

## **Appendix 7 Ealing Race Equality Commission visit with Metropolitan Police**

Visit: Stop and Search Training delivered to new recruits to the Metropolitan Police

Date: Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> August 2021

Attendees: Laura Forrester, Denise Charles & Edmond Yeo

Hosted by: Superintendent James Pigg and the Metropolitan Police

### **Pilot stop and search training programme**

We witnessed Superintendent Pigg deliver a pilot stop and search training programme to new recruits. This programme is a randomised controlled trial taught to new recruits studying a two-year degree course to qualify as a metropolitan police officer in the West London Area. In addition, two of the five Met's Violent Crime Taskforce teams are also receiving this training as part of the trial, there is also another London area and 2 other constabularies doing the same training (e.g. Essex). Body camera footage, now worn by Met officers, will be used as part of the assessment/evaluation process. The training has been created to address the ongoing criticism linked to stop and search, particularly the public attitude towards police created by the current approach:

- Most people are unaware of their rights, with no knowledge of what grounds they can be stopped for, and whether they are entitled to a written record of the stop and search (Form 5090) which can often lead to feelings of intimidation and fear.
- People from BAME communities are unlikely to call the police if they need help; there is perception that the police will not, or sometimes cannot, help them.
- Safer Neighbourhood Teams approach policing from a community perspective, creating partnerships and relationships with local organisations such as schools, local businesses, places of worship and residents' associations. This relationship can be damaged overnight when (Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994) Section 60 stop and search powers are used within small areas without due regard to local insights and intelligence from the local SNTs. Use of this procedure in this way reinforces public perception that the police carry out 'stop and search' without any

official grounds, or through racial profiling (i.e. most perpetrators are black therefore that gives grounds to stop and search you 'cos you are black), that the police are abusing their powers, and, more importantly, leave those affected feeling powerless and unable to turn to anyone for support or redress.

This is a two-day training course delivered by hand-picked officers that have the same belief system as what they are teaching. Their key aim is to improve the quality of encounters, creating a police force that has a view without bias. The training is based on the Procedural Justice Model to ensure people have a voice, there is fairness, and an explanation is provided for why the contact has taken place.

It is designed to engage people without creating agitation. This is a set of conversation strategies; officers are trained to have conversations that help to build rapport and avoid tension and unease. Officers are trained to engage in active listening and to remain consistent in their approach. One conversation model is like an hourglass - flowing from natural, general, specific, general, natural. Training extends to building conversations with multiple people, to prevent angry crowds and discord with the police. It also looks at preventing prolific stop and searches, where one person has been searched many times. The training is based on academic studied behaviours.

Probationers are also trained on identifying people with mental health issues. The stigma attached to mental health has diminished and it is no longer considered a taboo subject for the force. It is talked about more openly, with greater compassion and knowledge, the training helps officers to navigate conversations and makes it easier for them to link people to appropriate services.

The training model devised by the Metropolitan Police takes an academic approach to stop and search. Assessment and reflective practices are key to the two areas of training:

**1. Baseline Training** – helps to prevent officers from building stereotypes for why people should be stopped and searched. Officers are trained to look for characteristics that can lead to observational bias. They are asked to look at body language and not the outward appearance, relying on observation to provide less observer error and more observer effect.

Pay attention to the environment, the movement of people, location, time of day, day of week, weather, crowds and other external influences.

The training is an heuristic approach to training, relying on the Cognitive Bias Codex which segments 180 cognitive biases, providing officers with the ability to recognise quickly how to confirm bias and stereotype. It helps to diminish conformity to enable officers to assess a situation without bias.

Goal directed behaviour is discouraged, with no targets for stop and searches.

It creates a form of self-legitimacy, ensuring officers are doing the right thing and do not fall vulnerable to displaying any form of discrimination.

Initial training outcomes suggests there is a 57% improvement in the quality of stop and searches with training, 160 police officers were assessed, and 22,000 stops and searches analysed.

## **2. Resolution Conversations**

The purpose of a resolution conversation emphasizes two elements

- Such powers are used only when there is evidence of a pressing need
- Once the search has been conducted the person and found not to be a perpetrator, that they are reassured that they are free to go without any further repercussions (and what to do if they feel that is not the case)

There are some important caveats, bearing in mind restrictions on budgets:

- it is hoped that the model will pick up traction with all the streets duties teams across the Met and then snowball.
- plans that such 'use of force training' will be factored into officer performance and development (i.e. through CPD)
- an aim to include it in the 6 monthly training sessions (alongside First aid training/enhanced energy life support)
- people, whether a police person or a community person, will need to work hard to overcome confirmation bias/stereotyping

- breaking the cycle of distrust will need supporting work such as
  - early engagement with the community by introducing police service in primary (as part of PHSE curricula) and secondary schools
  - ongoing engagement, particularly during the adolescent years (especially boys)/colleges and youth clubs
  - strengthened links between school officers and dedicated ward officers
  - engage focus on those who are (likely to become) prolific offenders.

### **Questions posed by Commissioners:**

***What support is provided to police officers to ensure bad behaviour is addressed quickly?***

Performance and misconduct processes are carried out quickly. Officers can whistle blow on their colleagues anonymously.

***What support is available to people who suffer from severe injury that could be linked to crime and are unlikely to engage with the police?***

Redthread is a charity organisation which has volunteers in casualty, they volunteer their time to engage with people receiving trauma treatment.

***How do you monitor and improve the police service?***

Staff surveys are carried out regularly to evaluate staff morale, processes and determine what improvements are needed. Exit interviews are carried out with all staff leaving the police force and all officers are encouraged to take part in them. Confirmation interviews with prospective candidates take place to ensure they are given the opportunity to feel comfortable before they join the force.

***Police officers are often required to complete very long shifts which can have an impact on their mental health and welfare, what measures are in place to support them?***

Sergeants are asked to hold a de-brief after every shift, to allow them to gauge whether there are any welfare concerns or training and support needed. Blue Light Champions provide mental health support for all officers in complete confidence.

***The size of Safer Neighbourhood Teams has had a negative impact on communities, when will this change?***

The Mayor of London and the Prime Minister have promised to provide more police officers, we are currently training probationers and are aiming to increase the size of SNT's across London.

***Why are black males stopped and searched more frequently than other demographics?***

Disproportionately young black men are engaged in violence are more likely to live in a high crime area, poor housing conditions and will lean disproportionately towards offending. Stop and Searches are not the answer to preventing people from actively engaging in crime, other interventions such as youth support workers, mental health support, positive mentors are all services which need more funding.

***Early intervention with the police is much needed, how does this take place?***

Currently there are school officers present or visiting high schools. They will do their best to build relationships with the students and create some trust and mutual understanding.

***How are the public made aware of what their rights are, particularly in relation to a Stop and Search?***

There are leaflets available in libraries and at police stations.

***Why is this training limited to new officers/probationers and how can you extend it to the rest of the police force?***

Initially the training was created to be delivered over 4 days, however, this was reduced to 2 days from lack of funding. At this time there are many other police forces requesting this training but have limited resources to make it universal. Not enough funding available to the national police force.