



Home Affairs Committee

Oral evidence: Police diversity, HC 933

Tuesday 12 April 2016

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Members present: Keith Vaz (Chair); Mr David Burrowes, Nusrat Ghani, Mr Ranil Jayawardena, Tim Loughton, Stuart C McDonald, Naz Shah, Mr David Winnick.

Questions 1 - 156

Examination of Witnesses

Witnesses: **Dal Babu OBE**, former Chief Superintendent, **Janet Hills**, President, National Black Police Association, and **Inspector Mustafa Mohammed**, President, National Association of Muslim Police, gave evidence.

Q1 Chair: Could I call the Committee to order, and can I refer all those present to the Register of Members' Interests where the interests of members of this Committee are noted? Can I welcome our witnesses today, Mr Babu, Ms Hills and Mr Mohammed?

The Committee is looking at the issue of diversity in the police service. It is a question that comes up frequently when we interview and take evidence from witnesses in the police service. Therefore we thought it appropriate to look specifically at this issue in some detail. It is likely that we will produce a report that will outline our recommendations based on what our witnesses say and it may mean that we will extend the inquiry beyond today's session.

Can I start with you, Janet Hills? You are President of the National Black Police Association. How many members do you have?

Janet Hills: We have BPAs in 45 forces. At the moment we have 43 in England and Wales, and then we have British Transport Police as well as SEMPER in Scotland.

Q2 Chair: No, how many members of your association, roughly—hundreds, thousands?

Janet Hills: Thousands.

Chair: Thousands. How many thousands?

Janet Hills: I have been given—is that 15,000? 15,000 members.

Q3 Chair: 15,000 members? Mr Mohammed, you have just been elected—congratulations on your election. How many are members of the Association of Muslim Police?

Inspector Mohammed: Our network stretches to 11 associations of Muslim Police across the country so we have only 11 across 43 forces. It stretches to about 2,500 to 2,700 members.

Chair: Between you all you represent about 17,000 people although presumably some Muslim members might also be members of the National Black Police Association.

Inspector Mohammed: Yes, correct.

Q4 Chair: Former Commander Babu, you have left the Metropolitan Police now so we hope that you will speak openly—not that you were not before on these issues. Why is it that in the years that I have served on this Committee—of course Mr Winnick has served for much longer—we keep asking chief constables, home secretaries, Ministers, why there is a problem with getting proper representation in the police service. Everyone comes before us, as I am sure the chief constables will when they come after you, and they say they want to see more but nothing substantial appears to be happening.

We know the representation has increased by 0.9% in the last five years. If we look at the figures, for example, for West Midlands, the population as a whole of BME people is about 29.9%. In terms of the police representations it is 8.6% and if you look at Greater Manchester it is 5% for 16.2%, and of course the Met has a much wider gap. Why is it that we have failed to get sufficient black and Asian people not just into the police service but also promoted through the ranks?

Dal Babu: I think I would like to start by saying as a former police officer I think we have the best police service. I know the Committee and you say this frequently. I do think we have the best police service in the world. However, race and faith seems to be an issue that the police service struggle with and if you look at the hierarchy of the police service in terms of chief constables, and police and crime commissioners there is not a single, non-white face among all the chief constables and all the police and crime commissioners.

In fact we have gone backwards where we in fact did have a chief constable; he appeared before you—Mr Fuller. That is very disappointing. If you look at how the new Police Chief Officers' Council has been set up, there are 59 members and out of those 59 members there is one BME person.

The police service seem to have much more success around gender. It has not gone far enough; there are only nine members of the National Police Senior Council—

Q5 Chair: These are facts we already know. Tell us why. We know all this, which is why you are here.

Dal Babu: We need to get over some of the myths there are that people do not want to join. I think people do want to join, and once they join it is about understanding how you acquire the necessary skills to get promoted. The challenge is there is greater problems going into specialist departments. There is a real challenge in accessing courses for BME individual officers. If you look at the specialist departments and what is very, very difficult to know, and I do not know the answer to this, is who in the police service is held to account in terms of equality and diversity.

Q6 Chair: Who do you think it should be?

Dal Babu: I think the chief constables should be asked the question.

Chair: Individual chief constables?

Dal Babu: Individual chief constables, and I think the other thing is we do not seem to have the scrutiny from the police and crime commissioners around the diversity issues. If you go back to your question about why we are in this position for some years, I think the difficulty we seem to be having—

Q7 Chair: We will come back to you in a second because you have painted a very interesting picture there. See if you can answer this question as well, Janet Hills: why? Why is there still this woeful lack of representation? We have heard no chief constables, only one out of the NPCCs. In the senior ranks of the forces that we will be looking at today there are still a lack of representations. Everyone comes before this Committee and they say, “We will do better”, and it does not seem to happen. Why?

Janet Hills: From the national perspective, there is a crisis of confidence around fair treatment for black and Asian minority ethnic officers. Staff do not have a voice and have seen the dismantling of staff support associations, which has led to a perception of a conspiracy that black and Asian minority ethnic officers are being targeted, cloned and silenced.

You will notice from my submission that there are a number of examples around treatment of black and Asian officers up and down the country, with the worst case being in Cleveland. However that is replicated across the country where when you look at the stats there is nothing behind them. It does not tell the story. Yes, we can say that we are doing well around the recruitment but then when you get to the well-being and how officers are being treated then you have an exit at the other end, which will not necessarily be around resignations; it will be around dismissals that are not being considered.

Q8 Chair: When you raise these points as president of the association that represents 15,000 people who do you raise them with and who is not listening to you? You are making a very serious charge about the problems facing black police officers.

Janet Hills: Again when you look at the data, and that is what we use to support our evidence and argument here, from a national perspective if there are issues within certain forces we do our best to get in. In fact with the Cleveland case we referred them to

the IPCC given the issues were so huge there. Again there is nothing holding them to account to do anything about that.

Q9 Chair: Who should be held to account? Do you agree with former Commander Babu it should be the chief constables themselves?

Janet Hills: I think there should be an element of chief constables but it is who is holding them to account because at the minute—

Chair: Police and crime commissioners.

Janet Hills: Again, are they? This is the thing. When we are talking about diversity, when we are talking about performance then yes, we get that accountability.

Q10 Chair: Do you think there is still racism within the police service?

Janet Hills: I believe that there is institutional racism within the police service, given the policy and practices that are written that have hidden biases that are not always visible until you overlay the lived experience of members on to the policy.

Q11 Chair: Mr Mohammed, you are an inspector so you have managed to reach quite a high grade in the police service. Dal Babu became a commander of the Met. This is a very senior position in the Metropolitan Police. Are you, Dal Babu and Mike Fuller, not proof that the system does work, that we are getting people at the very top? It is just perhaps those who apply do not have the skills necessary to be promoted—I am playing devil's advocate here—and not enough people apply, therefore the pool is too shallow to choose from. Or do you think there is a more fundamental problem?

Inspector Mohammed: I will give you a little bit of context around my experience when you talk about my journey. My journey of promotion did not really take off until the last four years, and I have 29 years' service. Really the equality, diversity agenda was not really understood until of late.

The wide question around why is it, there are several factors. There is the issue around representation in those departments to allow the skill set to grow for BME officers. The opportunities are very limited and so people cannot laterally develop and you need those lateral skills then to help you go upwards. So there is an issue around that. The pool is very small to start off with and then there is an argument that if you are going to have an opportunity in a specialist department you need to come with a certain set of skills. Unfortunately you do not have that set of skills but you do not have the opportunity to try and get them by some secondments because the work force is now reducing and movement is very difficult.

Q12 Chair: We will come on to that. Danny Shaw, the BBC's home affairs correspondent, said that the budget cuts that had been instituted by the Government means that there cannot be a significant increase in diversity in the police forces because you simply are not going to get new people applying. Do you agree with that?

Inspector Mohammed: West Midlands will tell you otherwise. We have just recruited quite a healthy number into the force but recruitment alone I see that has a shelf life. It is all to do with funding and if that is exhausted then what other avenues are there to explore? I am not sure there is anything else left so I kind of agree with it but then there are elements to suggest that is worked for a very short term.

Q13 Chair: Yes. Janet Hill, you mentioned statistics and of course that is what we are basing everything on, and it is the lack of diversity in the statistics that causes us and the Government concern. You have a very powerful ally in the Home Secretary. She came to your conference, the first Home Secretary, I think, who has ever addressed the National Black Police Association certainly in the last five or six—or she is the only one before that as well since I have been here. She said that there were no black police officers—forget about chief constables—in Cheshire, Durham, Dyfed-Powys, North Yorkshire, and 35 out of the 45 police forces received a disproportionately low number of applications, and 39 out of the 45 forces recruit a lower proportion of BME people compared to their populations.

Finally an astonishing statistic, because the Chief Constable of Sussex is the lead on this area: not a single ethnic minority has been appointed to Sussex police between 2014 and 2015. What do you say about those statistics?

Janet Hills: They are clearly accurate. When you look at the statistics they will tell you that there is a problem and it is how that problem is being addressed. I am not sure that we are getting it right because we have a number of processes in the recruitment there that allows for officers or people to come into the police service, which they could fall at any one of those hurdles, and it is understanding what the issues are with that recruitment process that then allows for us to get additional people in.

Q14 Chair: Finally to you, Dal Babu, before I open this up, you became a commander. You are a poster boy. You succeeded. You got to almost the very top of the Metropolitan Police. Being a commander in the Met is like being a chief constable somewhere else. You did it. Why have other people not been able to do it?

Dal Babu: I was borough commander for the most diverse borough in the country, in Harrow, and I had a fantastic career, and I really enjoyed it. There were great opportunities. I just think that we need to recognise some of the good work that organisations like the Met are doing. They have four ethnic minority people who are ACPO members. It is possible. It would be interesting to see what the numbers are in the other forces.

Chair: Yes, but you cannot have it both ways. You cannot recognise all the good work that is being done and then complain that there are not enough black and Asian people going through the system. Which is it, because you have got there, did you not? If you can get there and we can have Pat Gallan as deputy commissioner, and we can have Mike Fuller it seems to be a community problem rather than a police problem. You seem to be absolving the Metropolitan Police of any questions here.

Dal Babu: If you look at the numbers for the police service they have gone from 140,000 to 120,000. That means that there is going to be some real challenges in how we achieve greater diversity. The Met has achieved 25% recruitment of its new recruits. That is very positive so we need to take the positive.

Chair: For BME?

Dal Babu: Yes, BME, which is really positive but I think the difficulty is, and I think my colleagues have already mentioned it, in terms of getting promotion, going into those areas, getting the courses there is still disproportionality and there is not a fair playing point.

Chair: Sure. It is not the recruitment, it is going up the ladder. That is the problem.

Dal Babu: Going into specialist departments. If you look at the number of BME in specialist departments it is considerably lower than the general figure.

Chair: Thank you. Since I mentioned Sussex, I call Tim Loughton.

Q15 Tim Loughton: Thank you, Chair. The situation in Sussex is even worse. I think it is not far-fetched to say that we have more black Conservative councillors in my constituency than the entire district police force has black officers. It can be done. So far we have just talked about recruitment. I am perhaps more concerned about retention of those people who we do at last get into the police force; there does seem to be a fairly high resignation rate and lack of progression then to senior roles, which presumably is leading to disillusionment and feeling that there is a glass ceiling of a different kind here. Is that a fair reflection? Are you as concerned or more concerned about retention and early resignations?

Dal Babu: I think you have hit the nail on the head because we are not talking about a huge pool of individuals within the police service. It is a relatively small group of individuals. I don't know what the statistics are at the moment, but the number of senior officers above the rank of chief inspector is relatively small. If you were able to work with those individuals you would be able to do some development work.

It is also about giving officers the opportunity to go into specialist departments. We need their skills. We need the language skills. We need it in the fight against terrorism. We need to make sure we deliver a better service for women who are victims of domestic violence. We need to be utilising those officers and I do not think we do that effectively as a police service.

I go back to the point I made right at the beginning. I do not know who the go-to person is in the police service around equality issues. Who is the chief constable who is the lead? Everybody knows Mark Rowley is the lead for counterterrorism. I do not know who the lead is for making things happen in terms of equality, diversity and changing that workforce.

Q16 Tim Loughton: If the police are not doing it themselves, is this a role that police commissioners should have taken up and say, "Hold on, why have we not got more black police officers and why do we not have any black police commissioners as well?" What is deterring members of that community coming into the police force and then staying, and also what is deterring on an amateur role—coming in as police commissioner candidates and then being able to shake things from the inside, and being that go-to person for the police or other police commissioners? Janet Hills?

Janet Hills: Yes, from a national perspective it is almost like there needs to be a multi-strand board—not necessarily from policing because clearly policing are not doing it for themselves. It is almost as if you need a number of disciplines around a table to look at these issues and address them and hold chief constables to account for getting them wrong, because we keep saying that we expect the chief constables to be held accountable but no one does hold them to account. There is no action plan in place for the next five, 10 years that allows for this progression to happen.

Q17 Tim Loughton: Do you think there is an issue around training as well and awareness schemes and engagement? Again, I think we have a very good police force in Sussex. We do have a very good police force and we have an excellent chief constable and police commissioner. I am constantly seeing on social media, “Sussex police engaged in LGBT rights events”, and I think their record on that has been excellent. The record on women has been not bad as well. Of course we have just lost the excellent Olivia Pinkney to become chief constable next door in Hampshire.

I just cannot think of events with that sort of engagement to try and engage the black community. Okay, we do not have such a large black community in Sussex but there is certainly very much more than is represented in the police force. Why are there not those campaigns happening and who should be doing that? Secondly, is it a matter also of training on this retention because presumably there are sufficient people from the BME community who have the qualifications to apply for the police force but then they need perhaps additional training and encouragement to make sure they stay and then progress through the police force as well? Is that on offer anywhere or again is that something which is completely lacking?

Janet Hills: You mentioned the progression of gender which I agree with but even if you look within that strand and look at where BME women are in that strand, we are nowhere near the top. There is something to be said about the visibility of the strand that allows for that unconscious bias, as people will say, in relation to our progression.

Again if you look at where BME women, in particular black and Asian women, are in that, there are gaps within the rank and file structure where no one has even looked at as a being a risk area, because we are again representative of our communities. In most communities the black and Asian females are very strong but this is not reflected in the police stats around BME women. Even though we say gender is doing well, we have not recognised the risk area around black and Asian minority women.

Q18 Tim Loughton: Mr Mohammed, you have been very quiet. Is there training and particular encouragement and engagement available in your force?

Inspector Mohammed: In terms of recruitment?

Tim Loughton: Recruitment but also retention to make sure that there is a level playing field for people to stay on and progress.

Inspector Mohammed: My experience is that the positive action programme, those initiatives, are, if they are well understood and in terms of the context of how they are run rather than the front facing marketing tool of, “We want more BME”, and you put BME

stuff out there to give that encouragement and get that expression of interest, then after that there is bit which requires additional support to prepare BME candidates, to better prepare them for the selection process itself. I would say that is the bit that is required with the forces to understand what they need to do in addition to just an invitation. That is one thing.

The training bit is called upon many times for staff association leads who deliver training on community, cultures, faiths, awareness so that is taking place but what we have to look at is the role model issue of where are our black and Asian leaders in the police service. There is the issue of what is the message that BME staff are giving to their communities as being part of the community. It is not a positive message because of their experiences.

Thirdly, you see the misconduct bit playing a part in BME disproportionality. It all comes together and that is how it manifests itself.

Chair: Thank you. I am going to bring Mr Winnick and then I am going to bring Nusrat Ghani because she has a specific Sussex issue. Mr Winnick.

Q19 Mr David Winnick: Ms Hills, the Chair has already asked you about harassment and you have made the point in the memo that you have sent us, and which all of us have read with much interest, about bullying and harassment. When we have, in previous Parliaments, had witnesses from your association and others from the minority community, the point has been made that there has been progress from where say 30, 40 years ago, when it was very rare indeed to have a police officer who was not white—there would be what was described as canteen culture of making life as difficult as possible rather like on the playground, and obviously disgraceful conduct. How far would you say, you and your two colleagues, that sort of canteen culture of outright bullying has now—

Janet Hills: For me it is not as overt as it was back then. It is a lot more subtle and bullying does not necessarily take shape in that way. There are a number of ways that a black and Asian minority ethnic officer can be stopped from progressing, which does not inform any kind of bullying, but we recognise that that should not go amiss and that there isn't really enough evidence around that sort of culture and behaviour that allows for us to actually recognise the risk.

Inspector Mohammed: I agree with Janet. It is not as overt as it used to be years ago but it is that lack of opportunity; it is that non-support to go upwards and continue being knocked back. That still applies but that is in the context of performance rather than any harassment as such. Then there is the grievances and misconduct bit again that adds issues to your chances of getting promoted.

Q20 Mr David Winnick: The other point I would ask is simply this: as far as policing is concerned, when you are doing your job for which you have been appointed, do you find in the main—obviously there are cranks who will take exception because of your colour, although hopefully not—when you are dealing with people in your role as a police officer have you ever found, rather than the extreme cases that I have mentioned, any sort of resentment that you don't happen to be white?

Inspector Mohammed: Is that from the public, sorry?

Chair: Yes, from the public or from your fellow officers.

Inspector Mohammed: In terms of community interaction, community service, public service, that is absolutely for me—no issues and vice versa. The two-way dialogue, the engagement, there are no barriers there.

Q21 Mr David Winnick: You are treated as any other police officer would be?

Inspector Mohammed: Yes, absolutely.

Dal Babu: Sir, I think there is a real myth, and you hear and see the police officers using this frequently, that the community don't want to join the police. I think that that is just absolute, utter rubbish and it needs to be nailed. My nephews want to join the police service; my friends want to join the police service; my parents were enormously proud that I was a police officer. If we allow that myth to perpetuate it is very, very dangerous; it puts all the emphasis on the community and the police can step back. But if you see what the Met have done at a time when the police service has gone down from 140,000 to 120,000, it has nailed 25%, which was one of the Macpherson recommendations that was never delivered. So I think the community are very, very supportive of us.

Chair: Sure. Of course, Bernard Hogan-Howe did propose that it should be a 50/50 recruitment process so it is 25% not 50%? Do you still think that is good?

Dal Babu: Well that is with the Northern Ireland process, sir, which would require primary legislation, and it would be people on this Committee who would make the decisions about that going through. I think that would be very, very difficult to get through although it would be very helpful.

Q22 Chair: Janet Hills, on David Winnick's point, are you treated equally by the public and by fellow officers?

Janet Hills: From a community perspective and coming from a black community, I would have to say that we are elevated, if I am honest. They love to see us in our roles, they love to engage with us. However, we have to understand where it is they are coming from with regards to issues of trust and confidence, which are legacy issues we are addressing. The fact that we are here, the fact that we are doing our job is supported by our communities, not that they would want to do it.

Chair: We are slowing down a bit; that is not a reflection on you. Ms Ghani, please ask your question.

Q23 Nusrat Ghani: I am another Sussex MP, very, very close to Mr Loughton. Janet Hills, you mentioned something quite early on in your opening statement that you felt some of the policies that were produced were covertly racist. Can you explain to me a policy that has been produced that you believe to be racist?

Janet Hills: What I tend to do is have the experience, say, of a promotion process from a member that hasn't been successful and then overlay that with the actual, and what you

will find is that sometimes—for instance, if someone has gone through a process and there should be an appeals process, so there are conditions about applying to go to the next rank for instance and one of the conditions could be that you have to score a particular mark so if you get lower than a particular mark then you cannot be—

Nusrat Ghani: But that would apply to anyone?

Janet Hills: That would apply to anyone, however what you then find is that on that particular officer's application they have been given that mark but there is no way of addressing or appealing the mark if you take into consideration other factors around the similarities between applicants. So—

Q24 Nusrat Ghani: If two candidates sat a particular test and both of them scored low, they would both have that low mark on their application. Is that correct?

Janet Hills: No. So we are saying that if you look at the competencies of an officer, they both have the same competencies going into—however, one has been marked down on the same—it's a difficult one without going into the real example—

Chair: Why don't you drop us a note on that and explain exactly what you mean. Would you drop us a note? Would you write to us about that?

Janet Hills: Yes, absolutely.

Q25 Nusrat Ghani: I do want some clarity on this because I think it is a very important issue if it is correct. I just want to understand a covertly racist policy. I just want to see an example.

Janet Hills: It is one where you are unable to challenge if you feel that you have been discriminated against.

Nusrat Ghani: But it is a written test that any candidate—

Janet Hills: It's not a written test. It's an application outlining your skills and readiness for the next—

Chair: I think if you just say it in writing so that we can come back to you. I don't want to really open this up any further unless it is to clarify.

Inspector Mohammed: Yes, to clarify, basically we have various different forces running promotion processes in different ways. Some of the processes involve where you need your manager's support to start the process and you don't get that support. So there is a disparity around that. Then there are bits in the process around when you look at the interview panel make-up, in terms of what they are looking for. So there are lots of little things like that, which I think Janet was referring to in terms of the promotion process and opportunity.

Chair: We will come back to that again.

Nusrat Ghani: It has been said that there are policies that are covertly racist; to have evidence of that will be incredibly useful. Can I go back to one early thing that Mr Mohammed mentioned?

Chair: Sorry, Ms Ghani, I do want to take this away. I am sorry, we will come back to that in a minute. We just have to go on to Mr Burrowes because we have a little plan here and we will bring you in again.

Q26 Mr David Burrowes: In terms of a note that you have sent, Janet Hills, you asked the Committee to be reminded of the evidence that the association gave to the Macpherson Inquiry. You say, “So that person is expected to become, if you like, a clone”. You go on to say, “You are asking them to come into this organisation to conform to the norm of the majority of the organisation”. You reminded us of that. Is that because you are saying that still is the case?

Janet Hills: Yes—

Mr David Burrowes: It is?

Janet Hills: From a black and Asian minority—we have cultural competencies that would add value to the organisation and they are not used to deliver on a policing delivery level. They are not used in that way.

Q27 Mr David Burrowes: You are saying that is still the case today in 2016 as in 1999 that the black person is expected to become, if you like, a clone?

Janet Hills: Yes.

Q28 Mr David Burrowes: Would you reflect that in your own experience, Mr Babu and Mr Mohammed? Effectively you had to become a clone to progress up the ranks? Is that the case?

Dal Babu: Mr Burrowes, I would say 33 years ago when I joined the police service was a very, very different organisation.

Q29 Mr David Burrowes: But as you went through the ranks, and obviously reflected in the time of 1999 onwards, you had to effectively conform and become like a clone to progress?

Dal Babu: I think you are not allowed your full—Janet was talking about the cultural aspect that you can bring to the police service, I don’t think that was valued. I think there was a set way where you were expected to deliver policing. I don’t think the cultural aspect, the ability to link in with communities, use your languages, was valued.

Q30 Mr David Burrowes: Mr Mohammed, as you progressed did you also feel that you were expected to become like a clone in your progression?

Inspector Mohammed: I think “clone” is probably a little severe. There are certain adjustments we have to make, whether that would be cultural or faith, to get on in the organisation. There is a standard of culture that is expected for you to kind of get into to progress in the organisation and that is 25 years—

Q31 Mr David Burrowes: In terms of the exit rates, the Met have said to us there is no evidence of disproportionality between white and BME officers in terms of the resignation rate, and that plainly seems the case from the stats. Back in 2009 the “Equality Commission Police and Racism Report” noted that nationally there was a higher resignation rate for BME officers rather than white officers. What is the situation nationally? The Met seem to have it under proper control. What is the case nationally on exit rates?

Janet Hills: Again, what is interesting is that the dismissal rates are not measured. So you will get resignations, people leave voluntarily, but then on dismissal we are saying that there is a disproportionate amount of black and Asian minority ethnics that are subject to misconduct who are dismissed and that is not counted as part of those exit stats.

Mr David Burrowes: Would you be able to provide us with the detail of those rates?

Janet Hills: It depends where you go, because with policing you can go to the Mayor’s office who also provides statistics and you will find that there’s a disparity, but those statistics can be provided.

Q32 Mr David Burrowes: But the overall picture in terms of overall exit rates, including dismissal and resignation—you are saying there is that disproportionality? Do you have a broad figure percentage-wise that you can just say what is the proportionality difference?

Janet Hills: This is a MOPAC slide I have in front of me. The BME and female police officer turnover has been showing an upward trend but it remains below the average turnover and that is for the Met. Here it says, “Voluntary resignations account for a greater proportion of BME and female officers leaving. Dismissal also accounted for 13% of BME officer wastage.” Rates of voluntary resignation have been increasing over the last three years—

Chair: We have access to those particular documents and can look at it. Thank you very much.

Q33 Mr Ranil Jayawardena: The College of Policing has been commissioned to develop and deliver a national programme to increase BME representation in the police service. What involvement do any of you—I would suspect this is more directed to Ms Hills and Mr Mohammed—have with that programme?

Janet Hills: I believe you are referring to the BME 2018 programme. Personally and from a national perspective, we were not involved in that.

Q34 Mr Ranil Jayawardena: In your correspondence and discussions with BME officers and indeed perhaps people who had applied to join the police service, do you find

that unsuccessful candidates are more likely to fail at the initial online assessment stage or at the later interview stage and do you have any speculation or any rationale why that might be the case if there is any evidence on that?

Janet Hills: I have not had any recent figures on that so I am unable to answer that.

Inspector Mohammed: Is that for progression or recruitment?

Mr Ranil Jayawardena: For joining the police service.

Inspector Mohammed: There are several stages and one of the biggest attrition rates is around vetting.

Q35 Mr Ranil Jayawardena: The College of Policing is also currently conducting consultation, I understand, on police education and qualifications, which proposes that all officers will need to be at graduate level and they believe, the College of Policing that is, that this will help to increase BME representation. Do you agree? Perhaps Mr Babu, you could start?

Dal Babu: I think it would be a positive move. I think in terms of where people are failing, vetting is still a big challenge because if you are born in this country and all your close relatives are in this country it is relatively easy to do the vetting. If you have relatives, for example, in Pakistan or in India or Bangladesh or Africa it may be more challenging. So I think there is some work being done on vetting so the police service is able to retain the individuals who show that interest, who go through the process, and we don't lose them at the vetting level. In terms of increasing the quality, the fact that individuals are graduates, I think that can only be a positive thing.

Q36 Mr Ranil Jayawardena: But do you believe that that will increase BME representation?

Dal Babu: I don't know if it will increase BME representation.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena: Any alternative views?

Janet Hills: When you look at, again, there is data around current police officers that have degrees, in that list BME women are at the top, and I cannot remember off the top of my head so it would be wrong of me to quote what the data is. Second to that are BME men and then you have white women and white men—

Mr Ranil Jayawardena: Thank you.

Janet Hills: —so actually I don't think it would be a bar but, again, it would have to be managed by way of we are not saying that it is the Russell Group degrees that are required as opposed to a degree.

Q37 Mr Ranil Jayawardena: A follow-on from that is I note that the direct entry scheme to superintendent level has been successful at bringing in more people from the BME backgrounds. I assume that both your organisations support that scheme?

Inspector Mohammed: Yes.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena: There is sufficient on that.

Janet Hills: Yes, from the national perspective, yes.

Inspector Mohammed: Yes.

Q38 Mr Ranil Jayawardena: One last question if I may, Chairman? The 2009 report from the EHRC recommended that ethnic minority PCSOs and specials should be encouraged to become police officers, police constables, in some cases perhaps by having their probation period shortened. Do you agree with that idea to help bring people through?

Janet Hills: Not necessarily shortened. There is a good representation of black and Asian minority within the specials and within the PCSOs and I feel that what they do around the work should be allowed to be used as a sort of competency, that they have done the patrolling competency and therefore goes towards them having a faster entry into policing. It is not to say that you are doing anything different. They are out there doing the job and it can count as an action.

Q39 Mr Ranil Jayawardena: But it would not shorten the probation period, as far as you are concerned? It should not do that?

Janet Hills: It should not shorten the probation period. The probation period should be as it is, but entry I feel that it could help.

Q40 Mr Ranil Jayawardena: You both agree with that as well?

Inspector Mohammed: Yes. The probation period should be the same. Maybe a bit of a fast track into joining.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena: Thank you.

Q41 Chair: Are you telling this Committee that the College of Policing, in preparing their plan for diversity, did not consult you as president of your association or you, Mr Mohammed?

Inspector Mohammed: I have had a brief sight of it but in terms of—

Q42 Chair: Did they consult you before they wrote it?

Inspector Mohammed: No.

Q43 Chair: Neither of you has been consulted?

Inspector Mohammed: No.

Chair: Mr Babu, you say you did not know who the go-to person was. The go-to person on race and diversity in the NPCC is in fact the Chief Constable of Sussex, Giles York. He so far has declined to come before the Committee on the grounds that it is the College of Policing that deal with this issue, but we will have him before the Committee very shortly.

Q44 Stuart C. McDonald: We have already had a little bit about how the Metropolitan Police has improved its recruitment from BME communities. To what extent would each of you say that is down to initiatives such as a second language requirement or the residential requirement? To what extent do you think these sort of ideas could be rolled out to other police forces across the country?

Dal Babu: As somebody who is probably the oldest here, when I joined 33 years ago 25% of the police were from Wales and 25% were from Scotland. We used to have these huge recruitment drives in Wales and Scotland and we did not go into our own backyard. The requirement the Met have had for recruitment within London is really positive. It was brave and it has delivered some really positive results.

I have spoken at length, in fact at this Committee before, that language is a really important factor. If we have officers who can speak different languages, they are able to engage with victims of domestic violence and support those individuals and they are able to help us in our fight against terrorism. This is not about being nice; it is about real qualities that individuals need to be able to deliver a better service and help the police service do that.

Q45 Stuart C. McDonald: Essentially the effects on recruitment, you are saying, are almost incidental? It was designed to achieve a better standard for policing? It was not a measure that was introduced for the sake of improving recruitment?

Dal Babu: As you know, Mr McDonald, London is almost majority BME so by the very nature of concentrating on that area as opposed to Wales and Scotland, which do not have that level of diversity, you are going to be focusing on people who are from those minority backgrounds. The Met have also done some very exciting work around language and there are some lessons to be learned, because for years we have been told that 25% is not achievable. I know the Chair has talked about 50%, which is a very high bar, but 25% is really impressive at a time when the police services are shrinking.

Q46 Stuart C. McDonald: What about you, Mr Mohammed and Ms Hills? Do you think lessons can be learned by other forces here or is this something that is unique to London?

Janet Hills: I believe lessons can be learned. London is quite unique in its set-up. The residential criteria, yes, I am behind that. I feel there are a lot of, say, black and Asian minority ethnic in London and we have that pool of people to recruit from. The language, again it helps the diversity but we still have a legacy issue coming from the black and Asian community that is not necessarily being addressed by having a second language. For instance, you could have a British-born Asian or black person who may not speak their mother tongue, and therefore that is excluding them from becoming a police officer.

Stuart C. McDonald: Mr Mohammed?

Inspector Mohammed: My colleagues have already said plenty.

Q47 Stuart C. McDonald: A second issue, if I may. Again, the Chair has already touched upon this but how, in London, for example, do you get from 25% to 50%? There is a debate going on as to whether positive action is enough or whether positive discrimination should be allowed through legislation. Are we not going to be here in 25 or 50 years' time unless we allow a degree of positive discrimination? What are your thoughts?

Dal Babu: I personally think we may need to go down that road. We need to be exhaustive. The Met have worked on positive action. There is an opportunity for other forces to look at what they are doing and make sure that they are delivering positive action. We need to exhaust positive action in full.

In terms of positive discrimination—and I presume you are talking about the Northern Ireland experience—you would need that primary legislation. The MPs would need to vote on that.

Q48 Stuart C. McDonald: Sure. Would you support it?

Dal Babu: I think for a limited time it would be a positive thing but I am not sure, practically, it would get through Parliament, so we need to work on the positive actions and exhaust positive action.

Q49 Stuart C. McDonald: Okay. Ms Hills?

Janet Hills: Again, if the political will was there and we could do in a fast way, absolutely 100% behind affirmative action for recruitment.

Q50 Stuart C. McDonald: But positive discrimination? Would you go as far as positive discrimination?

Janet Hills: Before I answer, what is your definition of positive discrimination?

Stuart C. McDonald: Rather than providing support for people to meet the same criteria, you allow a hand up and you are applying slightly different standards.

Janet Hills: If we are talking a similar sort of process to the Northern Ireland model, which was built into a strategy around the recruitment and retention piece, then yes. If it is thoughtful and not just done at a whim, yes.

Stuart C. McDonald: Mr Mohammed?

Inspector Mohammed: You would have to look at the current processes around positive action and the results that they yield. What are the results at the moment? Then project that over five, 10 years. Is the representation gap going to be any better? There is a strong argument to look at positive discrimination.

Stuart C. McDonald: Thank you very much.

Q51 Chair: Simon Byrne, the Chief Constable of Cheshire, supports you. Reacting to the Home Secretary's speech pointing out that there were no black officers in Cheshire, he said that he was open to a change in the law.

When you refer to positive action, you mean there are two candidates of equal merit, and if they are of equal merit you appoint the person from the BAME communities or someone who is a woman? Is that right? Or do you mean even if somebody is not of the same merit as the other candidate, you appoint someone of a lesser merit because they happen to be BAME? What do you mean by positive action? Janet Hills.

Janet Hills: For me, positive action is about having a strategy in place that allows for the recruitment of black and Asian officers at the same rate as our white counterparts, which does not involve—

Q52 Chair: It is a target?

Janet Hills: No. If we say "a target" then we might be setting ourselves up to fail. It means every time you employ a white officer you would employ a black officer, with no detriment around lowering of standards.

Q53 Chair: Mr Mohammed, is the problem not the selection panels? You tend to find that people select people who look like themselves. Therefore if the selection panels have no BAME people on them you are never going to get any BAME people, are you?

Inspector Mohammed: The buzzword at the moment is "unconscious bias". A lot of forces are looking into that and training selection panel members to go through that sort of training. There has historically been the perception amongst BME staff that if you do not fit

in, you are not part of the network or you do not share the values, you are not going to get promoted. It fits into that.

Chair: We are running out of time. We have Naz Shah next and following that, David Winnick and then Nusrat Ghani—I promised her another bite at the cherry—and we have other witnesses.

Q54 Naz Shah: Thank you, Chair. A couple of questions following on from the earlier questions. What do your positive action traineeships look like? Is it just black officers or BME officers who go onto these leadership schemes? What do they look like?

Inspector Mohammed: In West Midlands?

Naz Shah: Anywhere. Across the police force.

Inspector Mohammed: West Midlands I think do a comprehensive positive action programme and I am sure our chief constable, when he is up here next, will give you the data. Basically it is, firstly, getting the marketing campaign right and then it is the added support around running specialist—

Naz Shah: Sorry.

Inspector Mohammed: Sorry.

Q55 Naz Shah: Can I just say something? If you have a training programme, do you target 10 BME people to go on this training programme or do you have a mixture?

Inspector Mohammed: We do not have any such programme in-house in West Midlands. The College of Policing say, “We will give you three places per force, or two places per force”, and it is shared out nationally. The leadership programme.

Q56 Naz Shah: Are they all BME staff on the programme?

Inspector Mohammed: Yes.

Q57 Naz Shah: Do you not think you are missing it because you are teaching your BME staff to go away and look at BME issues when the issue is for your white staff to understand BME issues? Why are you not having mixed ones? Can somebody explain that to me?

Janet Hills: Alongside every promotion process is a positive action element. You have a promotion process for everyone but alongside that you would have positive action for gender and race. It is for everyone. If you self-define as being from a BME background, then you get offered the positive action.

Q58 Naz Shah: My argument is: do you have to be black to get racism? The answer, for me, is clearly no. Why are we just targeting black people and saying, “We have a problem” as opposed to targeting our white police forces and doing the work there? Why do we not have that narrative? I have not heard it today. Have you explored that narrative?

Chair: Dal Babu?

Dal Babu: The reason why we need to be working with black officers is because we are hugely underrepresented in hierarchy and in specialist departments. For me, that is a really important area. We need to be looking at some of the successes that we have had around gender. When I joined the police service, there were no black chief constables and there were no women. If you now look at the figures, almost 20% are women chief constables. You have that figure. The Chair has already mentioned Pat Gallan, a hugely successful individual who has worked as a black woman and achieved that. We need to learn the lessons around gender. Why have we been successful, to a limited extent, around gender, but we have been hugely unsuccessful in terms of race?

Q59 Naz Shah: Before I take my next question I will just make a point on that. I have a huge background in leadership development in the NHS and what I feel strongly about and what I am hearing is that we focus on just black people as opposed to changing the organisational culture. You are not doing any leadership development with white folk who need to address that prejudice, that subconscious prejudice or subconscious bias. You are not doing a two-pronged approach, what you are doing is targeting, and black people are not the problem. It is not women that were a problem. You had to change the force to allow more women and accept more women and celebrate more women. You have to change the mentality of men. You need to be looking at something else.

I will come on to my next question. That was just a point. The Home Secretary stated that the profile of police forces should reflect that of the communities they serve. Can this be achieved and if so, what changes do you think will make the biggest difference in terms of increasing diversity in the police force? If we can take you, Mr Mohammed, first.

Inspector Mohammed: Can it be achieved? Yes, in the long term it can be achieved but it needs some sort of radical approach around the positive action initiatives or positive discrimination. There needs to be a review of the discipline/conduct procedures and the disproportionality within that. There also need to be some figureheads from a BME perspective for people to look up to, to want to join, in short.

Janet Hills: For me, just on your point around the broader message, there does need to be that message, the message around why diversity is a value for the organisation. It is almost like diversity has become a dirty word. There does need to be that broader bit of work that is done. Within the Met, I know that there is unconscious bias training for leaders within the organisation. When it comes down to—sorry, what was your point again? Sorry, I have gone blank. What was your point?

Q60 Naz Shah: I am asking about the Home Secretary's vision of having a police force that reflects the communities they serve. Do you think that is achievable and what do you think needs to happen? If you had a magic wand, Janet, what would you do?

Janet Hills: Again, in the long term it can be achieved but there needs to be a strategy, an action plan, that gives us a delivery of that. At the moment across England and Wales, it is, "If you want to, you do it". There is no accountability there. There needs to be, across England and Wales, consistency around how we engage and how we hold chief officers to account for not delivering. Because there is no action plan, each individual constabulary does their own thing and therefore we have this disparity and inconsistency around, if you are a black or Asian police officer or member of staff, how you get dealt with and treated within the service.

Dal Babu: You would need to operationalise diversity. Diversity needs to be at the heart of what we are doing. We need to be looking at the people coming in. We need to look at the successes that have occurred and see how we can encourage more people to join the organisation. We then need to look at how we look after those individual points. I think Mr Loughton made the point about the individuals already in the organisation. We are not talking about huge numbers here. We need to have a comprehensive programme and go to the go-to person on diversity and say, "What are you doing to support these individuals and make sure that we utilise those individuals more effectively?"

Then it is about promotion. If you look at the hierarchy of the forces, you will find the vast majority of the forces will have no BME people at the top. There will be one or two women—there has been some progression in terms of women—but in terms of race, BME, you will not have those individuals. We need to hold those people to account. The thing chief constables probably fear more than anything else is coming before this Committee because I do not think they are being held to account by the police and crime commissioners. I do not see them being held to account by the Home Office. They come here, they get a public grilling and they have to defend what their force looks like and why they have promised—

Chair: Thank you, Mr Babu. We are running out of time and the grilling cannot start until this session finishes so can I ask colleagues to be very, very brief? We have a quick question from Mr Winnick and a quick question from Ms Ghani, and then we will move on to the grilling of the chief constables.

Q61 Mr David Winnick: Ms Hill, I particularly want to ask you so we will save time. I hope I will not be discriminating against your two male colleagues. As far as specialist units are concerned, that has a certain status, certainly as far as the Met is concerned. Am I right?

Janet Hills: Yes.

Q62 Mr David Winnick: Am I not correct when I say that as far as the Met is concerned, there were at the time some 700 officers in the Diplomatic Protection group and two women only, or at least two black women and not many white women either?

Janet Hills: Yes. There are some departments that are not as attractive from a woman's perspective, and potentially that could be the case. From a BME perspective, it is about accessing the skills to be able to go into those departments. For some of the specialisms you need to be a detective. It is being able to access the skills that allow you to then get into that departments because it is not always done the same way as the rank, when you take your exam and do all of that. It is more about who you know and if your face fits.

Q63 Mr David Winnick: A report by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission said it was a closed shop. In the main it was white police officers. The overwhelming majority were white police officers. One of the two black women I mentioned, Police Constable Carol Howard, took a case to the tribunal on discrimination. She argued she had been singled out and targeted for almost a year. She won the case, did she not?

Janet Hills: Yes, she did.

Q64 Mr David Winnick: Your association were very much in favour of her doing so?

Janet Hills: Absolutely, as we would be in favour of most of our staff—

Chair: Thank you.

Janet Hills: —but a lot of them will be silent on the matters and will not necessarily challenge.

Q65 Mr David Winnick: One last question, Chair. Would you say that there has been any change as a result of that case being won?

Janet Hills: There have been changes. The organisation have brought in Acas and they have also are being held to account by the EHRC around it. They are being investigated at the moment. There have been changes and there has been—

Mr David Winnick: Some progress.

Janet Hills: —some progress within the Met, but we need that nationally as well.

Chair: Thank you. Nusrat Ghani.

Q66 Nusrat Ghani: The evidence that you have presented today and that you have submitted to the Committee I would argue is less about race but more about the lack of shared cultural experiences amongst minority ethnic people coming forward in the police force, than there would be for a white British person. I do not think the issue is just about race, or more about race.

The people coming forward who are black or Asian will not have had the same experiences. They will not have gone to the same schools and colleges, they will not have the corporate language, there will not be an environment where their friends or family would have worked in that environment, so they might struggle a bit more at a selection process. They might struggle a bit more possibly understanding how to get through each promotion, and also they will not have the friendship networks to understand where promotion comes forward and to get promoted. Would you argue then that it possibly is less about race and more about cultural experiences, because black and Asian people will have come from a completely background or community from a white counterpart?

Janet Hills: This strand is race but within that you would have these cultural differences.

Q67 Nusrat Ghani: Would you say it is more or less? You said it was institutionally racist and I think it is culturally insensitive.

Janet Hills: It is the strand. The strand is about race and that is how everyone refers to it.

Q68 Nusrat Ghani: You could be a black person that has had the complete same experience as a white British person and you can argue that they would not have been discriminated against because they have had all those networks to help them through every single process of getting promoted. Their race has not held them back.

Janet Hills: Look at gender. Again, you see the progression there. However, you have BME women at—you could put that down to culture or you could put that down to race but it fits within the race strand and we address the issues that come with that from a race perspective.

Nusrat Ghani: Mr Mohammed?

Inspector Mohammed: I am not going to get too hung up about which strand it sits in. Ultimately, culture is part of the race strand. Whether that is race or culture, these things are happening, as far as I am concerned.

Nusrat Ghani: Mr Babu?

Dal Babu: I would say it is firmly about race and I think we need to—

Nusrat Ghani: Not about cultural—

Dal Babu: With all due respect, culture is a fundamental part of race. The reality is if you look at the chief officer groups, if you look at the hierarchy of the organisation, if you look at the specialist departments, whether you call it culture or people who have a different cultural experience, or whether people are from a different race, you do not see those people represented in those areas.

Q69 Nusrat Ghani: All right. Final quick question. We have talked about black, we have talked about Asian and we have talked about white but a growing demographic in London, for example, is mixed-race. If a person ticks a mixed-race box and gets promoted, do you consider that a black promotion or not?

Dal Babu: I would say yes.

Nusrat Ghani: They do not identify themselves as black but as mixed race.

Dal Babu: It is self-defining. You are absolutely right, the great thing about London is we are incredibly diverse.

Q70 Nusrat Ghani: A mixed-race person getting promoted above someone that identifies themselves as black is still a positive for you, or not?

Dal Babu: If you have people of different cultures getting promoted, that is very positive. What we are trying to say is that at the moment it is predominantly white. London is not predominantly white and we need to reflect—if you go back to what Robert Peel says—

Q71 Nusrat Ghani: Janet Hills? Mixed-race competing with someone that is black. Would you say they would have the same racial experience or not?

Janet Hills: I do not know what their experience would be. All I know is what the visible difference is and what I see.

Nusrat Ghani: Mr Mohammed?

Inspector Mohammed: Again, I cannot really elaborate on that but what I will say is when you have mixed-race staff getting through and promoted, they fall under the category of BME. The force then say, “BME, these are the numbers”.

Q72 Nusrat Ghani: Are you happy with that, being noted under BME?

Inspector Mohammed: I am not worried one way or the other. That is not such a big issue because mixed race are so small in numbers and it is a self-defining thing so we do not have much control over that.

Nusrat Ghani: Thank you.

Chair: We need to leave it there but those are very important issues. If any of you would like to address those in a written submission we would be very happy to see it. Thank you for raising them, Nusrat Ghani. Thank you very much for coming here, Mr Mohammed, Ms Hills and Mr Babu. I know you are a passionate Arsenal supporter so better luck next year, those of us from Leicester will say. Thank you very much.

Examination of Witnesses

Witnesses: **Chief Constable Dee Collins** (temporary), West Yorkshire Police, **Chief Constable Dave Thompson**, West Midlands Police, and **Robin Wilkinson**, Director of People and Change, Metropolitan Police Service, gave evidence.

Q73 Chair: I promise you, Chief Constables and Mr Wilkinson, this is not a grilling. This is just an informal chat between members of the Committee and the chief constables. I want to start first of all by congratulating you, Chief Constable Thompson, on your appointment to what must be one of the top jobs in policing in England, Wales and Scotland. Congratulations on your appointment.

Chief Constable Thompson: Thank you.

Q74 Chair: It was a rather short shortlist, I understand.

Chief Constable Thompson: It was. It was just me.

Q75 Chair: Are you glad you got the job?

Chief Constable Thompson: I am delighted I got the job but I would agree with the observation of the Committee that the lack of candidates for senior posts like West Midlands is a concern.

Q76 Chair: As far as your colleagues are concerned, because I have spoken to quite a few of the West Midlands Members of Parliament, they are delighted that you got the post. I do not know about Mr Winnick. He will ask you his own questions in a second. Presumably you are looking forward to fulfilling your ambitions and targets in it.

Chief Constable Thompson: Yes, absolutely.

Q77 Chair: Dee Collins, you are the acting Chief Constable of West Yorkshire. How long have you been acting and how long will you act?

Acting Chief Constable Collins: I have been acting for the last 22 months. I anticipate being in post for a little while longer. Obviously there are some complicating factors that influence how long I will be the temporary Chief Constable for.

Q78 Chair: Right. Will that be an appointment by the new Police and Crime Commissioner when he gets in—or she?

Acting Chief Constable Collins: It depends on the outcomes of other matters, clearly.

Q79 Chair: All right. I see.

Acting Chief Constable Collins: I will be staying in West Yorkshire, is the point.

Q80 Chair: Excellent. Mr Wilkinson, you are there and you are there to stay, I imagine?

Robin Wilkinson: One would hope so.

Q81 Chair: Good. The story, the narrative, is pretty depressing. We have had senior officials from the National Black Police Association and the Association of Muslim Police come before us. We know this because the Committee has held hearings on this for years and years and years. We have heard what Chief Constable Simon Byrne has said. We have been talking about these things for 20 years. Why is it that we still have such a huge underrepresentation of black and Asian police officers in the force? Dee Collins.

Acting Chief Constable Collins: I can start from my own perspective. I do think that the point made in the last session about austerity measures is absolutely correct for many forces. In my own experience in West Yorkshire over the last five years, we have lost 1,100 police officer posts and 800 police staff posts and had extremely limited recruitment opportunities. To be able to change that workforce mix has been incredibly difficult.

We have had a degree of success in terms of volunteers. We have also focused those very limited opportunities on internal applicants, whether they be police staff, PCSOs or indeed those specials, for some of the reasons that were alluded to before—that is, they have shown a degree of loyalty to the organisation. We have been able to bring in some new people and some new skills and also reduce the training commitments.

Q82 Chair: The figures are against you. The number you have in West Yorkshire is 5.1% of BME representation.

Acting Chief Constable Collins: That is correct, yes.

Q83 Chair: You cover great cities like Bradford and Leeds and the overall population as a whole is 18.3%.

Acting Chief Constable Collins: Yes.

Q84 Chair: Obviously you have only been doing this job for 22 months so you cannot be responsible for all the sins of West Yorkshire in terms of recruitment over the last half-century or so, but this is a problem, is it not? How would you address this? Those who gave evidence said it is up to chief constables, it is not up to anybody else. Do you agree?

Acting Chief Constable Collins: Absolutely. This is entirely about leadership, it is about culture and we have already alluded to that in the last session, and it is about opportunity, which was my point in terms of my ability to be able to bring new people into the organisation. I am really pleased to say that as a result of the recent settlement I am in a position, in fact, in the next 12 months, to be bringing 600 new police officers, a number of PCSOs, and a number of police staff into the organisation. From my perspective, it is a huge opportunity to take the learning from both West Midlands and the Met and others about how you proactively encourage people from underrepresented groups, including BME, to come and join us.

Q85 Chair: In the 22 months you have been the acting Chief Constable, how many BAME officers have you appointed?

Acting Chief Constable Collins: Very few because, as I have said, until now I have only had a very limited opportunity to bring people in.

Q86 Chair: Okay. We accept this. This the Government's fault. They are cutting your money. That is what you are saying, is it?

Acting Chief Constable Collins: I am not laying the blame at the door of the Government.

Chair: The Government gives you money.

Acting Chief Constable Collins: We simply were not able to recruit because we did not have the opportunity. What I would say is in order to be able to prepare ourselves for where we are now at, we have done an awful lot of work in terms of culture. I am very keen to explore that with you if we get the opportunity.

Q87 Chair: Okay. I am sure Naz Shah will want to know all about that when she comes to ask her questions. How many have you promoted?

Acting Chief Constable Collins: I reinitiated the promotion processes last autumn. We have had promotion processes right the way through. I was very interested to hear the evidence that has just been presented to you in terms of the rank structure—

Q88 Chair: Just tell me the numbers. How many have you promoted in the 22 months you have been the acting Chief Constable?

Acting Chief Constable Collins: In the 22 months that I have been in post—

Q89 Chair: How many black and Asian officers have you promoted?

Acting Chief Constable Collins: We have promoted two, now, to chief superintendent position, and we also have two at superintendent. Our profile is starting to change.

Q90 Chair: Okay. Mr Thompson, you have a bigger task because the West Midlands force is one of our great conurbations. Your figures are also pretty depressing: 8.6% and the population as a whole is almost 30%. You have been the Deputy Chief Constable as well as now becoming the Chief Constable. Why is it so bad? Why is the record so poor?

Chief Constable Thompson: There are a number of factors that impact on the career but I will talk about the progress we are making on recruiting.

Chair: Please.

Chief Constable Thompson: The cohorts we are recruiting now are about 27% BME. In terms of retraction of our recruit pool, when we advertise—like most police forces we have only recruited just under 200 officers over the last five years, and that is probably in the last 18 months or so we have done recruitment—we see some evidence of policing not always being the consistent career of choice. Some 21% of our expressions of interest are from BME communities. That is lower than the population.

It is particularly marked in black British communities for me, which is 6% in the West Midlands. We are not doing well enough in recruiting black British officers. Some of that is about overseas heritage and the experience of policing. Some of that is of course reinforcing issues of trust. Frankly, the events that have gone on in the United States have impacted upon black British communities' views of policing in the West Midlands, I would say.

There are things about our process. Because this was the first time we had recruited and we were determined to improve our representation, it is very clear on the analysis we have done on our own processes for recruitment that there is insufficient attention to processes if we are not careful. There is adverse impact that will happen in processes if you do not watch it closely. There is definitely, I would say, unconscious bias in processes unless you police them very carefully.

A key issue is the lack of observant role models. For example, in the West Midlands police there are no hijab-wearing female officers in the force. We do have applicants. We know we have applicants because we know from the analytics we do on our website, from Facebook analytics, that we have hijab-wearing females who will visit our site. We send messaging to try to encourage because we recognise we do not have—

Q91 Chair: In terms of role models at the top, you have been the Assistant Chief Constable of Greater Manchester so you have been policing communities that are diverse. You then went on to the West Midlands. I am sure David Jamieson must have asked you this question when he appointed you to become the chief constable. There are none at the equivalent of ACPO rank in your force.

Chief Constable Thompson: No, we—

Chair: You have no assistant chief constables.

Chief Constable Thompson: We have—

Chair: Tell us about the rank below that.

Chief Constable Thompson: We have one chief superintendent of 18 chief superintendents. We have three out of 33 superintendents. The position improves as we go further down the ranks but there is definitely an issue, and it is a long-term historical issue. If I look particularly, for example, at the three BME superintendents, they are all transferees to the force.

Q92 Chair: Really? From other areas?

Chief Constable Thompson: From other areas.

Q93 Chair: You have not been able to harvest, recruit and train internally? That is what you hope to change while you are Chief Constable?

Chief Constable Thompson: We are already making quite a lot of progress internally. There are a number of factors that play into progression. I would be interested, if we get the chance, to discuss the issues around specialist posts. That is quite important in terms of officer progression and there are definitely challenges here.

We have done quite a lot of work on promotion processes. Now, because rank structures have been reducing there has been less promotion process for senior ranks but when you start looking at the progress we are making further down the organisation, in terms of sergeant-inspectors we have about 9% now of our BME staff and we do not have an issue with retention. Our numbers have been going up. 23% who are BME who are applying are passing sergeants processes. That is higher than white colleagues and it is 44% with

inspectors and those processes. That is because of steps we have taken to eliminate bias in the process.

Q94 Chair: Fine. We heard about the go-to person. Who do you go to, Dee Collins or Robin Wilkinson, if I can bring you in here, on these kinds of issues, in order to improve the level of representation? Dal Babu talked about the need to go to the NPCC lead person, who is Giles York. Some have mentioned the College of Policing. Who do you go to?

Robin Wilkinson: To be honest, we focus ourselves in the Met. This is our—

Q95 Chair: Who is it in the Met who is responsible for diversity?

Robin Wilkinson: The Commissioner is ultimately responsible and he holds me to account for the aspect I am responsible for, which is the recruitment pipeline, ensuring we have appropriate promotion processes and ensuring that we have leadership programmes—picking up the point that was made earlier—so that we are developing the leaders in the Met so that they can effectively manage a more diverse workforce.

Q96 Chair: Do you take the point that those who run the process, if they are not themselves BAME, will never really understand the importance of this kind of representation? For example, on your senior staff how many are BME people?

Robin Wilkinson: Some 26% of my team are BME and 73% are female within the HR team within the Met. What we of course also do is—

Q97 Chair: Right, but in the rank immediately below you? You are the head of HR, are you?

Robin Wilkinson: Yes. Both of my direct reports are female.

Q98 Chair: Right. How many are BME?

Robin Wilkinson: I only have two direct reports. A small HR team.

Q99 Chair: So none? You are allowed to say “none”.

Robin Wilkinson: There are no BME people working directly below me.

Q100 Chair: What about in the rank below that?

Robin Wilkinson: Yes. There are two BME colleagues at the rank below.

Q101 Chair: Out of?

Robin Wilkinson: Out of 10.

Q102 Chair: How many times has the Commissioner come to you and said, “I am going before the Home Affairs Select Committee. They are bound to ask me about diversity, they always do. What is our plan? What are our numbers?” How many times do you discuss this issue?

Robin Wilkinson: It does not work like that.

Q103 Chair: Does he talk to you?

Robin Wilkinson: He talks to me regularly about this. He is passionate about it. You know he is passionate about it. He is absolutely committed that he wants—

Q104 Chair: His passion is not translated in the numbers appointed, is it?

Robin Wilkinson: I do not think that is true.

Q105 Chair: He promised 50/50. We now have 25%.

Robin Wilkinson: No, he requested 50/50. Let us be clear. He has sought agreement from the Home Office and others. He wrote again to the Home Secretary only earlier this week calling for targeted change in the legislation, picking up a point earlier around the equal merit provision, Section 159. His point is that the College of Policing set standards. We have standards of entry set by the College of Policing. If people meet those standards, they should be viewed as equally qualified. What the Commissioner has done is call for that change.

We are very proud of the work we have done over the last two to three years. Some 27% of recruits over the last 12 months were BAME. That is not good enough but it is a significant improvement on what we have been able to achieve in any of the previous years. At the same time, if I may, just as Mr Thompson said, resignation rates are holding strong. Equally, progress to getting people promoted, 163 BME colleagues have been promoted in the Met in the last—

Q106 Chair: Yes. Very good. We have all those figures. One of the issues that always comes to mind, especially if you read *The Evening Standard*—perhaps it is just *The Evening Standard* or perhaps it is us, that we focus on these articles—is that whenever you get a senior figure appointed at the Metropolitan Police, there is always an investigation. There are always complaints. At the end of the day, we had so many high-profile cases when

you reach a level beyond Dal Babu, there seems to be an issue at retaining people at the very highest level in the Met. This is not now; this is over a number of years. Do you understand that perception?

Robin Wilkinson: I understand the history. I am not sure about the perception. With the commander and above, four of our most senior leaders are BME in the Met. They are all good leaders and I am sure many of them will go on to even bigger jobs.

Chair: I see.

Q107 Mr Ranil Jayawardena: Ms Collins, you started at Cleveland Police.

Acting Chief Constable Collins: I did.

Q108 Mr Ranil Jayawardena: The National Black Police Association has highlighted today that there is a significant area of concern in terms of race issues at Cleveland Police.

Acting Chief Constable Collins: Yes.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena: The briefing that they made to the Committee highlights that there are currently six race discrimination cases being brought by police officers there and two civil actions, which they say are rooted in race issues. Why is this number so high?

Acting Chief Constable Collins: It is 10 years, I am afraid, since I was a Cleveland police officer. This is very much about relationships, I mentioned culture previously, and leadership. It is incredibly important—and this is what I have done since I moved to West Yorkshire Police—not only to talk about the importance of equality but to also demonstrate it. Since I have been at West Yorkshire Police I have become the President of the BAWP, leading on gender issues on behalf of the service.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena: BAWP?

Chief Constable Collins: BAWP, British Association of Women in Policing. I have also ensured that I have met and regularly meet with all of their support net groups, as well as the more established Federation, UNISON and GMB unions, in my case, to not just talk about issues but bringing people together. I have completely redesigned our approach in terms of inequality and how we approach that, both strategically and tactically, and use a degree of experience that I have picked up along the way—some of which perhaps has been from my experience in policing in Cleveland—that unless you force those relationships at an early stage and gain that trust of individuals that you mean what you say, it is incredibly difficult to try to move things forwards.

Q109 Mr Ranil Jayawardena: You are confident that for your police force now, lessons have been learned from those cases and are being learned across the UK, as well as from other high-profile discrimination cases against Cleveland Police that have occurred in recent years—the shocking examples of Nadeem Saddique and Sultan Alam? Those are extraordinary cases.

Acting Chief Constable Collins: They are. I do recognise, though, that it is important that we get all of the facts rather than perhaps only getting our information from the media. The way those lessons are learned, through the stated cases, through the Employment Tribunal findings and so on, is very important.

I also think that having those regular relationships internally as well as externally is very important so you understand the context. In my case, the context of what is happening in West Yorkshire at a time when I want to go out to recruitment is incredibly important. The circumstances feel a little bit different from what Dave has described about what perhaps local communities within the West Midlands are feeling and experiencing at the moment, in comparison to perhaps those areas within West Yorkshire, within Bradford, within Dewsbury and one or two other places. It feels a little bit different and I have to be aware and alive to that at a time when I want to go and recruit from those communities.

Q110 Mr Ranil Jayawardena: Mr Wilkinson, the Met, I understand, offers workshops to BME candidates in officer recruitment in preparation for both the online tests and the assessment days. Has the take-up of these workshops been strong? Do you believe they have improved the success rates for attendees?

Robin Wilkinson: Yes, they have been strong. They have been very welcomed. There are some practical steps. For example, vetting has been raised earlier in the panel and one of the things we do in that process is talk to people about the importance of being very precise and clear in the forms that people are given and having a kind of surgery. “Should I raise this issue? Should I raise that issue?” It has been helping raise some practical issues, demystifying the process and frankly just making the Met feel more human.

Q111 Mr Ranil Jayawardena: What is being offered in these workshops that BME applicants ordinarily would lack?

Robin Wilkinson: It is information-sharing. We get 40% of applicants from London applying who are BME. There is no issue about people not wanting to join the Met but people do approach this process with a bit of fear and trepidation and this is about trying to demystify it, put people at ease and explain what is going to happen through the process. It has already been mentioned earlier that white colleagues may have more friends who might have already been in the police, or family who were. This process will not feel so mystifying and suchlike.

Q112 Mr Ranil Jayawardena: Mr Thompson, we have heard from the Chairman the current state of your organisation in terms of the number of BME officers. Is your police force running similar schemes? Will it run similar schemes? Do you think this has merit?

Chief Constable Thompson: It runs schemes at three levels. In terms of recruitment, we do positive action for recruits. That is largely around trying to improve their confidence about the process, putting them in touch with observant role models, people who have a similar experience or background to themselves who can try to give them the confidence that there is a place in the police service for them.

We run it for promotion processes. The Spring Forward programme we run is general leadership but is targeted at those particular groups, trying to ensure they are given good opportunities around that.

We run it for specialist departments and functions. We have been doing it recently in counterterrorism and we run it particularly in terms of what we have done around firearms.

I do think though—there was a point made earlier—it is not just about asking BME staff to do better because when I go back to my promotion process, when we make the system fairer they are doing better than white colleagues. There is an issue here about looking very attentively, not just in terms of my leadership and the values I set for the force—diversity is very strongly sat in them—but looking very carefully at the processes. My sense is that it is not that we are engaging in directly discriminatory activity but there is definitely unconscious bias running in processes in forces.

Chair: Thank you.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena: Can I ask one very quick supplementary on the back of that?

Chair: Yes.

Q113 Mr Ranil Jayawardena: You just mentioned about promotion as well. I wondered whether you had any comment on direct entry to superintendent level. What is your view on that? Obviously it is working very well in the Met.

Chief Constable Thompson: The Committee was discussing before the issues about changing over time, the organisation. I am more optimistic with my constables, with police staff, with my PCSOs, with my special constables and sergeant-inspectors, but as I have discussed, the critical mass I have, senior leaders from BME, there is not a large pool to draw from. Direct entry can offer an approach. We have currently not supported the superintendent direct entry simply because we had no vacancies. We will look at that. I am also going to look particularly at rank-skipping for inspector to superintendent as an approach. Once again, we have talent at those levels.

Q114 Chair: Thank you. Dee Collins, just a very quick answer to this. How many conversations has Mark Burns-Williamson had with you in your 22 months about the issue of diversity, about the need to recruit more black and Asian people?

Acting Chief Constable Collins: I can honestly say almost every time we have a conversation, particularly at the moment, knowing that we are recruiting. I was very interested to hear about who is accountable earlier.

Chair: Yes. So were we.

Acting Chief Constable Collins: The Police and Crime Panel absolutely hold Mr Burns-Williamson to account in terms of our overall staffing profile and he absolutely holds me to account about our overall staffing profile. I am choosing my words very carefully because clearly here we are talking about diversity in its widest sense.

Q115 Chair: We are talking specifically about black, Asian and minority ethnics.

Acting Chief Constable Collins: Absolutely.

Chair: In the narrow sense, not in the wider sense.

Acting Chief Constable Collins: In the narrow sense, in terms of workforce planning, absolutely, and in terms of other processes too.

Q116 Chair: He talks to you regularly about this?

Acting Chief Constable Collins: Yes.

Q117 Chair: Every conversation. David Thompson, what about David Jamieson?

Chief Constable Thompson: There is similar interaction. My police and crime commissioner runs a public board where papers are produced and were held public—

Q118 Chair: We have heard about the papers. How many conversations—

Chief Constable Thompson: Yes, regular conversations so two areas are the main focus of conversation. Well, in terms of diversity there are three principle areas that the Commission focusses on in this conversation—

Chair: No, I just want to know about conversations—

Chief Constable Thompson: —BME recruitment. Regularly—

Q119 Chair: Yes, how many conversations does he have with you? We will come on to processes.

Chief Constable Thompson: I speak to him every week and—

Chair: He talks to you about this every week?

Chief Constable Thompson: Right. He doesn't speak to me about this issue every week. We will discuss issues around diversity regularly so we will do a structured process where we update and talk about recruitment. This issue features, the public can scrutinise me on that. We talk about stop and search, around that. We talk about disproportionality in the complaints system.

Q120 Chair: Excellent. Robin Wilkinson, how many times has the Mayor, in his term of office, talked to you about the need to recruit more black and Asian people?

Robin Wilkinson: As I say, he talks to the commissioner regularly about it and I feel the heat from that kind of conversation. So it is on the agenda, it is something that the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime has been very, very committed to achieve and—

Q121 Chair: So you need that, do you? You need to know that those politically responsible are putting pressure on you?

Robin Wilkinson: No, personally I don't. Absolutely not. A clear part of our strategy is to change the look and feel of the Met. The fact that there is accountability around that is surely what should be in public service but you have to want to do it. If you want to do it you can make progress.

Chair: Thank you.

Q122 Naz Shah: My first question is to you, Mr Wilkinson. I noted you are a board member of the College of Policing. Do you think it is acceptable for the College of Policing to be presenting or designing programmes for retention or leadership without speaking to the President of the National Black Police Association or the National Association of Muslim Police when you have this issue?

Robin Wilkinson: I was very surprised to hear that today. Very surprised.

Naz Shah: I take it you will assure that you will go back and look into that?

Robin Wilkinson: You most certainly can. Absolutely.

Naz Shah: Could you feed that back to this Committee, please?

Robin Wilkinson: Of course.

Q123 Naz Shah: My second question is to you, David Thompson. You have talked about a subconscious bias. What assurances could you give to this Committee today of what you are going to do, personally, to address that issue within the police force? As much as I appreciate you are chief constables of your own forces, you have, in positions of leadership, a responsibility especially after hearing what we have heard before you. So what assurances can you give us? What will you do personally?

Chief Constable Thompson: In terms of West Midlands Police, I have set out a number of issues around people-responsibilities on becoming chief constable. One of those responsibilities directly relates to unconscious bias, which is six months from my appointment there will be no interviews for any job selection in the force where staff are not unconscious-bias trained. The first group of people we have had trained are the command team and chief officers. We will also be doing an assessment on unconscious bias at those levels and we do a senior leaders' training day on 19 May. So we will not do appointments in our force because I do not think it will be safe and appropriate to do it without that training.

In terms of broader policing, the College of Policing lead on the programme is a West Midlands officer, Superintendent Manjit Thandi; he is on secondment. We have a good relationship with the College over that programme. We do a lot of work to host and support other forces with their recruitment processes and we do a lot of work to share what we do with national leads around the work. So on specific unconscious bias, that is what I will do. There are many other things we will do to ensure fairness in processes.

Q124 Naz Shah: Thank you. Finally, Dee Collins, you have talked about culture, organisational culture, and I have obviously worked closely with the local police on lots of issues around radicalisation and CSE. Personally, I must tell you that I do see that leadership there. But what have you done or what are you continuing to commit to because there are clearly other challenges which are presenting in places like Bradford West around BME communities? One of the things I am hearing here—and it is quite disheartening—is that police forces aren't reaching into communities. You are, in terms of recruiting, putting out adverts but are you using those community mechanisms like community groups or community champions as opposed to just visibility? What are you doing?

Acting Chief Constable Collins: A couple of weeks ago myself and the Commissioner hosted a positive action conference aimed at community stakeholders. A very, very large number of people were invited from all sorts of different diverse backgrounds, right the way across West Yorkshire, to share with us their thoughts about what would work within their communities in terms of recruitment, retention and progression. We had a number of people attend and some of the feedback was really interesting and has been reflected upon today, to be fair. For example, if you really want to attract younger people into the organisation in 2016 your recruitment process is too long.

If you want to recruit people from BME communities within Bradford you really need to go and reach into them and talk to young people; talk to people who are very key influencers, not necessarily the community leaders but influencers, to understand what is

going to work for them. So we have done quite a great deal of that and we are now in the process where we have some localised thinking looking at marketing material; making best use of YouTube, for example, about what a career in the police service could mean. We have also had the chief superintendent, who has recently been promoted, who has also done a piece of work to reach into communities that he has contacts with.

I think networking is incredibly important and I fully appreciate the comments that were made before about many people from BME backgrounds not having those contacts within the police service to automatically go to. It was very interesting: on my way here, I was having a conversation with a member of my own BPA who asked me what led me to be in the police service. Well, actually my best friend's father was a police officer. I hadn't thought about it necessarily in that particular way and that is clearly something that I need to think about to encourage my own BPA and so on to have those network.

Chair: Thank you.

Chief Constable Thompson: Chair, could I make a supplementary point in terms of that?

Chair: Yes, of course.

Chief Constable Thompson: On the initial stage of the application process in the West Midlands, applicants will give examples and they will also do a situation judgment test. We only look at the situation judgment test for the precise reason we are discussing because we know some BME candidates will not be as well networked with policing, will not be as well networked across and they will not be able to provide the level of actual examples that might hit the criteria on the forms but will do very well in the situation judgment test, which is the core issue. We try to take that into account in the process because we know simply it is one of the areas that has direct adverse impact if we simply look at the application form and so we are moving to look at the judgment side because that is a more accurate predictor of potential.

Q125 Naz Shah: In the submissions earlier and what Janet Hill provided, we saw the narrative around Stephen Lawrence. One of the things is that the police force, certainly from my perspective, is always associated with institutional racism because of what happened there. Have any of you thought about re-owning that now in terms of celebrating what the police force has learnt because of that tragedy, because of what happened made the police force one of the best police forces in the world? Have you owned that now or do you think you should be owning that now to engage with black and minority ethnic communities?

Acting Chief Constable Collins: I will start. Absolutely, I do think we need to recognise what is the learning that we have taken from the process. What are the issues that are still floating around in our organisations, and there are some, I think we have alluded to

some of that already today? What can we do working together? I think the key for me is: let's just not look at this in isolation because we have to take the whole workforce with us on this.

This is about values around fairness and integrity in respect of my own force area and this is about making sure we understand why this is so important. This isn't just about numbers, it isn't just about representation—it is about legitimacy with our communities and understanding what our communities' needs are. I just think it is a bigger narrative than perhaps we have been focused in on a little bit today. That is where I want to take things in West Yorkshire.

Chief Constable Thompson: From my perspective, while we recognise really good progress, I police an area that is 30% black and ethnic minority and that population is growing quickly and it is young. Not all the views of policing are formed by the UK. In a lot of the work we have done with young black people they have talked about, "The police shoot people". We have not discharged a firearm since 2002 in the West Midlands; it is formed from what is going on in Ferguson and the States so there is still, I think, a potentially serious trust issue. We will be doing a lot of work focusing on procedural legitimacy, demonstrating as we have done through things like schedule 7 that we behave in a fair and legitimate way. I think I have probably more work to do and that is not because we are not a trusted institution, it is because communities are changing so quickly that, in my view, a little bit like PEEL would say really, "You have to keep winning the legitimacy every day".

Q126 Mr David Winnick: I do not normally quote the Home Secretary, for pretty obvious reasons, but you will be aware that when she spoke in October 2015 to the National Black Police Association she said in the course of her remarks, "If the police do not properly reflect the communities where local officers police then we cannot truly say the police are the public and the public are the police". The three of you would not disagree with a word of that presumably?

Chief Constable Thompson: The only observation I would make of it—he says, courageously entering this area—is that I think representation is incredibly important. On that conference, which was in Birmingham, I walked with the black officers for hours and it was very impactful to me that seeing black officers is really important to black communities and how many didn't think we had any was a shock to me as the Chief Constable of West Midlands. I don't think it is simply about representation; we have to diverse in our attitudes and our values and our approach. It is not just simply looking like the community. You can look like the community and you can still not operate in a way that means you are part of the community.

Mr David Winnick: Yes, but you are not going to disagree for one moment that obviously the police force should represent, to a large extent, the population it polices. It would not make sense otherwise.

Chief Constable Thompson: I won't disagree with that, although, again, there are lots of other strands of diversity simply beyond race where we are not going to represent easily, but I agree with the position that we do not represent on race well at the moment.

Q127 Mr David Winnick: I should have prefaced my remarks by congratulating you following what the Chair said, particularly as a West Midlands Member of Parliament, and I did not duly do so. Chief Constable, you have talked about the need for progress. There is no complacency and I would not expect any complacency on your part any more than on your predecessor's, but would you say that you have an action plan in the West Midlands, bearing in mind the make-up of Birmingham, the Black Country, that you would hope in a short time would bring about a substantial improvement in the present position?

Chief Constable Thompson: We have a plan in terms of recruitment. We are in the process of recruiting—at the moment it is 450; it will probably be about 500 officers. We have a plan that will ensure, I think, that the second cohorts we have done, because we learnt a lot from the first experience, are representative in the community. I cannot, in the duration I will be Chief Constable, at the rate we are recruiting, say that the West Midlands police will match what it looks like as a population. It will be more representative. I also intend to make the force fairer in the way it works with communities and the way it treats its own staff.

Q128 Mr David Winnick: Thank you. Who is the most senior police officer in the West Midlands in the BME category?

Chief Constable Thompson: It is Chief Superintendent Matt Ward at Sandwell.

Mr David Winnick: Following him?

Chief Constable Thompson: There are three superintending rank officers who work in Wolverhampton. One is seconded to the College of Policing and one who also works in East Birmingham.

Q129 Mr David Winnick: The total number from inspector upwards of BME, how many, Chief Constable?

Chief Constable Thompson: From inspector upwards, I do not have a total to work through but I can tell you the numbers. There are 19 male inspectors who are BME; four female; four chief inspectors who are male BME; two female; three superintendents; and one chief superintendent.

Q130 Mr David Winnick: One question, if I may, to Mr Wilkinson. Recognising the importance obviously of the West Midlands would you accept, Mr Wilkinson, that to a large extent by the very fact it is the Met it should be giving the lead? Do you really feel that enough is being done where other police forces can say the Met has achieved this as far as

representation from non-whites is concerned? Would you consider that an objective as well—to give a lead as far as representation for the BME is concerned?

Robin Wilkinson: Yes, I think we certainly do and this is business-critical to the Met, ensuring that we have a police force that can look more like London. It is going to take a couple of generations, is it not, before it looks like London unless there is any fundamental seismic shift that we do not see in the landscape at the moment. It is fundamentally important but it is business-critical, is it not? It is about making sure that we have access to communities that we would not otherwise have access to—the skills, the language skills, all of that is what you need to police London successfully.

Q131 Mr David Winnick: Of course against the background of the Macpherson Report—

Chief Constable Thompson: Of course.

Mr David Winnick: —which could not have been more critical, could it?

Chief Constable Thompson: No, of course, and the Met, at the turn of the century, had 3% of its officers as BME and we are now standing at 12.5%. That is nowhere near enough, is it? But substantial progress has been made and must continue to be made and—

Q132 Chair: But what is your target? You said it would take a considerable length of time in the Met. Has the Mayor come to you with a target? Would you expect whoever is the next Mayor to be able to say to you, “We have a target to increase the numbers”? Have you ever had a target in the Met?

Robin Wilkinson: Our internally set ambition was to try to reach 40% recruitment. Every recruit intake, we try to make that match London’s. We have gone from 16%, which was our best ever, in 2014-15, to 27% last year. We are still not at that 40%. We get 40% interest—

Q133 Chair: When do you think you will get to the 40%?

Robin Wilkinson: It is a challenge. As Mr Thompson says, we have fundamentally changed all parts of the process, tried to take out those bits—

Q134 Chair: We accept all that. We accept you are doing good work.

Robin Wilkinson: There are two more important bits. One is called SEARCH. It is the core nationally set recruitment process. We are working with the College to fundamentally re-set that because we get disproportionate outcomes, which we cannot explain.

We have to re-look at our vetting arrangements too. I am sure it will be a conversation we will want to have with the new Mayor because there is significant disproportionality.

Those are the two bits of the process within our gift that we have not already changed. Then, frankly, you are into looking at whether there should be wider changes, such as the legislative option.

Q135 Chair: Yes, because there seem to be a lot of papers floating around, many strategies, but when you get down to the front line the numbers seem to be stuck.

Robin Wilkinson: I do not think the numbers are stuck. I think the numbers are moving. We recruited 1,600 police officers last year; 27% of those were BME; 30% were female. We will breach the 4,000-officer mark by June.

Chair: Thank you. Nusrat Ghani has the final question.

Q136 Nusrat Ghani: Mr Thompson, you talked about unconscious bias training. I think if it was suggested to me that I have unconscious bias training I would have to consciously acknowledge that I was racist. Therefore, are your officers on the interview panel consciously racist?

Chief Constable Thompson: I think you would have to recognise you had biases.

Q137 Nusrat Ghani: So they are racist?

Chief Constable Thompson: Everybody has biases. It does not mean they are racist. I think everybody has bias and the aim of the training is to make sure people are aware of that. We will provide opportunities for them to assess what those biases may be so they are aware of them.

Q138 Nusrat Ghani: What about having a panel made up of people who do not need unconscious bias training?

Chief Constable Thompson: Of course we do that. If you look at the SEARCH process we do for recruits, we have the most visibly diverse assessors because we know—psychological work says—if people who we are assessing see people involved in the assessment and selection process who are BME it is an important part of reinforcing candidates' ability to perform. On our final interviews to recruit, which are a reinforcement of success at SEARCH, where we do not have BME staff we have a community representative and we will look at what we can do to create representative boards. When we get into more senior positions, of course, we clearly do not have the level of representation.

Q139 Nusrat Ghani: If you are on an interview panel you tend to be a senior police officer. You will not be a junior police officer. You would have gone through the ranks a

little bit and you probably would have managed a number of people in a variety of ranks. Having gone through all those ranks and managed a variety of people do you still require unconscious bias training?

Chief Constable Thompson: I think everybody who is interviewing should be reminded. I am an assessor at the Police National Selection Centre. When I had my core training I was trained in unconscious bias. When I go to do the assessment process, I am reminded about unconscious bias. I have been on selection panels where there has been discussion among the assessors where the grades are reflecting a level of bias and that happens elsewhere in the public sector where I have also been on panels. There are many subtle things that are not about racism. The work we have been doing recently on Gender Decoder on applications for example, to use the right language when we describe a job to attract the right candidates, is quite important. There are many subtle things there but I think it is fundamentally the right thing to make people aware and constantly challenge people to ask the question, are they operating with any bias.

Q140 Nusrat Ghani: You also mentioned looking at the tests that are conducted to make sure that they are not biased or that they are blind tests. You accepted the fact that some candidates, if they are from a black or Asian background, might not excel at some of these tests. Is that correct?

Chief Constable Thompson: On some of the evidence another candidate may have an advantage on the application form because of their social contacts or the contact—

Q141 Nusrat Ghani: They would be disadvantaged?

Chief Constable Thompson: They would be disadvantaged.

Q142 Nusrat Ghani: So considering that in the West Midlands in particular—a bit like London where you have a high proportion of black and Asian people—instead of making sure that the test is not disadvantaging, why not change the test so it reflects the kind of people in the community you are trying to recruit from? It does not matter if they are black or Asian. They are probably culturally biased as well. So why not change the test to make sure that it is fit for purpose? Obviously the test is not fit for purpose if it is disadvantaging people.

Chief Constable Thompson: A few issues. There are many different strands of diversity, are there not? When we are looking at any process we are not only assessing its impact on race. We are looking at religion. We are also looking at gender. We are looking at all those—

Q143 Nusrat Ghani: There are elements in the test that would a put person who is black—I would be at a disadvantage if I took that test compared to Mr Loughton, who has just left. You will acknowledge that?

Chief Constable Thompson: No, not necessarily. What we are saying is we see a trend in certain parts of it that show disproportionate impact on a candidate so we will neutralise that part of the test because it will affect certain characteristics. It does not mean everybody.

Q144 Nusrat Ghani: Instead of neutralising, why not just change the test so everyone is on an equal level?

Chief Constable Thompson: I think it is almost impossible to deliver a test that absolutely does not have an adverse impact on anybody across protected characteristics. What is important is to carefully monitor and look where adverse impact trends take place.

As my colleague was saying about SEARCH, we have a higher pass mark in the West Midlands on SEARCH. We pass an average of 60%, which is 10% higher than the national figure. We do not see disproportionality. Pass marks at SEARCH level are seeing it. We need to look at SEARCH carefully. That is a most important part of the police process—it is the standard part all forces follow—and I think we need to have a hard look at SEARCH again. I am not saying there is adverse impact on SEARCH in a high way but we will look at particular parts of the process where certain categories of candidates are disproportionately impacted.

Q145 Nusrat Ghani: All right. I believe one of the most damning pieces of evidence we took earlier was the fact that black and Asian women are far more likely to take voluntary resignation, or whatever; to leave the force. It is not about recruitment numbers being high. It is about retention. I do not believe in any form of positive discrimination, but if this were happening in a workplace that I was in I would want to see some particular exit interviews or some research being done. Why are black and Asian women leaving the force after so much time, effort and energy has been invested by them and by you? What is the problem here?

Chief Constable Thompson: I do not agree with the evidence given before. I do not see that trend in the West Midlands.

Q146 Nusrat Ghani: Do you see that, Ms Collins?

Acting Chief Constable Collins: No, I do not see that necessarily in West Yorkshire either. That said, it is through the meetings I am now having with the BPA and our AMP that I am getting a far better understanding of what it is like now being an officer or member of staff within West Yorkshire police; what their concerns are. Some of those concerns around perceived disproportionality, and particularly around misconduct, have been echoed already this morning and we are now looking very closely into those things. If we don't, how on earth

do we then go back out into the marketplace, into our communities, and want people to come and join us.

Q147 Nusrat Ghani: So you are prepared to have the discussions now?

Acting Chief Constable Collins: Absolutely.

Q148 Nusrat Ghani: Mr Thompson, you do not recognise the evidence given earlier?

Chief Constable Thompson: No. I think we look very carefully at our retention issues in the West Midlands. I recognise some of the points from the evidence earlier. For example, line managers' recommendations; we eliminate those from our process because I think there is occasionally bias in them.

I recognise that there is some disproportionality in the conduct system that was mentioned before—it is a more complex picture—but I do not recognise the picture that was painted of large numbers of BME staff or female BME staff leaving the force. Our numbers are going up because there are more white officers retiring, leaving, as well as us recruiting more BME staff.

Q149 Chair: Thank you. I am afraid we have to end there. Just two quick points, one to you, Dee Collins. One of your local MPs, Rachel Reeves, has written to me about antisocial behaviour in Leeds and the positive impact when you issue injunctions on people.

Acting Chief Constable Collins: Yes.

Q150 Chair: I would be grateful if you could write to us about this or contact Rachel Reeves. We are not necessarily a postbox here but I did ask local MPs to come forward with questions they needed to ask.

To you, Dave Thompson: as you know the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for West Midlands has been suspended. What kind of message do you think it sends out to your recruitment of more BME people when the only black woman Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner has been suspended?

Chief Constable Thompson: You will be aware that is a matter for the police and crime commissioner, not me.

Chair: I know that.

Chief Constable Thompson: Any issues that involve visible role models in policing or public life do of course have an impact on communities.

Q151 Chair: Did you have any part to play in that? Did you call for her to be removed?

Chief Constable Thompson: No.

Q152 Chair: This was entirely a matter—

Chief Constable Thompson: There are issues that I have drawn to the attention of the police and crime commissioner, which I think have been reported, regarding a matter relating to a murder in the West Midlands where there was something that I think was appropriately drawn to the commissioner's attention.

Q153 Chair: You say it is his decision and his decision only?

Chief Constable Thompson: The deputy police and crime commissioner is an employee of the police and crime commissioner. It is the police and crime commissioner's decision.

Q154 Chair: I know we have put the focus on all of you today but when the panels hold the commissioners to account would you like to see that they were a bit more diverse than they are now? You do not have a panel; you have MOPAC in London, do you not, Mr Wilkinson?

Robin Wilkinson: There is a Deputy Mayor for Police and Crime and then there is the Police and Crime Committee of the GLA.

Q155 Chair: When you are held to account on diversity issues would you like those who hold you to account to be a little bit more diverse than they are now? Dee Collins?

Acting Chief Constable Collins: Yes, I would because it goes right back to the point of this particular session. Where are the role models for our members of the community to look to and aspire to become?

Chair: Mr Thompson?

Chief Constable Thompson: Some of the challenges about creating diverse organisations that you have talked about today I think apply to some of our political parties as well and some of the challenges that we face are the same.

Chair: Mr Wilkinson?

Robin Wilkinson: Yes, of course, but don't downplay the impact that colleagues in the BPA and other associations have in representing their members' interests and holding us to account in that kind of a way as well. It is an important part of the jigsaw.

Q156 Chair: Do you quake with fear when you get a call from Janet Hills?

Robin Wilkinson: We have lots of good conversations.

Chair: Thank you all very much again for coming in. Congratulations, Mr Thompson. I am sure we will see you again in the next four years.

