

Home Affairs Committee

Oral evidence: [The Macpherson Report: twenty-one years on](#), HC 426

Wednesday 22 July 2020

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Members present: Yvette Cooper (Chair); Ms Diane Abbott; Laura Farris; Adam Holloway; Dame Diana Johnson; Tim Loughton; Stuart C. McDonald.

Questions 104-168

Witnesses

I: Inspector Dan Popple, West Midlands police, and PC Adam Ahmed, Leicestershire Police..

II: Sayce Holmes-Lewis, Founder and CEO, Mentivity, Pastor Lorraine Jones, Founder and CEO, Dwayne Simpson Foundation CIC, and Bishop Derek Webley, Co-Chair, Windrush Cross-Government Working Group.



Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Inspector Dan Popple and PC Adam Ahmed.

Q104 **Chair:** Welcome to this evidence session of the Home Affairs Select Committee, which is part of our inquiry into 21 years on from the Macpherson report on the Stephen Lawrence inquiry. We are very pleased to welcome PC Adam Ahmed from Leicestershire police and Inspector Dan Popple from the West Midlands police. Thank you for joining us. I want to begin by asking both of you about the work you are doing at the moment on the relationship between the police and local communities, particularly Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities in your areas. PC Ahmed, can you tell us about the work that you are doing at the moment?

PC Ahmed: Thank you for having me. I am currently part of the neighbourhood team at Spinney Hill police station in Leicester. The area that I cover is the area that I pretty much grew up in, so I was educated in that area and my social life is in that area. It is what I would describe as a very multicultural city area. From a statistical point of view it has a high demographic—I am not sure what the figures are exactly— of people with a BME background.

I only moved into this role last summer. Since moving into that role I have been doing a number of projects with a variety of community members and mosques. For example, last summer we had a football tournament. We got all the different mosques involved and had a kick-about football game. In the end, we gave trophies to the kids. Before covid kicked in, we had another project that we were planning on running where we get a group of mothers from the local estate, from the Somali, Indian and Pakistani backgrounds and so on, and get them to work with us to tackle ASB issues. A lot of the time what I identify is that young kids tend to get involved from a young age. They come to our attention before they get into the serious side of criminality because of ASB-related stuff. There is an element of respect within our community. For example, within the Somali community, if my mum was to call me right now and say, "Come here and do this," I would have to do it—no question about it. So we thought that we would utilise that. Basically, we have this group or cohort of mums and we are getting them to work with us proactively, in order to go out and deal with low-level ASB, to prevent it from escalating.

Also, with the whole covid situation at the moment, there was a lot of attention on and concerns within the community about the policing style of it, so we have invited members of the community to come and join us. I have taken a few people from the local community out on patrol with me to see what I do. There are a lot of them coming out and we have been to a variety of different jobs; they were not related to covid, but nevertheless it was an eye-opener. They have a better understanding of my rationale, my way of thinking, what information is given to me and what information I can or cannot share.



Q105 **Chair:** You have done some work with Leaders Unlocked. Can you tell us about that?

PC Ahmed: Yes. Leaders Unlocked was before I joined the police. They set up what was called a youth commission and piloted it here in Leicester. That is how I met Rose and Katie from Leaders Unlocked, because I was part of the first cohort or the first group that took part in it here in Leicester. The whole aim and purpose of it really was to work with the criminal justice system and to build that relationship with young people. It gave us the opportunity to have our voices heard.

I was probably about 16 when I joined them. I worked on two strands from that project, first in relation to stop-and-search, which goes hand in hand with the relationship with the BME community. Those were the two strands that I was working on, and it resulted in my working a bit more closely with my local police force here in Leicester, expressing the views of the young people.

We went out and we consulted a lot of young people. We were going to the parks, the schools and the youth clubs, as well as after-school clubs, getting the views of young people and doing workshops with them, too. At the end, we collated all those views. We basically presented all this to Leicestershire Police, the city council, the county council, and so on—all the relevant agencies.

Q106 **Chair:** Is that—the fact that you were involved in that project—what led you to think about joining the police?

PC Ahmed: I have always had an interest in the criminal justice system, but I was leaning more towards the rehabilitation side of stuff, i.e. probation and prison service; those were the sorts of avenues that I was thinking of going down. But because of the relationship that we had with the local force—I would describe it as your friendly, critical person, if that makes sense—we would have these discussions, and one of them said to me, “Well, why don’t you become a special constable?” which is basically like a volunteer police officer, and, “Why don’t you come and see it for yourself, at first hand?”

At the time, I would say that there was no one from the Somali community or anyone of that background who was in the police service; it was not really seen as a profession to go into. One of the things that we always talk about is how when we are young kids, our parents naturally encourage us to go into becoming a lawyer, a doctor, or an engineer—those were the sorts of professions that you would hear about. Police officer was not one of those professions you would hear about. My view and all I ever heard about the police service was all negative, because there was never anyone in the police service who I knew or had any contact with, or who was in the organisation at all.

When my friend had a bad encounter, he would tell me. In the customer service world, there is a saying that when you have one customer who is dissatisfied, they will go and tell 10 other people, and those 10 other people will naturally tell other people. any positive work that you have



HOUSE OF COMMONS

done is basically gone. Essentially, that was what was happening in my community, so when I became a special in around 2015, I asked to be based where I am a neighbourhood officer now, down in Spinney Hill, because that is where my community is based. And from there, I just pretty much loved the job—the job, the role, I loved everything I was doing. It completely changed my view and thought process, because I got to see it from the other point of view.

Now that I am a neighbourhood officer, I make a point of doing workshops, because there is a lot of misunderstanding of what the police can and cannot do. I do a lot of workshops to change those views—to better educate and inform people about the process, how the system works, how the police system works and how separate it is from the criminal justice system, where you have the Crown Prosecution Service and so on. People don't understand: they just think that once you have arrested a person, it is you who is basically taking them to prison and that's it. That is a lot of the work that I am currently doing as well.

Q107 Chair: Thank you, that is really helpful. We have a series of follow-on questions and are keen to find out more about it, but can I bring in Inspector Popple? Can you tell us a bit about the work that you have been doing?

Inspector Popple: I'm Dan Popple and I work in the fairness in policing team in the West Midlands; I come under the diversity and inclusion department. My job is really to try to improve police legitimacy within our communities. I have been doing it for 18 months now. One of the early projects we had was around citizen satisfaction. We used to do a lot of surveys with people who had maybe been a victim of crime or about general community understanding, but there was a really noticeable absence of people involved in what we would regard as police-initiated contact—the people that we would stop and search, the people that we would stop in cars, the people that we would use force on. I was regularly asking, "What about the satisfaction among those people? What about people who have been stopped and searched and how they feel?"

What we then did was this. We wanted to demonstrate almost a proof of concept. We realised there were some great pieces of work around the organisation, but only in small pockets. Previously people had done work within and spoken to communities and asked questions about stop-and-search, but we felt that a lot of that may have been lost over the years and the organisational memory was not there, so we wanted to do a piece of research whereby we really understood what it felt like to be stopped and searched by West Midlands police. We predominantly targeted or spoke to people who were from a BAME background and who could really give us insight.

The research we knew academically showed that this was not a good situation; the legitimacy was poor. Within our team, one of my PCs, Sukhi Kaur, worked previously as a positive action officer, who looked to try to improve recruitment within the West Midlands. We aimed to identify some



HOUSE OF COMMONS

good contacts who could point us in the direction of people who would say, “Yes, I have been stopped and searched.”

We thought it was going to be difficult; we thought we were going to struggle to get people to talk to us. Incredibly, we had over 150 people come and give testimonies to us to explain and say, “This was how it was to be stopped and searched.” It wasn’t good reading. A lot of people would say, “I just felt targeted. I think the people are rude. They didn’t really give me the reason why.” The question we asked after that was, “How has it changed your perception of policing?” We had one really powerful testimony from a lad named Ajay who said, “I wanted to be a police officer, but I have now been stopped so many times just walking out of my home that actually I just don’t want to do that now. I would have liked to, but now I don’t.”

So we have this work now; we have this research, and the first thing we want to do is make sure we keep it and have it properly. We want to bring it into our organisation and get it properly produced. Then we identified probably two key areas, with lots of things underneath. The first one was that we don’t do this enough—we do not have enough of a voice coming into the organisation that talks about stop-and-search, and we need to change that. Whether it is through complaints, a citizen satisfaction programme, more research by IAGs or scrutiny panels, we need to start to get more understanding of what it feels like to be young—when I say young, I mean under 25—from a BAME background, and involved in stop-and-search.

We then need to start using that information to try to change behaviours. It is a cultural change in terms of behaviours. Most police officers in our organisation get stop-and-search training only when they join. We had some about 10 years ago and we have regular updates through our personal self-defence training courses. Personally, I don’t think that is the right place to talk about stop-and-search. I think that the stop bit is about the engagement, the talking, whereas our PSD training is pretty much around search techniques and self-defence. I think we need to detach that.

We plan to use the testimonies now to get some video clips and work with the people who have produced this to say how trust develops in training. We want to do something that is really about reflection, to allow officers to look, hear the stories the way we have, and say, “Oh, I didn’t know that was the impact I was having.” We very often talk about stop-and-search around GO WISELY, and that seemed to be good: if you do GO WISELY, you will achieve a good stop-search. But what we find with GO WISELY is that No. 4 on the list is your name, so we are telling our officers—and we have seen this in some of our body-worn video footage—that introducing yourselves is the fourth thing down the list. We want to flip that. We think there is a huge place now to start bringing in some of the testimonies and some of the voice so that stop-and-search is not about a legal process but is about an engagement, building rapport, and trying to humanise the encounter.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

That is where we are at the moment. We are just about to start doing some of the filming. We have got support from our learning and development team and support from our deputy chief and chief constable. We are starting to go through the process of getting that into the system as a stand-alone training, but also in student officer training and as part of our self-defence training.

Q108 **Chair:** At the moment, are you still developing what the training will look like, or have you worked that out and you are starting to roll it out?

Inspector Popple: It is probably more developing it, but we have a very good idea. We want to make sure we start talking about procedural justice so that we can start to really say, "This is what a good, fair stop-search looks like." We have the testimonies and we know the type of work we want to do. In the next week or so we will be looking to start forming it and bringing experts in. We have really good academic support from people like Professor Ben Bradford, who will give us some of that advice around procedural justice and making sure that we get that right.

Q109 **Tim Loughton:** Those were both fascinating testimonies, and it is really good to hear some positive stuff that is going on. PC Ahmed, you appear to be the ideal police recruit. We clearly need a lot more people like you who are able to engage with the BME community in particular. I want to ask you about stop-and-search, particularly in the light of some of the points just made, but can I first ask you about the Leaders Unlocked Youth Commission?

We did a youth commission in my part of the world in Sussex—we are one of the constabularies that did that—focused on engaging with young people generally, and particularly those who are really disengaged. It was not so much based on the BME community, but the same principles applied. What really made it work was the leadership from the police commissioner and the chief constable. I went to a number of sessions where the chief constable, the deputy chief constables and all the senior force were there, and they all pledged absolutely to take on board all the recommendations. There was a hotline from the participants right through to the chief constable, so they felt they were taken seriously. Is that the case in Leicestershire, with it really embraced at the top level, or is it on the side, as it were?

PC Ahmed: When I was part of the youth commission, it was very much like that. At the time I think Phil Kay was the DCC, and we would regularly meet him, as well as Rob Nixon, who is now the deputy chief constable. We would also meet our chief constable, Simon Cole, who is still here. We would regularly have those meetings, just as you have in your part of the country in Sussex. So yes, we did have those regular contacts. In fact, Phil Kay, who was at Leicestershire police—deputy chief constable at the time, I believe—was one of the people who encouraged me to apply to become a special constable and to come and see for myself.

Q110 **Tim Loughton:** How much do you think what you have done through that youth commission and all the other good work has now become ingrained into the psyche, the mentality of Leicestershire police? If you were to



HOUSE OF COMMONS

disappear under a bus tomorrow, are you confident that this work would carry on without you?

PC Ahmed: In terms of my views and opinions being put into the organisation, I genuinely believe that they are valued. At the end of the day, you have got to think of it from this point of view: who is the best person to tell you what the community is feeling? The beat I police, for example, I am literally from there. I grew up there and was educated there—my primary school and secondary school are on my patch. When something serious happens, I know for certain that my inspector, who is the NPA commander for the area, definitely takes my views on board when he is making decisions.

Being part of Leaders Unlocked, the youth commission, created an environment where I could feel comfortable from a very young age. I learned how to respectfully challenge—that is key—and put my viewpoints across. It created an environment where people can talk openly and honestly, because that is the only way you are going to create change, and where no one fears that they are going to be ostracised, for example, for their wrong views or opinions.

Q111 **Tim Loughton:** Let's take the example of stop-and-search. We heard evidence from a former police officer, Nick Glynn, who was critical of the police and accused them of still having institutional racism. He said that he had been integral in making changes to the stop-and-search procedure back in 2014, but clearly he thought they had not been followed and that the situation has got bad. Is stop-and-search dealt with differently in Leicestershire? Do you think you have a fairer procedure between the police and young BME people who get stopped? Effectively, when does stop become stop-and-search?

Perhaps Inspector Popple might come in after you. I was very interested in the whole business that it should be about engaging, not stopping and searching as a legal process, and that you only get to their name in item four, I think he said. Have you done things differently in Leicestershire? Has the stop-and-search machine been completely overhauled so it works more effectively and there is less criticism of it? Or is it just the same as in many other parts of the country? It is quite a big question—sorry.

PC Ahmed: If I miss anything, just remind me. From the scrutiny point of view, when I was on the youth commission, from the Leaders Unlocked side, I was also able to get on to a panel where they would watch randomly selected body-worn camera footage. I don't know about the rest of the country, but in Leicester, in our force, it is policy that when you are conducting stop-and-search you must have your body-worn camera activated. That is the policy standard.

I was part of that committee before joining the police. We would randomly select body-worn camera videos and we would watch them. We would do two or three, watch them all, discuss them and give good points and bad points, and what went well. This used to be with a superintendent and someone from the police equality unit was also present. We would talk about it and discuss it. If there were any negative points, they would go



HOUSE OF COMMONS

back to the individual officer via the supervisor and his manager; they would be fed back. If there were positive points, likewise, because it was important to identify positive stop-and-searches as well. That would also get fed back. As a PC I am no longer part of that group, but I know I have had my bodycam footage watched for stop-and-search because I have had emails in relation to that.

Stop-and-search is a hot topic in my community at this time, so I am also conducting workshops so that parents fully understand when children are getting stopped and searched what's happening, why we are doing it, what the rules and policies are, what we can cannot do. We are doing that stuff as well.

Every stop-and-search I do automatically goes to my supervisor. My supervisor is expected to review that stop-and-search. He will watch my bodycam footage and review what I have written in the report. If he believes that something is wrong, he will say, "Adam, you need to come in and have a chat with me to talk about it." Every stop-and-search is reviewed by a supervisor.

From a community point of view, I have recently taken—Do you remember when I was talking about covid patrols? One of those members was with me. We were around the corner and a job came in about a person with a knife. I gave him the description and I said, "Right, keep your eyes peeled. If you see a person matching this description, point him out for me." He pointed them out, I did the stop-and-search and it was a negative result—wrong person—but nevertheless he pointed that person out and I agreed with him.

We got back into the car and we discussed it. He is a Black male. We discussed it and I said to him, "What were your thoughts and feelings? You heard the information I got. You heard the description I got. What did you think?" He was in agreement. He was, like, "No—you did everything right. You were professional." He kind of changed his views as well.

Q112 **Tim Loughton:** Interesting—so an opportunity for reflective practice as well.

PC Ahmed: Yes.

Q113 **Tim Loughton:** Finally, may I come to Inspector Popple? Do you want to comment on that? You made a really interesting point, Inspector, that the training needs to be much better and to be updated; it needs to be part of continuous professional development. If you are doing that now, are young Black teenagers who have been the subjects of stop-and-search, or youth leaders, involved in training you as to how you can do much better, so that it becomes about engagement rather than about legal process?

Inspector Popple: That is more the ambition for us. We are right at the start of this journey. I look at a good stop-and-search. We had an incident with a young officer who had just joined. We have a procedural justice element as part of this officer's training, but when we spoke to her, she



HOUSE OF COMMONS

said, "All I wanted to do was get GO WISELY out. That has been drilled into me—GO WISELY is what is good." So we looked at the stop-and-search. I looked at it a year ago and thought, "This is pretty good." I look at it now, and I see other things. Why aren't we introducing ourselves? Why are those handcuffs applied so quickly? Why are we not explaining? Why do we say, "Section 1 PACE," or, "Section 60 power"? This is all jargon. Why are we not encouraging people to film? Why are we not talking to the camera? Why are we not explaining exactly the process and going through their rights? These are things that make a good stop-and-search for me.

We are not there yet, because we haven't got that far. What we want to do with our training and with the people we have spoken to, is to say, "What does good look like?" We held a forum recently and we started to tease some of those conversations out. What does good look like? Introduce yourself. Call me by your first name. Why are you saying PC Pople? Why don't you say Dan? It is little stuff like that.

We had a great example of a lad who is working with us called René—he spoke about some of the throwaway comments at the end. He had done nothing wrong. He was with a group of males and was stopped by a police officer. They weren't the people they were looking for and the officer at the end said, "And be careful next time." Fifteen years later, René said, "What do you mean, be careful next time? Where does that come from? I had done nothing wrong. Fifteen years later, I still remember that comment and the fact that my description didn't match the description that you were looking for." These are the things we need to understand.

Until I get those comments, testimonies and soundbites, I am just saying to officers, "Guys, think about how you close this and think about how you start this, because that is what important." I need to hear directly from people involved.

Q114 Dame Diana Johnson: Following up on the previous question, you talked about reflective practice, Inspector Pople, and about reflecting on what a good search looks like. Could you just say something about the restorative justice element and how that would work, practically? How do people feel that they have had their say and that it has been taken into account? What does that actually look like?

Inspector Pople: We don't have many examples and particularly not around stop-and-search, but as part of the fairness in policing team a couple of years ago, we started bringing restorative justice into our professional standards as a way of restoring that justice. We have got real buy-in now from professional standards. Some things aren't misconduct—some things will not reach that level—but something like a throwaway comment or something like how you made someone feel, that is where we want to go to now.

What we are trying to do with the people we have been speaking to, is to get to the position where we can sit down with an officer and talk through that together: "This is how you made me feel." The officer will then say,



HOUSE OF COMMONS

"This is how I felt." We are trying to merge that situation where the officer says, "I was scared. Last time I stop-and-searched someone, I got hurt," and the other person says, "But I've done nothing wrong." What we would love to see is those environments—we want to increase that voice coming into the organisation, whether it is a complaint or whether it is someone who says, "I just want to talk about it."

We have to start talking about what we do. We talk about reflective practice—we don't do it enough. Officers need to start that dialogue with themselves, to ask, "Did I really say that?" and be confident to critique their own work and then have the confidence to sit down with other people and say, "Let's talk this through."

We have the facilities now to have a very good restorative justice programme in West Midlands police; we just need to start pulling these pieces together. With the changes in professional standards looking at practice requiring improvement, there is a real opportunity to bring this into play now, but we need confidence from the officers and we need confidence from the community to do that. We want to try and use the people we are meeting as community mentors to help give that confidence and to say, "You can put complaints in and it will be taken seriously. We will look at stuff."

When there has been an injustice and someone has been treated unfairly, restorative justice is the best way of trying to restore that. We don't necessarily want to look at punitive things. We want to look at it, we want to learn and we want people to understand, "I could have done that better. Thank you for your support."

Q115 Dame Diana Johnson: Can you give me an example of where that has worked well? Is there a good example that you can talk us through?

Inspector Popple: I can't give you an example, I am afraid. I can find that out later and send something through.

Q116 Dame Diana Johnson: PC Ahmed, do you feel that you were able to reflect on what happened and take a view about whether you were scared or acted appropriately at that time early on in your training? With your experience as a special as well, do you feel that that is now part of the process that you have gone through?

PC Ahmed: Stop-and-search has always been something that we talked about prior to my joining the police service and even the Leaders Unlocked Youth Commission and so on. It was something that we always talked about in our community; from a very young age, we have talked about stop-and-search. In fact, I was stopped and searched at a young age as well. At the time, I had a really negative view of it.

However, as I steadily progressed, on the volunteering side and then going into the specials and then joining as a PC, my view completely changed. The reason for that is the talking about the positive side of stuff. If I may give you an example, we recently unfortunately had a young lad who passed away, and I was outside that scene, talking to a few of the



HOUSE OF COMMONS

grieving friends and families and so on. Long story short, I end up arresting someone. People in a car were detained for a stop-and-search and so on, and as a result two knives were recovered from that vehicle. The community—everybody—was out and about, and they all saw and watched it. The following day, I was having a chat to the group of ladies who I was talking to prior to that happening, and we talked about the stop-and-search. Some of them had some really negative views of it prior to that, but because of what they saw the day before, their views slightly changed, if that makes sense.

I am a great believer in talking about it, having discussions about it. The only way that you will actually make any form of change will be by talking about it. It is like the Inspector was saying—you have to give that opportunity to people who have had a negative experience to speak to someone, to have that conversation and dialogue, and both parties will learn in exchange.

Dame Diana Johnson: Thank you. That is very helpful. Finally, I want to comment on what you said about using mums to put pressure on and sort out antisocial behaviour in your community, and how interesting it is that that is a way of trying to deal with that low-level crime that can make communities not nice places to be. That was really interesting. Thank you for sharing that with us.

Q117 **Ms Abbott:** I would like to ask both our witnesses about the numbers of Black, Asian and minority ethnic officers in the force. We are looking at what has happened since the Macpherson report was published. Some things have got a bit better, but some things don't seem to have improved. One thing that does not seem to have improved—certainly in the Met, which is the force I know the best—is the overall number of Black and minority ethnic officers in the force, and in particular, the numbers at a senior level. I ask both of you why you think that is.

Inspector Popple: I don't have the numbers to hand, but I can get them quite easily. In the Fairness in Policing D&I team, I think we have recognised that, in the higher routes, we certainly have very low numbers of BME colleagues, and particularly females, and we are putting positive action in place. This is not my area of expertise, but I can get some information.

My work looks at fair processes, and I often help people to try to eliminate any form of bias. I think we have to make sure that we look at what has happened previously. For example, we look at certain roles within the organisation that may lead to specialism. One criterion for that role might be that we need an advanced driving course, and I will ask where that comes from and why that criterion needs to exist, because if we look at 10 years ago and at the current make-up of courses of that particular type, it is hugely disproportionate, with white males generally having those type of qualifications. We have to look at processes, and the promotion process cannot be the interview process. My view has always been that we only really look at fairness around the interview. We have to look at the entire organisation. We have to look at our talent very early on and allow it to



HOUSE OF COMMONS

flourish. We have to make sure every temping and acting opportunity, and every major course, goes through a fair and rigorous process.

Q118 **Ms Abbott:** Thank you. I think we can all agree with that. What I was asking was, why do you think the numbers are still so low, and why aren't there more at senior levels?

Inspector Popple: I think there is a confidence issue as well, and there will be bias in the system. There are still disproportionate numbers of white males in the organisation, so it is potentially a hostile environment. We need to ensure that we address discrimination in the organisation, which still occurs. We did a recent survey that said that 16% of our colleagues felt they had been discriminated against. There is a lot of good work going on to try to address that. People have been asked, "Why don't you want to go for promotion?" and they say, "I just don't want to." When they are in the post, we have to ensure that they feel valued and supported.

Q119 **Ms Abbott:** PC Ahmed, you were a special and then you joined the police force. Why do you think there aren't more people like you? Why aren't there more people joining the police force from minority communities? In particular, why aren't there more at a senior level? What do you think?

PC Ahmed: In terms of attracting people from the BAME community, we have Sergeant Nagdi, who is in HR, and I work quite closely with him. In my primary role, I am the neighbourhood officer, and I have contacts within the community and can gain access to schools, mosques, churches, etc., because I see them day to day, unlike Sergeant Nagdi and the HR team. Whenever recruitment opens up, he contacts me and some other officers who are Asian, Nigerian, etc.—from different backgrounds—and we get together and strategise how we are going to get into our communities and encourage them to come and apply for it. We actively go out there and talk to them.

Q120 **Ms Abbott:** That sounds very good, but tell me why, up to now, there have been so few police officers—particularly senior officers—from ethnic minority communities.

PC Ahmed: Like I was saying earlier, I had no interest in joining the police service per se. I was focusing on the probation side—the rehabilitative side. That was purely because, in my community, the police service wasn't spoken about as a profession, if that makes sense. We didn't have anyone from the Somali community here in Leicester until I joined. Because of that, the police didn't crop up to me. Whenever we talked about the police, it was always, "Have you heard? So-and-so's son has been arrested," or, "So-and-so's son has been stopped and searched." Do you see where I am coming from?

Q121 **Ms Abbott:** So you are saying that the reason why people weren't joining was negative preconceptions? Is that what you are saying?

PC Ahmed: Yes. Negative preconceptions—that's the word.

Q122 **Ms Abbott:** Why do you think people weren't being promoted?



HOUSE OF COMMONS

PC Ahmed: In terms of the promotion side of stuff, I have only been in service for three or four years now, so I don't feel comfortable commenting on that. I can talk about what has been happening and what opportunities I have been given, if you want to hear that.

Q123 **Ms Abbott:** I am trying to understand why, 20 years after Macpherson, the numbers of Black and minority ethnic police officers are still not much higher, particularly at a senior level. If you are not able to comment on that, that is fine.

Can I ask you another question about what they call disproportionality? One of the issues around Macpherson was the disproportionate levels of stop-and-search on Black and minority ethnic people. That is still an issue today. In some parts of the country, Black people are as much as eight times as likely to be stopped and searched than white people. That has been compounded by a disproportionality in the use of Tasers, a disproportionality in the use of force generally and, even with the covid situation, a disproportionate number of Black and minority ethnic people being handed fixed penalty notices. Why? Why do you think this is?

PC Ahmed: I can't talk about the national side of stuff, because I am not really up to date with all that.

Q124 **Ms Abbott:** Are you saying that Leicester is different?

PC Ahmed: I can talk about Leicester, because I know exactly what happens. I work in one of the biggest BME communities here in our local police service area. In terms of covid-19 tickets, we have personally not issued that many at all, to be fair. I don't have the figures off the top of my head, but my inspector was very keen to engage, explain and encourage, and enforcement was literally the last, last resort.

Q125 **Ms Abbott:** What about stop-and-search? What about Tasers? Are you able to comment on that and why they would be disproportionately used against ethnic minorities?

PC Ahmed: I can't comment on it from a national point of view; I can only talk about my personal views.

Q126 **Ms Abbott:** In Leicester, why do you think it is disproportionate?

PC Ahmed: Here in Leicester, like I said, if you take this community, it is the highest BME area. So naturally, if you look at my stop-and-search figures, naturally the people I am stopping are mainly going to be from the Asian and the Black—

Q127 **Ms Abbott:** No, but the argument, and it has been an argument for 20 years, is not that you get more Black people stopped and searched in Black areas; it is that overall you get a disproportionate number of Black and minority ethnic people searched. But if you can't speak to that—

PC Ahmed: No, I can't speak to that.

Q128 **Ms Abbott:** Inspector Dan, you will know it has been an issue for 20 years that disproportionate numbers of Black and minority ethnic people



HOUSE OF COMMONS

are stopped and searched. Now you see use of Taser and of fixed penalty notices over and above the numbers in the population. Do you have any thoughts as to why that might be, Inspector?

Inspector Popple: I think there are two elements. First, we would be naive to ignore that there is bias in individual officers, which could be fear, discrimination or making assumptions around people and how they are acting and the need to go and do stop-and-searches based on previous biases that may exist. The other element is around deployment of resources, whether that is permanent deployment, because we have generally more officers based in certain areas based on crime, or proactive deployment. The need for us is to understand where we are proactively deploying and monitor that to ensure that we are effective in what we are doing and that stop-and-search is an effective tactic.

Those are things we are trying to drive in our force now, to say, "Let's not just assume stop-and-search is an effective tactic. Has it worked? Are we putting people in the right places? Should we be thinking differently? Realistically, if we have a problem with, say, knife crime, is there a default position that we just go to stop-and-search tactics?" I want to see things that are more innovative and more community engaged. That is the concern with disproportionality. If we continually put people into areas that are high in BME people then potentially, even if we just did two stop-and-searches each—not necessarily proportionately more, but just two—that will naturally sway the entire West Midlands disproportionality rate for the whole force.

We have commissioned some research with the OPCC within our area. When you look at individual communities, the disproportionality is not there, because obviously, for example, in areas that have a high Asian population we do predominantly more searches in those Asian areas. When you look collectively, across the organisation, that is when your movement of resources comes into play.

Q129 **Ms Abbott:** Finally, do you think the relationship between the police and Black and minority ethnic communities has improved, and if so, why?

Inspector Popple: That is a really complex question. We have great engagement and great engagement tools with certain sections of the community—I mean people who are engaged. We have a platform where we pass messages on, with over 90,000 people, and we have a fantastic Facebook following. We engage with certain people, but what we did not have before was engagement with people, say, who were young and BME and had been involved in policing activities. I don't think that engagement has improved. I think we are trying, and we recognise the fact that we need to go out proactively and work with communities who have been affected by policing. I think in the past we just looked at victims and at communities more generally. There is some great work going on. There are pockets where we need to do far more work and be far more proactive to start to understand how it feels.

Q130 **Stuart C. McDonald:** Thank you both for your evidence so far this



HOUSE OF COMMONS

morning. I want to follow up on the last question. If you were asked now what are the most important things that have to be done in order to try to improve confidence in policing among ethnic minority communities, what would you say are the most important things that have to happen? Let's start with Inspector Popple.

Inspector Popple: We've got to start listening, and we need to be proactive with it. In our organisation, we are looking to try to create a philosophy of learning—becoming a learning organisation—not just putting out a handful of surveys and saying, "How did you feel about that?" We need to go to every person who is involved in policing or not and ask what we could do differently or what we could do better—what was good and what was bad—not script the surveys that have 10 or 20 questions asking what we think "good" looks like, but ask what we could do differently.

The other thing we need to do is start looking at behaviours and start trying to come away from this kind of checklist of guidance—this is what we do; this is what "good" looks like. "Good" isn't always about following the guidelines and the rules. "Good" is around being police officers, being human, talking, understanding and being part of the community.

Q131 **Stuart C. McDonald:** What is stopping these things happening just now? Is it just a lack of knowledge about these things, or are there resourcing issues, for example?

Inspector Popple: I think it is a lack of knowledge. Thinking about my service, I have been in the job almost 18 years. Training in comms and learning the skills around talking to people—it is a skill. To be a good interviewer, you have to go on courses. There are skills around rapport building. We have started to look at things such as negotiators, who have excellent skills around talking to people. Protest liaison officers are a prime example; they can really keep a situation of disorder calm. These are skills.

What I have learned around procedural justice, like I have said before, is that some of the nuances and little things can actually make the difference between a good interaction and a bad interaction. It is about making sure that we talk about that. We don't just say, "Go away and use a checklist." We say, "It has to be done in a particularly way." It's the style and tone. The evidence is there from the academic world. We need to translate it into conversations that are not academic but are real and tangible, and that officers can relate to.

Q132 **Stuart C. McDonald:** PC Ahmed, looking ahead, what are the most important things that have to be done to try to build confidence in minority communities further?

PC Ahmed: From our point of view, it would be more recruitment of people who are actually from the communities you are intent on policing. People need to be able to see someone and relate to someone who has actually gone through the estates and who has been educated like myself. That is quite important, and dialogue is key. It is about building further dialogue with the communities and having these honest conversations—



HOUSE OF COMMONS

not coming there for just five or 10 minutes, saying what you need to say, then going away and doing no action from it. It is important that people actually follow up on what you say to the community and what you promise to the community. If you cannot, you should explain why you cannot. I think dialogue is key, from my personal viewpoint.

Q133 **Stuart C. McDonald:** In terms of practicalities, you have given some examples of initiatives that are happening in both of your forces. To what extent do you share good practice with other forces, and to what extent have you learned from other forces about what is going on there? Is there enough conversation between forces, and can you give other practical examples of projects that you have picked up from elsewhere that you would like to implement? Let's go back to Inspector Popple first.

Inspector Popple: That is a good question. We do have a benchmarking facility, which we use quite a lot, and we did it recently for stop-and-search. What does "good" look like, in terms of stop-and-search? I think it was City of London that did some really good training on procedural justice, which we asked to be involved in, but they had finished that process at the time. So it is there, and the facilities are there.

Our ambition is that when we produce a video on our training, we would like to share it through that same process and say, "This is what we have done that is different." As I said, the infrastructure is there, and we do use it. Some forces do some great work on procedural justice. We have evidence-based policing forums as well. We work with the Open University as part of a collaborative approach to share our information. When we finish this work, we will take some more work into those arenas and share what we have done.

Q134 **Stuart C. McDonald:** PC Ahmed, are you aware of what is going on in other forces? Are you able to share best practice, and are there ideas that you would like to implement that you have learned from elsewhere?

PC Ahmed: I am part of the staff network—the Association of Muslim Police and the Black Police Association—where I regularly speak to our chair, who also has contacts within the other forces. We talk about what is working quite well for them if we are having a particular issue or problem, because they might have already had it and resolved it, and they might have a solution that we could potentially take and bring in with us. As the Inspector said, there is also evidence-based policing. We have the platforms, which I regularly look at as well, to be fair, and the Society of Evidence Based Policing. I look for ideas and solutions that have worked in other force areas and see whether I can bring them into my local area.

Q135 **Stuart C. McDonald:** Is there more work that can be done to try to facilitate that further, or are you quite happy with how forces learn from each other?

PC Ahmed: On my level, as a neighbourhood officer, I do not actually go to other forces, but if I see something that I like or that I think we could take, I do feel that I could speak to my inspector, for example, and the senior management team and bring it to their attention, and go and have



HOUSE OF COMMONS

a chat with those other forces to see what they are doing quite well. I have personally not contacted any other forces, other than using what is currently available on the platforms that I have access to.

Q136 Laura Farris: PC Ahmed, I think you said in your evidence that you were the first Somali officer to police the area, and it is the area that you grew up in. I have two questions arising out of that. Have there been other Somali officers who have followed in your footsteps, either through the Leaders Unlocked programme or otherwise? Also, you said that it was a particularly multicultural area. Are there other officers who are, again, very closely linked to the communities that they are policing who are doing the same thing, albeit possibly from a different ethnic background?

PC Ahmed: At the moment we have one person from the Somali community who is currently in his probationary period; he is out and about, I believe, doing his in-company training. We have two more in the application stage. It is something that I am keen on—getting more people from our community into the police service—and I am actively working on that with our HR team and so on. That is something that I personally want to achieve, to get a reflection from my community into the organisation itself.

In my station, we have multiple languages spoken by multiple people. We have Somali, Swahili, Punjabi, Urdu and Gujarati, so we have pretty much got the area that we cover—the demographic—covered really. In terms of religion, we have Muslim, Sikh, Hindu and Christian officers. As a team in my station, we are able to get into communities. For example, if I am struggling to get into a gurdwara on my beat, I will speak to one of my colleagues and say to him, “Look, I’m having an issue.” He’ll say, “Leave it with me. I’ll go in there and I’ll have a chat.” Again, they can relate to him. They see him and the barriers are down straight away.

Likewise, if they are struggling to get into the Somali community, I get frequently contacted on my thoughts and views. They pick my brains about how they can build that trust. Whenever I go down to a particular issue with an officer who is struggling, the barriers are automatically brought down, because they say, “Oh, it’s Adam. You’re so-and-so’s son.” We are a small community here in Leicester, so people already know each other, and it makes it so much easier to resolve what the problem is.

Q137 Laura Farris: Could I come back on that point? Would it be right to say that all the police in your area are following the same policing methods, but the difference is really connection to the community, or is it the case that you police slightly differently? I would be interested to know whether it is policing method or community connection that is the difference.

PC Ahmed: Each police officer is their own person. For me, one of the important things is that I am able to have my personality and my character. You cannot just say, “This is how a police officer is meant to act. This is how they are meant to behave.” That is completely wrong, in my opinion, because it is important to have your character, your viewpoints and so on.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

For me, my contacts in the community definitely help, 100%. Also, I think my personality has an element of influence as well. I am naturally usually a very happy, bubbly, jokey person, and I am quite laid back as a person as well. Naturally, my decision-making process is going to be completely different to that of my colleague who has come out from the countryside and has not come into the city where it is very different demographically, socioeconomically, and so on. It is going to be completely different, and these are discussions that I have with my colleagues who are from these different backgrounds, these communities.

I do take on students as well from other officers. I say, "Let them come with me for a week. Let me introduce them to my community and the area I police. Let them have a bit of chai, have a chat with someone, have a coffee and a tea, go and see the mosques, the temples and the gurdwaras, so they get a better understanding." That is quite important, I think.

Q138 **Laura Farris:** Do you think that has had a positive effect?

PC Ahmed: Yes. That is something I personally do, and I know other officers within my station also do that. We are all basically trying to make sure people understand sensitivities around our communities, because that education is not there, I don't think.

Q139 **Chair:** We need to move on to our second panel in a second. Can I just ask you about a couple of quick final points? Do not feel the need to respond to all these questions if you do not have any reflections to add.

We started this inquiry looking into progress since the Macpherson report. Obviously, that report discussed the issue of institutional racism, so I wondered whether that was a concept that would be discussed now in your forces, and whether you had any reflections on whether or not that discussion was helpful.

Secondly, there are some specific points: based on what you have said seems to be working or not working, do you think it is crucial to the success of some of your stop-and-search work that it is the same officers in the same communities doing those stops-and-searches, as opposed to teams of officers from outside the area coming in to do them? Does that then make a big difference in terms of the reconciliation and the relationship building?

My third point struck me when looking at some of the Leaders Unlocked work. Do you think a lot of this has to be done by the police, or are there some bits of the relationship that need to come from other organisations to facilitate trust and legitimacy with the policy? Answer as many of those points as you are able to. Inspector Popple, I will come to you first.

Inspector Popple: On the first question, I think it is right to talk about institutional racism. It needs to be discussed, and I think we need to start—we don't call them safe spaces; we call them brave spaces. We still have law and we still have misconduct, and we still need to talk about what it means. People need to be brave, to say, "I don't understand this. I don't understand the terminology. Why is it happening?" I think some of



HOUSE OF COMMONS

the facts and the numbers around disproportionality speak for themselves, and we need to explore what that looks like.

The second question—forgive me, would you repeat the second question?

Q140 **Chair:** Sorry. It was whether or not the work you have done, particularly around stop-and-search, relies on it being the same police officers in the same communities who are doing those stops-and-searches, as opposed to people moving through from one area to another.

Inspector Popple: It is a tough question. My feeling is we should ask, “Is there a problem?” and I would like to explore that in more detail. It would be wrong of me to say, “There is a problem and we need to do this,” but I would like to start looking at that as a piece of research to see whether it does change anything—whether disproportionality changes, whether behaviours change. If we can settle our citizen satisfaction programme the way we want it to look, we might be able to see if there are differences from different types of officer in different communities.

PC Ahmed: In relation to the first point you made, about institutional racism, I personally do not agree with that terminology. I think it is more culturally unaware. The terminology used is important, because naturally when you say “institutional racism” to someone, from my experience it puts people’s back up. People take it personally—“I’m not a racist,” and so on. From the discussions I have with my colleagues—these are discussions that I openly have with my white colleagues, for example—a lot of the time, it is just not being culturally aware, not being aware of the sensitivities of certain communities, and not being aware of the history behind stop-and-search, for example, which is one of the key questions you have asked.

On officers from outside areas coming into my community, for example, that is a very hard one, because it has not really been looked into. In my opinion, as a neighbourhood officer, I sometimes have to go and clear up essentially, because our response team, for example, get called to a job, come in, deal with it and move on to the next job, because another job is always waiting. That is where I come in as a neighbourhood officer—I always look at all the jobs that happen on my beat—and me and my colleague will try to resolve it if it was not handled in a particular way. We will go there and try to get a better understanding and stuff like that.

Chair: Thanks very much to you both for your evidence. It has been hugely interesting and we really appreciate it. Thank you for the immensely important work that you both do in your forces and your communities—we really appreciate it.

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Sayce Holmes-Lewis, Pastor Lorraine Jones and Bishop Derek Webley.

Q141 **Chair:** In our second panel, we have Sayce Holmes-Lewis, the founder and CEO of Mentivity; Pastor Lorraine Jones, the founder and CEO of the



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Dwayne Simpson Foundation; and Bishop Derek Webley, the co-chair of the Windrush cross-Government working group and a former police authority chair. Welcome, all three of you.

Can I ask each of you a bit about the work that you personally are currently doing? Pastor Lorraine Jones, could you tell us a bit about Dwaynatics? I know that it is based on some of the work that you son did and that he started.

Pastor Jones: Yes, that is correct. My late son, who was killed through knife crime, started the project Dwaynatics Boxing, with young people in Angell Town, I have continued that work through his legacy. We facilitate boxing and fitness. It was non-contact boxing and fitness, but we have recently affiliated with England Boxing—this is our second year—so we have carded amateur boxers now, too.

We are running seven sessions a week, and out of those seven sessions two specifically have police officers who engage in the training with our kids aged between five and 10. Then, with our amateurs, who are aged between 15 and 18—that is going very well—we also facilitate workshops around health and wellbeing, life skills and stop-and-search. We facilitated the workshops out of the interest of the young people and what they asked for.

We also run an awards-based ceremony two to four times a year, where young people and children are given awards for their achievements through our courses. Awards are presented by community leaders and the police. We also have a summer camp that is run mainly by the police, but we have volunteers as well. That has been going since before my son was killed, which was six years ago now. At the camp, every summer holidays, we provide different workshops and trips for five weeks for young people aged between 10 and 16.

Q142 **Chair:** Thank you—that is very impressive work. Can you say a bit more about the work that you do specifically around policing and stop-and-search?

Pastor Jones: Sadly and traumatically, I was a victim of police brutality. I am a mother of seven and have three grandchildren. I live in Angell Town—that is in Lambeth, Brixton—and I experienced a lot of harsh policing. I am going to be very honest with you, which I am in all my work. When my son was killed, he was on a life-support machine for three days. When the hospital called me to say that Dwayne had passed, when I saw his body and came out of the room, the first thing I said was to the police that “You can’t harass him any more.” That is the core and the passion—the reason I do what I do with the police, so that I can build better relations with the police and the community, and young people.

Through that I arrange a number of community talks with the community and the police. At the stop-and-search talks, we have had predominantly white officers participating in informing the community how stop and search is done. The good thing about it is the young people then respond, “That’s not what we experience,” so we are able to allow young people to



HOUSE OF COMMONS

demonstrate what they have experienced. Recently we have had young people—I have put this to our commander—asking for Black officers to come and engage with them more, because of the trauma they have experienced from white officers. So it is that level and depth of engagement and organising which I do in bringing officers, communities and young people together to talk and to reason, and to try and build to help that healing process.

Q143 Chair: Thank you, Pastor. We are so sorry about your son. I will turn now to Sayce Holmes-Lewis. Can you tell us a bit about the work that you do with Mentivity, but also about your experience of providing some training to the police around stop-and-search recently, and how that came about?

Sayce Holmes-Lewis: Good morning everyone. I am Sayce Holmes-Lewis, founder and CEO of Mentivity, which is four and a half years old. I grew up and resided in Southwark, south-east London, on the Aylesbury estate, for 26 years of my life. Mentivity came out of my life experiences and the need for mentors and positive role models in a variety of different settings—education, the sporting context, and just in general in society.

Before covid, we engaged 500 young people via early intervention mentoring; we also have alternative education provision based across London and now in Brighton, Worthing and Littlehampton, as well as Kenya and Uganda—so we have done a lot in four and a half years. A lot of our work is trying to find solutions to the issues that young people face within society—county lines exploitation and many other issues that young people are facing—and trying to get them earlier so we can focus them on their lives through their passions. We recently launched a programme called the Raising Aspirations project, in conjunction with Goldman Sachs, which actually just funded us through their racial equity fund, so we will be able to do a lot more of our work once we get back to the schools in September.

Much like Pastor Lorraine, my experience with the police has been very negative in terms of how I have been treated by the police. Most notably I was assaulted by a police officer at the age of 14, just going home from school in my school uniform. Out of that experience we pressed charges, but the CPS threw them out and, literally, there was a counter-claim from the police saying that I assaulted a police officer, when I did nothing of the sort. So for 24 years I have had a kind of disdain towards the police. Obviously I am a Black male and historically the relations between the Met police and the Black British community have been very disenfranchised and disjointed.

I was stopped on 5 May during lockdown delivering food to friends and family members that had issues with covid, and lost members of their family to covid, and I was profiled in under 45 seconds as a drug dealer. I have been stopped and searched over 30 times since the age of 14 and my solution this time was to actually initiate a training programme around cultural equity when it comes to stop and search, and conscious bias—because I don't believe it is unconscious. I believe it is a construct of each individual officer and the institution at large. So I launched that on 24

June at New Scotland Yard and it was a very impactful and powerful session.

Q144 **Chair:** What was in the training?

Sayce Holmes-Lewis: Talking about perception of the Black community, the understanding of the Black British community and how your world view of the Black community is formed. Many of these officers are very young and they have never been to London, so their first experience of London is through work. The information that they get about the Black British community is through the media, predominantly. The issue that they have is that, when they come to London and carry out stop-and-searches, they are pretty much met with negativity, which is very reinforcing in terms of their stereotype of the Black British community at large.

We spoke about the misunderstanding, having to integrate and how to communicate, in terms of social capacity, especially with young people, but also with the Black British community. When you shout, "Section 23," and, "Section 60," and do not explain what is going on, many people are going to have a negative experience and a negative response to the police. It is all about having honest dialogue and being effective in that communication.

Q145 **Chair:** In terms of what good policing would look like in this area, were you recommending things that they should be doing?

Sayce Holmes-Lewis: Yes, we were having open, honest dialogue about the interaction. The initial interaction with the police is pretty much negative, from my standpoint. I have been stopped over 30 times in my life, despite doing great work in the community for 21 years. Again, it is about the initial dialogue. It is about saying, "Right, I am stopping you, and this is the reason. This is my name, etc." When you are shouting at young people, they are going to be scared and you are going to be met with negativity. That is a problem.

The initial social approach is very important, but it is also about understanding the experience that some young people face and the previous experience that they may have had with other officers. One of the favourite lines of police officers is, "We're not all the same. We're not all bad," but the fact is that if you have a negative expertise, such as the one I had at the age of 14, that carries with you until it is met with some sort of solution. That hasn't ever happened. I had to change my approach and outlook towards the police in order to work with them before I solved this problem.

Q146 **Chair:** Thank you. Bishop Webley, I know you were the chair of the West Midlands police Authority a few years ago. Can you give us your reflections on how policing has changed over the years, both in your time at the police authority and since?

Bishop Webley: Initially, the Stephen Lawrence report focused the police service's mind on the real issues that had been faced predominantly by



the African and Caribbean community. The report and its addressing of institutional racism has been accepted. That was the position after a lot of tussle around whether or not that should be the case. That was important, because it focused people's minds on the fact that there was a community who felt that they were being criminalised and looked upon in a very negative way.

Yes, there were issues within those communities that they had to face as a community, but the disproportionality in terms of how they were being challenged and treated was just not right. I felt that, over a period of time—I speak as the authority that existed at the time—we took that on. The Stephen Lawrence report ran as a theme throughout the various committees that existed.

I felt at the time that West Midlands police took this very seriously. There was clearer involvement of the police authority, and there was work from the wider community and independent groups from the community to address some of the real challenges that were being faced by policing in general, but West Midlands in the context that I am talking about. Through its HR committee, which was the personnel committee at the time, there was a lot of work around recruitment, retention, promotion, policing style—neighbourhood policing was looked at—the representation of communities and their ability to feed into the policing plan and have an opportunity to speak to that. That took on a greater effort. It existed, but it took on a greater effort, and in my view there was a genuine attempt to find a way to address this issue, which was prevailing at the time.

Q147 Chair: Obviously, your reflection is more from the outside, but what is your sense about recent years? We have had some evidence to the Committee that the police have become complacent about some of those issues or that things have stalled. Is that your sense, or do you think progress has continued?

Bishop Webley: My honest view on that—this is in general terms, and not specific to the West Midlands—is that there was an austerity measure that came into being, and in the West Midlands about £156 million was taken out of policing. I think there is no way that level of funding could be taken out of policing without it having some level of impact on policing. I felt that the policing service genuinely tried to refocus, to look at policing in different ways, using aspects of new technology to help. There was even a discussion at the time about whether there could be private partnerships—a lot of conversations were going around.

Q148 But I genuinely think that the priority of policing and its focus had to change to deal with the resources it had at hand to deliver policing in respective communities. To some extent, they did well, and they really tackled violent crime, particularly in various communities, with a number of arrests made and significant individuals taken out of the community. In my view, they dumbed down on a lot of issues, but because of the austerity measures over a period of time things began to increase. In 2015, we saw an escalation of violence in a way that had not been seen for quite a significant period of time.



Q149 Tim Loughton: May I say what really powerful testimonies we have just heard? What is particularly encouraging and laudable from the first two witnesses is how you have turned your very negative experiences of the police—I think you, Pastor Lorraine, referred to police brutality and the very tragic experiences of your son—into something positive, to try to improve the situation rather than turn it into a conflict.

I will ask Pastor Lorraine first about the experience of Dwaynatics. I was involved some years ago doing a documentary in Birmingham where there was an organisation called Young Disciples, largely run by young Black people who had been involved in crime. Some had been in prison. I remember one young guy there who was about 30 and had young kids. He had come out of prison and suddenly thought, “Do I really want to live my life like this?” He became part of what became the youth organisation Young Disciples, working with people like him at an earlier stage to try to get them back on the straight and narrow, as well as working with the police and other authorities. They did a lot of sporting stuff, they had music recording studios and they were really engaging. What struck me was that it worked because people who had been on the other side and experienced all the bad stuff that had gone on were much better and more able to engage with people who would potentially be in that space as well, rather than parachuting in professionals from Whitehall, the police, Westminster or whatever. That was so much more effective. That is what you appear to be doing in your project as well. It is those people who have been victims or wrapped up in all of this who can have the most effect on young people. I am making a bit of a speech here, but do you think that is why your group is so successful? Is that the secret to it?

Pastor Jones: To be honest, the secret to it is the empathy and genuine care from the borough commander and the senior officers. That is the secret, because with police at that level coming into our environment, engaging with our young people and presenting medals to our young people, it is building healing and bridging that gap. It is something which we have not seen or experienced.

When the police come into our environment, they experience our culture, our foods and our diversity of music and they learn more about us. That is the unique thing with Dwaynatics—the way the police, the youth and the community engage in harmony. Also, because we have managed to build that level of relationship with the police, we need a lot more police constables and inspectors on the lower levels to engage. Because we have engaged in that way, we actually get referrals from the police. Because they know our environment, they will refer young people to come to us. They have referred a number of young people to us. There are a number of young people that have had experience in criminality, but there is a larger number of young people that are faced with the trauma of police misconduct and harshness in the borough, not necessarily directly. Some are directly, but some are from the video footage. It brings so much fear and anxiety, so it is really the police availing themselves and coming into our environment, listening and engaging, which makes us so unique.

Q150 Tim Loughton: Do you think that is absolutely genuine? To go back to a



HOUSE OF COMMONS

question I asked the previous witnesses, has this got the buy-in from the very highest levels—the Chief of the Met and really senior officers in your case—and are they determined to make sure that all the officers engage with you and what you are trying to do, or are they just paying lip service? What do you think?

Pastor Jones: I would not say it is lip service. Dwayne died six years ago and Dwaynatics has been going for five years, so I have experience of working with three borough commanders and the new borough commander who has just come in post, so it is not lip service. You will have to actually see it in action. When we first started to engage, there was a very stiff atmosphere—tense—with officers coming into our environment. After a few months and continually telling them what the police have come to do—it was police officers at Dwayne’s side when he first got stabbed; it literally happened in view of the Brixton police station. I tell that story of how the police helped him, and it is that communication that helps to ease the minds and bring that expectance for them to come into our environment. No, there are not enough officers engaging in this way. In Lambeth alone, in Angell Town alone, we have got over 4,000 people. The majority are children. So it looks like a drop in the ocean, but, because I know that it is happening and it is positive and achievable, it needs to ripple out across the borough and across London and the UK.

Q151 **Tim Loughton:** I have been looking at some of the achievements that you have listed. You said that Dwaynatics has certainly helped reduce reoffending numbers among the youth in Lambeth, and you have had some successes with driving out some drug dealing and so on. First, do you think that it really is having a big impact on crime? Secondly, partly as a result of that, do you think that the attitudes of the police that you deal with have improved? There is clearly still a long way to go. Or do you think they have still got the sorts of problems that you described five or six years ago when your son tragically died?

Pastor Jones: First, I do not think but know there has been improvement. Historically, Belinda Road was known for drug dealing and prostitution. Since we have been there for five years, none of that has happened: no violence, no drug dealing, nothing. It is amazing. That road is like a safe haven. On the streets around Lambeth we have got hotspots, so it is literally amazing what is happening on Belinda Road, and it has been consistent. That is a fact.

In terms of the police engagement, we are talking about real lives, real people. You could speak to young people within Dwaynatics about their experience with police engagement within our boxing gym, but that needs to be rolled out in the community, Tim. There needs to be more police engagement because I get so much video footage and so many messages of harsh experiences of what is going on now, so enough isn’t being done and we want more to be done.

Q152 **Tim Loughton:** I set up a project a few years ago called Midnight Football, which runs football on a Saturday night in a leisure centre between 10 pm and midnight. We got a lot of young kids coming along



HOUSE OF COMMONS

and working with the police, and the police actually sent their own football team to play against the kids, because it works so well. What was really interesting is that it changed the dynamics of the relationship between those young men and the police, so when they met them next time on a street corner, it was not to be hauled up for doing something wrong; it was “You’re the one with the demon right foot,” or whatever. That is what changes relationships, which seems to be what you are doing where you are.

The final point in all this is whether you think that police attitudes have changed substantially over the past five or six years in your area but not nationally. We have heard accusations that the police are institutionally racist, which obviously goes back to the Macpherson report, which is what we are researching. Do you think things have tangibly changed over the past few years?

Pastor Jones: I couldn’t say that things have tangibly changed in the borough, because we have evidence that we cannot take subtly, especially through the lockdown period, of the number of stop-and-searches that have happened to Black boys. We cannot take that lightly. However, I can say that, through my engagement—I engage widely—and conversations that I and other people who work for me are having with officers, we have never experienced that level of conversation and engagement before. It is very positive. What needs to happen is senior officers allowing PCs to have more of a level of engagement with the community in forums around sports or cultural workshops. They do not have enough time, but officers I have spoken to want to do community policing. They do not want to do the law enforcement side. I think that, if it can become compulsory that senior officers or the commissioner implement that within their training and within their refreshers, we will move along.

Tim Loughton: Brilliant. We have to move on. Congratulations. Thanks for what you are doing. More power to your elbow.

Q153 **Chair:** Sayce Holmes-Lewis, can I ask you for your thoughts on that same issue? Do you think things have got better or worse over, say, the last five years?

Sayce Holmes-Lewis: It is the same for me. At the age of 37, I am still being stopped and searched and profiled as a drug dealer, so from my experience it has not changed. It is not good enough. Education can breed a lot of change in attitudes, in compliance and in enforcement. For me personally, that is still happening. I was stopped four times during lockdown. I am a key worker. I am doing work for the community. The thing is that, even when I was stopped and tried to tell the officers, “This is what I do. Check who I am. I can even show you my website. This is what I do,” they dismissed it out of hand. That is the problem that we have around racial profiling.

However, as I said about conscious bias, because of a minority of us in the community doing negative things, everyone is tarred with the same brush—we are all criminals who can’t be doing positive things. That is the issue that we face. So for me, it hasn’t improved, and the reason why I



HOUSE OF COMMONS

have been really pushing for this training for the Met police and talking about conscious bias and having those conversations is because we have to carry this momentum, especially in the light of Black Lives Matter.

Q154 **Chair:** When you were stop-and-searched, how many times were you in the car and how many times were you walking on the street?

Sayce Holmes-Lewis: Every time I was in the car—four times. I do not walk that much now, but when I was younger, getting stopped and searched was a regular occurrence. In my adult life, there have probably been about 20 times I have been stopped in the car, and I have been stopped in the car with my son about four or five times. He was 14 yesterday, but from when he was as young as three or four, I have been stopped, and they ask him questions about who I am, which is not appropriate.

It is the conduct of the officers that is the problem that we have in the community—the lack of empathy and dialogue. It is always straight to enforcement before dialogue or speaking to a young person and saying, “How’s your day been? What’s going on? The reason why I am stopping you is because of this. I observed you—” and so on. That is not happening in the community. It is straight to enforcement, section 23, treating people like criminals and being judge, jury and executioner. You are there to uphold the law for equality, justice and empathy. That is not happening in our community.

Q155 **Chair:** Four times during lockdown sounds very high. Has that been the same level over the last five years or was that a significant increase during the lockdown period?

Q156 **Sayce Holmes-Lewis:** For me personally it was four times in two months, so that was probably a record. I have been stopped pretty much every month. Sometimes you’re cool about it. Again, not every situation has been negative. Sometimes they have stopped me and said, “Look, this is the reason why I’m stopping you,” and I’m like, “Okay officer, no problem. That’s fine. You can check the insurance.” When you are met with respect you are going to give that back.

Respect is earned. The Met police haven’t earned the respect of the Black British community and it is time to earn it now, through dialogue and working together. Part of my training programme is to have an outreach programme, which will commence once we go back to the schools in September, where we have the officers volunteer their time, because time with the young people is love and time for the community is love. You need to give that time and build those bridges, because they have never been built.

We go back to sus laws and the Scarman report. We have had reports. What is the action now? What is the solution? This is my part of the solution, as a community leader, implementing this training programme and bridging that gap, but understanding both sides of the story. We don’t understand what it is like to be a new recruit or to come from a rural part of England and come to a London housing estate, where you have grown up for 26 years of your life and where you have no problem



HOUSE OF COMMONS

when you enter. When someone else goes there, they are anxious because they have a preconceived notion of the Black British community based on their world view.

Q157 Dame Diana Johnson: I want to ask a question about the excellent work that your groups have done, and the fantastic work with young people and with the police. It seems to me there is a bit of a question. I think you mentioned, Sayce, that you are getting some funding from one of the City institutions to do this work. How do you manage to do all this wonderful work? Are you relying on charitable donations? Are you getting any support from the police themselves to pay for some of this work? How can you operate at the moment? Obviously, finances are very difficult, especially with covid. I wanted to understand how you are able to carry on providing these wonderful services.

Sayce Holmes-Lewis: It is a great question—thank you for asking. Four and a half years has been difficult. I worked for a charity for nine years, seven and a half of those years part time. I worked for the local authority, Southwark Council, as a community sports head coach and experienced two redundancies in 2013 and 2015.

When working for a charity, I felt that young people and our plight in the community was being exploited. I went out with Mentivity as a limited company, because I wanted people to take us seriously and I wanted institutions and schools to invest in us; 90% of our turnover, over the last four and half years has come directly, from schools.

We have been formulating the relationship with Goldman Sachs over the last two years. The Raising Aspirations project is a key part of that relationship. We are trying to shape the diversity and inclusion offer at Goldman Sachs and their recruitment for BAME young people, because the pathway is not visible or viable for young people. That is why they go to the street—because it is more viable. When both parents are working 40 hours a week and not at home, and you are still struggling and having to go to a food bank, what does that say to a young person? We have failed young people.

My model in terms of Raising Aspirations and Mentivity is to extract money from these organisations. Goldman Sachs has invested £125,000 in the racial equity fund and they have funded the NAACP and the United Negro College Fund in the USA. Over here, it is the Stephen Lawrence Trust and Mentivity, so we are in good company. I am trying to make sure that we are not an organisation that disappears, because when you are dependent on funding it depends on the Government. You see what has happened with austerity—over £1 billion, at least, taken from youth services and probably more from education.

Now it is about extracting that money from companies through corporate social responsibility to bring that back into the community, but they want to see a return on investment. That is the key thing for me and why we have the Raising Aspirations project. BT has now been in contact, as well as Google and YouTube. They are all going to invest in this because it is



HOUSE OF COMMONS

about creating opportunities that are viable and visible for young people. That is what it is all about right now.

That is how we have focused. Now we have the community interest company and we will go to the charity towards the end of the year; it is just having the three strands of income still to ensure that we are not dependent on funding and that we do not disappear, because our work is so important.

Q158 **Dame Diana Johnson:** Pastor Lorraine, what happens with you in terms of funding?

Q159 **Pastor Jones:** Diana, it has been very difficult. We have been going for six years—well, five and a half years; since Dwayne died, it's six years—and I literally started the project with some of the criminal injuries money that I got for Dwayne and personal money of my own. We did a campaign with the *Evening Standard* in 2015, which raised more than £1.5 million. Out of that money we got two years' funding, which came to about £35,000. The rest of the money went into projects in deprived estates across London. The London Community Foundation has been supporting us on funding, and it has just been the past two years that the Mayor's Fund for London has helped us with funding.

In the arch where we are, the police were given that arch to clean up the street. They literally just had their bikes there, and that is what I am talking about with the empathy of senior officers. It was the borough commander who said, "Look, Lorraine, you can move the boxing here. We just use it for bikes." For two years, Diana, we did not pay any rent. Now we are the leaseholders and we are paying up to £16,000, but that is being helped through the Mayor's Fund. The majority of the work is voluntary. I am covering costs, but we are not getting paid. We have had no money from the Government. I have only had an award from David Cameron. It is hard, but it is the outcomes—seeing these kids, seeing the youth and seeing the engagement with the police—that keep us driving, because it is visible that this thing works. We need more help and we want it to be rolled out across London.

Q160 **Stuart C. McDonald:** Thank you to our three witnesses for your very powerful evidence this morning. May I go to Sayce Holmes-Lewis first, going back to your experience of being stopped four times in the past few months? We have heard from you and from earlier witnesses about some good work that is happening in relation to how policing procedures such as stop-and-search are carried out and engaging and so on. But there must be an extent to which that does not really matter if we do not fix the issue about how much police stop people. Police officers can be as polite and engaging as they want to be, but if you are stopped four times in a couple of months, that does not matter—it is still quite outrageous.

Q161 **Sayce Holmes-Lewis:** Yes, I agree. I think it comes down to the reasonable cause and the intelligence around that. That is what stop-and-search is supposed to be based on, which it has not been in our community to a high percentage. The problem is that we now have to prepare young people. My son is 14 and I've had to have that



HOUSE OF COMMONS

conversation with him regarding the police and your rights around stop-and-search, because we have to prepare them for that. I don't think, as a community, we have prepared our young people enough to deal with these situations, because the emotional regulation goes out of the window when you are met with a police officer who is being negative.

Even with me, last year—it has happened many times. I have been assaulted on three occasions by police and nothing has happened, and we don't feel there is anything we can do when we complain, because when we do it is thrown out and nothing happens. It comes down to the accountability. Once you have the accountability and officers know that if they carry out their duties in a haphazard, overzealous way, they will be met with some sort of disciplinary issues and, ultimately, they could potentially lose their job.

But that is not happening—1,700 custody deaths and only one prosecution shows you now what the police have done historically. People will not forget that, and they pass that on through generations. This is why we have a certain disdain, because there has never been a bridge built to us and our communities. There has never been an olive branch saying, "Do you know what? We're wrong, we've got this wrong." Any time we have those conversations, there's always an excuse that goes back to criminality. Not all Black British people are criminals. There is a minority, and we are trying to solve that with our organisations.

Going back to the funding issues, funding is like a lottery. You could be doing great work and you will not get the funding. This is what has to change. Not everyone is from academia. Not everyone is going to sit down and write a 10-page proposal. It is about coming down and seeing the work. We have to change the order of things, and how organisations receive funding. If you are doing the work and it is creating an impact, you should be funded. You should not then disappear. This is a major part of the issue. Going back to the police, it is just about them saying, "We got it wrong. Let's move forward. How do we do this?" in consultation with the community.

Q162 Stuart C. McDonald: You have spoken about building bridges between the police and the community, but again on the disproportionality point I am intrigued by what you have said about this new training course on conscious bias. I think we heard a bit of criticism of unconscious bias training from a previous panel as well. Why do you think unconscious bias training is missing the mark? What is different about your course, and how well has it been received?

Sayce Holmes-Lewis: I think it is about who is delivering it, and that is the problem. Unconscious bias, unfortunately, has had a lot of white professionals delivering it, and you can't then explain what that is from your perspective. It is very limited. When I go in and share my story and my experience, what I have achieved and the issues that I have faced in terms of the obstacles, and show people that this is where I have got to, they are then like, "Woah, I've never seen this before. I've never heard this story."



HOUSE OF COMMONS

The problem is that unconscious bias takes responsibility away from the person, because you are saying that you are doing it unconsciously. No, it is conscious, because you are looking at somebody and saying, "Right, they fit the description in my mind of what a criminal looks like." That is where it comes from. What is the difference with me? It is not pointing the finger and saying, "Look, you're institutionally racist." We know this. The Macpherson report alludes to this, so we know this. It is about understanding why you do what you do, and having those conversations.

The second strand of the training is getting the outreach programme and getting these new recruits into the community as early as possible, so that they can embrace young people and they can both see that they are both humans, and have that dialogue. We are policing young children like they are adults, like they know better. This is a teaching point. This is education. If they are wearing certain things and it makes them look like they might be a drug dealer, it is about saying, "Look, unfortunately this is what people wear, and this is the reason why I stopped you." That may then strike a match in a young person's mind, and they say, "Right, you know what? Maybe I don't wear that black hoodie. Maybe I wear a different colour hoodie." This is about education. I do not think that police officers are equipped to deal with the social issues and the complexities around young people. That is where the training needs to happen.

Again, it is going to be multi-faceted in terms of the approach, but the third part of the training programme is getting young people into the organisation and into the Met. They do not want to be bobbies on the beat, but they might want to work around cyber-crime and technology in terms of forensics. It is about raising the profile of working in conjunction with the police or having a career in the police that is not around enforcement, because we all want a just and fair society. On those three levels, if we do that we are going to start to see some kind of change.

Q163 Stuart C. McDonald: Thank you. Turning to Bishop Webley, we have heard examples of pockets of good practice where work is under way to build links between the police and minority communities, but we also heard previously about really systemic problems. Is it just a matter of growing out good practice across the country more rapidly, with better resources, or are there more fundamental changes that need to be made to police forces and how they are governed?

Bishop Webley: I think the latter; there needs to be fundamental change. One of the issues I heard from one of the contributors was about empathy and care. I think leadership is critical. It is so important that the leadership actually believe that this is necessary and they manoeuvre the organisation behind that deep sense of conviction that it needs to change. Policing is greatly led by its chief constable. The chief constable and the team at that level of leadership must accept and believe that these are not issues around just having a discussion, but that they are systemic and structural issues that must be addressed.

The community needs to have confidence in policing. Policing must reflect the communities that they are leading. Policing requires the consent—not



permission, consent—of its own community. It must engage the community. Therefore, for me, at the heart of a lot of this is genuine neighbourhood policing, and the leadership must be clear right through that structure. So, it has got to be something that is more than just throwing money at an issue and rolling out training. Training is critical and the last contributor was correct about the whole way that they see the aspect of training; it must challenge these issues. But there must be leadership that comes from the highest level of policing.

Q164 Stuart C. McDonald: Do you think that leadership has been lacking, or is lacking just now?

Bishop Webley: I think there is a genuine view that things need to change. I think it is how you are inculcated with life and its values. Where do you draw your life values from? Who are you exposed to in your day-to-day life? What informs your thinking? Do you really understand the people around you? I think that if you live in an environment, or in a bubble, where you do not actually understand the realities of certain people's lives—it doesn't mean you have to experience everything, but there have to be means whereby you actually understand those individuals that you are actually policing, and that you actually understand elements of what makes their life tick, what motivates them. And if a community is saying, "We are being treated badly," it should be dealt with, because if you don't win over that community's confidence and trust, it affects other issues around criminal investigation, co-operating with the police and engaging with the police. It has a far wider social impact than just the statement of us doing this.

It is important in policing that the leadership is clear, it believes, it has a conviction, it does not try to negotiate away whether there is institutional racism or not, and it deals with the issue that this community is suffering. Why are so many people in this community being arrested? Why is stop-and-search so disproportionately represented within the African and Caribbean communities, and the BME community? Why? There has to be a reason. I accept that stop-and-search has a part to play in policing, but it is about how it is used. Is it intelligence-led? I feel that all of these issues have to be part of the wider conversation.

It is also about just how you deal with people. If you are stopping and searching someone and you are making that antagonistic, the police officer should understand that when you engage a person from an African or Caribbean community, there is a preconceived idea that they are going to be treated badly. It does not matter who you are; you automatically think, "How am I going to be treated here?" And unfortunately, having the uniform and possessing the warrant card is a powerful place. That is why scrutiny is required of the police in a very strong way, because they have powers that are far beyond those of anyone else and they must be used in a way that is proportionate.

Q165 Stuart C. McDonald: Thank you for that. Finally for you, on a slightly different note, I think that earlier you said—I think it was in the context of the publication of the Macpherson inquiry report—that at the time



HOUSE OF COMMONS

there were also some issues that minority communities had to face themselves. Can you just say a little more about what you were getting at there, and say whether those issues have been addressed, or are there other things that leaders in minority communities can do themselves to try to bridge a gap, or is that just shifting the burden completely the wrong way?

Bishop Webley: I think that overall there was a tension around whether or not the police service accepted that institutional racism that was declared at the time was acceptable, and it took a lot of arm-bending for some to accept it. That is what I am saying. If that is not accepted as a core—I think that what we are not saying is that every police officer is a bad officer. We cannot be saying that. To a large extent the police officer gets up in the morning and wants to serve the public and do the best that they can. They need our support and our encouragement, and I am 100% behind them. I have seen great work being done by them. The problem is that it just takes one or two whose attitude is not correct, and that disproportionately represents the police service in a way that is not fair.

At the heart of that is the culture of that infrastructure and the culture of that organisation. How does it function? Is it outward-looking in understanding the communities it is serving? I feel that there have been genuine moves towards that—that is my personal view—notwithstanding that, if that is the case, there have to be questions asked about why there is this disproportionate representation in some of the key areas that affects those communities. That has been ongoing for years. To me, that speaks to a structural and systemic problem somewhere in the system.

Stuart C. McDonald: Thank you. In the absence of our Chair—

Q166 **Chair:** I am actually still here, curiously—something strange has happened to the screens, so I hope you can see me still. Thank you.

I have a couple of follow-up questions. Going back to the issues around stop-and-search, the police, and particularly the Met, have said to us that what they are doing on stop-and-search is working to tackle knife crime and that is what is bringing knife crime down. When we have asked them about the numbers of people that they are stopping and searching and the disproportionality, as well as the nature of the stop-and-searching, their response is to say that there are many people who, even if they may not be carrying anything, are still involved in criminal activity, who have been searched, and that overall the impact has been extremely important. What are your thoughts on that and your response to that?

Pastor Jones: The way stop-and-search is being done has caused a large ripple effect of trauma, Yvette. The knives which they have taken, that is a fact, but we have to also look at the numbers of “no further action” after the stop-and-search. The real problem is how it is being done and what grounds they have to do it. Yvette, since Black Lives Matter and since George Floyd’s death, hundreds and thousands of those from the Black community have been thinking about historical, past, present and future engagement with the police, which has left them traumatised. We cannot dismiss that.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

With them increasing stop-and-search, and stopping and searching a group of people who are going through trauma, and the way it is being done, it is causing a time bomb. I really think the issues that the community are facing around that need to be addressed. I would not want to see more stop-and-search because I can see that, at the other end, there is a greater problem being created.

Sayce Holmes-Lewis: It is quite simple—you can't police your way out of this problem. Police come in at the end of the spectrum, and that is what the issue is: that is the negative side of what is happening. This is a community issue and we have to solve this within the community, through organisations like Dwaynatics, Mentivity and United Borders. We have to solve these issues.

It comes back down to socioeconomic problems—inequality. The fact is that if you want to spend money at the end of the spectrum, you are not solving the root cause. What young people need is just opportunity. As an adult, we look at this world and it is very depressing for us. Imagine if you are 10, 11, 12 years of age and what you are trying to do in this world is very difficult, especially in light of covid. For me, it is about the investment in organisations that are doing the work.

The police now need to come in at the beginning of the spectrum so that they can understand what is going on and when they do come into contact with certain young people, they know—"Right, I know this young person is doing something negative, so I can stop them, based on intelligence, not based on a broad outlook." That is what the issue is for me.

We have to invest in our communities and that is why we have to do these things. It is important for me; being here and speaking to you guys is massive for me. You know, I am a boy from a council estate. This is something that I can speak about for young people—to raise their aspirations. We are not doing enough as a community, as a society, as adults—treating young people with the respect that they need and also empowering them to make the change that they need. For me, you have to focus on the root cause. There have been many reports that show stop-and-search does not actually bring down crime. I have read so many academic reports and journals, but it is now about intelligence-led solutions. That is what we need to do.

Q167 **Chair:** I think the work you are doing is very powerful, and not just among young people. It actually has a very powerful impact on us, but much more broadly as well. Bishop Webley?

Bishop Webley: I agree that stop-and-search has a role to play in policing. The point is how it is used. It must be intelligence-led policing, where the police officers who constantly work within local communities gather a lot of information because of their relationships and their commitment to those communities through their neighbourhood policing.

I recall—I will be very brief—when section 60 was used as a blanket order across communities. It caused more problems than it resolved, because it



HOUSE OF COMMONS

criminalised a wider area where some issues of crime were not taking place. I know that in West Midlands there was a big discussion when I was on the authority. They have changed their way in implementing that, and I believe the decision is now taken at assistant chief constable level, as opposed to superintendent level. The point is that you can throw a blanket across an area, and you can resolve one or two things but create a bigger problem because of how it is misused. Yes, stop-and-search has its place, but it has to be used on an intelligence-led basis, joining up other police work that has been done in the local community to bring the community that you are serving along with you in the means of dealing with crime.

Q168 Chair: Thank you. We will have to close our evidence session in a second, but I want to ask for a final thought from each of you to leave us with. I thank you immensely—not just for your testimony today, but for the work that you are doing. It is having a very powerful impact.

I was struck by what you said, Sayce, about your conversation with your 14-year-old son and the impact that this has on the next generation. If we want to be able to feel optimistic for the next generation and optimistic about the future, what is the one thing that would give you some cause for optimism if it changed and if it was done from the Home Office or from within policing?

Bishop Webley: One of the positive things that is happening in the West Midlands is the work between West Midlands police and the office of the police and crime commissioner, which is about youth engagement and the setting up of youth commissions to be involved in police work and in speaking to their policing plan. They have them on each of their neighbouring policing units. They look at issues of stop-and-search and Taser use, and at all aspects of policing. It is about building relationships with those communities, but particularly with young people—giving them the confidence that over time, if the police take on board some of the issues that are causing us concern, they will build a future where young people can be more supportive of their work. But they must understand the pain and the hurt that is happening in communities, which some of them have caused, and they must seek to redress that as a matter of urgency.

Sayce Holmes-Lewis: I think, personally, that we just have to deconstruct the many labels and things that separate us within society. Even the term “racism” is something that I have now turned against, because it alludes to someone being less than human. We are all one race; we are all human. When we get back to that very basic human aspect of life—giving back to the community and doing right by each other—we will start to see the changes that we need to see in society. That is why it is so important to educate the next generation in terms of that, but also to create an environment in which they can flourish and are not demonised. So much has been taken away from them, in terms of investment and austerity, that young people are the ones who are bearing the brunt of the mistakes that we have made. That is not right. We need to make it right, and we need to do a lot more. Things like this are powerful, but it comes down to empathy, education and understanding.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Pastor Jones: To restore the confidence, the trust and the respect back with the police and the community, we need to utilise the community leaders to bring them together closer with the youths and to engage with them. I am very strong on practical solutions, such as engaging through sport or music—getting practical engagement with the youths. That is a life-changing experience—a beautiful one, which can grow.

Chair: Thank you immensely for your time. If you have any further thoughts—if there is anything that we should have asked you—or any further reflections that you would like to send us in written evidence, we would gladly receive it. Thank you very much.