



HOUSE OF COMMONS

# Home Affairs Committee

Oral evidence: [Policing priorities](#), HC 635

Wednesday 22 March 2023

Ordered by the House of Commons to be published on 22 March 2023.

[Watch the meeting](#)

Members present: Dame Diana Johnson (Chair); Ms Diane Abbott; Paula Barker; James Daly; Simon Fell; Adam Holloway; Tim Loughton.

Questions 427 - 459

## Witnesses

**I:** The Baroness Casey of Blackstock DBE CB; Sarah Kincaid, Lead Reviewer, Baroness Casey Review; Neil O'Connor CBE, Policy Adviser, Baroness Casey Review.



## Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Baroness Casey of Blackstock, Sarah Kincaid and Neil O'Connor.

Q427 **Chair:** Good afternoon, everybody. This is our next session in the policing priorities inquiry we are currently conducting. This afternoon we are going to hear from Baroness Louise Casey in the light of the review on culture and standards of behaviour in the Met, which was published just yesterday.

Before I turn to our panel this afternoon, I want to start by paying tribute, as I am sure all members of the Committee would, to PC Keith Palmer and the four other people who were sadly killed, and those injured, in the Westminster Bridge attack six years ago today. All of our thoughts are with the friends and families of those people.

Can I say a particular thank you to Baroness Casey for attending today? I know she has had a very busy week. She was at the GLA this morning giving evidence and answering questions. The members of the Committee have spent a long time reading the report. When I read it, I had moments when I was really angry and then really very sad about what I was reading. I am sure we are going to have a number of questions from the Committee this afternoon.

I want to start with three questions, but before I do that, I ought to ask everyone to introduce themselves. Could we get everyone to say who they are?

**Baroness Casey:** I am Baroness Casey, author of the review.

**Sarah Kincaid:** I am Sarah Kincaid. I was the lead reviewer on Dame Louise's team.

**Neil O'Connor:** Hello, I am Neil O'Connor. I am an adviser to the review and a former civil servant.

**Chair:** You are all very welcome this afternoon. It looks like we are likely to have a vote at about 3.40 pm, so we do not have that much time.

**Baroness Casey:** That focuses the mind.

Q428 **Chair:** It does focus the mind. I am sure all the Committee members will be very quick in their questioning and very succinct.

Just to start us off, you were very clear in your report, Baroness Casey, about the institutionalised misogyny, sexism, racism and homophobia in the Met. You are also very clear in your views about the Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner, and the confidence you have in them. Are you disappointed that the Commissioner has not been able to accept your findings of institutionalised racism, sexism, misogyny and homophobia?



## HOUSE OF COMMONS

**Baroness Casey:** First of all, thanks very much for having us along today. We are very honoured that the Committee is giving this session to our review today.

What do I think? I think the Met Commissioner is unfortunately splitting hairs over words. I think, overall, he accepts the findings of the review. I have put it to them, to him, that the way to deal with institutional racism—organisational racism, systemic racism; whichever word out of the thesaurus one chooses to use. I have put four tests in place that, in my mind, go across all the prejudices and discrimination we have found in the review. You can see that there is bullying and prejudice overall, and then within that we have found it to be institutional.

My four tests really give a way of allowing an organisation that believes it cannot fix or solve this—I have to say I disagree with that, but on the basis that that seems to be what the resistance has been over the last 20 to 30 years, the four tests are these. “Do you have people working in your organisation who are racist—not everybody but some people?” The answer to that question is unequivocally yes. “Do you have people in your organisation who are experiencing and on the receiving end of racism or, indeed, misogyny or homophobia?” The answer to that question is yes. “Do you have an organisation that, in terms of its procedures, processes and functioning, has systemic bias in it?” The answer to that is yes.

I would just remind anybody listening to this—I am sure I do not need to remind this Committee—that officers who are black are disproportionately more likely to be in the misconduct system than their white counterparts, to the tune of 81%. There can be no other reason for that than their skin colour or—how can I put it?—the much more lenient approach to their white male colleagues.

The final question is this: “Does the Metropolitan Police over-police and under-protect the black community in London?” Unreservedly, yes. The evidence is abundantly clear in the report. I suppose I feel sad today, in that I wish the Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner had given themselves more time to listen to and understand where black Londoners and all Londoners are coming from when it comes to the fact that, after 30 years this April, Baroness Doreen Lawrence has never heard the words “institutional racism” in regard to the murder of her own son and the battle that she and her family have had to fight.

I feel it is a really missed opportunity, if I am simply advising and being tactical. Deep into this, I just feel it is a shame. I hope that, over the next few weeks and months, as the Commissioner gets more into meeting Londoners and listening to what they have to say, he will not only accept my diagnosis but accept what is not a label but an accurate description of the organisation.

I think he is letting his police down; I think he is letting his staff down. In the report, it is so clear: close to 50%, I think, of his own staff and officers experience racism; over 33% of his own staff and officers who



are women experience sexism and misogyny; one in 10 of those women experience sexual assault or indeed sexual harassment, and 19% of his staff who are gay are on the receiving end of homophobia.

I want to give the Commissioner the best possible start he can have, and I really feel it is time to give the Met a fresh start. We have Sadiq, the Mayor of London, stepping up to chair a new type of board. We have a new Commissioner and a new Deputy Commissioner. We have a London that wants change. We have a force that wants change. I hope, in the weeks to come, we will see that type of change.

Q429 **Chair:** That is very helpful. Thank you for that. Can I just ask you, though, after all that has gone on—all the reviews and all the reports—what is different about your report? What is going to mean there will be change in the Met?

**Baroness Casey:** I cannot create the change. In fact, you have more power than I have, unless I go and do my other job in the other place, the House of Lords. I can affect some change from there, God willing.

The report is comprehensive. When we arrived in the Met, we realised we were in an institution that was long on hubris and low on humility, institutionally. Sarah Everard was abducted, raped and murdered by a serving police officer who used his warrant card to entrap her. For me, that would be a moment in an organisation or a profession that was equivalent, as I put in the report, to a plane falling out of the sky. Therefore, you would look at yourself as an organisation and ask yourself myriad questions.

During the review, Rev. Smallman had to endure not only the murder of her daughters but, on top of that, the behaviour of serving police officers. In my mind, as somebody who is pro-police and pro-law and order, in those situations we want them to be guardians. They were the guardians of those bodies. That was their job that night. They were not guards; they were guardians. They failed that test of integrity spectacularly by taking photographs and finding them funny.

At the end of my review in February, we did not know quite what we knew, but we knew from the misconduct report—we, not the Metropolitan Police, had looked at all of the evidence and the allegations. It was the largest assessment of those allegations from 2013 to 2022. In there, you have repeat offenders; you have people who have patterns of misconduct. None of those patterns was put together. And there you get a serving police officer who carries a gun, who has had nine different incidents, including one where he grabbed a woman round her neck and pulled her down a staircase, and for some reason that did not set off a warning bell.

Q430 **Chair:** Why is your report going to be different?

**Baroness Casey:** There is nowhere to hide in the report. It is not a single-issue report. It is not looking just at how they treat evidence; it is



## HOUSE OF COMMONS

not looking just at how they keep their records; it is not looking just at the particular issue of race, misogyny or prejudice. We have looked at everything.

We looked at everything because in 2023 it is not acceptable for a police service to be so closed, untransparent and unaccountable. The tenor in my voice today is because I feel desperate to ensure the Metropolitan Police Service and anybody who can hold them to account does get them to change. If they do not change, even with the combination of new leadership, different support, different powers and a new committee, we should not leave it forever. If something cannot be changed or fixed, reform it completely.

**Q431 Chair:** That is very helpful. Lots of Members want to come in, but I want to ask you one last thing. We are doing this policing priorities inquiry, looking at policing across the piece around the country. Is what you found in the Met happening in other police forces or is the Met a very special case all of its own?

**Sarah Kincaid:** I think you will find that a lot of what we found applies to policing in general. We were specifically looking at the Met and have focused on that. We want the Met to make sure it accepts responsibility for the things that are happening there, but there are quite a few areas in which we would say that, culturally and in terms of policing, this problem may well be going on in other forces. We would encourage other forces to read our reports and hope they look in the mirror to see whether they recognise themselves there.

**Chair:** That is very helpful.

**Q432 Adam Holloway:** It is wonderful to see such extraordinary energy and perception over this thing. This is a genuine question. I look around here, and we have loads of cops in Parliament and so on. If I were them, being told that they are somehow institutionally racist, I think I would be quite upset. I cannot speak to the procedures and protocols you refer to, but in terms of the men and women in the Metropolitan Police Service, why do you say it is institutionally racist? The vast, vast, vast, vast majority of them are not. It really is a question: why do you say that?

**Baroness Casey:** Dare I say it, but in the last couple of days I have had people say, "You're very powerful; you're very emotional." Do not think for a moment that behind this there is not a very steely and determined weight of evidence. I can tell you without any conjecture that almost 50% of black police officers in the Metropolitan Police experience racism. That is evidenced. It is not conjecture; it is not anything else.

I can tell you all of those statistics. For example, I can tell you—you should worry about this as the Home Affairs Committee—that, of cases of police-perpetrated domestic violence in the Metropolitan Police, only 95% proceed. The issues today are very grave.



## HOUSE OF COMMONS

The second thing I wanted to say today, to answer your actual question, is that all we have done is held up a mirror to what the Metropolitan Police Service has told us. We have been in the Met and with the Met. We have run discussion groups; we have run testimony; we have run surveys; we have looked at their own evidence.

If you think about it, 53% of serving police officers do not think people should join the Metropolitan Police Service in London. That is not because I have published a report today. It is not because of what I have talked about today. It is what they thought ahead of this report being published. That was done around about last autumn.

In a service where many people get married and many people pass policing down through the generations, only 33% would suggest that a family member should join the Metropolitan Police. The interesting thing about reviews and reports is that you reflect the reality of the lived experience of people in this organisation. It is not that we are putting words into their mouths.

Can I really come to this issue of institution and the word “institutional”? At the time, Macpherson gave a gift to the Metropolitan Police. He said, “It is not that anybody is individually racist; it is that the organisation is institutionally racist.” In a way, that is saying that the procedures and systems are institutionally racist rather than suggesting that any officer individually was racist.

What I am saying is worse than that. I am saying we have homophobic, sexist and racist police officers serving in the Metropolitan Police Service, many of whom are regularly in the newspapers for misconduct complaints. At the same time, I am saying they treat each other very poorly and with prejudice. On top of that, there is institutional, systemic and organisational bias.

It is really easy to say, “God, don’t blame the guys and gals. This is just bad apples. They don’t represent the thousands.” What I am saying in this report—remember, this is London, where 50% of the population is not white—is that it is totally out of kilter with the city it serves. Within that, it does not treat people who are black very well. To be honest, because of the choices it made around public protection, it ripped the heart out of the service it delivers to women and children.

They know it. The police service knows it. Officers know it. We have had people saying, “Finally, somebody has laid this bare.” That is the important thing today. In the last 48 hours, we have laid bare the enormity of this. Police officers know it. If we want to help good police officers, who are not racist and who are not sexist, let us stop being in denial about it.

**Q433 James Daly:** Baroness Casey, I have no confidence whatever—none—that the Metropolitan Police can change. Do you know the reason why that is? It is because there is no evidence to suggest they can.



## HOUSE OF COMMONS

Let me ask you this one question. You talked about the current Commissioner. According to what I have here in front of me, he was an Assistant Commissioner for special operations from October 2011 to January 2018. What did he do between those two dates to address the problems you have identified?

**Baroness Casey:** That is a question you should put to him. I have not looked at his personal track record. I take the point you are making. Yesterday, he did say that he was in the world of counter-terrorism and therefore was not particularly involved in some of these changes. It is time to give the Met a fresh start.

Q434 **James Daly:** We do not have much time. Are you saying the person who is in charge of the Metropolitan Police now, as far as you are aware, did not raise one concern about issues that were absolutely crystal clear during his time in the police? Have you got any evidence to suggest he raised concerns about how people were being treated with any politician, senior police officer or anybody?

**Baroness Casey:** No, I have not. You should put that to him. It is important to say, though, if you go down the structural route of changing the Metropolitan Police's structure, you will let everybody off the hook again for the change that is needed in that organisation.

Q435 **James Daly:** The point I am making, Baroness Casey, is this. You could have written this report—it is a horrifying report—five, 10 or 20 years ago. I suspect we will probably write it in about 10 or 15 years' time. The underlying thing is that people tell us what is wrong, but nobody ever addresses the solution.

Let alone the appalling behaviour, the amount of basic incompetence is frightening. None of those people will get sacked. None of those people will be reprimanded. Nothing will happen. These people have been incompetent at best and a lot worse for years. I am not talking about the people under investigation; I am talking about the senior police officers who were supposed to look after this organisation. Nothing happens to them.

**Chair:** Perhaps we will have the Commissioner in, to put those points to him.

**Baroness Casey:** As a colleague who is a Conservative, you also have to read the part of the report that says that, over a decade, £700,000 was removed from the Metropolitan Police Service. They had to lose money in very significant numbers.

Q436 **James Daly:** Does that justify incompetence?

**Baroness Casey:** They made those choices. I think some of those choices were not right, but to put the blame entirely on the shoulders of the Metropolitan Police retrospectively would not be fair, in my mind. Let us remember that Stephen Lawrence lost his life 30 years ago.



**James Daly:** Nothing has changed.

**Baroness Casey:** There have been successive Governments that have not done anything to address the racism in the Metropolitan Police that yet again I have uncovered. We have also uncovered many other issues that nobody has looked at before. The key issue that is making you angry, and I get it, is a sense of complete denial of their responsibility. They have to do something about it.

Q437 **Ms Abbott:** I want to return briefly to what the Chair said about why it should be different now. You will all know that some of the issues you have uncovered in this review go back not just to Macpherson, but to the Scarman report in 1981, which I can remember. He stopped short of calling the Met institutionally racist, but he did write at some length about the disproportionate effect of stop and search on minority communities. Of course, you have uncovered a lot more, but if these issues have not been dealt with in 40 years, why are they going to be dealt with now?

**Baroness Casey:** Remember, I have given a timeframe to this, so it is not an open-ended ticket for them to carry on and carry on. For the first time, we have looked at the management issues; we have looked at the cultural issues; we have looked at prejudice within the organisation; we have looked at how, frankly, they cannot even manage their own data and analyse their own statistics and their own facts.

I agree: it is a pretty shoddy show that needs a great deal of change. In a way, if they do not take this and they do not use it, I would happily come back before you in a year, two years or even sooner and say, "This is not changing sufficiently." I do genuinely feel we have laid it bare and done something incredibly thorough. If they did not see a route map out for them from this, I do not quite know what they would do.

As much as your colleague has said that Mark Rowley was there at the time, the point I have recommended—and I hope they accept it—is that they cannot do this on their own. If you think of the other reforms that have happened within the Metropolitan Police, they DIY them. We have said that they must bring in external people to work with them and actually do a misconduct system. I have recommended changes to his own management board, with not just advisers but staff. Sadiq Khan is going to chair a very different type of management board, again bringing in people from outside. Maybe I am sounding defensive, but if they do not do it, I do not intend to stand by them.

**Chair:** We will definitely have your back.

Q438 **Ms Abbott:** On vetting, a lot of people are concerned about how some of these people get in the Metropolitan Police Service in the first place. You say that vetting standards should be changed. Could you expand on that a little?

**Neil O'Connor:** If I may answer this one, vetting standards need to be tightened up. That is a national issue; it is not just for the Met. We have





recommended a number of ways in which they should be tightened, but it is more than just the vetting system itself. The vetting system has to be got right at the start, when people are being recruited into the Met, but re-vetting also has to take place. People should not be able to stay as police officers if they are not able to meet the standards of conduct the public expect. That plays into the broader management systems and so on that Baroness Casey has referred to in the Met. The whole system needs to be improved so that officers' conduct is monitored and acted on if it falls short.

We have also called for some changes to be made to the regulations around misconduct and so on, so it is easier to deal with officers who do not meet the right standards. That is not all that is needed. There are things the Met can do and should be getting on with now to improve the way they deal with officers whose standards do not meet expectations.

Q439 **Ms Abbott:** Finally, Sir Robert Mark was one of the most illustrious Metropolitan Police Commissioners. He came in in the 1970s. What he did, and gets every bit of credit for doing, was to clean up corruption among the CID. More than 400 officers were sacked or sent to trial. Some leading police officers went to prison. He came to the Met from an outside police force, Leicester.

I was reading his autobiography. He said that when he arrived at the Met, he felt like the representative of a leper colony attending the annual garden party of a colonial governor, which suggests the Met is not interested in serious reform. One of the other things he said in his autobiography is this: "I had served in provincial forces for 30 years, and though I had known wrongdoing, I had never experienced institutionalised wrongdoing, blindness, arrogance and prejudice on anything like the scale accepted as routine in the Met." Are things any different now?

**Baroness Casey:** It is really interesting that you quote that. That is in our report.

**Sarah Kincaid:** It is in our report. We use that quote.

**Baroness Casey:** We use exactly that quote. Part of the problem with the Metropolitan Police Service, and probably to a lesser degree some of the others but certainly the Met, is its hubris and the way its officers close in on each other, like a fortress.

That gets in the way of everything. For example, when a police sergeant has been convicted of a criminal offence of indecent exposure for doing a rather graphic version of that on a public train, they can keep him in the force as opposed to making the decision to sack him. On so many levels they close in on themselves, and they think they are untouchable.

The key findings of this report—they asked us to do it, and we took full licence from that—are exactly what you have described, which is this sense of optimism, bias, defensiveness, denial, hubris and a lack of



## HOUSE OF COMMONS

humility. All of that is standing in the way of change, whether that is their choices around vetting, their choices around misconduct, the way they treat Londoners or the way they treat BCU commanders.

Can I just mention one thing that I think is interesting about the police as opposed to other professions? This is about vetting. I have worked in different parts of the public sector. I have worked in the world of child abuse and children. I have worked in homelessness and with people who are vulnerable. I have been up close and around various other difficult bits of the public sector. What is really interesting is that the police have not moved into the 21st century in the way others have.

For example, if you want to get people into jobs where they are near to children, even if it is not perfect, you have to have a vetting system as a barrier and then an inspection system that at least asks the question, which they do in education, in children's services and in other places, "Are we attracting the wrong people?" We know that paedophiles, for example, will try to get as close to children as they can, and therefore you have to have at least systems in place to monitor that.

What I have found really interesting about the police is that there is not really the same level of recognition that, when you attract people into the police service, the best of humanity might want to be police officers, the people who want to protect us, who are motivated by integrity and social justice, but you might also attract people who want power and who want to abuse power. Why on earth would their vetting systems allow people with—what did Carrick have?—five counts of domestic abuse in their background? You would see that as a red flare sign if you were in another profession.

I genuinely think there are bits about policing that feel out of kilter with the 21st century. That would be one, along with the accountability structures and the non-existence of levers for change, but I have been quite struck by that one.

Vetting is a symptom of this wider lack of understanding that, although some of the people who are attracted to becoming police officers might be great, you will also get equal numbers who are not great. You have to have systems and awareness in place, which we would have in places where you are running services for homeless people, schools or any of those sorts of things. You would have checks and balances in place, and they do not have them in the same way in policing.

*Sitting suspended for a Division in the House.*

*On resuming—*

Q440 **Tim Loughton:** Congratulations, Baroness Casey. This is a very comprehensive and shocking report. The most shocking thing about it, as you said, is that it could have been written 10, 20 or 30 years ago. It is just more transparent about the extent of the problem that has now



## HOUSE OF COMMONS

come out into the open.

My concern—and it was a concern when we went to see the standards department in Scotland Yard recently—is that their solution to dealing with police officers who should not be police officers or investigating those who are questionable, at least, is to bring in more police to mark the police's homework. They seem not quite to understand the concept of people who are nothing to do with the police coming in to see whether they are fit for purpose and look at their judgment.

That would have greater credibility with the public—trust, as you put in your report, is absolutely key to this—and it might put a completely different perspective on that. You mentioned earlier bringing people from outside. You keep using the phrase “give the Met a fresh start”. They cannot be given a fresh start with only their own people. Would you not agree?

Their solution to misogyny is to bring in more female police officers, which is desirable. Their solution to racism is to bring in more black officers, which is desirable. That does not treat the underlying problem. It potentially gives the racist or the misogynist more targets to wield their malice on.

The solution surely starts with leadership and a system that does not allow misogynists, racists and homophobes to get away with it, so that they do not do it and, if there is any sign of it, the leadership clamps down on it like a ton of bricks. The police are not capable of instituting such a service themselves, are they?

**Baroness Casey:** We would all like to answer that question, because you are bang on. In terms of what happened on misconduct, we published our misconduct findings early at the request of the new Commissioner in September or October. The organisation's first response was to get 150 officers to join the people who had been failing to do it properly, taking those officers from other parts of the Met, in which they might have been needed. I could not agree more with what you said about that.

There are two reasons why—these are the words we use—a new independent multidisciplinary team should be brought into the Met to reform how it deals with misconduct cases, with a particular focus on how it handles sexual misconduct, domestic abuse and discrimination. That is a really clear finding for me, and it is a really clear recommendation that I hope they accept.

First, they are not very good at it. Why let the same people do it who have been doing it badly? Secondly, I do not feel reassured by the idea of just adding more people to the people who have done it badly. There needs to be an assurance exercise for people like me so I can say to women, “No, it is okay to make a complaint. It is all right to make an allegation,” and then they need to put their house in order. In relation to that very early Commissioner that Ms Abbott was referring to, cleaning up the Met has to be one of the most important priorities.



## HOUSE OF COMMONS

I could not agree more. My heart sank when I realised that some of the strategies they have deployed in the past are just about getting more women or more people of colour in. When you look at their strategy for doing that, you realise they do not have a hope in hell of achieving those things before I am either no longer around or certainly well into my pension years.

There is no plan B for some of these issues. They just go on. They say, "We will put more people in misconduct. We have to do better on how we recruit people." They do not do either of those two things well, which is why what follows from this report has to be more than a turnaround plan. It has to be a much more wholesale plan.

The other thing I would mention—you have hit the nail on the head—is the diary of "initiative-itis", which Neil wrote. If it were not true—it is something more akin to "The Thick of It" or "W1A"—it would be funny. It is incredibly tragic. They do initiative after initiative after bloody initiative, telling people to up their standards.

In the wake of poor Sarah Everard's murder and the sentence of her murderer, they did something called Rebuilding Trust. That was well intentioned, but within that they then had something called Not in my Met. Actually, they had an emergency one called "the Dep's three asks", where he says things like, "Be good; be this; be that." I cannot remember what they were, but they were things like, "Up your standards." That translated into a diktat going out across the Metropolitan Police where everybody had to count the number of times the Dep's three asks were mentioned. Honestly, you could not script it.

Flash forward to the absolute reputational nightmare—that is how they saw it—of some of the things that happened in the Met Police. They came up with something called Not in my Met. Not in my Met says, "Do not be racist. Do not be sexist. Do not be homophobic. If you are, please leave." "Please leave"—no, I am going to root out and find you.

**Q441 Tim Loughton:** There are a couple of other things I want to ask. We are short of time. There are lots of good observations and suggestions here. A lot of it is about bringing in advisory people from outside or bringing in scrutiny people from outside, which is all good, but you need to bring in executive people from outside.

You need to have at the highest level, such as Assistant Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner or whatever, people who come from a completely different background—an Army or business leader would be a prime example—completely overhauling the institution. As you and I know in particular, when you are looking at problems around child abuse, it is about how the system allowed it to happen, not just about how the individual professional allowed it to happen on his or her watch.

How would the system allow this level of misogyny and failure to go on? You have to have somebody who does not come from that system and



## HOUSE OF COMMONS

who has executive powers to do something about it and call out the problems, do you not?

**Baroness Casey:** Absolutely, Mr Loughton; you know that because of your previous experience. Recommendation 13 says, "The Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner, building on their recent appointments to lead the Met, should bring in new specialist expertise from outside the Met in permanent—rather than advisory—roles...to overhaul the management of the organisation, and lead on work including reforming the culture of the Met and the creation"—I mean, it is extraordinary—"of a workforce plan".

Q442 **Tim Loughton:** That still sounds a bit advisory. I want them in senior leadership positions running police departments.

**Baroness Casey:** We have made that abundantly clear by saying they have to be in permanent rather than advisory roles.

Q443 **Tim Loughton:** They should be in permanent executive roles, running police officers, not advising permanently on how the system could work better.

**Baroness Casey:** Honestly, double-check it, but that is what we have put in there.

**Tim Loughton:** If that is your intention, that is really clear.

**Baroness Casey:** It is our intention. Whether the next Commissioner does it to the degree we want is a different matter.

Q444 **Tim Loughton:** That is my next question. Have you had any discussions with the Home Office or indications from the Home Secretary about what continuing role you may have, to make sure your report does not just gather dust on the shelf?

**Baroness Casey:** I have not had any.

Q445 **Tim Loughton:** Would you like to? Are you putting yourself forward for such a role?

**Baroness Casey:** I did not think anybody was going to ask me that question so I would have to have a think about it, to be honest. The Home Secretary's position—she made it clear on Monday when we did have a call with her and the Policing Minister—is that she has full confidence in the new leadership of the Met and she wants to make sure they have her full support in order to get the job done.

Q446 **Tim Loughton:** For all the reasons we have just discussed, the police marking their own homework is not the solution. Whether it is you or one of those few other people up to your calibre who could take the baton on from you, there needs to be a progression report, so that, in one, two or three years' time, somebody can see what progress has been made, with the power to call out where progress has not been made, where it has gone in reverse or where failure has happened, which would lead to things changing even more drastically.



**Baroness Casey:** I have made the offer that on a periodic basis, a year or two years—I put two years in the document—either I or somebody like me could come back and provide you, the Commissioner and the public with the assurance necessary. Ahead of this, my prediction is that it is unlikely anybody will ask me to come back.

Q447 **Tim Loughton:** Why?

**Baroness Casey:** They will find it all too difficult, etc., rather than be brave. I am just being honest. I could be wrong. I have not had a conversation with them.

The other thing is that people will pick certain bits of what we have talked about and ask people to review certain bits. That is really clever, but it is a stupid move if you are actually looking for reform. You will get somebody to come in and have a look at—I don't know—misogyny. Let's take an easier one. You will get somebody else to come in and assure themselves. There is probably already, somewhere in that building, something called Operation Assure. I would put money on it, as the sun comes up and goes down.

Organisationally, people will start to do those sorts of things. At the end of my recommendations, I am trying to say that you need to leave people to get on for a period of time and then have another breath-taking moment, where you inhale the breath of whether you think change has really happened and you live with the consequences if somebody says, "They are getting on with it" or, "They are not getting on with it."

What I have said, and I am sticking to it, is this. If they have not made sufficient progress within that time—I have no power in this at all—it is my own view that somebody should look at how you would split it up, change it or reform it in a much more significant way.

At the moment, we have Lynne Owens and Mark Rowley. We have a change of leadership at the top. Assistant Commissioner Gray has long experience of the move from RUC to PSNI. That is the scale of reform we are talking about. If they take what we have said in this report seriously—and I think they are—at the moment I would say, "Do not split them up; do not change them." You are utterly right. Being brave about somebody looking at you is the best way to make sure you get reform.

Q448 **Chair:** Can I just be clear? Your review team have all finished. This whole thing just goes away now.

**Baroness Casey:** I am afraid so.

**Chair:** The ownership of the report is with the Met because it instructed you in the first place, or asked you to carry out the review.

**Baroness Casey:** Yes. We have an extremely well-qualified person who leads the review team sitting behind me. We will make sure the evidence we have gathered and the anonymity of it is carefully handled. We will



## HOUSE OF COMMONS

use the National Archives for some of what we do. We will hand over the actual report to them, and it is up to them to implement it.

Yes, I am frustrated about that. Our team has worked relentlessly on this. It is all we have done for the last 12 months. We are nervous about handing it over and letting people press ahead, but everybody has to be grown up, including us, and we have to let them get on with it for a bit. I am not used to this, but I am learning to handle it, though not very well.

**Q449 Chair:** Just finally, what would be a reasonable amount of time for that breath to be taken of whether change is happening?

**Baroness Casey:** My own view is that it will be two years at a minimum. I would probably start trying to look at some key things at about a year. You should get the clean-up right. The cleaning up should happen within a year. You cannot gift an organisation a long time to clean itself up, because you need to know the recruitment, vetting and other systems are right at the same time as you are changing the bar. Lucy D'Orsi at British Transport Police is on something like her 17th accelerated misconduct hearing in about six weeks. To be fair, Barbara Gray is not short of doing that as well.

Once you get your system and your clean-up right, there should be a time limit. Particularly if you are a black police officer, you know you are 81% more likely to be the subject of a misconduct complaint. If that statistic does not change within a year, I would ask myself whether they are getting that system change right.

**Q450 Paula Barker:** Baroness Casey, thank you to you and your team for the report and for being so candid. You spoke earlier about a police officer who indecently exposed himself on a train. That police officer is still a serving police officer. In the last few weeks, the Committee has heard that about 1,000 officers are now being reinvestigated and re-looked at. Is the threshold for dismissing officers too high?

**Baroness Casey:** Yes, as a brief answer. Yes, without a doubt. In a way, that is part of some of the culture within the police. You can get away with it, as it were. Their standards, oddly, are slightly lower than they would be in other walks of life. That case is coming up a lot, but there are countless examples of that.

What is very difficult for chief constables, and Mark Rowley within that, is that they are seeking powers that will allow them to reopen cases. They are trying to find ways to reopen some of the cases where most people in this room would probably think, "I am not sure they should carry a warrant card."

We feel very strongly, though, that the Metropolitan Police could do an awful lot within the regulations and rules they already have. Again, there is a little culture of, "Let's split it up, choose what we are going to do and then get people in to tell us it's okay." It is show and tell. There is another culture that means they will split this down. When I am saying



“they”, I am really going to the culture of the Met rather than any individual. There is this idea, “We can’t do without the regs. We can’t change anything unless the regs change. It’s the regs.” That is where the Metropolitan Police Federation will be at: “It’s nothing to do with us. This is all about the regs.” That is a classic line, isn’t it?

**Sarah Kincaid:** In dealing with some of the misconduct, which we have heard a lot about, all they do is follow the regs. Things like repeat offending or repeat behaviour will keep happening because they are not looking at patterns of predatory behaviour and so on. You would think they look at the regs and say, “Well, this doesn’t meet the threshold.” The threshold is pretty vague. It is behaviour that amounts to gross misconduct, which means someone might not be in the force. That is not very clear, is it? They do not look at patterns of behaviour; they do not look at behaviour escalating. They do not know what predatory behaviour looks like. That is what that tells me.

They might be able to recite the regs, but you need specialists coming in who understand—you would hope some police officers themselves would understand them—these patterns of behaviour. That is the kind of thing we need in the Met. Last year they brought in somebody who was a specialist in that, and as a consequence you are seeing a lot of cases coming forward. That is the change you need to see.

Q451 **Paula Barker:** It is quite stark, really. Rape convictions are at an all-time low. A woman police officer was systematically raped and abused by a male colleague. There were six investigations over a period of two years. That is happening inside the Met. It does not exactly instil confidence in women and girls who are walking the street, who may be subject to sexual violence, to come forward and report their abusers.

I just want to touch on the potential barriers the existing legal and regulatory framework may create and any reform that is required around that. Are there any barriers there?

**Sarah Kincaid:** There are some recommendations in the report that are about helping the Met to clean up its act. One of the examples we talked about earlier is in terms of vetting. The Met is re-vetting, to an extent, all of its officers, but it appears that, if it is established that someone should not have passed their vetting, it cannot get rid of them. That is another of these Kafkaesque regulations that does not seem to have been addressed. We have a lot of sympathy with the need for regulation to facilitate the exit of those people and have a path to reopen cases where new evidence has come to light.

Q452 **Paula Barker:** I assume you see a role for the Police Federation in that as well.

**Baroness Casey:** Their role will be to defend endlessly the fact that those powers are not needed, that we are just kicking police officers and that they have terrible terms and conditions. This is the Met one, not the





## HOUSE OF COMMONS

national one. The Met is not that pleased with our report so I am not that pleased with the London Metropolitan Police Federation right now.

Just coming to the point, this is just so staggering. David Carrick, a multiple rapist, had nine non-crime incidents between 2000 and 2019. He had five public complaints, including one where he dragged a woman down a staircase by her throat. He got through his initial vetting in 2001. He passed his probation in 2003 despite the fact that they would have known about all of this if they had bothered to look, as Jessica behind us did on all these cases.

He passed his probation in 2003. God alone knows how. He had checks done to become a firearms officer in 2009. We knew about the DV. Nobody checked. This is what is so staggering about this organisation. He was re-vetted in 2016. That was delayed by five years. People are saying I am being tough on the cops. I am being tough. They treated those women with utter disrespect by not making sure their systems were able to do what is common sense in other organisations. In any other organisation, you would put two and two together. One of those women came forward when she heard Susan Everard's victim impact statement reported in the news. That man was stopped because she came forward.

The stakes are incredibly high. That is why I feel quite powerful in what I am trying to convey to the new Commissioner, the Deputy Commissioner and every single serving police officer. Are we going to allow this organisation to be incompetent and be in denial about the fact that they would rather protect a man like him than protect their own women, black people who work there and the people they are supposed to serve—to serve, remember, not be a force for?

The stakes are incredibly high. I am incredibly frustrated. We need something that comes back that gives us reform here. You are so powerful. You are the Home Affairs Select Committee. We are not. We are a band of mighty annoying people trying to put the evidence together to persuade you and everybody else to do something about it. We have the evidence. We want to persuade people to do something.

**Q453 Simon Fell:** Thank you, Baroness Casey and your band of annoying people, for everything you have been doing. This is an incredibly powerful report. It is always dangerous, but I am going to quote you back to yourself. A few minutes ago you said, "If it cannot be fixed, it needs reforming completely." You have already suggested a timeframe of one or two years. I would love a bit more detail about how long you think the Met has to get this right. What should we be looking at in terms of measures and metrics as to what improvement looks like for them?

**Neil O'Connor:** In the review, we have suggested a progress review in two years and five years, but we also set out at the end of our recommendations a set of measures that we suggest the Met is held to account on, including improvements in public confidence, particularly among those communities in London who have traditionally and for a



## HOUSE OF COMMONS

long time lacked confidence in the Met. I am talking about black Londoners in particular, but in all groups across London confidence and trust in the Met has been falling in recent years. That is one of the measures.

Other measures include improvements in response times and in charge rates, so their effectiveness in cleaning up crime. We have set out a series of measures, and we think those should be looked at on a regular basis, transparently and publicly, and that should be a focus of the policing board we want to see established to oversee the Met and the reforms we are recommending.

Q454 **Simon Fell:** In your conversations with the Home Secretary on Monday and with Sir Mark over the last few days, do you detect an appetite to follow those measures and to work to that timeline?

**Neil O'Connor:** Yes, a lot of those measures matter already. Baroness Casey and others have referred to the Met's existing draft turnaround plan. They have recognised in there the importance of, for example, public confidence as a measure.

One of the points of the review is the comprehensiveness and interconnectedness of these issues and the need for wholesale reform. Rather than taking a tactical approach, looking at one indicator or another and focusing on single issues, it is really important to look at the whole piece and to look at progress across the piece.

Q455 **Simon Fell:** Again, thinking about that same engagement, you touched on the regs. They appear in your recommendations around giving more power to the Commissioner to reopen investigations and layer on additional sanctions, if he thinks they are not strong enough. Do you take the view that the Home Secretary is willing to give the Commissioner the powers to make those decisions?

**Baroness Casey:** Yes, the Home Secretary appears—she said it at the Dispatch Box yesterday—to want to give police chiefs powers around misconduct and disciplinary processes in the way they have requested, which we have reflected in our recommendations.

I just want to reiterate that the size of reform needed is not necessarily quite as well understood as I might like it to be by colleagues in the Home Office. To be fair, they only got the report days ahead of whenever everybody else got it and it is 360 pages. I completely understand that it will take time, but people need to see that this is not an either/or.

I would say that to the Home Secretary. She stood up at the Dispatch Box and rightly said, "I support Mark Rowley. I support Mark Rowley. I support Mark Rowley." Every time she got a question, she said, "I support the new Commissioner. I support the new Commissioner." You can say that and do that, and that is right, but, at the same time, you have to add "by encouraging enormous reform and change". "I support the Commissioner by putting new powers in place where needed and, in



## HOUSE OF COMMONS

the meantime, I support the Commissioner in being brave and bold about the level of the reform required.”

I feel it is a little bit either/or, and it has to be both. In the same way, Neil is right: if you read the report and you see the conclusions of the recommendations, you cannot pick and choose them. They are not a pick and mix. They have to be taken together. It is one chocolate bar, not optional bits and pieces. That is what I am slightly concerned about.

If I am being gentle and kind, I would say there has not been a great deal of time for people to see the depth of what we are talking about. Certainly 48 hours, if not longer, of media on quite a monumental scale probably has brought attention to it, but it is not, “I support Mark to do whatever he wants,” as it were. The job of government is to support the change needed in the Metropolitan Police by supporting Mark Rowley. Does that make sense?

I am slightly worried that the reform required is of the size of the RUC into PSNI, driven by different reasons, and I am not sure I am hearing that at the moment. That could be because I am concerned that it will not work and that in 20 years from now somebody will be sitting before you saying, “The Casey review in 2023 laid it bare and nothing changed,” when I am in an old people’s home, if we still have them, hopefully with lots of sherry.

The serious side of what I am trying to say is that they have to accept the reform now. I am worried that the size of the reform is not reflected in what the Home Secretary said yesterday. You cannot just say, “I will trust him and let him get on with it,” no matter how brilliant that individual is. That is my worry, and that is why I think Mr Loughton was right to ask me what were, to be fair, good questions about whether the checks are right, whether the balance is right and how soon this should happen.

I am conscious of time. I just want to say one last thing about the world “institutional”. I have been thinking about this. Mark has inherited an organisation and possibly, dare I say it, a culture that is long on hubris and quite short on humility. It is my own view that the report we have given them allows the Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner to be the bigger ones, to leave their hubris to one side and to say, “Would it not be good if we honoured Doreen Lawrence’s son? Would it not be good if we honoured all the black Londoners whose mums right now are thinking, ‘Is my child carrying a knife? Is he going to be stopped and searched? How will he be stopped and searched?’” People are telling their kids, as they grow up, “Don’t look at a police officer, if you’re black.” We want to tell our children to run to police officers. Black families and non-white people have not said that for some time.

In honour of that, Mark needs to be bigger than the headline or the word. He needs to remember that sometimes we all have to be bigger. That is what being in public life is about. That is the responsibility we carry as



## HOUSE OF COMMONS

public servants. That is why, for me, it is about an end to hubris and the beginning of humility. That is why it is important, and that is why the words are important. For any support you are all able to give, in a cross-party way, we would be so enormously grateful.

**Q456 Chair:** We are very grateful for your time this afternoon and to your band of annoying people for this report and for producing such an excellent piece of work.

Can I just ask two things very quickly? One thing that occurs to me is about these accelerated misconduct hearings, which I have been hearing about and that other police chief constables have used. The Met does not seem to have used this. Is that correct? It does not seem to have used it in the numbers other chief constables feel able to use it.

**Sarah Kincaid:** There have been fewer accelerated hearings. That is definitely right. They use the legally qualified chair system when they feel they do not have a slam-dunk case and someone has not admitted. Again, it is very heavily reliant on regulations. We think they could probably do better on both parts.

We have not said that legally qualified chairs are not able to come to a good decision. They are panel decisions. We certainly think that is not the root of the problem here. The answer is not to have loads and loads of accelerated hearings. It is for the Met to get its cases together well.

**Q457 Chair:** We are very surprised that an officer who is caught masturbating and gets a conviction in the courts is not put through an accelerated misconduct hearing.

**Baroness Casey:** He was.

**Chair:** He was put through one?

**Baroness Casey:** Yes, he was. We are back to Met culture.

**Chair:** He wasn't dismissed for misconduct?

**Baroness Casey:** He wasn't dismissed. He was given a written warning.

**Q458 James Daly:** Do they understand what "gross misconduct" means?

**Baroness Casey:** No. That is what we write in our report. We do not think they understand fully what gross misconduct means.

**Q459 Chair:** Very finally, are freemasons a problem in the Met?

**Tim Loughton:** What sort of a question is that?

**Chair:** In the past, people would have said that the freemasons had an undue influence in the Met, and there is no reference to the freemasons in your report. Have they completely gone away as a problem?

**Baroness Casey:** Whether they have gone away, I do not know. What I can say is that lots of things came up and we asked lots of questions.



## HOUSE OF COMMONS

Those things are in the report where we had clear evidence, whether it was an anecdote, a soundbite or a piece of testimony. We can prove that every single word from every single person in that report is true and that there are systems at play to make that happen. It did not come up significantly as an issue, and therefore it is not in the report.

Chair, would you just indulge me one final thing? I have spent the year thinking about the fact that we were commissioned in the light of Sarah Everard's death. When all of this stuff got into the media, people were chasing for headlines and running to get what we had said out. Vikram in *The Guardian* was going "ooh, exclusives". I was so irritated by all of that—particularly that—because we have tried so hard throughout this review to do it in a way that will honour Sarah Everard's memory, her family, Mina Smallman and her daughters, the families of those four young men killed by Stephen Port, and the 13 victims of Carrick we know of, 12 of whom he was sentenced for and one of whom, for various reasons, he was not.

I just want to say—I probably will not have another chance to say this—that the reform needed is really on behalf of them. We have a system of consent in this country. The public decide what our laws are and how they should be changed. You make those changes in Parliament. That is what you do as parliamentarians. You, on our behalf, make those changes. Then we ask the police to hold those changes on your behalf and our behalf. That has gone horribly wrong here. Consent is broken in London. I feel, sort of in honour of the last 12 months, we owe it to the victims of some of these police officers to get change. You have the power there, much more than I do. That is all I wanted to say.

**Chair:** Thank you. That is very powerful. We will be coming back to this. I am sure we will want to speak to the Commissioner, and we will want to invite you back as well, perhaps in a year's time, to see where things are. Thank you very much.