them in a nice way as well. Everybody knows their business even though they tell you, “Oh, we are going to take you in the van just to cover you and make sure that your dignity is not gone,” everyone sees you being taken to the police station and all of that. But I feel like they should conduct their stop and search in an orderly manner, in a better manner than they have right there.

Also it is not just about stop and search. If you go and talk to the young people and create a better relationship with them, then obviously they warm up to you. They start telling you certain things when they feel unsafe. If you do not create that environment you are going to always just catch them when they are doing something bad. If you build a better relationship with them, they will tell you when one of their friends is about to do something wrong, when they are about to do something that is going to endanger their lives and other people’s lives. There is no relationship between the police and the young people. We do not know what kind of homes that they are coming from, these young people, so if their parents do not understand them the police are definitely not understanding them. It is just going to keep going on in the relationship.



Witness C: The only interaction that you have with police nowadays is when you are being pulled over, when you are being stopped and searched. I remember back in the day, my first ever interaction with the police was in primary school and I remember they used to come in with their police cars, and you'd get the fire trucks. People loved the police. Not many people were born from a perspective where they instantaneously hate them. My first interaction was climbing in the fire trucks asking questions about this, asking police officers about this, and saying, "Okay, you guys, you catch criminals, you catch bad guys."

My next interaction after that was being pulled over because there were suspicions that I had a knife on me; and I was about six years old coming home from the park—things like that. We used to go to funfairs and little events at the park and, once again, sometimes you would see the police there, you will see the vans and you will see the kids going over there and interacting with them. There is none of that nowadays. The only interaction you have with an officer is when he is pulling you to the side, emptying out your pockets. Even then, if you have not had an interaction with a police officer prior to that moment and you do not have an opinion—"I don't really have an opinion on whether police are bad or good"—after that experience you are guaranteed to have one because of the way they handle you, the way the public start to view you after that, the way your neighbours, your friends, the shopkeepers are all coming outside there. Women are getting off the bus with their kids saying, "Come over here, keep away from them people".

Now you are being looked at and labelled as a criminal when you have done absolutely nothing wrong. What that is now doing, it is creating a state of mind for young people to want to hate the police. By those negative encounters you are breeding a state of mind that creates this hatred between young people and the police, so it never gets any better.

Q123 **Chair:** How old were you when you were first stopped and searched?

Witness C: I told you, I was about six or seven years old.

Chair: Six or 7?

Witness C: Yes.

Q124 **Chair:** After that when was the next time?

Witness C: I can't remember but it has been countless times from those points onwards, all to do with the same stuff, "You fit a description. There have been burglaries in the area and we need to make sure that you have not been a part of that or you are not carrying anything on you that has anything related to those burglaries." All types of nonsense. Section 60 is a common one that gets thrown at us for why we then get pulled over. Once again, all those encounters just bridges us further away from us wanting to engage with the police.



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Now I talk to my friends that have not had any experiences with the police and I am telling them, “Eff them. When you do see them do not interact with them, do not engage with them because when I interacted with them, this is exactly how I have been treated”.

Witness N: We know that the police treat black people differently. I just want to say it frankly because I just want to be blunt about it. That is the reality. Being a child and observing that, the first time I witnessed that was when my dad was being arrested for something and it was something that he had not done and yet the way that he was treated, for me being a small age and just witnessing that, I automatically just knew that there was something going on with this and that ultimately these were not people I could call if I needed protection.

Fast forward, we know that, in terms of deaths in custody and following police contact, we know that these are disproportionately black and ethnic minority people. We also know that use of force in terms of restraint is disproportionately used on black people. We have to also look at the criminal justice system and how we know the data around that, that there are more people from ethnic minorities entering the criminal justice system but police relationship does play a role in that because they have the ability to choose who they are going to arrest and who they are not going to arrest, who is going to get a caution and who is not going to get caution, who will be let off and who will not, who they are going to invest more energy in. Unfortunately the reality is they are playing a role in putting our young people on a conveyor belt into the prison system.

Me, as a person that studied law and went to [***] and all of the other things where you may be able to think, okay, this is somebody that would have a different relationship than maybe some of the young people that we work with, but it’s not true. There were points in my life when I did need to call the police but for fear of what would happen to the people because I knew that they would be treated differently and harmed. Let me just be explicit; I knew that there was a risk they would be injured by the police. I was not able to protect my own safety, using the police as a service to protect me, because I knew that that was a risk. Working on an estate where every single day—it is not that we see police, but the police are harassing the young people that we work with, it is not just stopping and searching them. There are no receipts. There are no processes being followed. They are taking people to the police station and strip-searching children. We do not know how to report these things. We do not know how to complain about these things.

I was asked when I was going to come here if I had direct experience and it blew my mind, because living in a community where you know your community is treated differently, there is none of us that do not have direct experience. Because the weight of that, it is harrowing and it just brings the straw and it means that we do not feel safe ever. That is the reality.



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Witness K: In my local area, I am stopped quite frequently. I'm able to say that our relationship with the police is absolutely appalling, because once you have been arrested for one thing at such a young age, they will target you. For example, there was an incident on my estate the other day that was just—the police will just come for you at any time for absolutely no reason and just stop you and try to intimidate you. For example, the other day, I was in a McDonald's in my local area. Some local gang unit from a police station came in and they sat down with me and they said my name and, I will be completely honest with you, the way that they deal with us and they know our ages is completely wrong. They grab out 13 year-old children. They will grab 13 year-old children and swing us around. They will swing us around, take us around the corner and things. I am not too sure. Personally, I think it is the way that police are trained because they are not trained to deal with the way that—because they do not know what sort of background we come from.

We come from—I am not too sure what the word is. We come from poor areas. We come from very poor areas. They do not know what background we come from. Every day they do not know what we go through and when we come out, we just want to come out and do our thing. We want to come out and go to school and get our education. But, oh no, we are home, we always seem to come into problems with the police because of past issues that we have had.

Witness E: One thing I will say about the police, one thing that has changed, is that they are wearing their little body cameras now so that saves us in a sense that before, when they never had them little cameras, they were a lot more reckless. Now they know if they get caught doing anything they are going to get in trouble. On our side, we might see police and just take off for the simple fact that a policeman might see you and say, "You fit this description. I am nicking you. I am bringing you home." Now your mum has sent you to go and get some curry chicken from the shop and she wasn't expecting you to get nicked and next thing now police are calling her saying, "Your son fitted this." It paints a bad image of you to your family.

Once you stop getting support from your family, who else do you turn to? You are going to go outside your house because in your house, you are not getting any support, so you are going to go outside. Once you get outside it is a big wide world so anything is possible and, like we know, we have phones and stuff. You probably could not get the information as quick as we get it. Now, the information that kids are getting is fast. You go on Snapchat, you go on Instagram. This is how mainly police are seeing things. On Snapchat, Instagram, they seeing knives, blades. They are saying, "How is this getting on the street?"

How are they preventing crime happen? There is no prevention for crime. If a crime is going to happen, it is going to happen. It is about trying to tackle the people's mental state before they get there. What is making someone wanting to commit that crime? Why are they waking up this



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morning and saying, "You know what, I am going to go and do this."? Or when they get put in a certain situation, you can have a weapon on you but it does not mean you are going to discharge your weapon. It does not mean you are going to use your weapon. It is when you are put in a certain situation of fear that you might say, "Oh my god!" or you might be desperate.

That is what I feel like the Government need to tackle: mental health. Stop looking at the police and what the police are going to do. All they do is wake up, "I have got to get to work at 9.30". They get to work. Their missus could be on them, "We need to pay this bill. We need to do—" that is what they got on their mind. They are not thinking, "Oh, when I stop this little kid, his family might not have certain things so he looks this way. He is in a trackie and his trainers look all torn up because his family are not providing for him. And now I am targeting this guy because he fits the description of another guy," who may be committing crimes because of his mental state. That is what I feel like the Government need to look at.

Witness K: The thing that you said about social media, I saw a video the other day on my Instagram of an undercover police officer that drew his baton and was hitting someone in Romford. He was younger than me. He was 16 and the police officer was literally battering him for no reason and saying, "Why are you doing this? Why are you doing this?" When I showed my parents that video, and my mum is a solicitor, so she said to me, "I do not know how people can report things to police because, more or less, you're reporting police to police". Obviously, in parents' minds people think, "How does that make sense?"

When we see that as young black children, we see that as, "Are these undercover policemen going to do this to me? Are these firearms officers going to do this to me? Are these normal police officers?" They think because we are underage and that we—not all of us know the laws, our rights, not all of us know that, so they will be thinking that they can take advantage of us.

Witness L: The one with the footage and that, the camera, sometimes what they do is they turn it off. That is another thing they always do is when they know—when they ask you for your name and you try to give your name and that, and they slyly cut you, "This guy knows what he's talking about," and they turn off the camera. That is exactly what they do. They turn off the camera and then give you verbal abuse. That is all they do. They dish up verbal abuse to you and they rough you up a bit and they might let you go but the next time they see you, he is going to remember, "I was down there and I gave him a verbal." So they come up to you and the whole thing is going to start again.

They are not going to do their job properly. To them, police is only for them as a job. No emotions, nothing. Telling them, "You are on the beat here, 9 o'clock till 5.00, doing my thing, after that I am getting my pay



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and going back home to my kids". They do not see anything normal. They see you as only black and white, "He fits the description. He's a black guy from that estate." More likely nine out of 10 of us have things on. So then that is it, they come up to you, they rough you up a bit and they cut you off, "He ain't got nothing," they leave you alone but they come back to you again.

Another thing is they say your government name. That is another thing that keeps coming up where you will be walking past an undercover and you know him, he knows you, basically. So he will be cheeky or say a government name and he will come up to you and then try to talk to you. By him talking to you, he thinks he is getting information out of you or asks you about things he shouldn't be asking. Some police officers are not meant to tell you certain things. But he will come up to you and he will tell you, "Oh, we found this and this on the estate, is this yours, is that yours?"

Witness K: He is intimidating you.

Witness L: Yes, he shouldn't be working.

Witness K: For absolutely no reason. We go about our day every single day but I go to college. I come home from college, get harassed by police. I know my friends and my friends' younger brothers, they get harassed by police for absolutely no reason for trying to eat food at McDonald's.

Witness C: As much as certain officers need to be looked at individually, their mind state, their mentality, their background and assess the facts—"Why do you even have this job. How have you got this job?" There needs to be more assessment into officers that are applying for these jobs and who they are recruiting. On top of that you need to now look at your actual training programme because, to summarise it, for myself, it is a dehumanisation programme. A lot of people would identify. There is no real human emotion when it comes to talking to police officers. It is a blank systematic stare, ridden of systematic laws, and they just preaching to you, talking absolute nonsense half the time. You can't have real conversations. There is no, "How has your day been? How are you doing at school? Are you guys struggling anywhere? How can I support you?" There is none of that.

I remember times when I have been stopped by police and they are quite literally egging us on to want to do something stupid. "There is a kid over there with a nice chain. Is that not the type of person that you guys will go and roll? What are you guys doing out on Valentine's Day by yourselves? Shouldn't you guys be at the brothel or something like that?" Officers chucking it to us, completely just sitting there trying to wait for our reaction. Waiting for us to say, "Go eff yourself, leave us alone," for them to say, "Right, mate, you're nicked." So once again, you need to assess the mental state of your officers that are out on the street and assess them, their training programmes that they have to go on and how



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they engage with young people, how they engage with the general public—not just young people, but everyone on a general basis from white, black, to females, to males, to children, to old people. You need a whole re-evaluation of their training programme and the people that you are recruiting.

Witness D: For me, one of the biggest things that has always stuck with me since I was younger is the fact that when I was stopped and searched and I was in the back of a bully van, I was just like, “You cannot do this” and their response was, “We can do what we like because we are the biggest gang in [***].” When I have heard that, that has just stuck in my head. All the time, I feel like the communication between young people and police is bad but it is more so on the police side because they approach situations in a very hostile way. More time, young people probably do feel intimidated and they feel a bit on edge so they are not going to be reacting calmly to whatever is being put in their way.

For instance, myself, when I was younger, I was not living at home. I was on the road from 16, so your whole attitude and mindset is different. So if the police do approach you, you are most likely going to be hostile because in that moment you do not care about nothing. I never cared about nothing. If my parents were not there to support me, I do not care about nothing now. So you as a police officer, you are not making me scared. I do not care. I feel like there needs to be something in place where they should be, “What can we do for you in order for you to get on this way, or in order for you to not get in trouble?”

Because when you get to the police station and you are a young person, you are not necessarily going to know your rights. They do not offer you—they are not going to tell you. It is down to you to find out. I did not know until I was in the station for three days that there was a book that I could have read and in that book it tells you what you are allowed. You are allowed to have food sent in from the outside, as long as it is sealed. You are entitled to have a shower if you are there for a certain amount of time. You are entitled to have 30 minutes outside. But they are not going to tell you you can go outside for 30 minutes. They are not going to tell you you are allowed to have a phone call. There are things that they do not tell young people and then they wonder why they get a certain reaction from young people. It is bad because of the fallout.

There are so many things that can be prevented but they just do not care about it. When a young person is smart and clued up about things, they do not like it. Then there is a whole madness. Then it is turn off the cameras or beat you up in the cell. Stuff like that. Taking your things, like it just does not make sense. In my experience of police, all the way through has been poor. I do not like the police now. Even my daughter, she is [***] years old. My daughter says, “Mum, why do the police not like black people? Am I going to be killed by a police officer?” That is what she said because of what she hears and what she sees. That is not a good look.



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Witness C: Officers rely on you as an individual not to know your rights, for them to get away with these injustices—it's as black and white as that. But in the work that we do with our council and sit in on stop and search monitoring board meetings, I was talking to one of the chairs one day and I was telling them this is exactly what the officers are doing. "Oh no, officers would never do that" until one of them rocked up with camera footage of them doing the exact same thing they swore their officers would never do. Once again, they rely on you not knowing your rights. If they tell you to put your camera away, you can't tell them, "Oh, this is a part of this and that right." They will force that camera out of your hand and it will be in their pocket and you ain't going to see that again. That is now a part of their "evidence".

Witness N: When you do know the law and you tell them, "I am legally allowed to film," which we do all the time, they will still confiscate your phone, they still say you are obstructing them when you are not. So it prevents you from even having your lawful rights and from you being able to execute those.

Furthermore, on what you said about the scrutiny. I joined every scrutiny group available—the local ones, the [***] regional ones as well that feed into the national ones monitoring around stop and search and other things. There was a big divide between people that were chairing those groups who were black and people who were chairing those groups who were white. The people that were white said there was no disproportionality, that there were no issues with stop and search in their boroughs, which is simply not true if you saw with the boroughs that the data they brought at every meeting did not even represent what they were saying.

I would just finish by saying the black men who were chairs, every single one of them was stopped and searched during the course of their duties, being a stop and search monitoring chair. Even when they would explicitly say, "I am a stop and search monitoring chair and it is my duty to make sure that you are doing this lawfully," they will still be stopped. Some of them were even arrested illegally for assaulting police officers, and then this had to get thrown out of court. Other people that were chairs were also attacked by the police and raised their own cases. One of them sued the police and won money for that case as well.

We need to look at it and not just saying there is scrutiny but the people that are taken voluntarily, because we do not get paid to do that, to investigate the data and hold them accountable are getting beaten up by the police when they are not at those meetings. It is just ridiculous. Then to be fair, that is when I decided I do not want to be part of those scrutiny panels anymore because I do not think they hold people to account. It is a waste of time. But try being a young person that is trying to drive change and seek accountability to not have any route to do that. It is shameful.



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Witness H: I would definitely agree with what N said about the scrutiny meetings. It can be very demoralising when you keep going. Everything we just heard, when we do express all our feelings to certain police and we do feel like nothing gets done, so maybe that IAG should be given some more power.

But separately, I want to talk about positive things of police. I have had many negative experiences with police, as I am sure everyone here has, but I have also had some positive experiences. I would say that—I have forgotten the name of the organisation but I know you guys can help me. It is the boxing where they have the police and they box with the young people in [***]. It is [***]. I do not know if anyone has heard of it. It is a boxing club where we have police that come in but they are not wearing their uniform and they train with the young people themselves. I have had quotes from young people specifically saying, “That guy is a police officer, but he’s cool. I was just chatting to him for an hour.” What it does is we bring the uniform out and we put a human there.

Just to give a response to what M or K were saying about the beating. There was a video recently of a young person who was beaten by a police officer under cover. That was going around social media before the Metropolitan Police could respond to it on Twitter. But there are a few individual police officers—I am not going to name them, but they have quite a following on Instagram and social media—and they speak out themselves about it. I had young people come up to me and say, “Well did you hear this policeman’s response?” That is individual police doing individual actions. I feel that these police will be scrutinised for doing that if they were coming to light saying, “We are defending this person” or this and that.

I would just say that if you can give more opportunities for police not to be in a uniform and to step outside of that and be more human interactive, and every opportunity that I have had with police when it is not like that I have walked away positive. That is the same from a social media response with the policeman that has come out and said, “Actually, this was an unlawful beating,” and then what he did was give an account of one of his arrests and how one of his arrests was seen unlawful and it turned out the other way. He was giving an example, so I thought that was a positive.

Witness I: I feel there is a balance—there is a balance between police stereotyping the public and the public stereotyping police. Where the public stereotype police, I feel it comes from generations, so my generation—I am [***]—it was getting stopped every day. It was non-stop stop and searches. It became normal to us. If your parents had asked about what happened today that would be a normal thing to say, “I got stopped and searched.”

So coming on to the next generation, and that is like my brother’s generation—a young guy going to school, going to college—they will be



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taught from our generation that you are going to get stopped and searched because that is how we have developed a relationship with police. The next generation from us is going to see that, "They are stopping my brothers, or they are stopping my sisters," or something like that. "They are people to be wary of." That's what is taught.

Even with policing, looking at the public now, they have certain areas that they get abused and stuff like that. But I feel in policing there are more dominant black areas in certain parts of [***] than there is in white areas. If you are putting police that have stereotyped a certain group or gender or something and you put it into a different community, they are going to act different to the way they will act in black communities, and that is where it tends to clash. There is not a balance of it.

If I train someone to drink out of this cup of water and I train someone to write with this pen, but then you send the person that is trained to drink the cup of water to write with the pen there is going to be a clash. I feel that is the problem. There is not a balance. I do not feel it is just police that need to work on stereotyping as much but it is the public as well because there is a balance. If we are trying to work together to solve something there is no point fighting fire with fire.

Witness L: A lot of it is the gang unit; they are different to normal police. Normal police officers are different. The problem with them is to them they just see as, "I have got a paper with a couple of names on that paper, couple of people that live on the estate—whatever, whatever—that are known associates of this gang". To them it is easy. To them they just come in, they harass them and say, "I have got a paper. I am going to tick this paper. I am going to tick this name off the list. So if we get my man, if we get him into custody, we can tick him off the list and then we can work on to the next guy." The undercover, they are not better than—they are worse than the normal police officers.

Witness C: They have a specific job to target. Normal police officers, they have other duties to go around and make sure other pedestrians are safe. The gangs unit, they come into your area looking for you, to the point where they will park up on the corner of the road and wait for you to walk past, and say, "All right, guys, we have not seen you lot all day. Where have you lot been?"

Witness L: When you see them walking the street in front of everyone, they will call your first name and then they will say, "What are you doing around here?" and another thing is they say, "Where are your drugs?" That is another thing they say, "Where are the drugs? Why do you have two phones?" Even if you are walking down the street with someone, let's just say a female, they come up and they just start searching a female up and they start saying, "Oh, are you with this person? He is known to us—" everything. So it makes you look weird.

Witness C: It is like they are trying to criminally entrap you sometimes. They are asking you all these questions and asking you to try to justify



yourself or why you are here, why you are there. It is almost like they already have preconceptions of why you are there. "You are standing on this corner to sell drugs, aren't you? So, go on, you tell us what you are doing here then." Like you have just said, "Why do you have two phones?" Once again, "This person was seen walking away from you. Is this person with you? Go and stop that person up there as well." That could literally have been a random person that walked past you. You say, "How are you doing, mister, are you okay?" That person has now walked off down the road and the police are following him because he had just come away from your presence because you are on this gangs matrix—all of your little brothers, your cousins, your sisters, neighbours, friends, families, anyone that is interactive with you, they will be getting dots put underneath their name to say you are now someone for us to investigate or want to look at.

Witness J: I want to take it back a little bit when we were talking about dehumanising and when it comes to the police, the fact that they look through a criminal lens when they see some young people that might be on the gangs matrix or a group of young people that might be just chilling on a corner or might be just together, they automatically categorise in the head that that group of young people are criminals. Once you other a group of individuals it makes it easier to do certain acts to them. You might want to grab them up, you might say something to them, you might want to antagonise them and that kind of justifies it.

I just want to give an example. There have been a number of times when we have been on the estate and the CIB, the gang unit, are out on the estate and they are searching some of our young people we work with. There was one specific incident when one of the young people was getting searched just outside our office. One of the young people came in and was calling saying, "Come, N, J, come!" As I went to step outside—it was you that came in that time—there was an undercover officer trying to hold me from going outside to see what is going on. He put his hand on my chest and I was like, "What are you doing?" I step outside, about 20 officers standing around this one 16 year-old boy, 15 year-old boy; two people searching him and the rest all standing around in a semi-circle basically cornering him. That is basic intimidation tactics.

Things like that do not make it easy for anyone in the community to even like the police in any way. You can be someone who is living up on the estate, it was in the heart of the estate. There are hundreds of houses on top just literally surrounding. You could be someone looking out of those windows, seeing that young person being searched and automatically, whether the police find something or not, next time you walk past that young person they are criminalised as well. It is community trauma that takes place when one police officer—the so-called one police officer that H is talking about—that might be the good apple, that one officer might do something, might stop and search someone and then the whole community now has a different perspective on that specific young person. That trauma lives on.



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Witness M: I am [***] now. The first time I got arrested I was 13 years old, and ever since then police came to my house asking if I was involved with something or I was stopped and searched. Last year, sometime around July, I was nearly stabbed, basically, and two minutes later the police came and they asked me if I was involved. I could not say yes because of all the other times where they came to my house and said this, this and that. I just did not want to speak to them and tell them what happened. Because of the way they are seen to people, like myself and other people around me, I just do not feel like I can talk to them about anything that is happening in my life.

Witness B: I just wanted to highlight the fact that for me as a black person, the lack of relationship the black community have with the police from 20 years ago up until now historically has always been that way. Whether it is to do with deaths in custody, having people like Cherry Groce, Smiley Culture, there is a list of names of predominantly black people who have been interacting or have come across the police and have been killed because of their presence. Whether you say that they have killed them or not, they have subsequently died after being in their custody or being in their house. Up until when the late Bernie Grant stepped up to help Cherry Groce's family, there were no answers from the police. That is only one individual who had a genuine interest in helping a particular community, which he came from to help.

Coming from that historically as a black person, when you look at all these things that are going on, stop and search, deaths in custody, which are still continuing, whether people hear about it as much now or not, it is still happening and it is happening at a rate that is just ridiculous. You have deaths in custody. Justice for Families have been involved in deaths in custody—I have been going on their marches for ages and I know N has been on those marches. All these things, as far as I am concerned, should not have to be happening. You should not have to have a group of people who have experienced something—not all black people but predominantly black people. I have been going on the march since about 2011. Since then it has grown and grown and grown and grown and grown, and the more I go the more black families I see, the more injustice I see. These same people going on these marches go into meetings and talk with the police. Whatever they are doing, they are trying, and still they seem to be going nowhere fast.

People outside of that, they might not have even experienced that within their family, but those people who are experiencing that, they are internalising that as a part of their own family because it is a part of their wider community. I might have had anyone in my family killed in police custody, stopped and searched and whatever has happened—which I have—but hypothetically that might not have happened to me, but as a black person living in [***] I feel that pain of those people because I feel like it is just something that is going to continue and continue and continue to happen.



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The people that are working within the police who might be put up in a senior position or worked their way up to a senior position who are people of colour or black people, they are by themselves within that role. The fact that they are the only one in itself is wrong. When people look at that and they say, "Oh yeah, there is a black senior police officer coming to speak on behalf of black people" and what they are saying might be correct, but the actual system, which they work for, is totally against them; we are going nowhere.

Witness C: I know black police officers that are still being racially abused within their own department. Black police officers have spoken on issues where their own colleagues are abusing them for the colour of their skin. So the fact that we even have to sit here and have this conversation just goes to show what a joke the system is. The police force is what enabled institutionally racist.

Witness A: I just wanted to say something. This matter is controversial. Wherever I go to such meetings everyone is hating the police and I will probably get hated for this. I genuinely believe the ideology of policing is good. But there are certain individuals who I say are corrupted, who are abusing their rights, who are going out there with the intentions of stop and searching, predominantly black people, and fair enough, that is wrong. I am not condoning this sort of behaviour, but what I would say is that—I am a police cadet so I have had a phenomenal experience with the police. Police cadets, they encourage unity with black and Asian community. They are doing a lot of work to ensure the relationship between the public and the police is growing, although right now it does not seem that way.

The issue is the system. Yes, there are a few mishaps in the training programme. I believe that those officers that have been recruited are not the right people. The recruitment needs to be harder and it needs to be those officers that are passionate about making a change in the communities and not just fulfilling their own desires. That is it from me.

Witness N: Can I say that the Macpherson Report exposes that the police as an institution, it is an institutionally racist institution? So I just want to make the point that if there are some bad apples—because we like this analogy, there are a couple of bad apples—but there is really good apples as well, I am sorry, but if those good apples don't point out and say, "These are the bad apples and this is what they are doing wrong," which they don't, because there is no accountability, then the whole tree is rotten and the whole tree needs to be removed.

The reality is it goes further than just training. It is about accountability, which is there is none. There will never be a relationship until there is accountability for the historical failures. I was [***] when Mark Duggan was killed and when it was revealed that you can be lawfully killed when you are unarmed. This is what an inquest jury decided. So being a child and understanding that showed me that the young people that are my



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friends, the boys that are just labelled as gang members will go into the matrix, but we don't know how they get on there. Even just being a victim of violence puts you on there. It doesn't mean you have committed any crime.

The majority of people on there are green, as in pose no risk, and most of them have no criminal record, so why are they on this database that has really adverse effects in terms of education, in terms of their employment opportunities, in terms of housing? Why are they even on this database? But just by being labelled in that way can get you killed, and there will be no pathway for accountability there. I wanted to get involved in those campaigns to try to seek justice. It blew my mind as a child to join this campaign group and find out how many people have been killed in this country and the fact that zero officers have been convicted, even though there have been 10 unlawful killing verdicts.

This is even one man, Azelle Rodney, who was shot six times in the head and it was supposed to be unlawful. When the officers stood trial, they found them not guilty because the police are not willing to convict—sorry, because the public are not willing to convict police, because the majority of the public have an idealist view of the police and they would call them if they were in trouble. The majority of you would call them if you were in trouble. That is okay, but you just have to understand that in our communities, we don't have that ability. That really puts a strain on us.

Being a child and coming into this, there is no way now that I am not going to fear for my children, when I have them, in terms of their relationship, because it is not just our generation or the generation under us. It is since the 1950s and before that, and nothing has been done to address the historical failures, so we grow into this over generations. Still now we are fighting for justice. These campaigns have been going for decades and still no justice. We come into them as babies and grow up into adults. To be honest, I will probably have to join many more campaigns over the next two decades because I am sure that there will be more people that will be murdered and there will be more accountability that is necessary. It is really sad, because this is just not a way to live.

The last thing I want to make about those campaigns, it takes over your entire life. You don't get any inquest funding, you don't have any legal aid. You are thrown into this situation that nobody wants to be in. You have lost a family member. You cannot even grieve in peace because nobody really believes what is happening to you and your loved one is just rotting in there because their name has been tarnished in the press and everything like that. The weight and burden of that, the trauma that it creates, you would never want to see a police officer again.

Q125 Chair: Witness G, did you want to come in?

Witness G: Certain relationships that we may have with [***] police, like obviously I know certain police officers and they are really good, but obviously it is like what you were saying. I do not know if I understood it



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properly, but it is like the police that are around my area, they know me in a certain way, but if they call in other units from different areas to come in, they don't know you like that. They haven't built a relationship with you, so you are a suspect straight away. You understand? If you are hurt, you are a suspect, no matter what.

Listen, imagine this, somebody just got stabbed and obviously everyone is traumatised right there and then, but if police are coming to ask the people that just lost their friend or who were around and just witnessed that, like just seen their friend stabbed, they are in shock, they are traumatised. Even if he did not die, he is in a hospital. The CID come in there, it is like I am traumatised already. When you are coming and you are talking about, "Oh, we need your evidence," and all of that, I am traumatised. You can't just come after, you understand?

But now imagine I am sat down in a room in [***] Town Hall and the police, they're really happy. They said, "We have taken a lot of knives off the streets". It does not matter, you understand, because you know what, I know Sainsbury's might use something and technology has advanced, hasn't it? There is analytics when it comes to coding. People are controlling, like the department controlling you with your mouse, moving it, for you to click certain things, cookies, they are sending you certain things. I am pretty sure if somebody is ordering a knife online, you are going to see that, you understand me? If you use analytics to go to the people that are marketing these things, people that are bringing out these things—you see zombie killers. Who the hell gets hold of this? What happens to bring them kind of things there, you understand?

Imagine this, you come out of the hood, you come out of the estates, you leave this estate, you go to another estate, it looks exactly the same. You understand, you are not getting anywhere. You see certain people coming in, some certain people who are coming in that are getting given the houses where your mum is not going to be living. Your mum is going to be living in this block and then they got these nice apartments next to it. That makes you feel like, "Why can't my family live in that?" It makes you feel away. You understand? Then obviously there is public schools and there is private schools and the people that are going to private schools are often buying certain things from people that are not—you understand? That is how it has been happening, all of that, you know what, instead of like you could have been working together, you understand?

Police, I feel like it is just a business, isn't it, because if they do not make a certain amount of arrests or if they do not make somebody become a criminal they can't arrest them. Like if only they were paid regardless and there did not have to be a target that they reach, I feel like police will be less under pressure and then we interact with them more, you understand? I feel like that will be the case.



Witness H: I would definitely like to hear what some of the MPs and everyone feels. It feels there is a disparity between what you are hearing and what you kind of go through on a day-to-day basis, because I do feel like I have been to many of these and I feel that many people here have been to many of these. We have all expressed our opinions and our views and it has not been taken the other way since or maybe it is just a misunderstanding, so I just kind of want to really make sure that everyone is understanding.

Just my last point, I think what was said is true, it goes beyond training, but I feel that is an easily tangible outcome to begin with. Yes, it will cost a lot of money and I know we are pushing it our [organisation], I know many others are pushing it, but I do believe—this is my last point here—that one of the outcomes to increase better and positive relationships between police and young people is the initial training and that training could be delivered. I have not delivered it to police, but I have delivered it to community officers and the response and the outcomes of delivering those programmes to community officers has made a massive impact.

Witness N: Sorry, I don't want to sound pessimistic, but I just want it to be seen in the context we have an institutionally racist police force in the context of an institutionally racist society. It is not the only institution and training isn't just required there, it has to be everywhere. It is not just about training; it is about taking on responsibility that this might not affect me or my children, but it is actually my responsibility to do something about this, because the weight cannot be on black and ethnic minority communities to move this forward when we are also dealing every single day with the actual impact of living with it. Somebody else has to take some leadership on this and, "We are going to do something, as white people, as the white community, the dominant group in society," to say, "We are going to make a change to acknowledge these institutions are racist and make a difference there," because we can't do that. We do not have the power to do it. We can come here and drain ourselves by telling you about our lived experience, which is traumatic to do and does take away energy from us, but what are you going to do with it afterwards? It is your job to push it forward, so that is the context that we have to remember.

Q126 **Chair:** What are the things that you think would help? What are the sort of things that we should recommend in our report? What are the things that the police should be doing or wider than the police, but centrally the police? Yes, go on.

Witness K: Being completely honest, you have to see it for yourself. You have to come to the areas like, for example, [***]. If you come to [***], you will see what happens with these police officers. They take liberties because we are young people. Obviously we have access to all our rights and things, but obviously some of us don't remember. But to be honest, like I said, you would have to come and see for yourself to understand what we go through on a day-to-day basis.



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Witness C: If you, as an MP, were to swap your pay cheque for a minimum wage pay cheque and you were to come and live in our council estates, I am sure you guys will find all of the answers yourselves without having to come to us 110%, you know what I'm saying? Furthermore, when £4.8 billion is being spent on creating 20,000 more prison places but not even a fraction of that is being spent on trying to rejuvenate communities, to create youth clubs, to create boxing clubs, to create apprenticeship schemes—when you look at the disproportion of where the money is being spent in society, I am not convinced in any way, shape or form that the Government or any sort of politicians really have our best interests at heart.

Because each of those 20,000 new prison places are going to cost, what, an extra £40,000 for every single year one young person spends there? For one year that a young person spends in jail, it is going to cost £40,000 of whose money? You know what I am saying—taxpayers' money. But at the same time, once again, there is no youth clubs, there is no football schemes, there is no boxing schemes, there is nothing to rejuvenate or to further our education as young people to build our future, but you spend so much money on incarcerating us and basically sending us down the toilet. So I am in no way convinced that anything is really going to be done, to be honest.

Witness D: I feel like just saying it, because if I don't I am going come out and feel drained. Like the reason I don't come to these things now is because I swear I have been to so many of these in city hall, everywhere, just sitting around talking to the same people, the same people, saying the same thing, the same thing, the same thing. It is frustrating, because, well, no, nothing is going to change. To be honest here, you are not really going to know what is good until you come and do it properly. Like it is all good coming in your suits to things and having a couple of words with the young people, yes, but you are not really in the mix of things. Like there are things, like there are a lot of mental health issues going around with young people. There is a lot of things that people have seen that they shouldn't have seen. There are a lot of things people have had to do because they thought that they have had to do it. There are a lot of problems that need to be dealt with, there are so many.

But none of you lot will ever see it, because we are in the bubble of madness and you lot are out here eating in flipping Benihanas. Do you get me? Like it's mad and I hate—I can't keep sitting here. You know what, yes, I didn't even want to talk with the slang but I can't help it. Like I am trying to sit here, talking professional, but instead I can't do it, like because it's frustrating. If I don't talk like this, I'm not keeping it real to myself because like, as a female, all my experience with police has been shit. I have been beaten up, I have been tied up by police from 17 years old, like I got beaten up in jail. It is wrong. Then I have come out and I don't get no support. I am a female, so imagine like as a female, a mixed-race female, classed as black by a white person, whatever you want to call it, it is hard out here.



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But you lot ain't really going to—like it is all good us telling you shit and you writing on paper, but where is it going to? Who is going to read it? Are you going to read it when you go home or are you just going to walk out and jump on a train and read *The Evening Standard*? I don't know.

Q127 **Chair:** Let's be honest, we can't promise you that our Committee is going to change anything. We can't. We are not in charge of the Government; we are not in charge of the police.

Witness D: When you are having us here, is it like for numbers on a paper, like, "Yes, I have met with Witness N"? Do you get me? "I have met with so and so, so and so, so and so. Oh yes, and that is it now, guys. Let's go home and have some food." That is what I see it as like, you have got it on paper now, "That is good, next person, next section." Like serious violence, who is actually in there? Do you get me? Like, who's in it? We should be in there, but we are not in there, and we are going to be in there for like the last five minutes viewing the thing, not even talking.

Witness H: If you are going to feed back that point, we would just like a bit of proof for you. For example, the Home Office right now have just put some money up for an independent drugs review. The independent drugs review—some of you may have heard of it, some of you may be working on it—is to see if there is a link between drugs and violence. I am sure a lot of people here were involved in a violence reduction unit two years ago from the Home Office, just a different department, which proved 47% of homicides are related to drug dealing and drugs. Once again we've got another year, and Dame Carol Black is lovely. She is going to come in a suit and visit [***] and they are going to do another review on drugs and then they are going to come out and prove that there is violence linked to drugs, but they proved that two years ago with the violence reduction unit, so why are we doing an independent drugs review now? I mean, listen, there was a lot of good points that come up from the Macpherson Report. I think it was 70 points; am I correct?

Chair: Yes.

Witness H: How many have come up in the last 10 years? When you did the review 10 years ago, was there 70 more improvements? Because I am sure we could have 70 more improvements today.

Witness K: But this isn't really to do with drugs, like what we are all here for today is to discuss is why the police conduct themselves the way they do. The reason why there is a problem, this is the exact source of the problem, being someone that has personally been through it. What is that thing called again?

Chair: The matrix.

Witness K: That is the main problem. I can tell you from personal experience, from being a 13 year-old child. Okay, fair enough, I am not perfect, I have made mistakes in the past. I am a changed person now.



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For example, I moved away to [***] when I was 16 years old because of personal reasons. I was in care at the time. I was walking in a local town and I was with some friends of mine from college, who had previous history with those police officers. At the time, we were stop and searched. I have no problem with police. I am not rude to police when they stop me, I have no problem, but this police officer started taking a particular interest in this particular one person and started moving really erratic. Then at that point, my friend has not defended himself, but he said, "Can you please stop?" and then the police officer dragged us all to the floor—there was about three or four of us—and I said, "What are you doing?" and excuse my French, the police officers replied—what did he say? "Something, something, you black cunt".

I will be completely honest, I was completely shocked. I had my face on the floor and the policeman had his knee on my neck. How are we meant to react as young people? As young people we have our own minds. We are still evolving, so it really depends on what mindset you have, because some people can take that as, "I do not know why this person is trying to hurt me. What do I do? Do I rebel or do I—?" because at the end of the day, it all comes down to who do we report it to? We can't report police to police, so where do we go from there?

Witness C: People are getting sick of talking. It is getting that serious. People are getting sick of speaking and there is a thing where actions speak louder than words, you know what I am saying? We need to start, as individuals, not as us, relying on the system that has effed us over so many times to get us out of that problem, but as us as individuals to rely on ourselves to get us out of the problem, not looking towards people that have created the problems for us, because this Government and these politicians have created environments where crime thrives and then they send their police forces in to "clean it up and deal with it". Once again, they pocket whatever funding they get for that and we are the ones that get the full backlash of it, do you understand? So personally I would not even suggest coming to petty things like this. I suggest that we link up ourselves, to be honest, and our organisations link with your organisations and with your organisations and we stop coming to nonsense organisations like this, to be honest.

Witness K: To be honest, do you know what it is? The people in this room, they do not see what we see, so like he said, feel free to come through to our estates and see what we go through on a day-to-day basis. Until then, I do not see where we are going to go with this.

Witness C: For a minimum wage pay cheque, please.

Witness: Forget that, because some people love it.

Witness: They would not do that.

Witness C: Of course not, because they know the struggle, but they play ignorant to it. Sorry.



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Q128 Chair: All right. Look, our job, we are a mixed Committee, right? We are a Committee of MPs from all over the country, so my constituency is Yorkshire. It is a coal-mining area in Yorkshire. We had pits close and real problems getting new jobs into the area. We have not had big problems with gangs and knife crime. We have had big problems with unemployment. We had quite a lot of problems with drug abuse when some of the pits closed and then that kind of changed over the years; we got some new investment, changed a bit. We have a lot of really low-paid jobs and a lot of exploitation in some of those big distribution centres, a bit like the Amazon centres. It is one of those sorts of places where we have some of those big Amazon distribution centres because we have a lot of pit sites and things.

You are right, it is completely different to the areas that you are living in. Every area has different kinds of challenges, every area has different kinds of problems. Part of the reason for having MPs from all over the country, the idea is you have people from every different community, you have every different group but, as we know, there is not enough representation. You are absolutely right, there are not enough black MPs, there are not enough Asian MPs, there are not enough—

Witness C: But MPs make decisions on young people and on areas that affect young people without consulting young people whatsoever. Why is there not a Youth Parliament?

Chair: There is.

Witness C: Oh sorry, there is?

Chair: Yes, there is.

Witness C: Man, I didn't even know that. How about that? It goes to show how known it is. That is what I am saying, it goes to show how known it is and no one knows about it.

Witness D: It needs to be more televised. People need to hear about it.

Chair: There is a Youth Parliament, but look, it does not make the main decisions. The main decisions are made by the main Parliament, or actually the main decisions are made by the Government. A lot of this, the reason we do inquiries, is we are supposed to hold the Home Office to account and hold the police to account, but part of the reason we want to talk to you and to hear from you—and we would have [***] if we had not had a change in the time of the debates—is because we want to know what questions we should be pushing at the Home Office, what questions we should be putting at the police.

Now, we are all going to disagree on what those questions are, but we also want to know what it is we should be recommending. The things that people have said, all right, you have talked about training, you have talked about some of the wide things like investment in youth services, in boxing, in things like that. You talked about accountability and I was interested: how do you make the police accountable? If you have the sort



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of problem where you have a police officer who is clearly racially abusing somebody and abusing their power and so on, what is the best way to have the accountability? You talked about cameras, so there might be cameras or other things. What are the things that you think would help change attitudes? What are the things that you think would help change what happens? Before I get you to answer, I am going to just bring Tim in.

Q129 Tim Loughton: I want to add a couple of questions to that, because I think this goes deeper than just, "We need a facility there," or, "We need some more money there." Just on the Youth Parliament, the Youth Parliament does come here once a year. No, it comes here several times a year, but one day a year it sits in the Chamber of the House of Commons and 400 young people—who, interestingly, are always disproportionately more people from the BAME community than others and from deprived areas—come and speak and make a really impressive job.

When I was Youth Minister I set up a Youth Select Committee, so we had a group of young people who come and have witnesses like we do and produce reports that the Government respond to and we debate in Parliament. It sounds like tokenism. We need to do a lot more of that and we do need to do a lot more of that in this place.

You are right, we can come along in a suit and we can go and visit and all the flags will be out and we see it, "Oh, that's terrible." and we come back again. What some MPs do—I spent eight days undercover in Birmingham living in tower blocks, sofa surfing, going out and meeting gang members, almost getting arrested by the police, getting approached by drug dealers, almost getting shot. We had some TV security with us and it was a really fascinating experience. When I was a Minister, I used to spend a week a year being a social worker, going on cases and things like that. We need to do more of that. You are right, that is only how you see the real thing.

There is a bigger issue here, which I just want your response to add on to Yvette's questions. It is about trust and voice, so who do you trust and who speaks for you, do you think? I would quite like your reactions to that, because there is a huge lack of trust problem here and you feel disengaged, detached from the whole thing. Throwing a bit of money at some extra facilities, fine, but that is not approaching the underlying serious social engagement problem that you are, not surprisingly, articulating and articulating really well. That is the answer I want, because you have to get to the fundamentals before you can then start doing the practicals of how you rebuild that trust.

Witness N: Sorry, Tim, I don't think it is a problem of engagement. We are here because we are engaged, all the people we work with are engaged and we can't not be engaged, because this is our daily lives. I do not like it when it is framed around disengagement, hard to reach. We are not detached; we are very attached to it. The reality is in terms of



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voice, we can come and have a voice and be represented. It is what is going to happen next, which is why I think the main issue is about accountability, because it is how are these things followed forward? What action is actually taken? I think we do quite well at engagement, actually.

Q130 Tim Loughton: You are not the problem in that, but it is loads and loads of people who you speak for who are not engaged. Just for some of the things being said here—

Witness N: By engagement, who? Engage with what?

Tim Loughton: With anybody in authority, public servants or whatever. What you have made quite clear, and I absolutely understand it, is you do not trust us. Why would you trust us?

Witness: You haven't given us a reason to.

Q131 Tim Loughton: That is what I am asking. Who do you trust? Who speaks for you?

Witness: I trust myself.

Witness N: I trust myself, like that is it.

Witness C: Ourselves and people from our community. I know people that I have worked with, people that have come from the same estates that I have come from that I would feel more comfortable to go to for a source of information or CV writing or anything than I would to go to my local MPs or whatever about, really and truly. But once again, one of those people even tried to run to be a local MP and he got shot down hard.

Witness K: On top of that—I am not going to say police, I am going to say bullies—these bullies are more or less under you, so they listen to you. They do not listen to us and our communities, so it is for you to step up and listen to us. We are in this. We took time out of our day, our hard-working day, to come and sit in front of you and tell you things that are going on in our community, but nothing ever happens. We can sit here for days on days on days, but what is actually going to happen? It is for you to speak to them.

Q132 Tim Loughton: That is what we do, because next week or whenever we will have a bunch of senior police officers here and we will say, "Look, this is what we have heard from young people in the frontline the whole time. This is not what police procedures are supposed to be, this is not what we are told every year in the police reports about, 'This is how many stop and searches we did'. This is what is happening to real people. How could that be? There is a disconnect".

Witness K: Then how many other young people will get assaulted after that weekend?

Witness: That is what I am saying.



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Q133 **Tim Loughton:** It is completely anonymous.

Witness K: We get bullied on our estate every single day. Imagine standing outside your house every single day being fearful that police are going to come and stop you or harass you. Do you know how I feel to see my mum cry every time a tribe of police officers come to the door for absolutely no reason, just because of things that have happened in the past?

Q134 **Tim Loughton:** That should not happen.

Witness K: But it does happen.

Q135 **Tim Loughton:** The police do not say that happens, so we have to challenge the police and ask, "Why is this happening?"

Witness K: We have thousands of these meetings every week.

Witness L: That is the problem. You are not going to change it all. We have heard this before where people say, "We are going to speak to the higher people, whatever, whatever," but it has not changed, because it is not the first time. It has been happening for years and you are doing nothing.

Witness D: It is like if a police officer assaults me, it is good. As soon as I do something like a little tap, I am getting done for assault, that is it.

Witness C: You are going to jail. If a police officer commits GBH on a member of the public, what happens? Does that person go to jail? Of course not, but if me, as a member of the public, were to assault a police officer, what is going to happen to me? You know what I am saying. You refuse to give a name and address—do you get me—it is an offence.

Witness E: Let's just say I was a police officer and I said, "You know what, you are looking dodgy, mate. You look like you got something on you. I need to tap you down and give you a strip. So you need to go out there for a strip search right now, I do not care about your suit, I do not care about how nice your hair is," they are going out there. But just for instance, let's just say it was like that. This is it, I am putting you under pressure right now. In your head, you might not have anything on you, but in your head you are thinking, "I might well have something, just because of the way you have—" so what I thought, with police officers, you see, if we said to them, "Look, if you pepper spray this person for longer than five seconds and they end up partially blind, you are getting probation for the rest of your life."

That is what you need to do, you need to start giving these lot rules and start saying, "Look, you see, if this happens, you are going to get sentenced and you are going to be in that cell with a whole load of people that do not like police officers. You are going to have to stay in there for another six to nine months". If you lot don't do that, they are going to come out and keep beating us up and keep doing what they're doing, but



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if you give them lot rules— They feel like they are more in charge than you are. They ain't going to say nothing to you.

Witness C: Like the people that are supposed to hold the law should know the law better than anybody, obviously besides lawyers, right? So if one of those people that are supposed to uphold the law breaks that, I personally feel like that should be a 10 times harsher sentence than any member of the public that has not once been educated on the law, that has not once been given the opportunity to be educated on the law, because that is another thing that we seem to forget. We all have to live and abide by rules in society that we are never, ever taught, that we have to pay crap tons of money to go and learn, do you understand? But if we then break any one of those rules, that is it, bam, your hand is coming off, you are being prosecuted to the full extent of the law. But police officers that have studied these laws for years break the law and then get away with it scot-free.

Q136 **Chair:** Witness I, do you want to come in? You have your hand up.

Witness I: My hand was not up, but I would just like to say I am thinking you are basically the middle between the public and the police, so hasn't there ever been a thing where it is like the public can speak to police direct?

Witness D: We have. We spoke to the Commissioner and it is like they are scripted.

Witness I: No, but not the Commissioner, I am talking about like the local ones, like you are from [***], having a panel of [***] police, because—

Witness D: Have you not spoken to them, like do you not follow that? The police are scripted when you ask them questions when they are on the panel, because every time I have ever asked the police anything, especially the Commissioner, on arresting powers and all of that, they are scripted. They do not give you answers.

Witness: The ones that are sent are not CID. It is not the gangs unit, it is not TSG, it is not those ones.

Witness D: Yes, they are not the ones.

Q137 **Chair:** Are there any good relationships, like with some of the neighbourhood police? Are there any good relationships with the police, any times when they get it right?

Witness I: I have had times with police in the area, like you were saying about area police. There was just one time we came out of a retail park and we have all been stopped, but it was from units that are not from the area. The units that were from the area got called in and we all got put to the floor and everything. There was one officer that I remember, he came over and said, "Oh no, no, he's cool. Let him stand. He is not going to



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cause you no trouble in that sense. You don't have to treat him like that." From that, I was kind of shocked. From that sort of stuff happening normally, I was kind of shocked, like the police come forward and said, "No, what you are doing is wrong. Chill out."

Q138 **Chair:** If you have like neighbourhood police who know the communities and build up trust—

Witness D: Those relationships, they have been built, like especially in the areas, they have been built from when you were younger. In my era, for my age, I am [***], and from when I was growing up there has been one police officer and he has always been around. So whenever there has been a problem—that is from my experience though that I have seen in my area, I am from [***]—with outside officers coming in, he has always stuck up for the men because he will chat to them because he wants to talk to them. They will engage with him because he is not an idiot, he is a nice person. He is still a police officer, but he has helped them a lot of times when people have tried to run up and tried to nick them and that. But that is just that one police officer in the areas.

Witness L: I would say those are better than the ones that are on the estate. The ones on the estate, they have a grudge against you.

Chair: We will take it in turns.

Witness J: I have been told a number of times by a series of young people that the gang unit on [***], there is one unit, there are so many scenarios where one member of the gang unit would say to one of the young people, "Run!" and then another officer will come and catch them on the other side, like it is some sort of cat and mouse chase. Like the CID officers, the undercover officers in [***] in particular, there is an amount of times, like I said, the one when L came in to call me out. When I step out, he was trying to hold me up to not go outside, or when we are outside, they are talking to one of the young people where they are filming.

There was another incident when me and N were outside and the officer completely disregarded our existence. We were questioning him, we were trying to ask him questions and he did not even look at us, didn't even turn around and try engage with us.

Q139 **Chair:** Is that your neighbourhood police or that was the gang unit?

Witness J: That is the gang unit on the estate. Even the neighbourhood police on that estate—

Witness: They are fact-fed. It is the same thing.

Witness J: The point I am trying to make is that on our estate, whether it is the gang unit, whether it is the local police officers, they all have preconceived notions of the young people that they interact with. There is even another similar situation where there was an incident happening



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with some schoolchildren. Officers come from outside the area. They are the ones that react to the buses, there is a specific police unit for buses. The incident happened on a bus. They came and I was with two of the young people that I work with and these officers, one of them was like, "I know you, I know you," pointing out two of the young boys. I am thinking, "How do you know us?" and then he kind of went back and said, "Oh, I do not know. I do not know where from, but you got a twin, one of them is a twin." He goes, "Oh, you got a twin" so it is like there is obviously some sort of information sharing that is going on with police officers. They have no business dealing with some of the young people that are on the estate. They are only there for buses, problems that happen on buses, but they are there antagonising and calling them and saying, "Oh, I know you, I know you," and then literally just for them it is fun.

Witness N: Can I just say, outside [***] a few months ago, a young man was brutalised, literally outside [***] by six officers who were sitting on top of him. He was literally—he looked lifeless. This was at 3.30, 4.00 pm, so schoolchildren were there, parents were there, people were screaming. It was horrific. Everybody filmed it and there was a long period of time where we did not know if he was alive, because he just was not moving; we did not know if he was breathing. We were obviously all traumatised and concerned by this.

I followed it up with the borough commander, because I was the chair of [organisation 2] at the time. It went through the process and they said that that was justifiable. In fact, when I first called him and said, "You know, this has happened on the estate. What is going on?" and he said, "Oh, but did you know that young person stabbed one of my officers in the head?" That just did not happen. That is just incorrect and it did not happen, but the borough commander has been fed a false story, even though there is evidence, there is video evidence, and everybody was there to witness it. For me, as a community representative on [organisation 2], to go to him for accountability and for him to tell me something that is not correct—

Q140 **Chair:** Witness D was talking about having better neighbourhood police, that being better. Did you—

Witness D: Only one officer, yes.

Chair: When you had that one officer, because you had a good relationship, would you have gone to that officer for help?

Witness D: I did not really chat to the man, I was just kicking ball, but he was chatting to the other guys in the area and they said he was cool.

Q141 **Chair:** Anybody else who has good experiences with police officers? I mean, we need a police force. We need a good working police force, so what is it that we need to do to get it work right?



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Witness C: Put it this way, the one experience that I had with the police where I would not say it was good, but I can put it this way: been stopped by the police, same old nonsense, they are coming up to us talking whatever rubbish, trying to antagonise us. We are walking away from the situation, "Oh, eff the police," and one of the community support officers came up to us after that, and quite similar to what someone else was saying, kind of disagreed with it and said, "Do you know what, guys, they should not have actually dealt with you like that. I am sorry this is how it all went".

I respected the fact that, right, "You have come up to us to talk to us," but at the same time I said to him, "You are still a bit of a prick, because you did not say nothing to them, you know what I am saying? As you are an officer that witnessed and identified that this was wrong, you still sat there with your tail tucked between your legs and did not say nothing to any of them and you waited for me to walk away before you tried to smooth things over, almost like, 'Oh, by the way, guys, I'm not like that, I am not like any of them. I'm a good one'," you know what I am saying? I just had to look at him, like, "Well, once again I appreciate what you are saying, but you didn't do nothing about the situation". After that, from that day forward, the most it was was he would be the only officer I would look at and I would nod my head towards. He will come up to me, "How are you today?" and I would be like—nod—and that would be it. That was the only good experience.

Q142 **Chair:** With that officer, by the way, would you have gone to that officer for help if you needed it?

Witness C: No, because once again, he did not help me when he witnessed it.

Q143 **Chair:** So basically even for that example, that was still not enough for you to build confidence?

Witness C: No, because he witnessed me being mistreated and he sat there in silence.

Witness G: For me, like it is the same. There are police officers that you treat like the teachers in school, "Oh right, yes, I do not want to deal with that teacher. I would rather this teacher come in here." There was a whole unit of police officers and every time they saw me, obviously they know I hang around with certain people, but they know I am not like them in the sense of they know that I am responsible at certain times, you understand? So obviously there is these guys, but they have been separated, distributed to different units, different areas and that. But one time I was telling one of them, he was asking me, he said, "So what do you want to do with your life? What do you want to do in the future?" and he said to me, "If you want to go to uni or anything, just come over, I'm here, and then just come to the station and talk to me. You know where I am," you understand? Then those are the kind of police officers that I



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would rather be around, you understand? That is why I would rather my community police officers come and deal with me.

But also I was about to say this, it is that you see these cameras out here, there is more cameras than there are people. Yes, so if you see that and then there is cameras, the facial recognition and that, why don't we do that for missing persons now, for missing people? Why don't you spend money on doing that? So if somebody has gone missing, these cameras are going this way, straight away, facial recognition.

Like alcohol has its benefits, but the disadvantages outweigh the benefits. Yes, so there are good police officers, but there are also bad—like you were saying, the bad apples, that basically outweighs everything. That is what I am saying.

Q144 Chair: If I could ask you a question, because we were due to finish at about 6.00 pm, but it is really good for us to hear you talking so we kept going. But I am just conscious, that green screen has what is on in the House of Commons and that looks to me that they are going to come to the final speeches on the serious violence debate. Would you like to stop now and go into the gallery and watch the serious violence debate or do you want to carry on talking? Your call.

Witness E: I want to say one last thing to everyone else.

Chair: Yes, all right. You get the last word.

Witness E: One last thing, I do not think anyone in this room right now would treat the police in the sense that we all come from, like you say, a neighbourhood, basically. Let's just say my life is under threat. I personally would not pick up the phone and call police and say, "Look, this guy, he is going to come and kill me, he is going to do this." There are reasons for that, why I would not do that. First, when they get the guy and they arrest the guy and they go and lock him up, boom, if they have enough evidence to do that, that is one. If they do not have enough evidence, he is going to be out here scot-free and I am going to be in even more danger because I have told the police. Do you understand? Now you are labelled as a snitch, so that is before you even think about anything, just know that no one is going to speak to police because no one wants to be called an informant.

Let's say someone does want to speak to the police, like he is in a situation that someone gets stabbed and then the police come to the hospital. Now, they are just looking at you like, "You know what is going on. How do you not know what is going on? Why did you get stabbed? Who is coming for you?" Now, if I made that phone call and I said, "Look, this guy is going to kill me and boom, boom, boom" and then I get stabbed, then they got some CCTV of this guy in the area, they have the evidence to put together to get this guy sentenced, but because we are in a situation where we do not do that first step, when people do get caught and certain things happened. That is why it is a complete cycle. It is just



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going around again, if that makes sense, while no one is getting locked up and why we do not feel safe, because we cannot phone in and say anything, because if something does happen to us, it is like you are going to be labelled. It is even worse. You are better off being dead than to be out here labelled as a snitch.

Witness C: When we are in our groups, they have tried to call out people and say, "Oh, that is a nice chat we had the other day, mate. Yeah, cheers for that," trying to get their friends to look at them, like, "Hold on, what conversation did you have with the police?"

Witness E: That is how you have this organisation, that you speak to the police and you speak to us. Find an organisation that when someone is in danger, they can phone these people and they will tell these people the information and they will pass it on to the police and then the police will do what they do. Because as soon as someone feels like they are directly contacting the police, they start feeling like police and police can only protect you a certain amount, you understand? They got certain hours to work. After them hours, there is no protection.

Q145 **Chair:** I am just going to say thank you to all of you. I am not going to pretend that our Committee is going to change anything anymore than anybody else that you have talked to. I am sorry that it is frustrating for you, feeling like, "Well, you just keep saying the same things and nobody listens". All I can say to you is it is because our job is basically just to ask questions. We pull people in and we question them and we can hold people to account publicly. We do not have the power to change things, but we do have the ability to call in police officers, Home Office Ministers and so on, and to challenge them on things. That is what we do. We can do that—

Witness C: Who does have the power to change things?

Chair: The Government and—

Witness C: Are you not, as politicians, a part of Government?

Chair: The Government is basically elected from Parliament. You have the general election and MPs are elected from all over the country. The Conservatives have the most MPs, so therefore you get a Conservative Government. Some MPs are in the Government but some Conservative MPs are not. Tim is not a member of the Government, he is not a Government Minister. They are appointed, they are in charge of different Departments. They can make decisions and so on.

Witness C: How do we speak to the actual Government MPs or—

Chair: We can say it to them, we can push it for them.

Witness C: So we can't, but you guys are the only ones.

Q146 **Tim Loughton:** One question I would ask the Home Secretary is when is the last time he went and met any groups like you, for example, and



name and shame them if they have not done it.

Witness E: They need to do what you did.

Q147 **Chair:** The other thing that you can do is that your MP can also make representations to the Government for you and can sometimes get Government Ministers to meet as well, depending on who your MP is. The idea is you have an MP to represent you from your individual area and then also there is the parliamentary committees.

Witness N: I just want to make really clear that for me, accountability includes firing police officers for misconduct and doing things wrong. They don't get fired. They need to lose their jobs because we do not want them to continue in the police force when they are corrupt and they abuse their power, because then you have a corrupt police service. It does not work.

Witness D: Yes, fully fired, no pay, because you know like you suspend them and pay them; just fire them, gone.

Chair: By the way, does anybody want to try to get into the end of the debate? It is on the final speaker now. There will be another debate after, but it might be quite a boring one, sorry.

All right, can I thank you very much? We are still hoping to [***] [-. I would just say do talk to your own MP as well, because your own MP will want to know the things that you are saying. Given our original question about how much has changed since the Stephen Lawrence inquiry and since the Macpherson Report and all of the things that were supposed to have changed, you have made pretty clear, from your point of view, not much has changed and certainly in terms of trust in policing, not enough has changed. We have a responsibility to now go back to the police force and the Home Office and make that clear as well, so we will do that. Thank you very much for your time.