

## Home Affairs Committee

### Oral evidence: [The work of the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service, HC 560](#)

Wednesday 8 July 2020

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Members present: Yvette Cooper (Chair); Ms Diane Abbott; Ruth Edwards; Laura Farris; Simon Fell; Andrew Gwynne; Adam Holloway; Tim Loughton; Stuart C McDonald.

Questions 1 - 55

#### Witnesses

I: Dame Cressida Dick DBE QPM, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service, and Assistant Commissioner Helen Ball, Assistant Commissioner for Professionalism, Metropolitan Police Service.



## Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Dame Cressida Dick and Helen Ball.

Q1 **Chair:** Welcome to this evidence session for the Home Affairs Select Committee. We welcome Metropolitan Police Commissioner Cressida Dick to give evidence to us this morning and also Assistant Commissioner Helen Ball. You are both very welcome. Thank you for joining us in this rather distanced session today.

Before we start, we are aware of the number of your officers who have been injured in recent weeks in policing and we are appalled that that should have happened to them. Can you please convey to them our best wishes and our thanks to them and their colleagues for the work that they are doing?

**Dame Cressida Dick:** Thank you, Chair.

Q2 **Chair:** Commissioner, what do you see now as the biggest challenges facing the Met over the next couple of months?

**Dame Cressida Dick:** We have been policing the health emergency and, of course, trying to support the public of London for the last 12 to 14 weeks in that. I am very proud of the presence we have shown, the resilience we have had, the support we have given to people, and the fact that we have been able to continue to bear down on violence and to keep the streets low in terms of crime.

We have, of course, had some considerable operational challenges latterly. I am sure we will come back to those. But we have also been building a stronger Met for the future, learning the lessons during this period. Helen, in fact, leads on our recovery and renewal work. We have been growing the Met. We have not paused with any of our recruiting or training. I believe we have looked after our staff well in some difficult circumstances. Of course, most importantly, we have supported colleagues in the NHS and the public in fighting the virus.

As I look forward, we have been through a turbulent few weeks in terms of protests as a result primarily of the death of George Floyd in those terrible circumstances, which resulted in Black Lives Matter protests of a huge number and variety, and some other counter-protests. Since then, we have had further, almost entirely peaceful, protests. We have also been dealing with unlicensed music events.

But we have not taken our eye off our normal job in the last few weeks, I can assure you. We have been continuing—and you will have seen some of the results—to bear down on violence and have had some fantastic successes against serious organised criminals. In the next couple of months, as the country moves further out of lockdown, no doubt other challenges will come our way. We have had to flex and surge and change



on a weekly basis. We will do that. We are prepared. We are ready. There will be more people on the streets. There will obviously be more people enjoying licensed premises. There will potentially be more people on the public transport system; we are not sure about that.

We are an integral part of the London Strategic Co-ordinating and Transition Groups. We will make sure that we play a full part in keeping London safe in all ways in the next few months. We are working with others to think about—let's hope we don't have to—how we work with others on a local lockdown or, indeed, should there be a second wave. What would that mean for the Met? How would we support London and Londoners in that?

**Chair:** Thank you. We want to follow up on a series of those points. We will start with Andrew Gwynne.

Q3 **Andrew Gwynne:** I want to raise some issues, Dame Cressida, following the issues of policing around Covid-19 and the lockdown. We have seen scenes during recent protests, but also a number of police officers have been attacked and injured in unlicensed music events and raves in places like Brixton, Notting Hill, Newham, Kilburn, and Clapham and Tooting Bec Commons. Why do you believe that is happening and what can be done to prevent it?

**Dame Cressida Dick:** There has been a combination of things. Clearly, everybody has had to live through the period of lockdown and it has affected some people very much more than others. I would say people do seem quite frustrated in many respects and quite angry in some respects and keen to get out on to the streets. Some people have been very keen to express their views in protests. Some people have been very keen to enjoy music events, given that there are no festivals and no music going on. Other people have been out shopping and going about normal-but-not-normal daily business, working and whatnot.

We have seen a level of tension, there is no doubt about that. People have been getting frustrated about, for example, the way Covid-19 has affected their communities. People have looked at, latterly, some videos they have seen of police interactions with the public and have become angry about that.

I would have to say when I look at the protests, which I think my officers policed absolutely excellently, there were a small number of people at the large protests, each of them—at Black Lives Matter 100, 200 or maybe 500 people, and indeed when we had the weekend when the so-called far right was protesting on that side of the equation, if I can put it that way, a number of people—who were intent on being incredibly aggressive and very violent in a way that is completely unacceptable, of course.

At the unlicensed music events, these events we know in London historically, sadly, are not just parties in the street. There are huge sound systems. It is something people in the local area hate. They call us. They



want us to get rid of it straight away. We are mostly very good at stopping them before they start. But if they get any traction, they tend to attract some people who are either drunk or under the influence of drugs or anyway just intent on being extremely antisocial and on occasion violent.

I would describe it as a whole series of different things. Attacks on police officers, as the Chair and you have said, are completely unacceptable. I have far too many officers who have suffered injuries in the last few weeks.

Q4 **Andrew Gwynne:** Thank you. It is very concerning and our thoughts are with those officers, but it has also been suggested by people like Tim Newburn, professor of criminology and social policy at the London School of Economics, in *The Guardian* on 26 June that the current conditions as a result of Covid-19 may be conducive to more widespread disorder. Is that your view and how is the Met preparing for it?

**Dame Cressida Dick:** It is worth going back to the beginning of the crisis and the complete lockdown. People were asking me how this would turn out and what relationships between the police and the public would be. I said that we must maintain as good as possible relationships throughout.

However, we do not actually know how enforcing the regulations will work. We do not know how people will respond or how compliant they will be. We do not know whether there will not come a time when people will just want to be out on the streets expressing a view, where the long-held sense and, indeed, right to express in an assembly or a gathering normally will come slap-bang up against the restrictions. That is what we saw. We have seen other large gatherings, which we have talked about, where people have ended up being very disorderly.

I am not a sociologist. I do not know how people are going to respond in the coming weeks, and I do not know what is going to happen, of course, with the health emergency. But I do know I have a fantastically resilient service, which we have shown throughout. I have very well prepared and trained people. I have people who are utterly determined to stay focused on their mission. We will be quick to deal with any potential disorder. We will be fast on to that. We will be engaging and engaging and engaging to try to explain to people how they can behave or ought to behave and, if something goes wrong, why that has happened. We will try to keep things calm.

My appeal to everybody in the coming months will be that we should all be trying to keep things calm, bring people together and not divide people.

Q5 **Andrew Gwynne:** As the lockdown regulations are lifted, you must have done some assessment as to what the possible flashpoints are likely to be so you can prepare for that. Have you done that piece of work?



**Dame Cressida Dick:** We have certainly looked ahead, as we have done throughout, at all the potential changes in restrictions and the big moments that there might be. We had one last weekend when licensed premises opened again. We were well prepared. Most people behaved extremely well. It was a reasonably quiet weekend in London.

We will look forward and look forward and look forward. Helen can talk about this. We have very good community contacts, not just in the public authorities but in our communities. We have very good information gathering and assessment going on all the time. We are forward-looking and we will dispose our efforts and our capability where they are required.

Do you want to say anything about engagement, Helen?

**Assistant Commissioner Ball:** Thank you. The Commissioner mentioned that I had been leading on some of the aspects of this work. In a normal major incident, you would have a response phase and then move into a recovery phase. Of course, this is not a normal major incident, so we are realising we have to recover things like training—and we are looking at how we can bring back the training that we had paused—and at the same time still respond to the pandemic. We will be responding to that for some time to come.

Absolutely, as the Commissioner has described, we are thinking about the potential for further local need for lockdowns or different restrictions, potential protests and flashpoints, but also events that traditionally happen. We saw that Pride, traditionally a wonderful, large march in London, had to go online. We are thinking through to events where people might just feel that they want to be out celebrating.

We are talking to our communities and our local groups and people who are particularly affected by those events or protests all the time to make sure they are telling us how they want those things to be policed and that they are giving us their concerns and telling us about things that they think might be problems. Then, as we reach them, we are communicating with and, indeed, involving them in the policing plan to make sure that it is as acceptable as possible to our communities.

Q6 **Tim Loughton:** Commissioner, I echo the words of the Chair in sending our good wishes to the injured officers. Your colleagues have had a particularly challenging time in recent weeks and we all appreciate that.

Can I dwell on the two weekends of those high-profile demonstrations that we saw in London and the unedifying scenes of items and punches being thrown at police, bolting police horses, that terrible injury to the policewoman on that horse, and the alarming scene of officers retreating down Parliament Square in front of a mob? In retrospect, do you think you handled well the policing of those demonstrations in both respects, be it Black Lives Matter or the far right, football supporters and assorted others who turned up the following weekend? What lessons have you



learned?

**Dame Cressida Dick:** We handled them well. We handled them as well as anybody could. I have a very experienced cadre of public order commanders. We had our best people out on the days. Our capability, capacity, training and experience here in London is second to none in the world across my teams.

It was very hard to know how those protests would eventuate. If you think of a “normal” protest, we have an organiser, we are able to engage and we know how to help them to keep themselves and the people who are turning out safe. They think about a route, we talk to them about how that might work, and so forth.

With the big BLM protests, we had absolutely nobody who would talk to us before. On the day the officers are, of course, asked to engage as much as possible and talk to people. You will see the officers in blue bibs going around trying to find somebody who might be some sort of an organiser to explain what the challenges might be. However, we had—it is not quite the right word—quite aimless crowds in a way to start with. People were coming out with very strong feelings and saying, “Central London start here”, and then wanting to go in all sorts of different directions. But they were peaceful in the main.

On both the two days of the first weekend, before the far-right and counter protests came out, we had peaceful, if you like, protests. Protesters were pretty rude to people and my officers were, I felt, particularly my black officers, subjected to constant abuse all day long, as were many others. But they were physically peaceful until about 6 o’clock and then suddenly in Whitehall missiles started being hurled.

If I had known before the Sunday, for example, that missiles were going to be hurled at 6 o’clock, of course I would have had all my officers kitted up at that point. But having all your full kit on, especially if you have the helmet on, is extremely hot and it is quite hard work to do for any length of time and, more to the point, it is quite an aggressive act. This was a crowd and we did not know how they would be responding to the police. On that Sunday there were 15,000 people. The officers in charge did exactly the right thing. As soon as they saw missiles being thrown, they had their people being kitted.

What you called running away or retreating was, on the first occasion, officers who had gone into the crowd to arrest somebody who was beating up somebody else and then they came under attack. They moved away very fast and we replaced them with kitted officers. That is not an uncommon thing. Of course, if I knew then how people would behave, I would have done it differently.

Q7 **Tim Loughton:** Can I move on? There was some unfair criticism. We had a session a few weeks ago—you have probably seen the transcripts—with four witnesses who were exceedingly critical of police behaviour as



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regards the BAME community generally and particularly of the way those demonstrations were policed.

To quote Katrina Ffrench from Stopwatch, she said, "I did not see the police adopting as heavy-handed an approach"—to the far-right weekend demonstrations—"as they did to the Black Lives Matter protesters ... the police, in a sense, stood by and did nothing ... When the far right are out, they are allowed to get away with what they want".

How do you refute that?

**Dame Cressida Dick:** It is an outrageous comment and absolutely without evidence. I was there, not in the thick of the crowds but on duty all the time, for all three days we are talking about. I have cameras that I was looking at on and off for a lot of the day. I can tell you that from about 11 o'clock, just outside here, officers who as usual were dealing with what was presented to them, initially talking, engaging and chatting to people on the far right, were met with crowds surging and great aggression. At that point, you will have seen very firm policing and it went on being very firm throughout the day against those parts of that crowd in Parliament Square that were aggressive. It was very firm and very restrained on all the protests.

I was asking yesterday what complaints we had received, if any. I am not sure that we have had any, actually. I did not see a single officer on those long, hot days overreact or go over the top, despite huge provocation and despite many of them coming under physical attack for protracted periods. I saw firm, fair policing, dealing with what was being presented and what the intelligence suggested.

We do usually get accused by both sides of being firmer against one than the other, but my strong belief is that it was extremely firm when required and extremely fair on all occasions.

**Q8 Tim Loughton:** I wanted to give you the opportunity to put that on the record because we were not given any evidence for those statements, which I thought was singularly unfair. I think it is the case—perhaps you can confirm—that the Black Lives Matter demonstration was much bigger than the following week and yet there were rather more arrests at the far right/football thugs' demonstration than there were at the Black Lives Matter one. Is that the case?

**Dame Cressida Dick:** There were more arrests on the day on which we had both the far-right protesters and the Black Lives Matter protesters.

**Q9 Tim Loughton:** The second weekend?

**Dame Cressida Dick:** The second weekend. There were many more arrests that day. There was a great deal of violence shown to the police by elements of both sides, if I can put it that way, earlier in the day by people on the far right, who then kept trying to get around. There was a very peaceful Black Lives Matter element, who were just sitting in Hyde Park and causing no issues at all, and then there were some other people



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whom I would broadly describe as antifascists joined by some BLM people later in the day. Broadly speaking, the far right were very keen to get to them and they were very keen to get to the far right. They were very aggressive. Police in the middle were having to use horses and goodness knows what.

On the arrest numbers, I can give you the total, but I cannot say who is of what persuasion, if you like, because that is not how we think about our arrests.

Q10 **Tim Loughton:** It would be useful to have some basic numbers if you can do that.

**Dame Cressida Dick:** I will do that.

Q11 **Tim Loughton:** Can I just move on? We have lots of other questions.

**Dame Cressida Dick:** Sure.

Q12 **Tim Loughton:** This plays into the greater narrative of the policing of the BAME community in particular. We had a statement from Professor Ben Bowling of King's College London in which he spoke about the previous police commitment to antiracist policing. He said, "The commitment to antiracist policing was short-lived ... the police service ... remains institutionally racist".

I want to give you the opportunity to refute that, but you see the figures for stop and search. In May, the stop and search figures were at a recent record of 43,644 and disproportionately, certainly within the Met and other major cities, aimed at the BAME community.

You see high-profile incidents. You may not want to comment on it specifically, but there was the stopping of Bianca Williams and her partner, being handcuffed in front of a three-month-old son when they had voluntarily pulled over in that car. The police said initially that it raised no misconduct issues and within 24 hours you had changed your mind and referred yourself voluntarily to the IOPC. It plays into a narrative that there is still differential policing going on.

How do you respond to that? You might specifically want to respond to this latest case and whether you saw anything that troubled you in the stopping of an Olympic athlete and whether you are satisfied that if it had been an Olympic athlete like Sharron Davies with her white partner, say, to quote an example, the same treatment would have been meted out to them.

**Dame Cressida Dick:** Let me start with the matter of the stop of Ms Williams and her partner. Obviously, it has raised lots of concerns for people. Equally obviously, when we see something on a video on the internet, we see only a part of it.

It is true that my teams reviewed all the material we have. Fortunately, in the modern age, we have body-worn video. We have other video



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material, including from the police vehicle, and we have seen the evidence the two athletes have given. That was all reviewed by two separate teams. In terms of whether there was misconduct apparent, the view of my teams was that there was no misconduct apparent.

However, we have voluntarily referred to the IOPC, in shorthand, because of the level of public concern. Yesterday, two of my officers spoke on our behalf to Ms Williams. All of us watching could empathise with somebody who is stopped in a vehicle with a young child in the back and who probably does not know exactly what is going on and is subsequently found, together with her partner, not to be carrying any illicit goods or weapons—

**Q13 Tim Loughton:** The College of Policing guidance is that there is not routine handcuffing of people stopped for stop and search. Yet in this case, and in many other cases, there is routine handcuffing. What was the justification for the routine handcuffing of a young couple with a baby in the back of their car?

**Dame Cressida Dick:** The IOPC will look at everything that has gone on and will form a view. I do not want to—and I do not believe I do—run a police service in which handcuffing is “routine”. It must always be justified and the justification has to be in the law and written down. Having seen a number of issues raised over the last several weeks, I have asked one of my senior officers to please review our handcuffing practices to make sure it has not become in any way a default in certain situations, because it should not be.

I also have a new Use of Force Oversight Group, which involves members of the community. They will be looking and do look at these specific instances as well as data.

Every time we see a video that is of concern to members of the public, we review it and we see if there are any lessons to be learned. My senior officer said, “I am sorry”, to Ms Williams for the distress it has clearly caused her and I say that, too. If there are lessons to be learned, we will learn them. I am looking at handcuffing as a specific issue.

Back to how far the Met has come, we have come an enormous way. I say to other people that if you want to call us institutionally racist, that is a matter for you, but it is not a label I find helpful, as I have told this Committee before. We are not collectively failing in all the ways described in Sir William’s definition. There is no collective failure. It is not a massive systemic problem. It is not institutionalised. More to the point, we have come such a very long way—I talked to you about this a year ago and I am not going to go on about it now—in a variety of different ways.

I have been involved in antiracist policing since 1983. I implemented the recommendations of the Stephen Lawrence inquiry report. This is very close to my heart. One of the things I do all the time is look at whether there is any stereotyping or any prejudice and what the outcomes are.



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Yes, we do have disproportionate outcomes, apparent when you compare it with the census population, but we are policing a city in which the number one priority for our public, however you survey them, is violence and gangs. We have horrible disproportionality affecting our black communities in all kinds of ways in terms of health, employment and all sorts of other things.

If I go to violent crime, in London last year 72% of homicide victims under 25 were black. Nationally—you probably know the figures—you are four times more likely to be a victim of homicide if you are black and eight times more likely to be a perpetrator. The overlap with my key metric, which is knife injuries for under 25s, which we have been reducing for the last two years and into this year, shows enormous disproportionality in the way it affects our young black men as victims and, I am sorry to say, as perpetrators. That is horrible. For knife robbery, gangs, county lines, line holders: hugely disproportionate.

I set out to reduce violent crime on the streets as it is affecting specifically our young people. I set out when I became Commissioner to try to improve community confidence and to reduce the gap in confidence between those who have least and those who have most. We have made some progress in the last three years, a lot on violent crime and some on the latter, but in the last four weeks, clearly, people have had their consciousness raised about a huge variety of issues in relation to our black communities, and I am listening to that. I am listening to my own staff. I am listening to the public. I am prepared to see this as a time when we take another big step forward in the way that we did, I believe, 20 years ago.

**Q14 Chair:** In terms of that listening and your continual reviews and so on that you are talking about, when you described reviewing that video footage of Bianca Williams and Ricardo dos Santos and their baby being arrested, you said that the test was that there was no misconduct by police officers. Do you think that is the right test to be applying when you are looking at those videos? Did you have any other concerns or alarms, even if you concluded it did not cross the misconduct line?

**Dame Cressida Dick:** Let me get Helen to answer that, because it is her people who do this routinely whenever a video is posted that appears to show something that is concerning to the public.

**Assistant Commissioner Ball:** To start with the referral to the Independent Office for Police Conduct, we did review this particular video and do believe that we did not see misconduct by the officers. There are also grounds to refer to the IOPC on the basis that a complaint has been made. In this case, there was a tagging of the Met yesterday in some of Ms Williams's tweets that we concluded were equivalent to a complaint being made. If you have that kind of community concern or concern from the person involved, you should treat it as a complaint and, therefore, we—



Q15 **Chair:** But I am interested in your concerns. I am interested in whether you watched this and thought, "Do you know what? That is not how we want our officers to be responding when they are dealing with two people who have a baby in the back of the car, the nature of the way in which that stop was carried out and that search was carried out". I am interested not in the grounds for referring to the IOPC but in whether you as senior officers had concerns about that incident when you viewed it.

**Assistant Commissioner Ball:** In respect of that particular incident, we have reviewed what happened before the stop and the reasons why the vehicle was stopped. The complaints work that the IOPC will do will show that there were good grounds for the officers to stop that vehicle. They did not know who was in that vehicle at the time they stopped it. After that, they dealt with what was in front of them. I do not want to talk through that this morning because that is now under investigation by the IOPC and that needs to run its course. But we do watch these videos and, yes, it has caused us concern. The overwhelming anxiety of communities and the feedback they give about how they present our officers' actions has, of course, caused us concern. That is why, as the Commissioner mentioned, we have set up a Use of Force Group, which is meeting at least weekly to look at real instances on these videos and to see whether they should be referred for investigation and whether there is other learning.

Q16 **Chair:** When was the Use of Force Group set up?

**Assistant Commissioner Ball:** Four weeks ago.

Q17 **Chair:** You have had a fivefold increase in the use of handcuffs in the last three years. Did you have any concerns about the big increase in the use of handcuffs before four weeks ago?

**Dame Cressida Dick:** I do not dispute that figure, but I do not recognise it. I do know that the use of force data that is being collected by my Deputy Assistant Commissioner nationally for the last three years started with very inadequate data. Most of us would say that we are probably only this year beginning to get good data coming out of that recording. It is probably still patchy in some parts of the country anyway. I find it hard to compare this year with then because it was ropery data three years ago, and we said so. It is hard to read too much into it.

However, when you look at the levels of violence we have seen and the levels of concern about violence, the many horrible attacks on police officers and some other instances, one can understand. Handcuffs will be used when officers fear that somebody has a weapon and might hurt someone else, the officer or themselves, or when they have evidence that they might pop in their mouth, which I am sorry to say we have seen, or when they fear on the grounds of what they are seeing in front of them that the person is likely to want to escape. Those are the sorts of times that they will use them.



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But it is an individual officer's decision. They have to justify it. I have been out doing stop-and-search operations with my teams and have been out with them when they have ended up doing stop and search. I see the most professional officers the Met has had. They are extremely courteous. They know their powers. They are looked at by body-worn video and video all day long. They are mostly extremely restrained. If it is deemed to be the case that—

**Q18 Chair:** I am ready to be corrected if there are different or more up-to-date figures, but the figures I have for the Met are for April-May 2020. That was a period when people should have been locked down. There were 25,000 total handcuffing cases, the compliant and the non-compliant together, up from just over 5,000 in April-May 2017. That was a fivefold increase. All the figures do show a very significant increase in handcuffing.

Given particularly handcuffing in cases where nothing is found and where there is no further action—or “positive outcome” as the police would say—and the humiliating impact of the use of handcuffs, I am surprised that you did not have alarm bells ringing that you needed to at least review the use of handcuffs before four weeks ago.

**Dame Cressida Dick:** We cannot compare this year's data well with three years ago. However, I do absolutely accept that there is a considerable amount of handcuffing happening on the streets, some of which is associated with stop and search. Because we have a positive outcome rate of just over 20%, whether you are white, black or whatever, a number of people, therefore, either three-quarters or four-fifths, will in fact be sent on their way. To have been handcuffed—I am agreeing with you here, Chair—during that process, depending on the circumstances, some people may have found the kinds of adjectives you have used. That is why I am now doing a review.

**Q19 Chair:** To confirm, around 35% of those handcuffed are black Londoners. Therefore, inappropriate use of handcuffing is going to have a bigger impact on the black community in London. Are you looking particularly at the impact on the black community in London as part of that review?

**Dame Cressida Dick:** Absolutely. We look at the community impact of everything we do and in all our reviews, but in this particular review work we will, of course, be taking a lot of advice and interest from members of the black community. They will be telling us how it looks and feels for them and what they think we should be doing about it, absolutely.

**Q20 Chair:** I want to come to Ruth Edwards to pursue some of these issues further but, again, so I can confirm, are you now apologising to Bianca Williams and to her partner for what happened to them? I was not clear from what you said.

**Dame Cressida Dick:** I am sorry if I was not clear. I thought I was very clear.



**Chair:** I may have missed it, sorry. I just wanted to clarify.

**Dame Cressida Dick:** We apologised yesterday to Ms Williams and I apologise again for the distress that this stop clearly caused her. That is what I have done and that is what I am saying.

Q21 **Ruth Edwards:** Dame Cressida, thank you. I want to echo the Chair's thanks for everything you and your officers have been doing to police what has been a very difficult situation in London and also to echo her best wishes to those injured officers. The scenes we saw of injured officers in Whitehall were absolutely appalling.

I would like to continue on the theme of stop and search. I understand from figures that the Met's use of stop and search has increased a huge amount in the last six months or so. I understand that 43,644 searches were carried out in May 2020, compared with just over 19,000 in December 2019. I was wondering what was behind that considerable rise and how effective you believe that increase has been in reducing crime.

**Dame Cressida Dick:** When I became Commissioner, violent crime in many categories was increasing exponentially, particularly knife crime. You will remember the stories of knife crime on the streets and, sadly, as it was affecting young people. We had then, relatively speaking compared with now, low levels of stop and search.

It was my view that my officers to some extent either did not have the time or had lost confidence in using that power and many others in the fight against violent crime, so I have encouraged further use. I have never set a target. I have never said what, just "further use", but always saying that if we are going to do 1% more enforcement operations, we should be doing 1% more engagement, explaining ourselves, bringing people in, letting them see how we do it, helping young people understand their rights and so forth. It is a twin-track approach.

We have ended up with more resources, as you know, and more capacity and reducing violent crime, I am glad to say. We have had quite substantial reductions of 18% one year and 13% last year and still heading down. Then, of course, there has been a big plummet, as the Chair pointed out, during the time of Covid-19.

I do believe there is a link. I have not had rigorous academic research on this, but I am utterly sure there is a link. I have said so on many occasions. There is a link between the presence of officers on the streets and the level of violent crime. There is a link between the use of stop and search and the level of violent crime. You can draw a graph in the last few years that pretty much shows exactly that.

Let us take May as the example. In the last several weeks we had the twin effect of wanting to be present on the streets to support the public and to reassure them—people were talking about whether there would be looting, rioting and all these sorts of things—and wanting to continue to bear down on violent crime and on drug dealers in particular associated



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with violent crime. We have had a huge increase over the time of Covid-19 in the number of people charged with possession with intent to supply. We have continued to bear down on violent criminals, street criminals and also domestic violence. Stop and search does not lend itself to that but just to make the point.

We have had less crime to deal with so the officers have had more patrolling time, in essence. We have also had some areas of Met policing that have not needed people there so much. For example, the parliamentary estate when you were not here had fewer police. The airports have had fewer police. We have been able to move people from one type of job on to the streets. When they have come across people and when they feel they have grounds, they have been doing stop and search.

June was lower than May, and that reflects the other demands of the protests and slightly increasing crime levels again now. But that accounts for the big bulge, if you like, in May. Overall, if you took the year to May, there was a 50% increase overall in stop and search.

The increase was much smaller in relation to section 60. I heard the Committee being told about an explosion in section 60. That is not true. Over the last year we have done just 11% more section 60 searches. That has resulted in 34,000 people being arrested for a variety of things and 4,000 weapons seized.

There was a huge range of things. One stop was made on a police officer's instinct that something looked a bit wrong with a car. They did a car check and decided there definitely was and that car would not normally be there. They talked to the driver and it ended up with a stop and search and £1 million cash. That is an extreme example, but there has been a lot of good yield.

Of course, section 60 in particular can have a deterrent effect. When we announce a section 60 authority, which we always do, in an area, it tends to say to the gangs—and for us it is nearly always gangs after there has been a stabbing or two stabbings and we authorise a section 60—that there is going to be a presence of officers who have the power to stop and search. In fact, we do not usually do very high volumes of stop and search under section 60, but it is a deterrent as well as a crime investigation tool.

**Q22 Ruth Edwards:** Thank you. That was very interesting. I recall you said that you did not have a target for stop and search. I wanted to read you what a previous witness to this inquiry has said to us. This is Nick Glynn, a former police officer. He said, "In May, there were 44,000 stop and searches in the Metropolitan Police. That is a result of leadership, but the wrong kind of leadership. It is the leadership of David Musker, who is the stop and search lead in the Met Police. He proudly told me that they were aiming for 30,000 stop and searches a month. I asked him what the evidence was for that and why he was aiming for that many. He smiled



and said, 'Because we can'. They have now exceeded that. They are on to 44,000 a month. Targets are being introduced by stealth. Maybe you will not find them written down in a policy anywhere, but, believe me, they are there. They need to be removed for stop and search because they are damaging communities, are counterproductive and are not effective against crime."

I was wondering if that was a picture you recognised. Also, I wanted to give you the opportunity to respond to it.

**Dame Cressida Dick:** Thank you. I have been very clear. I will not have targets. I will not have targets for the service and I will not have targets for teams or individuals. I will not have competition between teams about who is doing more or less. I am interested in the effect. I am interested in reducing violent crime and the positive outcome rates. I am interested in them using high-quality intelligence to focus in the highest-crime areas and reduce the crime there and focus against people we know are prolific knife carriers, carry weapons and are violent drug dealers. That is what I want them doing.

I cannot speak for that comment and you would not expect me to. I do not know if that was said. I can say that Dave Musker is now retired. He was the stop and search lead and a very well-known figure around here as the Gold Commander for the Carnival and goodness knows what other things.

My stop and search lead now, Jane Connors, some of you will know. If this is the underlying bit of the question, you would be hard pushed to find somebody who was more sensitive to the community concerns and community issues and who would be less likely to impose a target.

I do not believe that my officers have targets. I do not want them to have targets. I have said many times that I do not expect stop and search to go on going up and up, even if we carry on growing and have more capacity. That would not be right.

There is a balance here. If three-quarters of the people who are stopped and searched do not have anything on them, there is potentially a cost—for want of a better word—in the community. You can deal with that cost. Many communities ask us to do more policing, "We want you out here. We want you doing stop and search. I do not care if my son gets stopped and searched 10 times because I want him not to be carrying a knife. I want him not to be at risk". But overall, I do understand that it is a power that has a history in people's minds and psyches in London and is, therefore, sensitive. Secondly, if you are being stopped and searched and you have nothing on you and that happens more than once in your area and you are frightened about violent crime, it would be frustrating and worrying.

Q23 **Ruth Edwards:** Thank you. You mentioned community relations. You said there had been a 50% increase in stop and search in the last year.



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What effect have you noticed, if any, on your relationship with communities in London, particularly perhaps black and minority ethnic communities?

**Dame Cressida Dick:** I do not know if Helen wants to come in here again. She leads on professionalism and engagement for me.

There have been some concerns raised in the last several weeks. We know that. People are concerned and they are anxious. How are the police working with us? How does this work? Why are they doing that? Lots of people are more alert to the issues now. We have tried throughout to engage.

At the same time, since I was last in front of this Committee I have invested in more schools' officers. I have invested in more youth engagement officers. I have invested in more training not just for my people but for members of the public. I have invested in members of the community who come and watch us do stops and searches. I have done a whole series of things to try to increase people's understanding and increase our sensitivity.

I do keep an eye on the figures like a hawk to see that our stop and search operations are focused in the highest violence areas, the highest violence wards and the highest violence boroughs and are getting a reasonable yield. I can tell you that they are.

Of course, people have expressed concerns over the last many months and years on and off about stop and search. I am alert to that and am absolutely up for this moment in time to be a moment when we take a giant leap forward both in the way we work across the Met as a place that everybody can thrive—we might come on to the internal environment—and also in the way we work most effectively for and with our communities, particularly our black communities, and how we can involve them more in our work. We have more black volunteers than we have ever had. We have more black officers and staff than we have ever had. We have more black specials and PCSOs. We have far more black volunteers.

I feel positive about the future, but I must be very alert. London is a place where the Commissioner needs to be alert. That is probably the best way of putting it.

**Assistant Commissioner Ball:** Our communities are very concerned, still, about violence levels in their communities and about on-street drugs markets. When we hold our listening forums, those are the things that often come through. They have different views on the use of stop and search to tackle violence and on-street drugs markets, but by and large the tactic is mostly supported. Of course, it matters enormously how we go about it and how clear we can be that it is a properly intelligence-led intervention. We need to be clear about that and be able to demonstrate that to communities.



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We have local monitoring groups. We work with the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime to make sure that the local monitoring groups can pick up on instances that they are concerned about. That is a hugely important openness that we have. That is likely to be strengthened even further. The Mayor is creating an action plan at this point for increasing trust, confidence and accountability for the Met. The local community monitoring is likely to be strengthened even further. That is beneficial.

The thing that is certainly causing the real anxiety at the moment is the videos. What is needed there is a very fast explanation when we can make it and confidence that it is going to be properly investigated and, if there is learning to be taken from it, that learning will certainly take place.

Q24 **Chair:** I have a follow-up to clarify on those figures. You have a big drop in the proportion of what is referred to as positive outcomes—further action cases—from 28% of stop and searches two years ago to 20% of stop and searches to date.

**Dame Cressida Dick:** It is a bit higher than that now, Chair, but yes. It has gone back up a bit. It bounces around.

Q25 **Chair:** Yes. I am looking particularly at the Met figures for May alone for young black men in London. It looks like—and clarify if we have misread the figures—10,000 young black men aged 15 to 24 were stopped and searched in that one month of May and over 8,000 of them were not found to be carrying anything or doing anything that required any further action. That is 8,000 people in one month and there was no further action required.

The young black population of London, from the figures I have, is only between 70,000 and 80,000 people. That suggests that in one month alone more than one in 10 young black men in London were stopped, searched and found to be carrying nothing and found not to be doing anything that required further action. That is just in one month and also at a time when most people would have been at home during lockdown.

Does it alarm you that you have so many people from that cohort being stopped and searched and nothing further found, especially when the chances of them being in that group where there is no further action needed is five times higher than for young white men during the same period?

**Dame Cressida Dick:** I am not alarmed. I have said before that I am alert and I remain alert.

First, the positive outcome rate is the same, whatever ethnic group you come from. The disproportionality in London has dropped a bit. It has become better or less bad in the last year or so. It is very much lower than many other forces, as you know. In London you are 3.8 times more likely to be stopped and searched if you are black, whereas in many places it would be seven or nine times more likely.



Q26 **Chair:** But your likelihood of being stopped and searched and having nothing found and no further action taken, that is the group I am talking about. I am not talking about the cases where you have found something and somebody was carrying a knife or there is some further action to be taken. I am talking about the sheer number of people being stopped and searched and nothing is found at a time when you had a very big increase in stops and searches—in May, when most people were at home. You had this big increase in stops and searches and also a drop in the proportion of positive outcomes. You were stopping more people but you, therefore, as a result, had a lot more people being searched without anything being found and a lot of people who may well be feeling, “Why am I being stopped and searched? Why am I going through a potentially humiliating experience?” and so on.

Does it worry you that you have had such a big increase in the number of people stopped without finding anything and the community impact that that is likely to have?

**Dame Cressida Dick:** I am alert to that. Of course, I am concerned about that and I am talking to people about that. To be clear, it came down from 28% to about 20% slowly during the last many months. It is now heading slightly back up. I want the positive outcome rate to be high and higher, if you like. That is what I am talking to the teams about all the time.

Also, as Helen said, the important thing is—and I have observed this on the streets—that most of the time the officers are extremely professional. They deal with it extremely well. They are on their body-worn video. They explain themselves. They keep young people, usually, chatting and laughing and joking a lot of the time if that is appropriate. They send people on their way knowing why they have been stopped and searched. In the main, I think they are understanding that and feeling as good as they could.

People will be in different circumstances. Some of the people you are talking about upon whom nothing has been found are very violent repeat offenders who happen not to have anything there then. Some of them have stashed it. They have given it to the other boy or whatever. That is a proportion of those people.

I can tell you that we are focused in the right areas and we are focusing hugely on people we know to be involved in violent crime. Some of them will be.

Q27 **Chair:** Some of them will also be teachers and ambulance workers and Olympic athletes.

**Dame Cressida Dick:** I know.

Q28 **Chair:** They are saying very loudly that they feel that they are being repeatedly stopped and searched and that they are being unfairly targeted and also treated in a way they find either humiliating or



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inappropriate or discourteous. You have talked previously about the importance of courtesy in these interactions. That is not what we are hearing a lot of people describing. Having talked to some different London MPs and councillors over the last few days, that is not what they are feeding back as well, particularly in the last few months when we have seen those stop and search numbers increasing.

It appears that you have not had very much community engagement going on because you have been limited by lockdowns and groups and community organisations are not working in the same way. Are you worried about the impact that all of this is having on confidence in particularly the black community?

**Dame Cressida Dick:** I have said already, Chair, I see this as a time when we can make a giant step forward. We have been on a firm platform. I absolutely am listening to these concerns. I hear them. I want to move on again, with all the communities in London feeling that their police service is there to protect them and to reduce violence and is their service and one that they are proud of. We have a long way to go with some parts of some of our communities. I know that. I am absolutely determined to work on that and with that.

But we have been doing more engagement through a variety of different methods in the last few months than we have ever done in the history of the Met. We have put more effort and engagement in inclusion, diversity and engagement than we have ever had before. We have been able to do a huge amount despite Covid-19, which Helen will probably want to say something about.

**Assistant Commissioner Ball:** At the beginning of Covid-19, we knew that we wanted to engage much more with communities than we were ever able to before because we wanted to make sure that they were reassured, that they understood the regulations and the restrictions and that we helped them to comply with them. We put extra officers on the streets as reassurance patrols, particularly patrolling parks, open spaces and streets, and encouraging people to comply with the restrictions.

That has meant that, while there were fewer people on the streets, we have been out there engaging with the people who were on the streets. We have also continued our community engagement. We have not stopped any of the ward panels that were going on before. Our community conversations by our local leaders have continued. They have just gone virtual and online. In fact, we have seen an increase in the number of people taking part in those conversations, particularly young people. We will continue to do that because it is so much more accessible for young people to be in those conversations.

Those are two instances. The only other one I would like to mention at this stage is the volunteers who have joined us particularly for this period. Fifteen hundred new people have come to volunteer with the Met. They have also been out delivering leaflets to prevent elderly people



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being victims of fraud, doing weapons sweeps alongside officers and staff, and doing call-backs to our older victims of crime to make sure that they are safe and well. In the course of that, they are finding some people who have really needed us. We have been engaging even more than before.

**Dame Cressida Dick:** We have also been keeping in touch with young people who we know are vulnerable. Our schools' officers have been working just as hard as they ever have and they have been particularly talking to young people who are at risk of getting involved in offending or being victims, for example.

Q29 **Ms Diane Abbott:** Thank you very much for coming to give evidence to us. In the case of the two young athletes and their baby whose car was stopped, who were handcuffed and so on, do you accept that one of the reasons why that has resonated with communities is that it is such a common occurrence?

If you are a black man driving a nice car, the chances of you being stopped because a police officer thinks you are a drug dealer or a violent criminal are so much higher. Doreen Lawrence was talking about this last week. Bishop Sentamu has spoken about this. Neither of these people, to the best of my knowledge, are violent criminals or habitual carriers of knives. You do not seem to have a perspective on how this looks to communities. Everyone has had that experience in my family and among people I know. If you are a black man in a smart car, you will get stopped. This is what Bianca Williams thought happened to her.

Her other point was that if this had been the first time this had happened to her, that would have been one thing. She said it had happened to her and her partner, since they got their new car, at least four or five times and maybe more. That is one of the reasons she was so upset.

**Dame Cressida Dick:** We know that the IOPC has been doing a piece of work on stop and search more broadly over the last I don't know how long. I will be interested to see whether it tells us anything about repeated stops or perceptions of repeated stops. I will want to know what it is saying about that. What you say is not new to me, of course. I have heard it on and off throughout my service as something that people feel. Baroness Lawrence was talking to you about what happened to her over 20 years ago.

Q30 **Ms Diane Abbott:** But she was saying that because she felt it was relevant to what is happening today.

**Dame Cressida Dick:** Exactly, of course it is, and that is my point. Absolutely. What happened in the past and how people felt about that is absolutely relevant to today and I understand that entirely. I am assured at the moment that that is not a current repeated problem in the way that you describe. I know it has been in the past. I was Commander, Diversity, as it was called, you will probably remember, in 2000 and 2001 and people were saying those kinds of things and able to evidence them



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in a very obvious way. I do not believe that is what is happening now, but I do understand that it is people's perception and we need to respond to that.

Equally, my officers must feel that they have support to do their job and use their powers judiciously, and of course fairly, and to be able to keep the streets safe. But absolutely I understand why that resonates, I think. I cannot put myself in the shoes of a young black man who has been stopped, but I do understand why that resonates, yes.

**Q31 Ms Diane Abbott:** I am not even talking about young people, although young people should not be stopped and searched. I am talking about an eminently respectable, middle-aged black man driving his car and finding himself stopped disproportionately, just because certain assumptions are being made about him. That is one of the reasons why this resonates because so many people thought, "This has happened to me" or, "This could happen to me". You have been very firm in this evidence session and elsewhere that you do not think the Met is any longer institutionally racist. That was obviously one of the findings of Macpherson, which is what we are looking at. A number of people have queried that—Matthew Ryder, the Matrix barrister.

**Dame Cressida Dick:** Yes, I heard him, yes.

**Ms Diane Abbott:** Deborah Coles, Director of Inquest, said, "The disproportionality in the use of force against black people adds to the irrefutable evidence of structural racism embedded in policing practices." You are very firm that you are no longer institutionally racist. What are the outcomes—I do not mean the new processes but the outcomes—you would point to to say there is less institutional racism than there was at the time of Macpherson?

**Dame Cressida Dick:** When I was in front of the Committee last year, I said I did not find it a very helpful label. I do not think it applies to us, but other people, of course, are absolutely at liberty to judge us as that. What I want to do is to look at outcomes, to look at the processes, to look at our attitudes, to look at our behaviours, to make sure that we are not ignorant, that we are never prejudiced. I absolutely accept—I have never suggested that the Met is completely free of bias or discrimination, or that there is no racism.

**Q32 Ms Diane Abbott:** What I am asking, though, is what outcomes point to that? Is there less stop and search? Do you have a much larger proportion of black officers? Tell me what the outcomes are.

**Dame Cressida Dick:** That is what I do. I look at all the disproportionate outcomes, if you like, and whether they are going in the right direction or the wrong direction. That is what I do. Since I was last here, we have had yet more black officers join us. More than 50% of the country's black and ethnic minority officers are in the Met. We have over 8,000 people in the Met and 5,000 officers who are black and ethnic minority. That is by a



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long chalk the largest we have had and it continues because we are growing and we are still getting more and more in.

We have reduced violent crime, as I mentioned, which disproportionately affects black communities, by large quantities. We have eliminated—I am talking about last year—disproportionality in our promotion processes. I do not think many organisations could tell you that, but we do not have any, so people are getting through the promotion processes at exactly the same rate. Looking internally, we have improved our staff engagement, including our black women, who were clearly feeling they were being treated less fairly than others overall just a couple of years ago. That has not reached complete parity, but it is heading in the right direction. I could go on.

However, we police an unequal society, we draw from an unequal society, and I hate, as much as anybody in this room I think, the disproportionality that exists across society. What I can tell you is that I am absolutely determined to reduce ours. Where I have large measures of control over that, I will take that control. Where I or my Met is part of a bigger set of issues, I want to play my part in that, too.

**Q33 Ms Diane Abbott:** Have you brought down disproportionality in relation to stop and search?

**Dame Cressida Dick:** Slightly, yes.

**Q34 Ms Diane Abbott:** Have you brought down disproportionality in relation to use of Taser? You will be aware that the fixed penalty notices you are now able to impose because of the Covid legislation have the same disproportionality we have seen over the years with other powers the Met has.

**Dame Cressida Dick:** A slight reduction in disproportionality in relation to stop and search. I do not have the Taser figure right in my head, but I can follow up with that.

Perhaps I could quickly talk about Covid. I know this is something that was of great interest to the Committee when Martin came. The first few weeks of the lockdown was the time when we had the vast majority of our enforcement activity, but of course we did a tiny amount of enforcement, a tiny amount. I appreciate Martin has been rerunning his figures, but I think we had the fourth lowest per head of population enforcement through FPNs or arrests of any force in the country. As you heard from Helen and me, we put officers out everywhere, trying to show reassurance to people.

If I take the key period when we were doing enforcement, I had 120,000 officer shifts and I had my teams issue a fixed penalty notice only once in every 129 shifts. We issued some tickets and we arrested some people at the same time as dealing with them for other offences. Of course, once the Crown Prosecution Service made it clear that if somebody was arrested for, let's say, drug dealing and the Covid offence, it would not be



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proceeding with the Covid offence, our enforcement started to drop off considerably.

We had only 36 arrests in the whole of London for Covid-only legislation in that time period. It was a very small amount of our activity that resulted in enforcement and the vast majority of it was engage, encourage, explain, again and again, to people of all communities. There is disproportionality, absolutely, but it is in such a tiny number and, as I say, the vast proportion of those were people who were being arrested for another offence when there was enforcement. I know it has caused concern. My own view, compared with some other issues, is that it is a lower-order issue.

**Q35 Stuart C McDonald:** Thank you both for your evidence this morning. Commissioner, would it be fair to say that your evidence in relation to stop and search is that this huge disproportionality exists because of inequalities that are outside your control and you do not think that policing has anything to do with that? Or are there concerns about the policing aspects of that?

**Dame Cressida Dick:** Of course, there are policing concerns because the community are concerned and, therefore, I need to be concerned.

**Q36 Stuart C McDonald:** What are they and what are you going to do about them? So far, your evidence is focused on the reasons why this disproportionality exists outside your control, but what is it that is within your control that you can do and that you are going to do?

**Dame Cressida Dick:** In relation to stop and search?

**Stuart C McDonald:** Yes.

**Dame Cressida Dick:** I am, as I said, trying to ensure that the positive outcome rate goes up. I will not flinch from continuing to try to reduce violent crime as it affects our young people, particularly our young black people. We will be continuing to police in areas of high violence, and I want my officers to feel enabled to use the power. I will, of course, be seeking for not only the outcome rate to go up but also as we go through the years I will hope, probably more than I can actually make happen, that the disproportionality will decrease.

I will be like a hawk if it turns out that we are being objectively unfair and treating people differently, but I will come back to the point that at the moment the positive outcome rate is just the same across different communities. I would say that is a better measure of fairness than looking at a census population. The biggest disproportionality is on gender, of course, and age. Those are the two biggest disproportionalities. Then ethnic differences come next. I cannot do much about some of this, I believe. However, I do not want the level of community concern to rise or even to continue at the rate it is at the moment.



Q37 **Stuart C McDonald:** It is not an express target, then, to reduce or eliminate disproportionality?

**Dame Cressida Dick:** No, we are on a journey. Of course I would love it, I would absolutely love to be able to wave a magic wand and get to the place where there is no disproportionality, but I cannot.

Q38 **Stuart C McDonald:** You said as well that there are no targets in relation to stop and search, but you clearly make quite explicit operational decisions to increase the amount of stop and search that goes on. Is that fair to say? There have been points where you have decided you think it is a useful tool so you are going to use it more.

**Dame Cressida Dick:** What I have done is invested in certain types of teams who have capacity and capability sometimes to do stop and search operations, and I have focused them in particular areas. The Met has grown in the last couple of years, and I have had more people available to work against violent crime. They are not just doing stop and search, they are executing search warrants, they are arresting people. They are doing massive amounts of diversion, early intervention, engagement and all sorts of other work as well. Stop and search is part of their task. The Violent Crime Task Force would be one of them.

Q39 **Stuart C McDonald:** On the last couple of occasions that you have been before the Committee, stop and search has obviously been something that you think is a useful police tool. There is a lot of dispute about that. I will need to go back and check the record from last time, but I think last time you said that there was academic research that showed that it was a useful tool and you might have even wanted to send it to the Committee. This morning you seem to be saying it is not about academic research, it is related to a graph.

**Dame Cressida Dick:** No, I think you have misunderstood me. What I said was I have not done academic research in the last several months. There are conflicting studies. There certainly are some studies that would show it, but all the studies are quite small-scale. There are some academic studies that show a linkage, but I have not had academic researchers alongside me in the last year, 18 months, two years.

Q40 **Stuart C McDonald:** If this is such a huge tool for the Met and yet we have heard so many concerns about its impact on community relations, surely you need robust evidence as to the positive impact that it has. Can you explain what this evidence is that it has a positive impact that outweighs all the concerns that have been raised with us?

**Dame Cressida Dick:** I have done some of that already. It does result in large numbers of arrests of people for violent crime, it does result in weapons being seized, it does deter people in section 60 situations. It is being asked for by many people in many areas a lot of the time because they are so concerned about the volume of knife-carrying that is going on. Those are the kinds of things I point to.



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I can also show you a graph, which is our graph, that pretty much shows where we have ended up with more—and I have not asked for more, more, more—and we have seen a reduction in violent crime in the area. Of course, to prove that the one thing led to the other is extremely difficult. I do accept that the more people understand, the better. There is research going on at the moment, as you know, about the underlying issues and disproportionality in Taser, and I support that. The more we understand, the better.

**Q41 Stuart C McDonald:** My final question is you speak quite a lot about things going in the right direction and how much progress has been made and so on and so forth, but what we do not seem to get is a clear picture of where the Met wants to go and what the action plan for doing that is. There is talk about reviews and being alert and so on, but where is the clear picture of what it is the Met wants to achieve and how it is going to go about doing this?

**Assistant Commissioner Ball:** In relation to this subject, I think we are very clear. We want to be able to work with communities so that we can carry out the lifesaving work that we are doing in relation to reducing violent crime and finding weapons on the street—genuinely lifesaving work that needs to continue. We want communities to really accept that and understand it, and for people who are stopped—to use that as an example—to appreciate the reasons why that has happened.

Therefore, we are thinking about reviewing the training that we give to our officers to make sure that they really are thinking about the needs of the particular community and the individual, making sure that they have addressed any bias that they might hold, talking to them about London's histories and our particular communities and the ways that they might respond to us. Those are active conversations with our community advisers to work through whether there are different ways of approaching officers' use of force and also their engagement with communities.

**Q42 Adam Holloway:** Commissioner, can I say I am extremely impressed at your evidence? A few weeks ago we had what I felt was a not entirely balanced evidence session in which the many sins of the Metropolitan Police were discussed, but none of what you have just described as lifesaving work. Please can you paint for us a picture—and perhaps try to redress the balance of that evidence session—of what your officers are doing to protect young black people who are at such risk from violent crime?

**Dame Cressida Dick:** Thank you. A theme for this Committee is how far have we come. I have the privilege of leading a police service that is more professional, more capable, more transparent, more accountable than any police service has been, I think, and certainly than the Met has been. It is, I believe, more in touch with its communities than it has ever been; it is engaging more with its communities; it is more representative of its communities than it has ever been.



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It does not just save lives in this way, it saves lives every day, including black lives, of course, in a way that I am extremely proud of. Only last week we had a person who was, which is not uncommon, suffering from acute behavioural disorder. They had harmed themselves hugely. They were running in and out of the traffic, trying presumably to kill themselves, sadly. It was a horrible, horrible case. Four of my officers ended up saving this person's life. They will get a Royal Humane Society certificate, which we get more than any other organisations in the world for our lifesaving.

Sadly, we turn up at horrible incidents where people have been stabbed and whatnot all too often, and we save people's lives. These particular officers ended up covered in blood, with blood in their mouth, in one instance, having to go to St Thomas', and they have saved the man's life. This is what my people do, that kind of thing, every day of the week. They are passionate about protecting people and saving people's lives.

They start off in schools, in youth groups, in other places, trying to help young people stay away from violent crime, giving them tips about staying safe online, staying safe from gangs, working with youngsters who need safeguarding, working with youngsters who have got themselves involved in low-level offending, and trying to divert them away. We have fantastic results with our own diversion schemes.

Then they are out and about on the streets spotting people and talking to people. If you look at the work we have done recently on the county lines, sadly London exports county lines far more than any other city. We have arrested and charged in the last few months 87 of the line holders. During that we have superb evidence. We start with just a phone number and within three weeks we have people locked up and normally pleading guilty, dismantling the line totally, and along the way safeguarding the children who have become tangled up in the dealing or being enslaved and sent up country. That is the kind of work we do.

These are serious organised criminals, of course, but you will have seen the extraordinary results the officers got last week. These are people who control the drug-dealing networks, in effect, by supplying the drugs, supplying the firearms, taking enormous amounts of cash. There were 170 people arrested and £13.1 million was seized—mostly, I may say, of white ethnic origin, old-fashioned organised criminals, incredibly dangerous, exploiting young people and black people on the streets of London. My officers put their lives at risk often. I could go on.

**Q43 Adam Holloway:** Commissioner, absolutely you could. On that, how does it make you feel, as someone who has been a police officer for some time now and the most senior police officer in the country, in the context of spending your career trying to deal with crime and save lives, when Committees like this use expressions like "institutionally racist"? I have been an MP in Kent for 15 years and I absolutely refuse to accept that Kent police are institutionally racist.



**Dame Cressida Dick:** I speak for my officers here, I think. There are varied opinions, of course, but I have been out and about with my teams over the last few weeks and people are desperately sad at some of the accusations, they are desperately upset to be labelled in the way that the police are being labelled. You are welcome to come out with my front-line teams. You will see the most diverse bunch of people you could imagine—eastern European language speakers, gay people, such a different demographic from, forgive me, those sitting in this room now and in many other places.

They say to me they find it odious to be accused, as they feel it personally, of being racist. They hate that. They say, “You just won’t see it on my team”. But they do understand that there are some misunderstandings, that there are some connections that are not being made, that people are angry about things, and they want to make the relationships better. But they want to save lives and, among everybody else, they really want to save black lives and they care about that.

**Adam Holloway:** Chair, if I may, perhaps we could take the Commissioner up on that and we could go in very small groups, perhaps in the same evening, to some of the more challenging boroughs and we could have a look at this.

**Chair:** Thank you, Adam, we will follow that up. We are very tight for time. We have both Simon Fell and Laura Farris still to come in.

Q44 **Simon Fell:** I will be very brief. I would like to look at technology in the Met and, in particular, live facial recognition technology. We have heard quite a few concerns and seen a few reports about the effectiveness of this and whether the algorithms in it are perpetrating an increasing discrimination. There was a report in July 2019 from the University of Essex that talked about 20% of facial recognition matches being correct, and being disproportionately inaccurate on black, Asian and female faces. What is your approach for improving this?

**Dame Cressida Dick:** You will see a great deal of our approach on our website. I mentioned us being extremely transparent. We have been extremely transparent about live facial recognition and we have reams on the website, including, of course, equalities impact assessments, as you would expect us to have. We have not been using live facial recognition in the period of Covid on the basis of not large crowds and not the right environment to be using it in. We also recognise that this is a sensitive tool that some people might see as quite intrusive, and at a time when people are anxious about things we need to be careful.

We have been working with the suppliers and improving our understanding of how best to use the technology and, indeed, how the technology itself works. The kind of figures that you have there do not match what I have now. The technology that we have in our machine, which came to the end of its trials just before the period of Covid, no longer has a lower rate of identification for women than men. It is now



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equal and it was already equal on ethnicity. On black and white it was equal. It is described as the most accurate technology that there is.

We are very comfortable with it in terms of potential, as people might say, bias. However, the most important thing is that we use it very openly. We do have lots of checks and balances and the most important one of those is that it is not the tool that makes the decision, it is the two officers in the chain after the machine has said, "That could be Cressida". Two separate officers make a decision about whether even to go and speak to Cressida. Of course, if it had not spotted me, then my image would be deleted immediately.

**Q45 Simon Fell:** Thank you, that is reassuring. Can I pick you up on the improvement piece there? IBM, which is no slouch in this area, has pulled out of facial recognition technology over these concerns. Obviously, your system sounds like it is improving, which is a good thing, but it is that oversight that is key. In terms of the algorithms themselves and the use of this data that comes out of it, are you comfortable that people who have oversight of the Met and various panels have access to the right materials to be holding you to account?

**Dame Cressida Dick:** Broadly, yes. I have spoken a lot about the use of technology, including this technology, in policing. I accept that it is something that people have concerns about, of course, and therefore it is very important that we are utterly transparent in its use and that people can feel that they understand where and when and how it is being used, has been used, with what effect and that there are good intrusive checks on it.

We believe that we have been managing it very well. We obviously have the Bridges decision in South Wales around the law. I have noted that some vendors have stopped supplying or have said it is not a market that they are interested in. I think there may be a number of different reasons for that, if I am honest. But we do absolutely see that the public need to be assured. With modern technologies that are and will be game changers for policing, we must make sure that there is an effective ethical framework, which I believe you will see on our website, for how we have reached the stage we have and how we are going to deploy in the future, and secondly that we are on a very firm legal basis, which we believe we are. We could imagine a time in the future—and this would obviously be a matter for Parliament—where people want to put further checks in and ensure that the public are reassured by that. That is not just on this technology but on other technologies. We have been talking to the Turing Institute and others on that.

**Q46 Laura Farris:** Thank you very much to both of you. I want to follow up on one of the answers you gave in response to Stuart McDonald earlier, which was about promotional structures. One of the answers you gave was that if you looked at the way people were being promoted through the Met Police you saw every demographic being equally represented. I want to ask you about that in the context of what the Equality and



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Human Rights Commission found about discrimination within the Met Police. In 2016 it undertook an investigation and there were some quite significant findings around discrimination in general, but more specifically around—I do not want to say a culture of victimisation—victimisation specifically and a sense that lots of police officers have very strong senses of loyalties within the hierarchy. People feared that if they were going to bring a complaint there was a risk of victimisation by people further up the chain.

I am sure you are familiar with David Isaac's report and with the Equality and Human Rights Commission's report. I would like to know what you say about that and how, if at all, that has prompted a change in the way the Met Police has organised its personnel or any HR procedures.

**Dame Cressida Dick:** I have said already and I would like to say again that I do not suggest for one second that the Met is completely free of bias or of discrimination or that everybody feels they are on a level playing field. Of course not. I care about that and I want it to continue to improve and improve. Whenever I meet anybody who runs any large organisation they say the same thing. We are all subject to those kinds of issues.

What I mentioned was that when you look at the promotion processes in the last year you cannot see any disproportionality. However, if you were to look at my representation up and down the organisation, although you would see very good and much improved diversity and specialisms, you absolutely see that we have less diversity at the most senior levels. I am very proud of the people we have, full stop, including those at the senior levels, and we have several, most senior police officers and members of police staff, but representation is nothing like proportionate and nothing like what I would like to have. There is much further to go.

I accept that people in my organisation—it was described to me the other day—have felt over the years a sort of headwind for a variety of different reasons. Not least, some of them have felt and may feel now that they have been subject to discrimination. We took that report very seriously and among other things we brought in a discrimination investigation unit. I will ask Helen to talk about how that works.

We look really carefully at all possible aspects of disproportionality across our people and the processes that they go through. One of the ones that is still stuck for us—again Helen might want to say something about it—is internal misconduct. This is not where a member of the public has complained but where somebody has from within suggested that a colleague has committed a misconduct offence. Although our outcomes and sanctions are the same, we are still seeing just about twice as many of our BAME colleagues are suggested to be doing something wrong. There is huge research on that and some understanding of it, but these things still are not sorted for us and concern me. I have 22 staff support associations, including the well-known Black Police Association, and the Muslim association and many others. They are working with Helen and



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others to reduce this disproportionality. There are still elements of our workforce that would feel on occasions that the playing field is not level, and I accept that entirely.

**Q47 Chair:** Commissioner, just before you bring Helen Ball in, I am conscious of your time. I have a series of factual questions I want to put to you at the end to either get you to send further written evidence or to briefly answer if you have those facts. Do you have time to do that and to take Helen's response now?

**Dame Cressida Dick:** Absolutely. They may end up being written but, of course, yes.

**Assistant Commissioner Ball:** I will be very quick. In response to the Equality and Human Rights Commission report, we made some very important changes, as the Commissioner has described. We revised and reviewed our grievance procedure and there is a much more supportive grievance procedure in place now. We introduced a discrimination investigation unit, and that is able to look at allegations of misconduct with a discrimination element to them. Both of those were improving the situation, but insufficiently. The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime has carried out two sets of analysis of our misconduct investigations, finding out that on the first occasion if you are a black or ethnic minority officer you were twice as likely to be referred into a misconduct process and your outcome at the end of it was also disproportionate.

The second report, the follow-up a couple of years later, found that we had eliminated or at least reduced substantially the outcome difference, which was very good news, and we had taken some important actions to do that. But we were still seeing more referrals into the misconduct system.

The third phase of work has been to look, and we have triaged every single referral, which is bringing down the numbers of misconduct investigations as required but has not eliminated that disproportionality. We are thinking about what we do next, and that work has been very well advised by the Black Police Association, our Independent Advisory Group and others. We will be now thinking about the next steps. There are some important changes that have been made.

**Q48 Laura Farris:** One short follow-up. I am conscious of time and the answer can be in writing if necessary. Do you keep statistics on staff retention?

**Dame Cressida Dick:** Yes.

**Q49 Laura Farris:** Would it be possible for us to consider, for example, how long people remain with the force, with a breakdown by ethnicity?

**Dame Cressida Dick:** Absolutely. To extend an offer, if you want to come and look at any or all of it, please do. I chair our Inclusion, Diversity and Engagement Board. It is the only board other than the



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management board that I do chair. I put a lot of heart into this. I have some very skilled people. We do know our data inside out and back to front and we have a lot of activities going on, not just on promotions and not just on misconduct and complaints but in all kinds of ways. We have had some great successes latterly with fast-track schemes and new ways of supporting and encouraging people.

As I say, I absolutely accept that it is not yet totally the Met that I would love to be leading, which is one where everybody is thriving and feeling that they can and there is nothing against them, if you like. But we have come a very long way, including in the last three years, and we can show you the data, whatever data you want.

Q50 **Chair:** On that data issue, to follow up, I referred earlier to some analysis we had done based on the Met figures on the numbers of people, by ethnicity and age, being stopped and searched where there was nothing found or no further action taken. Could you provide us with your assessment of those figures and send those figures to us, by age and ethnicity, and also as a proportion of the population of London; that cohort of population of London? I am particularly interested in those who have been stopped and searched where there was no further action needed or taken.

Secondly, do you have figures on vehicle stops?

**Dame Cressida Dick:** By ethnicity?

**Chair:** Yes.

**Dame Cressida Dick:** No.

Q51 **Chair:** Is that not a bit of a problem?

**Dame Cressida Dick:** You will remember the so-called stop and account recommended in the Stephen Lawrence inquiry report, introduced in the legislation in 2005. In 2011 the legislation was reversed. We were the last force to come away from stop and account, two years ago. The reason we did was, first, it seemed to be a very time-consuming and bureaucratic exercise for many people, especially the person on the receiving end, not the officer. Secondly, the conversation was often getting in the way of a proper conversation between the person and the officer. Thirdly, nobody was doing anything at all with the data outside us. We were keeping some eye on it, but it was not important data. I do not regard it as a problem now and I do not intend to go back to implement it again.

Q52 **Chair:** Given the concerns that Diane Abbott raised earlier about the vehicle stops and people's reported experience, if there is anything further that you can write to us on, that would be helpful.

Another quick, factual question. The violence suppression units that you have introduced, what proportion of them are new recruits? Do you have the figures and proportion that are new recruits going straight out on to



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the streets to do that?

**Dame Cressida Dick:** Helen will talk about how we do that very briefly.

**Chair:** Literally just a factual thing, because you can write further with this evidence. Do you know the proportion that are new recruits?

**Assistant Commissioner Ball:** It will vary because our new recruits are being attached to them for a short period as part of their development rather than being permanently attached.

Q53 **Chair:** Do you know what proportion are BAME officers?

**Assistant Commissioner Ball:** Of our new recruits?

**Chair:** No, of your violence suppression units.

**Assistant Commissioner Ball:** No, but we can find that out.

Q54 **Chair:** It would be very helpful if you can send us that. I ask because it has been put to me that some of the violence suppression units that are doing some of the stop and searches over the last couple of months have been in some areas two-thirds new recruits and, therefore, less experienced in doing stop and searches, and in some areas that they had no black officers as part of them. That was raised with me as a question about whether that was having an impact on the quality of the stop and searches and the impact and concerns.

Could you also send us any further information on the points that were raised about when you review video footage whether you are simply looking for misconduct or whether you are looking for other things and how you are responding to video footage?

**Dame Cressida Dick:** I think Helen has already said—

**Chair:** I am asking if you can send us further written information about the way in which—

**Dame Cressida Dick:** Helen has just said that we do look for other things.

Q55 **Chair:** Some further details would be helpful on the way in which you are reviewing those.

Finally, on the content of the training for new officers and whether that includes anti-racism training that looks at structural inequalities or simply some of the diversity and inclusion issues, again it would be very helpful to have further detail on the training and whether those new recruits, for example in the violence suppression units, have already undergone that training or whether that is something they are likely to be coming to later on.

**Dame Cressida Dick:** Could I say very briefly on that we are very excited about the way we deliver training now? I honestly think it will be very much better and more in tune with the communities. Helen



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mentioned the London curriculum, as we call it, much more than diversity and inclusion. Yes, anti-racist training, certainly, and much better coaching for the individuals and much more supervision and support for them when they are first going out on the streets. As you know, we are getting more black and ethnic minority officers coming through all the time, so the proportion of the newer officers that are is high. We want to make it higher again and we are considering whether we should bring back London residency as part of that. We will see.

I think that, together with our direct-entry detectives, our Police Now people, our PEQF, as they call it, the apprenticeship scheme—we have 5,000 cadets, 50% of whom are BAME, many of whom want to become police officers—all of this is very exciting in terms of how we bring people into the organisation with better understanding of communities and better education about the issues that you have focused on a lot today.

**Chair:** Thank you. It will be very helpful to have some of that further detail in writing about the content of that training and also the timing of it in terms of when people are going out on the streets.

Thank you very much, Commissioner, and thank you very much, AC Helen Ball. We appreciate your time today.