

Shifting culture

The experiences of Black and racially minoritised officers of the Metropolitan Police misconduct process since the Baroness Casey Review

'Since publication of the Macpherson report in 1999, the Met has remained largely White and largely male. If recruitment continues on its current trajectory, it will take at least another thirty years, until 2053, to reach gender balance. It will take even longer, until 2061, to reach 46% Black, Asian and ethnic minority representation - what is needed to be representative of London today, let alone the even more diverse city it will be in nearly 40 years' time. The Police Uplift Programme has been a missed opportunity to improve the diversity and skills base of its workforce. There is no plan B. This isn't about being 'woke' or having politically correct quotas. It means the Met is missing out on the talent it desperately needs to improve its effectiveness. It is also damaging community confidence, by failing to create a force that looks like the city it polices. This is creating a negative spiral in which some communities continue to have negative experiences at the hands of the police, trust them less, and are less likely to join.'

The Baroness Casey Review, 2023¹

Foreword

'The police are the public and the public are the police.' - Sir Robert Peel (1829)

Sir Robert Peel's nine principles of policing have been the guiding values that have driven the profession and the service for nearly two centuries in the UK. Four of these nine principles are founded on the relationship between the public and the police.

In recent years, this relationship between the Metropolitan Police and Londoners has been strained; in particular, trust within Black and racial minority communities has diminished rapidly.

Following Baroness Casey's Review in 2023, the Met launched a two-year strategy, *A New Met for London*, in response to the challenges and toxic culture identified in the review. The acknowledgment of these failures in the new strategy is an encouraging start, but acknowledgment must progress to understanding and accepting the lessons behind these failures. The risk of not doing so is perpetuating the past.

As the two-year review period is fast approaching, we wanted to examine whether some of these challenges have been addressed. In this briefing, we explore one critical aspect detailed in the Casey Review: the experience of Black and racially minoritised officers in the Met since 2023. This briefing does not purport to be wholly representative or scientific, but in our opinion, it reflects experiences and views that are representative of a large proportion of Black and racially minoritised officers within the institution.

The CJA and the NBPA want to engage in constructive dialogue and to truly learn the lessons that can instigate a process of systemic change within the Met to meet its stated objective of becoming an anti-racist police service.

We are extremely grateful to the interviewees for sharing their personal and traumatic experiences. We hope that in doing so, their stories can empower others going through similar challenges and help to put the organisation on a better path.

Annette So
Criminal Justice Alliance

Andy George
National Black Police Association

The National Black Police Association (NBPA)

The National Black Police Association (NBPA) works to improve the working conditions and representation of Black and racially minoritised staff in UK policing. With over 4,000 members, it engages in policy development, provides advice and representation, and advocates for fairness and equality in the police service. The NBPA drives initiatives like mentoring and leadership programs, promotes racial harmony, and works closely with police and political leaders to ensure transparency, accountability, and equitable opportunities for all staff.

The Criminal Justice Alliance (CJA)

The Criminal Justice Alliance is a network of over 200 organisations and academics working towards a fair and effective criminal justice system. The CJA's policy work in recent years has had a strong emphasis on policing and many of its current challenges such as violence against women and girls, stop and search, victims, and the implementation of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Race equality across the criminal justice system has been a central part of the CJA and its members' work. CJA publications *Beyond a numbers game* (2023)ⁱⁱ and *Towards race equality* (2022)ⁱⁱⁱ, focused on the recruitment and retention of Black and racially minoritised groups across the justice system and the monitoring of equality issues in prisons. Most recently, the CJA's super-complaint^{iv} calling for the repeal of Section 60 stop and search powers drew attention to its disproportionate use on minority ethnic communities.

Introduction and purpose

This briefing is a collaboration between the National Black Police Association and the Criminal Justice Alliance. The NBPA has recently become a member of the CJA.

The CJA and NBPA share a common interest and cause in improving the experience of Black and racially minoritised staff in policing. Both organisations also wanted to highlight the experiences of Black officers regarding the misconduct processes within the Metropolitan Police since the Casey Review in 2023 and examine whether any improvements have been made.

An exchange of letters

Following the publication of her interim report^v into the Met's misconduct processes, Baroness Casey wrote to Commissioner Mark Rowley, summarising her findings, and the necessity for swift effective action, stating piecemeal reform was not an option.

Baroness Casey detailed many concerns in her letter to the Commissioner^{vi} where racial disproportionality, unfairness and poor practice were ingrained into the misconduct system:

“Allegations relating to sexual misconduct and other discriminatory behaviours are less likely than other misconduct allegations to result in a ‘case to answer’ decision. ‘Case to answer’ decisions are given to 20% of allegations concerned with breaching equality and diversity rules, and 29% of allegations involving sexual misconduct compared to 33% of all finalised allegations. This suggests that equality and discrimination issues are not being tackled effectively.

There is racial disparity throughout the Met's misconduct system. Despite improvement, it was still the case in 2021-22 that Black officers and staff were 81% more likely than White officers to have misconduct allegations brought against them, while Asian officers were 55% more likely. Black and Asian officers were also more likely to have an allegation substantiated than White officers. This is a long-standing issue and is clear evidence of systemic bias.

Regulation 13 (which allows for the removal of probationers) is not being used fairly or effectively in relation to misconduct. Regulation 13 is not being used to remove enough of those officers who should not be in policing, with only 8% of cases in the most recent year resulting in dismissal. Regulation 13 is also, however, being used disproportionately on those from ethnic minorities, with Black officers being 126% more likely and Asian officers 123% more likely to be subject to a Regulation 13 case than White officers.”

In his response, Sir Mark Rowley accepted Baroness Casey's evidence-led critique. He also acknowledged the centrality of race discrimination to the cultural challenge facing the Met.

“The evidence is clear: the disproportionate way in which you have showed us Black and Asian officers and staff have been treated shows patterns of unacceptable discrimination that clearly amount to systemic bias. The fact

that allegations of racism or sexual misconduct and misogyny have less chance of being upheld is also completely unacceptable.

You uncover painful experiences from those within our ranks who have suffered discrimination and hate from colleagues, only to have their hurt compounded by a weak response from the organisation. This cannot continue.

Tackling corruption and abuse: racism and misogyny are just as damaging to our integrity as corrupt relationships with organised crime and we will now use the same tactics to defeat it.”^{vii}

Key questions

Almost two years since the public exchange of these letters there are some pertinent questions that this briefing will seek to answer.

- Have the Met’s actions lived up to the words of the Commissioner’s letter in response to Baroness Casey’s interim report on the Met’s misconduct system?
- Have the Met’s actions helped to strengthen relationships and build trust with representative staff associations such as the NBPA?
- Have the trends Baroness Casey so clearly detailed showed any signs of diminishing?

Context, background and current position

Over the last four decades, numerous inquiries, inspections, and academic analysis have placed the relationships between the police, the UK’s Black and racially minoritised communities and the institution’s approach to addressing discrimination and promoting inclusivity at the top of the agenda for policing. An aspect of this dialogue and rhetorical inquisition has been the need to make the police more representative of modern, diverse Britain. Central to this is the consensus that policing must demonstrate how individuals from any community can join, develop, and thrive within the profession, without fear or recrimination, and while feeling comfortable in their own skin.

History

Successive inquiries, starting with Lord Scarman’s 1981 report^{viii} into the Brixton riots, have advocated for the recruitment of more Black and racially minoritised police officers as a key component of reform and in addressing racism within policing institutions. Fast forward 19 years, and the Macpherson Report^{ix} into the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence proposed targets be set for the recruitment, retention, and progression of Black and racially minoritised police officers.

Another major outcome from Macpherson was the recognition that the representation of Black, racially minoritised and other protected characteristic groups (now recognised under the 2010 Equality Act) was something to support within policing. The NBPA is one of the most well- established staff associations

working on these issues, having contributed to the Macpherson process, and to the development of policy in race and policing for more than 30 years.

The NBPA has endorsed the findings of Baroness Casey's Review as have others including the Mayor of London^x and the Chair of the National Police Chiefs Council.^{xi} However, there is a perceived disconnect between the aspirations of inclusivity often cited by police leadership and the lived realities of Black and racially minoritised officers and personnel.

Baroness Casey's Review differed from previous reviews in one significant way. Commissioned in the wake of the murder of Sarah Everard by a serving police officer, it examined the organisational culture of policing. Through this lens, discriminatory behavior can be seen as an inevitable outcome of a dominant organisational culture inherently focused on maintaining the status quo, and virulently resisting change. One could argue that race and racial equality have become touchstone issues, with Black and racially minoritised officers bearing the brunt of this resistive culture.

The Casey Review

Interim report (2022)

In October 2022, Baroness Casey published an interim report on the misconduct system, a comprehensive qualitative analysis of misconduct allegations and cases internally initiated, and not by external complaints or allegations from the public, media, or other sources outside of policing.

The report covered all relevant cases from April 2013 to March 2022 and resulted in a dataset covering 18,589 allegations, 10,252 cases and involving 12,856 police officers/staff. The dataset also included 619 cases where Regulation 13 (which allows for the removal of probationers) was used between April 2018 to March 2022. Workforce data on the organisation with regards to gender, ethnicity, and years of service was also included to provide benchmarks.

A series of qualitative interviews with individuals and groups of staff and management were conducted across the organisation and detailed in the final report, as well as a thorough literature review.

Final report (2023)

The enormity of the scale and breadth of the challenges to the Met's misconduct process and discrimination within the organisation were identified and laid out in Baroness Casey's final report.

"How the Met tackles misconduct is key to its integrity. The very public cases of criminality among serving Met officers, the Interim Report, and this examination of the Met's handling of grievances and employment claims, make it clear that the Met has a big job to do to improve its systems and culture.

Discrimination is tolerated, not dealt with and has become baked into the system We have found widespread bullying, particularly of those with protected characteristics. 22% of staff and officers experienced bullying.

There is a profound culture across the Met that incentivises people to look, act and sound the same, and resistance to difference.”

Regarding racial disproportionality and the misconduct process, some of the key findings detailed in Baroness Casey’s final report are highlighted below:

- Black officers and staff were 81% more likely than their White counterparts to have misconduct allegations brought against them, and more likely to have an allegation against them substantiated.
- Only 8% of Regulation 13 cases in 2019-20, and only 4% in 2018-19, led to dismissal. But Black and Asian probationers are more than twice as likely to have a Regulation 13 case raised than their White colleagues.
- Asian women officers were four times more likely to have brought an employment tribunal claim against the Met than white officers and Black women and male officers three times more likely.

The final report’s conclusions on discrimination alluded to a deeply embedded culture that rather than addressing the causes and holding those responsible accountable, protects those instigating abuse and perpetuates discrimination. The report stated in its conclusions and findings to have found:

- Numerous testimonies of overt acts of homophobia, misogyny, and racism by serving officers and staff in the Met.
- Systems that have bias and are discriminatory in the outcomes they deliver.
- Bias in the policing of London, including under-protection and over-policing of Black communities and under-protection of women and girls.
- A culture of denial with leadership and systemic failures to root out racist behaviours and address discrimination.

Institutionally racist

One of the most damning conclusions from the Casey Review was the labelling of the Met as institutionally racist. The Mayor of London accepted the Review’s findings of institutional racism, misogyny and homophobia, committing to ‘put the Met on a path of far-reaching systematic and cultural reform’.

Despite the evidence, Met Police Chief Sir Mark Rowley repeatedly rejected the use of the term ‘institutional’.

This poses several foreseeable problems:

- It echoes Sir Paul Condon’s rejection of the term 24 years earlier at the publication of the Macpherson Report^{xii}, reinforcing the perception that nothing has changed within the Met.
- It gives succour to regressive forces in the Met, sending the message that the institution will resist substantive change. In stating it ‘institutional’ was a political term, the Commissioner made a very political statement. In the current British political climate, where terms like ‘woke policing’ and ‘two-tier policing’ are commonly used by politicians, newspaper columnists, and social media pundits, this was unlikely to be interpreted as a mere objection to language. The potential for a substantial report to be labeled

as politicised by this statement was clear, and some might argue it was a deliberate act to undermine the review.

- Finally, Baroness Casey used the term ‘institutional’ to describe several areas of discrimination. Was the Commissioner signaling out institutional racism? Does he accept Baroness Casey’s view of the Met as institutionally misogynistic? Such differentiation would be disastrous, culminating in a hierarchy of discrimination and impeding the need to acknowledge and address the intersectional nature of discrimination.

Post Casey

The Met’s response since the launch of the Casey Review has focused on a two-year strategy, *A new Met for London*.^{xiii} The plan is a broad, corporate strategy with pledges around additional resources and building neighborhood policing capacity. One key aspect of the strategy is culture change, which includes improving vetting systems. There is also a commitment to being a non-discriminatory organisation. As a result of the implementation of this strategy, more officers have been disciplined and dismissed since the Casey Review was launched.^{xiv} The Commissioner appears to be making good on his promises to use the approaches of countering terrorism and corruption to bring to book discriminatory officers.

However, any meaningful assessment of the effectiveness of these measures might not emerge until Baroness Casey returns to conduct her two-year follow-up review in 2025. It remains to be seen whether these efforts have truly shifted a culture that has effectively incubated discrimination and been highly effective in resisting reform.

For the NBPA and its members, their messaging has been clear. In the 12 months since the Casey Review, the number of cases the NBPA work with has increased 2.5 times. Freedom of Information (FOI) requests have been submitted in relation to the misconduct process and the disparities highlighted in the Casey Review since its publication. Formal responses will be made publicly available when possible.

The interviews

We conducted three interviews with NBPA members, focusing on their views and experiences of the Met's misconduct process. These were selected by the NBPA, chosen on the basis of willingness to participate, and cover a range of experiences across the misconduct process. We acknowledge this was inevitably selective and cannot reflect the broad range of experiences of NBPA members. However, the experiences detailed are not isolated amongst the NBPA's membership. The three officers interviewed are still in the employment of the Metropolitan Police.

Interview 1

Background

I joined the Met as a PCSO in 2006. I was 18 at the time. I then became a PC in 2015. I come from a family with strong roots in policing. My brother was a PC in the Met, and I have relatives in Jamaica who worked for the Jamaican Constabulary. Family connections and recommendations were instrumental in my decision to pursue a career in policing. I knew other serving officers, mainly from the Black community.

Pressures of being a Black officer

I had a lot of resistance from close friends and family about joining due to the history of policing and particularly the Met, with the Black community. I lost close friends by joining the Met, people didn't want to know. It's tough to handle. As a Black officer, you are in no man's land, ostracised and criticised by some in your own community while enduring a hostile environment within the job. It is, however, understandable as many Black people have experienced trauma in their interactions with the police. But this is amplified in the job as there is no understanding or recognition of these pressures on individual Black officers.

Marginalised in the job, while in the community often being labeled a sell-out. This is particularly stressful when significant events happen, such as the 2011 riots and George Floyd's murder. Policing the BLM protests, where frankly I agreed with the protesters but had to do my job, was difficult. Has policing moved on in terms of the experience of Black officers? Not at all in my opinion. We have had a succession of reports stating the same facts. Things haven't changed from Scarman to Casey. The ongoing internal hostility and resistance to change adds to a very difficult environment, not only for Black officers but anybody who steers from the policing culture orthodoxies.

Training

My recollections of the training programme at Hendon are that it was an introduction to policing culture. The language on the curriculum always associated Black with something negative. There were not many Black officers. Tutors treated me less favourably, and bullying left Black colleagues out on their own, isolated, vulnerable and not part of the team. It was a metaphor for my future experiences. It wasn't easy. From very early on I learned relations between officers in the job were a big part of the culture and often a route to favouritism. Sexual relations between trainers and trainee officers were common and accepted. It created a toxic environment. It's an issue in policing that should be addressed.

After Hendon, I went on to street duties for trainee officers. Where you go out in the Borough Command Unit (BCU) and experience policing working alongside experienced colleagues. I was assigned to Newham. Before arrival, I pressed my clothes and shined my shoes. I wanted my attire to be correct. So, on arrival at the parade, one of the tutors, a female officer, walks past me deliberately steps on my shoes and eyeballs me. At the time I just brushed it off as some kind of initiation, but on reflection it was part of a prolonged episode of bullying, intimidation and trying to test me. I have had countless incidents of this type of behavior in the job.

Personal toll

It takes a huge toll on you personally, your health, well-being, your marriage, and your family. You are in this job where you are treated as an outsider. You need a tough exterior and frankly, can only trust a few colleagues who earn your respect. With others, you are wary of everybody until proven otherwise, which is unhealthy. I am in a job where I feel constantly under threat. But you have bills, a mortgage, and commitments, so leaving the job is very difficult. This has a huge impact on your mental health.

Support within the job

Support from line management has been thin. I have been very guarded with line managers. I have only ever had one who had my best interests at heart. The complaint processes as a Black officer in the Met are to be avoided. In my experience, if you go down that route as Black officer, they will come after you. There are countless examples. Things have only got worse since Casey. You have your own small network of trusted people. But if you are not in that circle they cannot be trusted.

The Police Federation (Fed) is not a source of support for Black officers. The Fed are all linked to senior leadership. Everything gets leaked back. There are some good Fed representatives but overall, the organisation doesn't serve the interests of Black and minority officers.

How can the Met address these challenges?

Since the Casey Review, in my opinion, things have got worse in the Met for Black and minority officers. Racism is deeply ingrained in the service. Attempts to address it since Casey have been a charade with no conviction. If they want to change, they need to listen to us. Accept institutional racism exists. This won't happen under the current structures. The Met needs to be broken up and the level of accountability substantially raised.

Interview 2

Background and early experiences

I joined the Met in 2015. I was a teacher before becoming a police officer. People often comment on the career change. I never had a burning desire to be a police officer. I was drawn because the children I taught rejected policing as a career option, and I wanted to change that. I was a special constable (a volunteer officer) for two years before joining the regulars.

I was a special in Lewisham, and I worked in the evenings and weekends. I was attached to a team. It was a good job. But the same thing that ruined my time as a special ruined my regular policing experience, and its policing culture. The pecking order, the hierarchy, the ingroup and outgroup, the isolation, that the them and us concept it creates is horrible. As a special, it's even worse because you're treated like dirt when you're there for free. You're volunteering your time which for me should be revered but it's the opposite; you are treated contemptuously.

My family and friends didn't want me to join. They all thought the Met was a racist organisation but that wasn't their main reason for trying to convince me not to join. My father was worried about the dangers involved in the job. I didn't have any friends shun me after joining but I just had to be careful in terms of separating my work and private life and being careful who I told about my occupation.

Training

Twelve of us were posted to Brixton for our street duties. We met the Chief Inspector on our first day. We were in his office, he welcomed us to Brixton. He said three years here is worth five years in any other borough. Three of us in the class were Black. The Chief Inspector then said pointing to us, the three Black officers, that we would have an even harder time because of our colour. We were taken aback there was no mention of why and what support the team would give, nothing.

In Brixton, one of the biggest things I observed was how much white police officers' engagement with Black people was driven by fear and stereotyping. Even interactions with mothers and young families were always made far more tense and stressful because officers were more wary and fearful in a way that didn't impact on their interactions with white people. This just leads to the likelihood of excessive responses to situations that can be talked through.

Poor communication, stereotyping, and ignorance on the part of officers' blight policing. For Black people, it means avoiding any interaction with the police because a poor interaction can have life-changing consequences. I had never fully appreciated this until my stint in Brixton. Stop and search, and the almost inevitability that such interactions would lead (too often unnecessarily in my opinion) to a full search just blighted community relations.

My fellow white officers couldn't get it, and the institution never has. This culture comes from the institution, senior officers, and the training. If people bring prejudices into the organisation they aren't challenged. The culture effectively endorses their prejudices. Racism is an adopted culture in policing.

Experiences of the internal misconduct and complaints processes

During the period leading up to this, I got involved in a relationship with a new Inspector at Brixton. He had previously been a sergeant at the Territorial Support Group (TSG). The relationship lasted for three years and went downhill very quickly. I suffered sexual abuse and coercive controlling behaviour during this relationship.

He controlled my finances, where I lived, who I saw, and exerted control in my working relationships. All of this happened while I joined the TSG, which brought a new level of pressure and stress in my policing career. The working atmosphere at the TSG was toxic. There was a lot of bullying, and little trust and camaraderie among colleagues. For example, they had a system of fines that you would have to pay if you got something wrong, made a mistake, or failed a course. You were constantly on edge watching your back, and you couldn't trust anybody. Looking back, it was an unacceptable working environment that was made even more intolerable as a Black woman.

I became very ill, and my mental health declined through the combination of this hostile working environment and abusive relationship. I attempted suicide and my abusive ex-partner at this time made a series of complaints about me to the superintendent of the borough where we lived. They were best friends, had been on holidays together, and spoke on the phone several times per week. The police came to my door, put me in handcuffs, and arrested me for controlling coercive behaviour and criminal damage. They put me in a police cell, interviewed me without an appropriate adult, and sent me to get medically assessed, after which I was cleared to leave. It was traumatic. A couple of days after I was given bail conditions to live at my sister's address while they continued their investigations.

During this time, my ex-partner was contacting my brother-in-law, continuing his controlling and coercive behaviour and told me 'I know how this system works.' Then another set of allegations came out, and he said he didn't know anything about it. I was really terrified I was going to lose my job, and that's what they do, they use that threat. I was interviewed regarding the allegations against me, and it turned out he had made three further allegations. That's when I found out what was happening, and I never spoke to him after that. He had manipulated the entire situation and the system, wholeheartedly backing his allegations without stepping back to get my view in a situation where he was the abuser and had so much power over me. I never ascertained if he had other women complain about him.

I cut all ties shortly after that with him and moved back to Croydon. At this time, I went for my sergeant's exam. I was interviewed by one of his friends, who failed me. This is how the system works to protect its own and keep anybody who challenges the culture down. I appealed it. They said, 'Well, any complaints will have to wait until your investigation is over'. This was the first time I was ever talking about the abuse that I had been through. They weren't listening. I thought, OK, I'm just not going to say anything. I moved on, met my current partner and fell pregnant.

But I was so terrified that my ex was going to find out that I was pregnant because, in his head, he still thought that we were going to be together. I was

scared, and my mental health was poor. That's when I came forward and told the truth. I said 'This is what's been going on. This is what's happened; this is the abuse I suffered. I don't care about the criminal aspect.'

What I needed to do was keep my pregnancy off the books because if he found out, he had influence where I worked and would continue to control me. So, I had to go off sick, and then three months after I had my baby was my hearing. In the hearing, I told the truth about what happened. At the end of the hearing, they said it was he who was abusive to me rather than the other way around. There were no findings at all in my case, and they then went to investigate it.

Months after that, they started the criminal investigation into my ex and contacted me, saying they didn't see any realistic prospect of prosecution. I asked them if they sent it to the CPS. They said no. I insisted that they had to send it to the CPS, and they said, 'No, we don't, we're just going to close it.' I was absolutely devastated. So, I appealed it. I won, and they sent it to the CPS, and we are awaiting a decision on prosecuting my ex-partner.

I am researching a PhD at University. A friend of my ex-partner saw me and approached me, asking what I was doing there. I told him, and it was a short conversation. But eight weeks afterwards, he alleged that I referred to all Black officers on the TSG as 'cotton pickers.' So now, I am being investigated for being racist.

A further arrest

After all this and some personally harrowing experiences, I was involved in another arrest concerning something that happened to my current partner, who was also a police officer. The police walked into the house when my baby was three months old. They said they were looking for my partner's phone, and I said I didn't know where his phone was. They then said, 'If you don't give us his phone, we're going to arrest you.' I replied, 'Arrest me, I am breastfeeding. I've just had a baby. I don't even know what you're talking about.' They then threatened to arrest me and remove me from my son if I didn't tell them what they needed. They were there for about three hours. I was on my own during this time, in a very vulnerable state. Then they would call my partner, saying 'Listen, your wife and baby are crying.' They kept pressing, 'You need to tell us where the phone is,' and they arrested me and searched me. The threat of taking away my child has had a huge psychological impact.

Abuse of power

I was arrested in 2020 for the accusations from my abusive ex-partner and that went on until May 2023. I was accused of being a racist by the other man in November 2022, and then I was arrested in June 2023 when they threatened to take away my baby. This situation is still ongoing. Throughout all of this, there have been successive abuses of power and an inability of the system to stop it.

Interview 3

Background

I graduated from university in 2010. In 2011 I joined the Met as a Special Constable, and in 2012 started as a regular officer. I was never inspired to be a cop. I finished university, and I was nudged into policing. I wanted to do something active and not related to my degree, which was in computer sciences. I applied for the police and the Marines, and ultimately chose policing. I am currently a firearms officer but suspended. I enjoy the variety of roles in the job and that you can do all these different and challenging things. No job other than the military offers such a variety of opportunities, it's unique in that respect. I am a very active physical presence. I practice martial arts and as a six-foot-four-inch Black man, I am used to having to overcome stereotypes.

My mum was concerned about my joining. My family is mainly made up of professionals in medicine and law. I do have some family members who are police officers in the USA. The state of policing in the UK was frowned upon. My family is middle class, and I went to a private school. My parents were both rebellious and pushed back against racism. The dominant culture is oppressive in policing. People fear losing their jobs/status. The institution picks you off and makes an example of people to suppress any challenge to that dominant culture. The institution carries on trying to suppress me. But for me it adds to my story, and that annoys them.

Training

The training was OK in terms of explaining the law and its application. But I was criticised for being too apologetic. In policing, communication is different. Apologising or acknowledging a mistake is a complete no-go in policing. I was pulled up on it on numerous occasions, particularly in basic and firearms training. This trait ran through the organisation like Blackpool rock. Policing struggles to accept ever being wrong and to acknowledge being wrong, or saying sorry, is so hard for police officers and the institution. For street duties, I was in Westminster. But street duties in Westminster were interesting. Supervisors spoke about discretion and not being qualified to use discretion. I didn't understand and pushed back on this as it meant adopting their biases. Their interpretation of using discretion was linked to what they saw as a fair assessment of a situation but of course this was driven by personal bias.

Racism

My first experience of racism in the Met was at Westminster in a neighborhood team. Our sergeant walked in and said:

'Why are you guys talking... if I turned off the lights, I couldn't even see you.'

We looked at each other and were incredulous. We made a complaint, and he got a written warning. From then on, I knew the Met has a high tolerance for racism. I have used this example as to how accepting of racism the Met is. They will never agree to the term of institutional racism, it will always be the few 'bad apples.' Casey found that there were a few more bad apples than they hoped. Her report allowed the leadership and politicians to rectify this and steer a different course. Instead, by not acknowledging institutional racism they empowered the racists.

My experience of misconduct

I had a child from a previous relationship which broke down. I bought a house together with my ex-partner. The relationship worsened. I was physically and mentally abused by my ex-partner. My mum and family rallied round to help. My partner suffered from post-natal depression. The relationship broke down. During COVID, she became very abusive and controlling. I had a breakdown that impacted on my work, but it was all related to my deteriorating situation at home. I reported it to the Professional Standards Unit (PSU). I didn't mention the physical abuse in my report to the PSU.

I was advised to leave the house, which I did. I would come to look after my kids in the evening but didn't stay at night. One evening I came into the house, a man I didn't know was there. I asked him to leave but he wouldn't. It nearly escalated. I implored him to leave as my daughter was here. I spoke to my partner; she was angry that I should challenge who she has in the house. I then told him I would call the police. At this point, he left. My ex-partner tried to argue with me, she said she was going to report this to the police. I told her to do what she wanted, I had to leave for work. On arriving at work, I mentioned this to my sergeant. He noted it as a domestic argument, no problem. But I decided to disclose everything as family and others were advising me to do so, and this latest incident was the deciding factor. When I did that, I was told she had made an allegation. My sergeant said he would have to take my firearms ticket.

The claims she made were linked to secret recordings of me in the house. She shared recordings of me saying on a call that I would 'f—k her up.' But the police closed these allegations as NFA (no further action). Then the DPS got involved and reopened the case and interviewed her. This resulted in a full-on inquiry into alleged misogyny. She said in an interview that I was never aggressive but said because I do martial arts and fight competitively in the sport, I was threatening. They tried to pin charges of burglary and criminal damage on me at my property, but they were all dropped. In June 2023, I was arrested for controlling and coercive behaviour.

On the day of my arrest, they went to my mum's house. I wasn't there, so she called me, and I spoke to them and arranged to meet them at a police station. I attended with my solicitor and Fed rep, but they wouldn't allow my Fed rep into the interview. They then went to my girlfriend's house and searched her flat for my phone. They kept me in a cell for six hours and played my son crying on the phone as a threat. I told them they really shouldn't have done that; they had traumatised my son already. I was released after 10 hours. They inflicted huge distress on my girlfriend and threatened to take my son. My bail was for six months, but they refused to inform me when it had ended, then refused to return my devices they had taken for months. I was then called in and told I was suspended. I was told by a senior officer that further allegations had been made by other colleagues. Croydon BSU didn't take up the complaint against me. I contacted the local MP, and the investigating officer then started investigating me with allegations that I was a misogynist.

I told her about the parental alienation I was experiencing as I was going through court proceedings regarding access to my first child. In her report, she stated that I was a bad person, closed the report, and concluded that despite

my ex-partner being proven to have stolen my phone and contacted my current girlfriend and friends, I had to be the abuser. It's as if Black men cannot be victims of abuse. I was suicidal, had deteriorating health, and developed PTSD. I appealed the case. It was then reviewed by the investigating line manager (both Black officers). It was alleged that I had sex at work, but no evidence was ever produced.

Do you think you will ever serve again as a police officer?

If they fire me, which I don't believe they have grounds to or they would've already done so, the repercussions will be interesting. I don't know if I want to go back to work.

It all happened from 2022. It impacted on family court proceedings around access to my daughter. They gave my ex-partner access to the police reports through this, which was against police policy but worked in my favour, as I got access to them through my lawyers who were representing me in the family court.

I know my case may seem extraordinary but there are many officers of all races who have experienced wrongdoing through the Met's misconduct process. My case has been repeated many times over the years. Black officers who appear challenging and won't toe the line are more likely to be zealously targeted.

Conclusions and the choice faced by the Met

“These point to a collective and continued failure by the Met to understand, accept and address the existence of racism at all levels in the organisation. We have found complacency in the Met to tackle problems, a lack of curiosity about what people of colour are telling them; and a wilful blindness to seeing the evidence all around them, within and outside the Met. There is cynicism that the Met is capable of changing itself in relation to race. Officers, staff and community representatives we spoke to said they felt little had changed. Many expressed a weariness about the persistence of these problems.

We have found institutional racism in the Metropolitan Police.”

The Casey Review 2023

The Casey Review was emphatic in its conclusions regarding the Met and institutional racism. The choice appeared clear, but the sense that the period since the launch of the Casey Review has been more about subterfuge than a committed programme of change is one that pervades organisations such as the NBPA, wider civil society, and Black and racially minoritised communities.

Clearly, one of the most important barometers must be whether the organisation is providing a safe place for all its staff since Casey and addressing the entrenched inequities she found. The evidence we have gathered suggests things might have got worse.

Concerning all three questions we posed earlier in this briefing, our answer is no.

- Have the Met’s actions lived up to the words of the Commissioner’s letter in response to Baroness Casey’s interim report on the Met’s misconduct system?
- Have the Met’s actions helped to strengthen relationships and build trust with representative staff associations such as the NBPA?
- Have the trends Baroness Casey so clearly detailed showed any signs of diminishing?

Of course, we will have to wait and see the outcomes of Baroness Casey’s follow up review to acquire the formal assessment. But if her verdict concurs with our analysis, in our view, the Met must be restructured into a form that increases local community accountability and representation from all of London’s diverse communities.

Any future structure is not for us to detail here. But what is clear is that the accountability deficit that Casey exposed is at the heart of the dysfunctional and abusive culture the Review exposed. In our opinion, this cannot be addressed under the current structure.

Will Londoners have the police service they deserve? The Mayor of London has committed to police reform and to overhaul the force to become one that is trusted and representative, with a culture that is welcoming and safe for all its staff and officers regardless of their background. Making this culture shift is not only morally essential, but the only way we can ensure we can ensure a safer London for everyone.

Endnotes

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- ⁱⁱⁱ Criminal Justice Alliance. (2022) *Towards race equality*. Available at: <https://www.criminaljusticealliance.org/cja-resources/towards-race-equality/>
- ^{iv} Criminal Justice Alliance (2021) *More harm than good*. Available at: <https://www.criminaljusticealliance.org/cja-resources/more-harm-than-good/>
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- ^x Mayor of London. (2023) *Mayor of London statement following Baroness Casey Review*. Available at: <https://www.london.gov.uk/media-centre/mayors-press-release/Mayor-of-London-statement-following-Baroness-Louise-Casey-Review>
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- ^{xii} Sir William Macpherson of Cluny. (1999) *The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry*. Chapter 6, 6.6. Available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7c2af540f0b645ba3c7202/4262.pdf>
- ^{xiii} Metropolitan Police. (2023) *A new Met for London*. Available at <https://www.met.police.uk/notices/met/a-new-met-for-london/>
- ^{xiv} Evening Standard. (2024) *Metropolitan Police misconduct: Casey Review highlights failure to remove rogue officers*. Available at: <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/metropolitan-police-misconduct-casey-review-rogue-officers-b1159132.html>