Home Office Research Study 294

Assessing the impact of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry

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Foreword

The Inquiry into the failed police investigation of Stephen Lawrence's murder and broader issues of minority ethnic communities' trust in policing, led by Sir William Macpherson, was one of the defining moments in the recent history of the police service in England and Wales. The Inquiry Report pointed to fundamental flaws in the investigation that were attributed to professional incompetence, institutional racism and a failure of leadership. To combat these individual and organisational problems, the Inquiry urged the police service to examine how its policies and practices had allowed these flaws to exist, and set out a wide range of recommendations for improvement which have been described as the most extensive reform programme there has ever been on police-community relations.

The Home Secretary published an action plan for implementing the recommendations of the Inquiry in 1999. The Lawrence Steering Group (LSG), consisting of independent members, the police and other agencies (see Appendix), was also set up to support the delivery of the action plan and to oversee its implementation. The LSG became increasingly interested in assessing the impact of the Inquiry on the police service and its relationship with minority ethnic communities. The need to look at the outcomes arising from the implementation of the recommendations was also underlined by the Home Secretary in a recent meeting of the LSG. Researchers from the Home Office's Research, Development and Statistics (RDS) were therefore, commissioned by the LSG to carry out an evaluation of the changes prompted by the Inquiry in the police service.

The resulting research, carried out by the Mannheim Centre for Criminology at the London School of Economics, was one of the most extensive and detailed to have been conducted on police-community relations in England and Wales. It drew on a large national survey of police officers and approximately 2,000 hours of observations. The research report highlights the progress that has been made in policing since the Inquiry's publication, and points to a number of areas where the Inquiry has been an important lever for change. It also suggests the areas where further work is required to deal with the more challenging, systemic issues. The research's comprehensive and nuanced analysis illustrates how these issues manifest themselves in day-to-day policing and, as a result, identifies where further reform is required.

Many of the issues identified in this study point to the need for a greater appreciation of the needs of different communities by the police service. The proposals put forward in the recent Government White Paper *Building Communities, Beating Crime* (2004) can be seen as an attempt to address this. The White Paper sets out ways to strengthen the processes for the recruitment, retention, progression and support of minority ethnic and female staff in the police service. A strategy aimed at using learning and development to improve police performance on race and diversity, to be published in the next five years, reinforces the Government's workplace proposals. Importantly, the strategy will focus on improving and assessing individual officer, team and force performance in the critical area of race and diversity. The broader police reform agenda outlined in the White Paper also directly deals with the issue of cultural changes in the police. In promoting citizen focused policing, it seeks to engender a more responsive and customer-focused culture in the service and underlines how important front-line staff are in maintaining the reputation of the police and the broader criminal justice system. Communities need to be at the centre of policing, through neighbourhood policing teams, public engagement, and new accountability structures. Moreover, greater emphasis will be placed on public satisfaction and community confidence through their incorporation into the police performance framework.

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Executive summary

Introduction

This report outlines the findings from a large study designed to assess the impact of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry on policing. The Inquiry's terms of reference were "to identify the lessons to be learned for the investigation and prosecution of racially motivated crimes" through a detailed analysis of the events surrounding the murder of Stephen Lawrence and the police response to it.

The primary aim of the study was:

> *to evaluate the overall impact of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry on the police in England and Wales examining changes prompted by the Inquiry in, and relationships between, police policy, operational practice, and the confidence of minority ethnic communities in the police, both at a national and at individual force level.*

Methodology

The information and data for the study were collected between 2002 and 2004, and the research was divided into three key phases:

- **Initial phase** – qualitative research in four sites (two in London, and two in small/medium county forces) to establish officers' perceptions of the Lawrence Inquiry and 'scoping' interviews with some key stakeholders.

- **Three national surveys** – to gauge opinion about the Lawrence Inquiry and to establish a picture of its impact at a national level. The surveys involved:
  - 1,267 face-to-face interviews with officers of all ranks except those in the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO);
  - a postal survey of ACPO officers and staff (n = 98); and
  - a postal survey of police authority members and staff (n = 133).

- **In-depth qualitative research** – over 18 months of fieldwork that included:
  - a detailed examination of operational policing in four forces;
  - a case study of murder investigation in London; and
  - research with minority ethnic communities exploring their experiences of policing.

Attempting to establish the impact of the Lawrence Inquiry on policing was a complex task as there were no easy means by which practices and behaviour at the time of Stephen Lawrence's murder and the publication of the Inquiry Report could be compared with those at the time of the research.

It was possible to draw on earlier studies of policing for comparison. Some changes, particularly those involving structural developments, such as the introduction of new procedures or processes, do not require baseline data. However, where there were no appropriate baseline data available, the normative framework employed by the Lawrence Inquiry was used as the benchmark against which police practices and behaviour might be assessed. In the absence of benchmarking data, the study focused on officers' *perceptions* of changes since the Lawrence Inquiry, as well as the attitudes and experiences of minority ethnic communities.

Summary of findings

The Lawrence Inquiry appears to have been an important lever for change in the police service and there have been some substantial and positive changes in policing in the past five years. There have been significant improvements in:

- the recording, monitoring and responses to hate crime;
- the organisation, structure and management of murder investigation;
- liaison with families of victims of murder;
- consultation with local communities; and
- the general excision of racist language from the police service.

However, there remain a number of important caveats to this picture.

- The positive developments noted here were not uniformly visible across police forces.
- Forces – perhaps understandably – tended to focus attention on those changes that were most obviously identifiable and achievable.

- The greatest continuing difficulty is understanding the nature of, and designing responses to, the problem of 'institutional racism' within policing. As a result, despite the intentions of police forces and their staff, certain groups still receive an inappropriate or inadequate service because of their culture or ethnic origin.

Understanding and responding to the Lawrence Inquiry

- The Lawrence Inquiry was perceived as an important moment in policing by officers in all force sites, and its overall impact to have been broadly positive.

- However, there was also considerable anger about the Inquiry in all sites, with officers feeling it unfair. The reaction was particularly powerful in London where the Inquiry and its immediate aftermath was described in strongly emotional terms. In sites outside London, the Inquiry appeared to have less resonance, as officers felt the failings it identified were indicative of an incompetent Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) rather than reflecting general practices in the police service more broadly.

- Staff both inside and outside the MPS thought the failings of the Lawrence investigation were rooted in incompetence rather than in racist practices.

- MPS officers consistently perceived the Inquiry to have been less fair – to their force, to senior officers in the MPS, and to detectives involved in the case – compared with officers serving elsewhere. Interestingly, Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) officers generally felt the Inquiry was fairer than their White colleagues did.

Institutional racism

- Much of the anger officers felt about the Lawrence Inquiry stemmed from use of the term 'institutional racism'. This was the single most powerful message that police officers received from the Inquiry.

- However, both survey data and observational fieldwork suggested that the term 'institutional racism' is not widely understood in the police service. Almost all front-line officers and some senior officers in the fieldwork sites thought that institutional racism signified a widespread problem of racist behaviour and

attitudes among police staff. This misunderstanding was reflected in media coverage of the Inquiry and in broader public reactions. It is, therefore, not surprising that the term created widespread resentment and anger.

- The confusion was most likely exacerbated by the definition of institutional racism used by the Lawrence Inquiry and the use of the word 'racism' in the term itself.

Impact

- Officers of all ranks overwhelmingly believed that the services provided by the police had improved in the years since the Lawrence Inquiry. Just under three-quarters (72%) of officers felt the overall impact of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry had been positive.

- One of the most significant impacts of the Inquiry was that police officers felt under greater and more intense scrutiny. In all sites, officers reported their heightened sensitivity and anxiety in dealing with BME communities after the Inquiry. Some officers feared that public awareness of the Inquiry made it more likely they would be accused of racism.

- The officer survey indicated that greatest anxiety existed in relation to stop and search – with officer confidence having notably declined since the Lawrence Inquiry. In all sites officers reported a climate in the aftermath of the Inquiry in which "people were too afraid" to stop and search for fear of being accused of racism.

- The Inquiry also appeared to have brought into focus officers' uncertainty and confusion about the use of their powers. Officers, with their perception of increased scrutiny, thought that it was more difficult for them to break the rules around stop and search.

- These anxieties suggested that the Lawrence Inquiry had alerted officers to the possibility that their behaviour might be perceived and, crucially, successfully defined in a way that was at odds with their own intention and perception.

The changing climate of policing

- Although institutional racism was the central focus of the Lawrence Inquiry, one of the primary responses of the police service focused on eliminating racist language among police staff.

- The qualitative research undertaken showed that explicit racist language has been almost entirely excised from the police service and is no longer tolerated in all force sites. This is an important and marked change to the climate as little as ten years ago. The Lawrence Inquiry appeared to be an important catalyst in this change.

- The change in language appeared to be strongly related to a climate of increased scrutiny, and a heightened awareness of potential disciplinary responses.

- However, some BME staff felt the absence of racist language was largely cosmetic and did not represent a genuine change in the culture of the force. BME officers were also more likely than their White counterparts to believe that minority officers faced discrimination in their work.

- Further, the urgency in tackling racist language was not mirrored in the response to other forms of discriminatory language and behaviour. In all sites, a greater tolerance of sexist and homophobic language was apparent and sexist language and behaviour was widespread in all sites.

- The experiences of women and minority staff suggest that the excision of explicitly racist language in the service had not led to broader changes in the internal culture of the police organisation. Women, gay and lesbian officers, in all sites, reported feeling excluded by a predominantly male, heterosexist culture. Women officers frequently felt undermined and undervalued. Strong feelings of exclusion and discrimination described by women and minority staff went largely unrecognised and unaddressed in all forces. Across all research sites there was little organisational understanding or support of the differential needs of minority ethnic staff, for example in relation to the racist abuse they received from the public.

Relationships with minority communities

- There have been significant improvements in the structures for consulting with local communities, and in understanding the need to consider community impact more broadly. In all research sites, local citizens felt the police had made such advances in the way they consulted with communities that they were now equal or better than other agencies.

- The introduction of independent advice has been an important development: over four-fifths of forces had established a force-wide Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs), seven in ten at a divisional (BCU) level; and two-thirds for specific campaigns or operations.

- In all research sites, senior staff recognised the need for liaising with communities in response to events that had the potential for 'critical' impact on local communities (although understanding of what constituted a 'critical' incident varied).

- However, while the principle of consultation between the police and local citizens appeared to be well-established, its precise purpose was often unclear and oriented to police-led agendas rather than community needs and concerns. Forces varied in the extent to which they actively involved communities in strategy and practice, and in the extent to which they attempted to address difficult problems of representation in consultation forums.

- The development of posts dedicated to liaison with local minority communities has been a consistent and important development. These staff were responsible for much of the progressive work in developing relationships with minority and other communities and were valued by community workers in all research sites.

- In all sites there were other officers without a specific community portfolio who made considerable efforts to develop relationships with local minority communities. In particular, officers who had more contact with local communities, such as beat officers, had a better understanding of local needs and concerns and were able to foster better relationships.

- However, the roles of liaison and beat officers were generally not integrated into mainstream policing. As a result, officers in these roles often felt marginalised and were subject to other pressures (such as frequent abstraction) which undermined their ability to sustain community contacts.

Local service delivery

- In response to the Lawrence Inquiry, all forces had instituted diversity or Community Race Relations (CRR) training as a means of sensitising staff to the diverse cultures and experiences of minority groups. In the officer survey, the majority of staff found the training worthwhile and described the impact of CRR training primarily in terms of an increased awareness of some differences in cultural protocols.

- Difficulties with language were a relatively common problem in interactions with some BME groups. Officers were often unsure how to access interpreters, or when it was appropriate to do so. Moreover, it was not often feasible for interpreters to be available for help at the point of immediate need.

- There are continuing problems connected with routine working practice and service delivery which had negative consequences for relationships with some local communities. These largely stemmed from a failure to recognise differences in the ways policing was perceived in different communities. This issue is of crucial importance to the police service and goes to the heart of the central notion of institutional racism identified in the Lawrence Inquiry.

- In all sites, BME research participants described mistrust of the police and an expectation of discrimination. This widespread expectation of discrimination within BME communities was a key lens through which the actions of individual police officers were understood. Within such a context, inappropriate or simply poor service by individual officers was often perceived as racist.

- Police tactics that focused activity on BME communities, particularly minority youth, were frequently experienced as provocative and discriminatory. Appreciation within police forces that routine policing might be experienced in such a manner varied considerably. The absence of such appreciation was, without doubt, a barrier to increasing trust in local communities.

Murder investigation

- The MPS introduced a number of important changes to the structure and organisation of murder investigation as a result of the Lawrence case and the Inquiry's findings. These have resulted in significant improvements both to the overall quality of murder investigation and the treatment of victim's families. These included the introduction of new standards and procedures for the management of murder scenes; a requirement to record investigative decisions and their rationale; and trained and dedicated Family Liaison Officers.

- Other changes to murder investigation also occurred between Stephen Lawrence's death and the Lawrence Inquiry that were linked (though not exclusively) with the Lawrence case. These involved the introduction of: dedicated Murder Investigation Teams to concentrate skills and improve the quality of investigations; a Homicide Assessment Team who attended and advised at life threatening assault, unexplained death and murder scenes; more oversight of Senior Investigating Officers and their investigations; critical incident training; and formal reviews of murder investigations. These changes led to an improved initial response at murder scenes and increased scrutiny of investigations.

- However, these developments were oriented around pragmatic and tangible measures that favoured procedural changes in investigative practice. This left the broader issues raised by the Lawrence Inquiry and its findings, particularly in relation to institutional racism, relatively unaddressed within murder investigation.

Responding to hate crime

- The police service has made significant strides in dealing with and responding to hate crimes and the Lawrence Inquiry seems to have been an important catalyst in this regard. Services generally, and the recording and monitoring of racist incidents in particular, had improved in all research sites. Officers in all but one site appeared to understand the definition and nature of 'racist incidents' as defined by the Lawrence Inquiry.

- The greatest changes, especially structurally, had been made in the MPS sites with the introduction of dedicated Community Safety Units. Outside London the story was mixed. In particular, there was one site that appeared to be lagging significantly behind all others.

- The greatest continuing concern arises from the low status of such work. Even within the MPS it was commonly felt such work was not perceived to be 'real police work'.

Levers for change

- While the changes stimulated, in part, by the Lawrence Inquiry were evident in all research sites, there were some notable differences among forces in the extent to which these changes occurred.

- The context in which forces operated appeared to be an important factor in the extent to which the Lawrence Inquiry and its recommendations were seen to be relevant to the force area, and consequently in the immediacy with which they were tackled. These included the demographic profile of the force (the size of BME population); the perceived levels of racist incidents; the perceived relevance of the Lawrence Inquiry to the force; and local issues, such as episodes of racist disorder.

1. Introduction

This report outlines the findings from a large study designed to assess the impact of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry on policing. The primary aim of the study was:

> *to evaluate the overall impact of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry on the police in England and Wales examining changes prompted by the Inquiry in, and relationships between, police policy, operational practice, and the confidence of minority ethnic communities in the police, both at a national and at individual force level.*

Background

Over 20 years ago Lord Scarman's (1981) report on the urban unrest of the early 1980s highlighted problems in relations between the police and minority ethnic communities. Despite their greater risk of victimisation such communities often feel they receive a poor service from the police, are less likely to report crimes and, young minorities in particular, have less favourable attitudes towards the police (Home Office, 2004). The murder of Stephen Lawrence in South London on 22 April 1993 focused attention once again on such problems.

The circumstances of the murder, the absence of a successful prosecution of the alleged perpetrators, and a broad perception that the investigation was not well handled by the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), led to a campaign by the Lawrence family. This led to the establishment of the Macpherson Inquiry in 1997. The Inquiry's terms of reference were "to identify the lessons to be learned for the investigation and prosecution of racially motivated crimes" (Macpherson, 1999) through a detailed analysis of the events surrounding the murder of Stephen Lawrence and the police response to it. The focus of the Lawrence Inquiry was both particular and general (McLaughlin and Murji, 1999). In Part 1 it examined the circumstances of Stephen Lawrence's murder, the police response to it and the subsequent criminal investigation. In Part 2 it explored the broader issues of police-community relations and discrimination both within the service itself and in its policies and practices more widely. The Inquiry team's approach was shaped by a realisation "that a narrow interpretation of our terms of reference would have been pointless and counterproductive" because "Wherever we went we were met with inescapable evidence which highlighted the lack of trust which exists between the police and the minority ethnic communities". They continued:

> *At every location there was a striking difference between the positive descriptions of policy initiatives by senior police officers, and the negative expressions of the minority communities, who clearly felt themselves to be discriminated against by the police and others. We were left in no doubt that the contrast between these views and expressions reflected a central problem which needs to be addressed.* (para 45.6)

The Inquiry concluded that there had been a series of fundamental flaws in the investigation and that these resulted from "professional incompetence, institutional racism and a failure of leadership by senior officers". It described its approach as "uncompromising" (para 45.24):

> *A new atmosphere of mutual confidence and trust must be created. The onus to begin the process which will create that new atmosphere lies firmly and clearly with the police. The Police Services must examine every aspect of their policies and practices to assess whether the outcome of their actions creates or sustains patterns of discrimination. The provision of policing services to a diverse public must be appropriate and professional in every case. Every individual must be treated with respect. 'Colour-blind' policing must be outlawed. The police must deliver a service which recognises the different experiences, perceptions and needs of a diverse society.* (para 45.24)

The Lawrence Inquiry Report contained 70 recommendations "amounting to the most extensive programme of reform in the history of the relationship between the police and ethnic minority communities" (Bowling and Phillips, 2002: 16). The recommendations included:

- a new ministerial priority and associated performance indicators (covering *inter alia* reporting and recording of racist incidents, public satisfaction, victim liaison, racism awareness training, and recruitment and retention of staff);
- increased inspection powers;
- a new definition of a 'racist incident';
- changed practices in relation to the investigation and recording of racist incidents and crimes;
- improved family liaison;
- changes in first aid training;

- a review and revision of racism awareness training;
- enforcement of the revised disciplinary and complaints procedures;
- introduction of a requirement to record stops as well as searches; and
- increased focus on the need to attract minority ethnic recruits to the police service and to retain minority ethnic officers and staff.

Of these wide-ranging recommendations, racism awareness training, recording of stops and searches, minority ethnic recruitment and changes to inspection powers were outside the remit of this study. Many of these issues have been examined as part of the Home Office's research programme following the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry (see, for example, Tampkin *et al.*, 2004; Quinton and Olagundoye, 2004; Miller *et al.*, 2000; Bland *et al.*, 1999).

Racism and institutional racism

It was the application of the term *institutional racism* to the MPS in particular, and the police service more generally, that generated the most debate following the publication of the Lawrence Inquiry Report. The Inquiry took evidence from several experts on the importance of distinguishing the discriminatory practices of organisations from the actions of individuals. It considered the deliberations of the Scarman Inquiry and was critical of its arguments for acknowledging the existence of 'unwitting' or 'unconscious' racism yet confining the idea of 'institutional racism' to overtly racist policies and practices consciously pursued by an institution. By contrast, the Lawrence Inquiry took the view that institutional racism consists of:

> *The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people.* (para 6.34)

The Inquiry concluded that "institutional racism… exists both in the Metropolitan Police Service and in other Police Services and other institutions countrywide" (para 6.39). Consequently, the research reported here examines policing in England and Wales generally and not solely in the MPS.

The use of the term institutional racism in this way was not unproblematic. In particular, it led both to considerable misunderstanding and resentment within the police service. Indeed, despite the intention that it should draw attention to problems at the level of organisational policies and practices, 'institutional racism' was interpreted as indicating a widespread problem of individual racism. Media coverage of the Lawrence Inquiry, together with the reaction of some key stakeholders, were important factors in this (mis)reading of the Inquiry's intent. However, aspects of the Inquiry Report itself may have contributed to such misunderstanding.

The Lawrence Inquiry sought to draw attention to embedded organisational practices and policies that result in a failure to provide an appropriate service to minority ethnic communities. However, the definition used by the Inquiry included terms such as 'unwitting prejudice' and 'racist stereotyping' more suggestive of individual, not institutional racism. Further, the Lawrence Inquiry shifted its attention between the actions of individuals and organisations. The Inquiry was understandably concerned both with investigating and understanding the actions of particular police officers at the scene of the murder and during the subsequent investigation, as well as examining the broader practices and policies of the MPS. However, in doing so it drew attention to not one but three processes: unwitting (individual) discriminatory behaviour; conscious racism; and, collective or systemic discrimination. The difficulty is that the three processes were not clearly separated within the Inquiry's definition of institutional racism, leading to the potential for confusion among those receiving and reading the Report.

A framework for the research

In conducting the study, and in attempting to analyse and make sense of the data collected, it was thought important for the research to focus on all three processes identified above: unwitting (individual) discriminatory behaviour; conscious racism; and collective or systemic discrimination. This meant, at the very least, examining contemporary policing for signs of:

- use of language or behaviour by police officers that was racist in content or intent;
- use of language or behaviour by police officers that, though unwitting, was perceived or received as racist; and
- systematic discrimination as a result of a collective failure to provide an 'appropriate and professional service'.

What is meant by 'appropriate' and 'professional' and how should researchers make judgements as to what is and is not professional and/or appropriate? The approach taken was to identify indicators in the Lawrence Inquiry Report itself. The most important of these are listed below:

- The use of racist language and behaviour is, *per se*, wrong.

- A failure to appreciate cultural differences is wrong; policing should not be 'colour-blind'.

- To understand racism requires an appreciation of the perception and experience of those subjected to racism, thus:
  - a racist incident should be considered to be 'any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person'; and
  - where minority communities perceive themselves to be discriminated against by the police this should be taken as an indicator of a significant problem – at a minimum as an indicator of 'a lack of trust'.

- No aspect of policing lies outside these values and norms; by implication the conduct of officers toward each other should be informed by the same standards as those governing their relationships with the public.

The broader context

The climate of policing has changed since Stephen Lawrence's murder in 1993. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's (HMIC's) thematic inspection on police and community relations (1999a: 9), for example, found evidence "on this inspection that many officers partly due to publicity around Sir William Macpherson's Inquiry have race issues in the forefront of their minds". However, the thematic also reported "that whilst a number of forces are at the cutting edge of progress in this field, the approach by a large section of the police service is less than satisfactory" (HMIC, 1999a: 3).

Since the research was commissioned in 2002 a number of other important events and inquiries have occurred. The ramifications of the 11 September 2001 attacks in New York and Washington DC and the 'war on terror' instigated in its aftermath have heightened tensions within certain communities and, arguably, have had a more generalised impact upon efforts to increase tolerance of diversity. A BBC TV programme, *The Secret Policeman*,

in October 2003, which used undercover filming to expose racism among recruits to a number of forces in the north of England and North Wales, prompted an Inquiry by the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE). In its interim report (CRE, 2004) it accused a number of police forces of 'stealth racism' through their failure to comply with race relations legislation. Finally, in early 2004 the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) established a further inquiry. Headed by Sir Bill Morris, and focusing on professional standards and employment matters in the MPS, it reported in December 2004 (Morris, 2004). As this brief review illustrates this research was undertaken in a fairly rapidly changing social and political context.

2. Methodology

The central aim of this study was to assess the impact of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry on policing in England and Wales. This study endeavoured to assess change at a national level, at force level, and within forces. It focused on six major areas of anticipated change: police policy and procedures; police operational practice; the structure and organisation of policing; the perceptions and experiences of police among minority ethnic communities; the perceptions of operational officers; and racism within the police service.

The study sought to assess the impact of the Lawrence Inquiry on policing in broad terms, not simply focusing on whether the recommendations made by the Inquiry had been implemented, but to what extent the Inquiry might have shaped and developed policing practice in a variety of different ways.

Causation is one of the trickiest issues in all evaluation research, particularly in the absence of baseline data against which change can be assessed. Attempting to establish the impact of the Lawrence Inquiry on policing was a complex task. There were no easy means by which practices and behaviour at the time of Stephen Lawrence's murder and the publication of the Inquiry Report could be compared with those at the time of the research (2002-04). As a starting point, the three HMIC thematic inspections on community and race relations conducted before, and immediately after, the Lawrence Inquiry were examined hoping these might provide benchmarking data (see HMIC, 1997, 1999; and 2000). Unfortunately, different measures and sample sizes were used in each inspection, and no possibilities for benchmarking emerged.

In the absence of benchmarking data, the study focused on officers' *perceptions* of changes after the Lawrence Inquiry, as well as the attitudes and experiences of minority ethnic communities. Although it was apparent that the Lawrence Inquiry Report was perceived to have had an impact, teasing out what was directly linked with the Inquiry, and what formed part of broader changes in policing was not straightforward.

The research draws on two comprehensive studies of policing – the Policy Study Institute's (PSI's) *Police and People in London* study (Smith and Gray, 1983) and the more recent *Policing for London* research (Fitzgerald *et al.*, 2002) for comparison. The time that had elapsed, in particular, since the *Police and Police in London* study meant that attributing change to the Lawrence Inquiry was difficult. Some changes, particularly those involving structural developments, such as the introduction of new procedures or processes, do not

require baseline data. However, in relation to many of the more subjective judgements made in this report where there were no appropriate baseline data available, the normative framework employed by the Lawrence Inquiry was used as the benchmark against which police practices and behaviour might be assessed.

Given the complexities of this research, a variety of quantitative and qualitative research methods were used. Multiple methods, together with inter-force and intra-force comparisons provided the basis for a form of 'triangulation' (seeing similar phenomena from different vantage points). The findings and conclusions presented throughout the report are based, wherever possible, on evidence from more than one source. Specific quotes and examples are used to illustrate the general point being made.

Although each method was selected on the basis that it was appropriate to the particular research task, combining different approaches had a cumulative benefit. Using a variety of methods, seeking the views of a range of key actors, and comparing different localities, allowed greater confidence to be placed in the findings than the adoption of a simpler methodology would do.

The research reported here was conducted between 2002 and 2004, and was divided into three key phases.

- **Initial phase** – qualitative research in four sites (Sites 1-4, two in London, and two in small/medium county forces) to establish officers' perceptions of the Lawrence Inquiry and 'scoping' interviews with some key stakeholders.

- **Three national surveys** – to gauge opinion about the Lawrence Inquiry and establish a picture of its impact at a national level. The surveys involved:
  - 1,267 face-to-face interviews with officers of all ranks except those in the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO);
  - a postal survey of ACPO officers and staff (n = 98); and
  - a postal survey of police authority members and staff (n = 133).

- **In-depth qualitative research** – over 18 months of qualitative fieldwork was undertaken that included:
  - a detailed examination of operational policing in four forces (Sites 5-8; one in London, one small and two medium county forces);
  - interviews and focus groups with Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities exploring their experiences of policing; and
  - a case study of murder investigation in London.

The research sites were selected on the basis of policing context (city, town, urban, rural); composition of their populations (with a variety of high and low minority ethnic settlement, and different types of minority ethnic communities); force size; and geographic spread. Two of the initial sites (1 and 2) and one of the in-depth sites (5) were in London. In most forces, research was carried out in single Basic Command Units (BCUs). Where forces incorporated very different policing environments, for example those which covered urban and rural areas, research was undertaken in two BCUs. The profiles of forces and sites where the qualitative work was undertaken (both initial and in-depth) are outlined in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Profile of research sites

Site		Approx size of force*	Approx size of population in BCU	% BME population in BCU
1		Large	200,000	20%
2		Large	250,000	60%
3	BCU 1	Small	150,000	<5%
	BCU 2		80,000	<1%
4		Medium	200,000	<10%
5		Large	200,000	40%
6	BCU 1	Small	150,000	<5%
	BCU2		180,000	<1%
7	BCU 1	Medium	200,000	30%
	BCU2		200,000	<10%
8		Medium	120,000	20%

* 'Large' = over 15,000 officers and staff; 'medium' = 5,000-15,000 officers and staff; and 'small' = under 5,000 officers and staff.

Initial phase

Given the complexities of this particular evaluation, and because there were few benchmarks to measure change against, it was decided that a sensitising period was necessary at the outset of the research to provide some indication of what officers' attitudes to the Lawrence Inquiry were and the changes, or otherwise they perceived to have taken place. This work helped to inform the design of the questions used in both the national surveys and the in-depth qualitative phase.

Between August and September 2002, ten researcher days were spent in each of four sites (two in the MPS, one in a southern and one a northern constabulary). A wide range of policing roles and practices was observed, as described in relation to the in-depth qualitative research below. In addition, key stakeholder interviews were conducted with representatives from the Association of Police Authorities (APA), HMIC, and the National Black Police Association (NBPA). No initial work was undertaken with minority ethnic communities as data on the experience of, and confidence in policing both before and after the Lawrence Inquiry were far more substantial and reliable than the available police data and there were already good, clear benchmarks in place (for example via the British Crime Survey).

National survey phase

A core element of the research was to explore police officers' perceptions of the Lawrence Inquiry and its impact on policing. To this end, three surveys were conducted: two of police officers and one of police authority members and staff. Respondents were asked a range of questions covering the impressions of the Report and its impact, and also about their attitudes toward the central concerns of the Lawrence Inquiry. In the main officer survey, the aim was to conduct a total of 1,200 interviews with police officers from forces across England and Wales. Even with such a large sample it was neither sensible nor feasible to include all 43 constabularies in the sampling frame. Undertaking the survey in approximately one-third of forces was thought to allow the geographical distribution of forces and variation in force size to be taken into account. It would also ensure that enough interviews were undertaken in each force in the sample to allow all ranks to be included in sufficient numbers. Because of its size and importance to the study it was clear at the outset that the MPS had to be included in the survey. In constructing the sample, the first decision was to ensure that the number of interviews reflected the MPS's size as a proportion of police force strength in England and Wales. At the time of the survey, the MPS accounted for approximately 20 per cent of total officer numbers in England and Wales, so its allocation was set at 250. This left a total of 950 interviews to be allocated across the remaining forces. Starting from a random point, one in three forces were then selected, giving a total of 15 forces in all. The sample was checked against the HMIC's (1993) 'families of forces' information (the most up-to-date at the time) to gauge the geographical and demographic spread that had been achieved. Five of the seven force families had two forces each in the sample, and the remainder three and one. The sample was double-checked to ensure that forces with big cities and/or large minority ethnic populations were included in the sample.

Initial quotas of the 950 interviews were allocated proportionately to each force based on its size.[1] The largest force represented 21 per cent of the sample of 14 forces, and was allocated 21 per cent of the interviews (195). The smallest force, at three per cent of the sample, received a quota of 30. However, this method resulted in the six smallest forces receiving quotas of fewer than 50 interviews – the minimum number thought necessary for the sample realistically to reflect the potential variation between forces. The number of interviews was therefore increased in each of these six forces to 50, the shortfall being taken from the eight larger forces in proportion to their size (the largest represented 27 per cent of the total numbers of the eight largest forces, so contributed 27 per cent of the shortfall, and so on). As a consequence of this the numbers of interviews allocated to each of the 14 forces ranged from 50 in the smallest force to 173 in the largest (and 250 in the MPS – which were further divided between eight boroughs, the Territorial Support Group and the murder teams of the Specialist Crime Directorate).

Two adjustments were made to the sample as a result of concerns raised by chief officers. Due to operational pressures, two forces (one medium-sized shire force and one predominantly urban force) felt unable to provide the numbers of officers that were initially requested. After negotiation, both agreed to provide half their original quota. To make up the resulting shortfall, two forces of similar size and social and geographical composition (one shire force, one metropolitan) were approached. Both agreed to participate in the research and provided the remainder. The final sample was therefore very similar to the original plans, but with 17 forces involved instead of 15.

The proportion of female officers in each force ranged from 15 per cent to 20 per cent, with the average being 18 per cent. It was decided that a slight over-sampling of women officers would be appropriate, and a target of 20 per cent of female respondents at the ranks of constable and sergeant (constituting the bulk of the sample) was set, with as many interviews to be achieved with female officers at higher ranks as possible. Given the extremely low numbers of police officers from minority ethnic backgrounds, and the concentration of the few that there are in the metropolitan forces, it was decided that it was not feasible to set a quota of interviews for minority ethnic officers. However, when approaching individual forces support was sought, wherever possible, in interviewing minority ethnic officers. In order to reach greater numbers than was practicable in the face-to-face survey, self-completion questionnaires were also distributed by post through the NBPA to members of local Black Police Association (BPA) branches.

1 Because a non-random sample was used the report does not include tests for significance.

The procedure for allocating quotas of interviews per rank was similar to the allocation of interviews per force. Firstly, rank quota were devised using the actual percentages of officers at each rank in the police service in England and Wales. This resulted in a rather small quota for chief inspectors, superintendents or chief superintendents. Again, it was felt that 50 was the minimum number of interviews necessary in order to be able to adequately reflect officers' views at each rank. The number of interviews allocated to the two senior ranks was increased to 50 each, and then the number allocated to inspectors was increased to 100, since there are significantly more inspectors than chief inspectors. The remaining 1,000 interviews were then allocated to sergeants and constables in a ratio that reflected their proportion to each other in overall force numbers (i.e. about 21 constables for every four sergeants).

Table 2.2 Allocation of interviews per rank

Rank	Number of officers		Initial interview quota		Number of constables and sergeants only		Adjusted interview quota		Ratio of change in proportions
Constable	99,487	(78%)	940	(78%)	99,847	(84%)	843	(70%)	0.90
Sergeant	18,574	(15%)	175	(15%)	18,574	(167%)	157	(13%)	0.90
Inspector	6,195	(5%)	59	(5%)	-	-	100	(8%)	1.69
Chief inspector	1,550	(1%)	15	(1%)	-	-	50	(4%)	3.33
Superintendent	1,256	(1%)	12	(1%)	-	-	50	(4%)	4.17
Total	127,062	(100%)	1,200	(100%)	118,421	(100%)	1,200	(100%)	

The aim was to gain coverage of each force that is as representative and as close to the quota of rank and gender as possible, while at the same time trying to avoid overburdening any single BCU or force. These considerations also needed to be balanced against the practicalities of deploying the field force of survey interviewers (in terms of interviewer availability, travel time, fair working conditions and so on). By and large, it was possible to balance these concerns to the satisfaction of each force, its BCUs, the individual respondents, the field force and the research requirements. Overall, therefore, although it is not possible to claim that the final sample is fully representative of the police service in England and Wales, its size and structure make it broadly representative of the 17 forces included in the survey. The choice of the 17 forces allowed for all the major regions of England and Wales to be included and for all force types to be represented.

The survey was conducted in summer 2003. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 1,235 officers in the 17 force areas surveyed and a further 32 minority ethnic officers completed postal questionnaires. In total, therefore, 1,267 police officers were interviewed. The breakdown by rank is shown in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3 Respondent breakdown by rank

Rank	Number	%
Police/detective constable	831	65
Sergeant	217	17
Inspector	115	9
Chief inspector	59	5
Superintendent	31	2
Chief superintendent	14	1
Total	1,267	100

Of the officers interviewed, 82 per cent were uniformed and 18 per cent from Criminal Investigation Departments (CID). Just over three-quarters were male (76%) and one-quarter female (24%). The age of officers interviewed varied from 20 to 56. Seventeen per cent of officers interviewed were aged 29 or under and three-fifths were aged 39 or under. As noted, considerable emphasis was placed on attempting to ensure that interviews were conducted wherever possible with minority ethnic officers and a booster postal survey was conducted with the help of the NBPA. In the event, the approach was very successful in this regard with 11 per cent of respondents being non-White (a total of 143 BME respondents in total) – far higher than the approximately three per cent of police force strength overall in England and Wales. A basic breakdown of the ethnicity of the sample is detailed in Table 2.4 below.[2]

Table 2.4 Respondent breakdown by ethnicity

Ethnicity	Number*	%
White	1122	89
Asian	66	5
Black	54	4
Other	23	2
Total	1,265	100

* Discrepancies between the overall totals in the tables are due to missing data.

2 The 16+1 Census ethnic classifications were used in the survey, but have been aggregated for presentation purposes.

In addition to the main officer survey, postal surveys were conducted of police authorities and of ACPO. It was decided that a survey of ACPO staff be conducted separately from non-ACPO staff. Although, a core of questions needed to asked to officers across all ranks, the roles of ACPO officers in terms of introducing and leading change also suggested the need to ask them slightly different questions. Given the much smaller numbers of ACPO rank officers, it was far more feasible to reach them via a postal survey – something which was considered unrealistic with officers at other ranks. The ACPO survey was conducted at the very end of the study between September and November 2004. Questionnaires were posted to all ACPO rank officers and staff – 232 in total. A total of 98 responses were received – a response rate of 42 per cent. Of these, 25 were of chief constable rank or equivalent, a further 53 were deputy or assistant chief constable or equivalent, and 20 were from senior police staff. Slightly under half of the respondents had responsibility for race and community relations as part of their portfolio.

The survey of police authority members and staff was conducted with the support of the APA. Questionnaires were sent, by post, to all police authorities in England and Wales in early July 2004. Here there was a particularly poor response rate. In all, 133 replies were received, a response rate of under 20 per cent.[3] However, it is worth bearing in mind that a number of the questions in the survey required respondents to compare their perception of the situation in 2004 with that existing prior to the publication of the Lawrence Inquiry Report in 1999. A very significant number of police authority members will not have been in post for five years and over and, consequently, may have felt the survey was not relevant to them. Interestingly, quite a broad range of responses were received. Within the total of 133, the largest number from any one authority was 14. In all, responses were received from 35 of the 43 police authorities. Over four-fifths of responses (83%) were from members and 17 per cent from officers. Of the responses from police authority members, a little over one-third (37%) were from local councillors, one-quarter (26%) from independent members, and one-fifth (20%) from magistrates. The 47 responses from local councillors were relatively evenly distributed between political parties, including Conservative members (18), Liberal Democrat (15) and Labour (13) with one 'other'. One-half of respondents had been police authority members for more than five years – 65 per cent five years or more.

A key challenge was designing survey instruments that incorporated questions that were meaningful to respondents and likely to result in the collection of data that would help answer the central questions of the study. The design of surveys was informed by the initial

3 The precise response rate is difficult to calculate accurately. Questionnaires were distributed via police authority clerks and it is impossible to know how many were distributed to individual police authority members. However, on the assumption that each police authority has a minimum of 17 members, and adding at least a couple of staff numbers to the total, at least 850 questionnaires could have been distributed.

phase of work. The main officer questionnaire was piloted both within and outside the MPS prior to the main fieldwork. In all, 65 pilot interviews were undertaken, and the questionnaire was altered substantially as a result. In addition, considerable advice was taken from police officers at all ranks, together with representatives from other bodies such as the APA and the NBPA in the development of the instruments.

In-depth qualitative phase

As outlined earlier, in the absence of benchmarking data to assess the impact of the Lawrence Inquiry, the research focused on officers' attitudes towards the Lawrence Inquiry Report and its perceived impact on police practice and behaviour. The qualitative fieldwork played a vital role in this process. Whereas the survey data offered a broad description of the perceptions and attitudes among officers, the qualitative research allowed the extent to which officers' views were reflected in their day-to-day work to be observed.

The fieldwork in the qualitative phase involved three key elements: a detailed examination of operational policing in four forces; a case study of murder investigation in London; and work with minority ethnic communities exploring their attitudes towards and experiences of policing. Research in the in-depth sites (5-8) took between 12 and 16 weeks.

While observational research included a number of policing activities specific to each local context, in order to standardise research activities between sites as far as possible the bulk of the research in Sites 1-7 comprised observations of the same core policing roles: uniform patrol policing; proactive and reactive CID (though this was not possible in Site 3); community (beat) officers; and those officers with a liaison portfolio. Researchers accompanied individual or pairs of officers (depending on local arrangements) for entire shifts. Where the role involved 24 hour policing (such as patrol policing and CID), a range of shifts were chosen to incorporate all parts of the 24 hour period. In the in-depth phase, researchers worked with at least two teams in each core role where possible, spending between three and six days with each team. In each site, wherever possible, observations were conducted with both new and long-serving staff, men and women, and White and BME staff in each. Informal interviews were conducted with almost all staff observed. Formal interviews were chosen in several ways. First, care was taken to ensure interviews were conducted with a range of men and women, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered (LGBT) staff, and White and BME staff across all ranks. Second, officers at all ranks who had a community portfolio or particular interest in local communities were interviewed. Third, observational research was guided by local issues in each site, identifying

participants through observations or the suggestions of other staff. In Site 8, researchers focused the majority of their attention on minority ethnic communities' experiences of policing and the experiences of BME officers.

Research with the murder team took six months, and included in-depth observations of the different stages of the investigative process, interviews (see below) and documentary analysis (including Senior Investigating Officer [SIO] decision logs, family liaison logs and a dip sample of seven murder reviews being handled by other murder teams in London). Three critical incident training courses (levels two and three) and a simulated week-long exercise for SIOs were also observed as well as a range of strategic and tactical meetings on particular cases, or elements of cases attended including: SIO meetings; 48-hour and 10-15 day superintendent reviews; meetings on particular cases, or elements of cases, including interview strategies, family liaison, and forensic strategies; case conferences; murder reviews; and a meeting involving investigators and an MPA representative. A 'cold-case' review (reopened following new evidence) and a dip sample of seven murder reviews being handled by other murder teams in London were also analysed.

Interviews were conducted with murder detectives at all levels of the observed team, the senior staff on the area, relevant ACPO officers, serving and retired officers from the Murder Review Group, support staff in the Major Incident Room, and the analyst and intelligence officers. Informal discussions were conducted with murder victims' families including those from BME groups. Despite their importance, it was not possible to interview crime scene managers/coordinators in any depth, although some informal discussions with them did occur during the research. Finally, an analysis of SIO decision logs, suspect interviews, witness statements and family liaison logs was undertaken.

In total, more than 2,000 hours of observation were undertaken in the in-depth phase and extensive field-notes were made by all researchers – amounting to many thousands of pages of data. Although it is never possible to eliminate researcher influence, the duration of research in the in-depth phase meant that officers became accustomed to our presence. In addition, given the range of behaviour observed during the research, it is likely that an accurate picture of front-line policing practice and murder investigation was gained.

Using interviews alongside observations also enabled the researchers to explore issues raised by the observations in more depth, check out their perceptions/understanding of particular issues, and the extent to which what had been observed reflected practice more generally. The interviews were semi-structured and most were recorded and transcribed. The main themes running through and guiding the observational fieldwork,

and therefore also through the analysis of qualitative data, were drawn from the Lawrence Inquiry Report. As described earlier, there were some issues that were covered by other research studies in the Home Office's research programme, such as stop and search and CRR training. Beyond these, the remit was to examine all the major questions raised by the inquiry and therefore the recommendations in the Inquiry Report were used as organising schema for both fieldwork and analysis. All interviewees were asked about the Lawrence Inquiry Report and its impact, about their assessment of the extent of change and to what extent these might be attributable to the Lawrence Inquiry Report. The interviews also explored particular areas relevant to individual interviewees' role, experience and the policing context. Interview transcriptions and field notes from observational work were used to generate a series of headings and topics across the research sites and the data were then analysed using this template, enabling similarities and differences to be identified.

The community-based fieldwork was approached in a number of different ways with the aim of ensuring that a range of different minority ethnic groups, and the issues they faced, were incorporated. In all sites, community meetings, and those between the police, partner agencies and community representatives were observed. Interviews were undertaken with community members, youth and community workers and independent advisors where they existed, as well as police authority members in most sites. The research then focused on the local context in each site. For example, in Site 5 there were problematic relationships between the police and young African-Caribbean men so the researchers concentrated on these issues, running a focus group with local Black youths and interviewing their youth and community workers. In Site 6, where the treatment of asylum seekers was a cause of concern, interviews were carried out with asylum seekers, and voluntary and statutory sector workers who supported them, and observations conducted in drop-in surgeries. In Site 7, a range of men and women from the Pakistani and Indian communities were interviewed and, in Site 8, the research explored different communities of interest, focusing in particular on the experiences of minority ethnic women, including those who were victims of domestic violence.

Interviews with community participants covered a range of core questions about the Lawrence Inquiry and its impact, about attitudes towards the police, their views on community consultation, and whether policing minority ethnic communities had improved since the Lawrence Inquiry. Comparing and contrasting 'community' with police accounts and the observational work of police-community interactions was useful in terms of cross-checking reliability and validity, as was seeking to access a broad range of community voices, not only those involved in police-community liaison, but also the more vulnerable and detached, and some of the more critical.

In Sites 3, 4, 5, 6 and the murder team, the research was undertaken by a single researcher, in Sites 1, 2 and 8 by two researchers, and in Site 7, three researchers. The team that conducted the in-depth fieldwork included two White and two Asian researchers (three female, one male) – a White researcher conducted fieldwork in two of these sites, a mixture of White and Asian researchers in the third, and two Asian researchers in the fourth. The observational research in the initial qualitative phase was undertaken by White researchers.

Although none of the sites in either the initial or in-depth phases of the qualitative research have been named, in the following analysis comparisons have made between London and elsewhere. There are several reasons for this. The MPS are identifiable in a number of ways: they are the largest force and many of their structures and practices are distinct (which therefore renders anonymity difficult). In addition, as it was the MPS that were the focus of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, it was important to be able to assess how the Inquiry had been received by them, and how they had responded to it, as well as to able to compare this with perceptions and responses in forces outside London. Under these circumstances anonymity was impossible. However, the boroughs and the murder team within the MPS that participated in the research have not been identified.

Feedback was provided to all forces that participated in the qualitative research (both initial and in-depth phases) as soon as practicable after research in their site was completed. The feedback process (which generally involved officers at chief superintendent rank and above) was intended to be of mutual benefit. It enabled: the observations to be discussed, their accuracy established, and whether they reflected officers' own experiences; and issues linked with individual forces and circumstances to be discussed that could not be explored in the same depth in this report. This process also enabled concerns to be raised as soon as possible, in the hope that forces would then take the opportunity to use the feedback. There was evidence (particularly in Sites 1, 5 and 6) that some elements of the feedback were taken on board.

3. Perceptions of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry and its impact

In this chapter, using data from the main surveys and observational fieldwork, police officers' perceptions of the nature and impact of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry are explored.

General reaction to the Inquiry

During the qualitative fieldwork considerable anger about the Lawrence Inquiry was expressed by police officers in all sites. The strength of reaction was particularly powerful in London where the Inquiry and its immediate aftermath were described in strongly emotional terms. Front-line officers felt personally criticised by the Inquiry and said it was "awful", "terrible" and that staff felt "shocked and kicked". "We've been slagged off, week after week, month after month. That, more than anything, broke my morale", a Police Constable (PC) in Site 2 said. The intensity of feeling in London was perhaps predictable given that the Inquiry had focused primarily on the MPS.

The Inquiry appeared to have less resonance in all sites outside London (Sites 3, 4, 6, 7 and 8). One officer who transferred from the MPS to another force found both the level of knowledge about the Lawrence Inquiry and the issues it raised were very different. "People haven't got a clue," he said, "it's not a big story" (Site 3). A Detective Sergeant (DS) in Site 7 said: "It was remote, something that was in the press and belonged to London." In Site 6 officers said they barely registered its publication. "To be honest with you," a sergeant said, "you ask people here about Stephen Lawrence, I'd be surprised if they even know who Stephen Lawrence is." One of his colleagues said: "We haven't changed our practice at all. We deal with coloured people the same as we did one year ago, five years ago" (DS).

Officers in forces outside London distanced themselves from the Inquiry by contrasting the MPS's incompetence with their own forces' perceived professionalism. As one officer explained:

> *I was a uniform sergeant at the time, it wasn't massive, the impact.* [The feeling] *was the Met are crap at investigating, but we all knew that anyway didn't we…* [and] *the Met are arrogant and it's about time they got their come-uppance.* [People were] *not surprised that these things could happen… and if the Met had done a bloody good job there wouldn't have been a problem.*

In all sites, officers felt the failings of the Lawrence investigation were indicative of the incompetence of the Metropolitan Police, rather than reflecting practices in the police service more broadly. As a sergeant in Site 6 explained: "Who was Stephen Lawrence? He was a Black lad killed in London who the Met made many cock-ups about. It was bad publicity for the police that was generated by the Met. They made cock-ups, and we're all paying for them as we always do."

Furthermore, officers perceived the MPS's failings to be rooted in incompetence rather than racist practices. For example, a DS said: "I'd be surprised if [the investigation was poor] because Stephen [Lawrence] was Black, I just think it was incompetent…. The police will investigate murders with the utmost ferocity. I can't imagine a whole team of detectives going 'OK bugger it', 'cause he's Black. I can imagine the SIO being incompetent, and going down the wrong track, but not 'cause he was Black" (Site 7). Similarly, a senior officer in London said:

> *The suggestions of racism and the fact that we'd ignored him because he was a Black boy were ridiculous… What they showed was that the police were dreadful…* [and] *the murder investigation was poor… all the way through… he got poor first aid, the family were dealt with dreadfully, but had they been a Puerto Rican family or a White family, they would have got a dreadful service.*

Some officers, in all sites, also questioned why the focus had fallen on the murder of Stephen Lawrence in particular. For example, a PC in Site 5 said: "It angered me because it was one murder where the police made mistakes, but what about all those other murders where the police made mistakes, what about all those other families, all those victims."

Although the Inquiry seemed to have less resonance in sites outside London, there were marked differences between sites, in many ways reflecting the nature of the places being policed. In two sites (3 and 6) minority ethnic populations were very small and in Site 6 the Inquiry was seen to be irrelevant to the policing context because, as one officer put it, "we don't have any coloured issues here". Similarly, in Site 3 a minority ethnic PC explained that the Lawrence Inquiry had not compelled officers to change their practice because "they haven't had to, have they, there are no Black people here". In Site 6 a far more muted organisational response to the Inquiry and its recommendations was apparent. A senior officer said: "I think it's very easy to deny even as prestigious a report as Lawrence, because it applies elsewhere. It doesn't apply here in the psyche of a lot of people until you expose the inadequacies of the locality to people."

By contrast Site 7 had a large BME population and some experience of urban disorder. Here the force responded to the Lawrence Inquiry by issuing statements supporting the findings of the Inquiry both publicly and internally, and created structures and processes to address its recommendations thereby signalling the Inquiry's importance to the force. It was also likely that both the political and demographic context of this site would have made it difficult for the force not to respond, or to have been seen to do so.

Although the Lawrence Inquiry received less attention and generated a less personal and emotional response in forces outside London, it was clearly registered by officers and in fact there were many similarities with the views expressed by MPS officers.

Perceptions of the Inquiry's 'fairness'

During the in-depth fieldwork many police officers suggested the Lawrence Inquiry had been unfair and that the police had been singled out for attack. Large numbers of front-line officers felt unsupported by their managers, and suggested they had been made scapegoats.

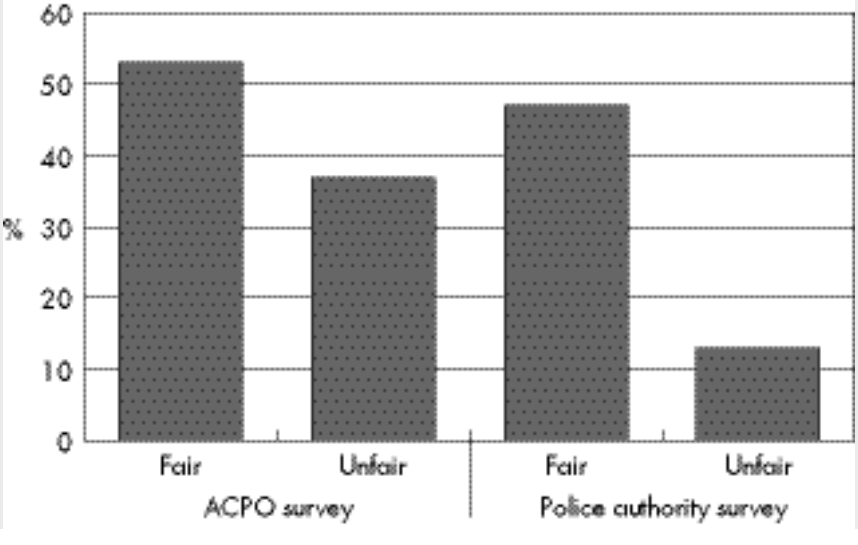
Officers in the main survey were asked how fair the Lawrence Inquiry was to: the MPS; investigating officers; senior officers; and to the police generally (see Table 3.1). The findings suggested, overall, officers felt the Inquiry was fairer to the MPS (less than one-third describing it as unfair) than to the police generally (where over half felt it unfair). Half of respondents felt it was either 'very fair' or 'quite fair' to the senior officers criticised in the Report and 45 per cent said the same about the investigating officers. Importantly, only 16 per cent of respondents thought the Report was fair to them as individual officers.

Table 3.1 Perceptions of the 'fairness' of the Lawrence Inquiry (%)

	The MPS	Police generally	Other agencies	Senior officers criticised in the Report	Officers on the scene	Investigating CID officers	You as an individual officer
Very fair	10	4	7	12	8	12	5
Quite fair	27	16	22	38	22	33	11
Neither	32	29	58	29	24	31	33
Quite unfair	25	37	12	17	32	20	30
Very unfair	7	14	2	3	15	5	21

A similar pattern was evident in responses to the ACPO and police authority surveys (see Figures 3.1 and 3.2). Over half of ACPO and police authority respondents felt the Inquiry had been fair to the MPS (53% and 47% respectively) but a much higher proportion of ACPO respondents compared to police authority respondents felt it was unfair (37% as opposed to 13%). Both groups felt the Inquiry less fair to the police service generally, with only a third of ACPO and police authority respondents (37% and 35% respectively) perceiving it as fair.

Figure 3.1 Was the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report fair to the MPS?



Although officers, in all sites, felt the Inquiry was unfair, survey data indicated differences in the strength of feeling between London and elsewhere. Officers serving in the MPS at the time of the survey, or who had done so previously, were less likely to perceive the Inquiry to have been fair compared with officers serving elsewhere (see Table 3.2).

Figure 3.2 Was the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report fair to the police service generally?

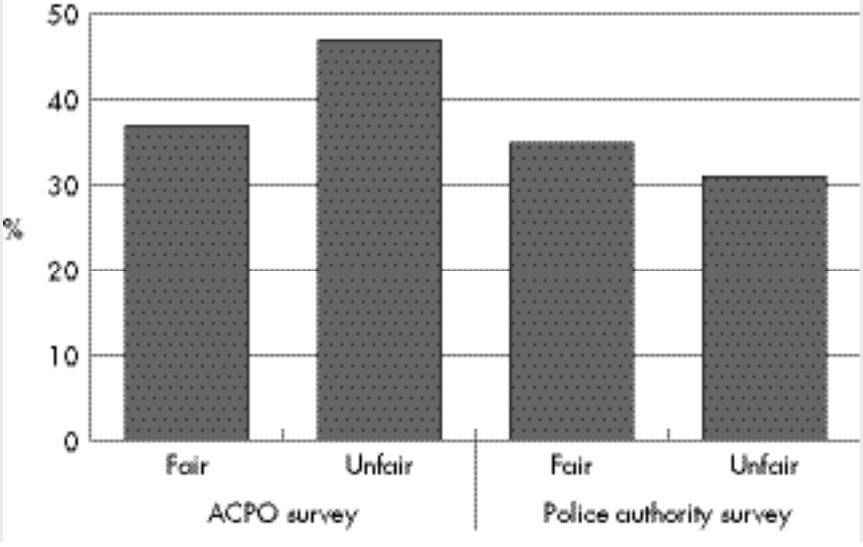


Table 3.2 Perceptions of 'fairness' and service in the MPS (%)

Respondents saying 'very fair' or 'fair'	*How fair was the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry towards…*						
	The MPS	Police generally	Other agencies	Senior officers criticised in the Report	Officers on the scene	Investigating CID officers	You as an individual officer
Ever served in the MPS	27	22	30	44	18	36	15
Never served in the MPS	40	20	29	53	24	46	17

Considerable – and consistent – variations in police officers' responses according to ethnicity were apparent in the survey data (see Table 3.3). For example, a far larger proportion of BME than White respondents in the main officer survey perceived the Inquiry to have been fair (53% and 34% respectively). Similarly, a higher proportion of BME officers felt the Report was fair to senior officers criticised in the Report (69% compared with 48% of White respondents) and to the investigating CID officers (66% compared with 42% of White respondents).

Table 3.3 Perceptions of 'fairness' by ethnicity of respondent (%)

Respondents saying 'very fair' or 'fair'	*How fair was the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry towards…*						
	The MPS	Police generally	Other agencies	Senior officers criticised in the Report	Officers on the scene	Investigating CID officers	You as an individual officer
White	34	18	27	48	27	42	15
BME	53	30	42	69	56	66	31

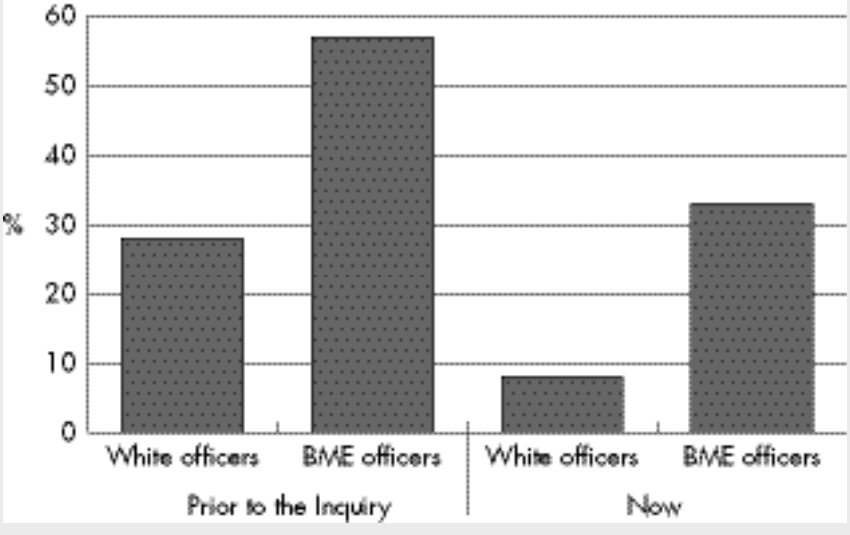
Institutional racism

Much of the anger officers felt about the Lawrence Inquiry stemmed from the label 'institutional racism'. This was perhaps the single most powerful message that police officers received from the Inquiry. In all sites, the Inquiry was associated with this term – even in Site 6 where knowledge of the Inquiry was otherwise poor.

Officers were asked to rate how fair a description the Lawrence Inquiry's definition of institutional racism was of their force. Officers at all ranks thought it was now a less fair description of their force than it had been at the time of the Inquiry. Of the 40 per cent of respondents to the ACPO survey serving in their current force at the time of the Inquiry, half felt the description 'very fair' or 'fair', and just under a third felt it was 'unfair' or 'very unfair'. Approximately one-third (31%) of respondents to the main officer survey thought it was a 'very fair' or 'fair' description of their force prior to the Inquiry compared with 11 per cent at the time of the research four years later. Once again, however, there were considerable variations by ethnicity within the sample with White respondents being far less likely to feel that the description of their force as 'institutionally racist' was 'fair' compared with BME respondents (see Figure 3.3).

Respondents to the ACPO survey were asked how well they thought officers in their own force understood the term 'institutional racism'. The vast majority (94%) said their ACPO colleagues understood the term either 'well' or 'very well'. By contrast, only two-thirds (67%) thought middle mangers in their force understood the term 'very well' or 'well' and this figure fell to 24 per cent for front-line officers. Only three ACPO officers believed front-line officers understood the term 'very well'.

Figure 3.3 Proportion of respondents agreeing that the Lawrence Inquiry's definition of institutional racism was a fair description of their force



The observational fieldwork confirmed the lack of understanding surrounding the term 'institutional racism'. Confusion over the notion of institutional racism was widespread, with the majority of officers conflating ideas of institutional and individual racism. Almost all front-line officers and some senior officers in the fieldwork sites thought that institutional racism meant a widespread problem of individual racism in the police service. Given these circumstances it is perhaps not surprising that the term institutional racism created widespread resentment and anger. For example, one PC said: "The term institutional racism was being bandied about, that really annoyed me. I never have been, I never will be [racist]. When you join the police, you don't get sent on a course to be a racist" (Site 3). Even officers with a more sophisticated understanding of the term said they were still confused: how can an organisation be racist and individuals not when "the organisation is the people in it" (DS, Site 5). The widespread resentment about institutional racism, and the acceptance of it by senior officers was viewed as a betrayal by staff in some of the case study forces:

I thought about resigning. It was like, 'you should be hung and burnt at the stake, you're all racists'. (DC, Site 5)

I thought 'how dare they'. I felt really aggrieved. I still do. I'm still angry about it.
(Detective Inspector (DI), Site 7)

Media coverage almost certainly had an important role in shaping officers' understanding of, and opinions towards the Inquiry. Indeed some officers thought it helped to distort the meaning of 'institutional racism', contributing to the widespread misunderstanding by most staff. In the ACPO survey three-fifths of respondents felt the way the Inquiry had been presented in the media was negative. In the officer survey many respondents reported being affected by media coverage and three-fifths (60%) felt it had a negative impact on their jobs. Staff reported feeling under intense and negative scrutiny:

> *I can remember clearly there was a period following Stephen* [Lawrence]*'s death and the publication of the Macpherson Report where it just hammered on about the police, you couldn't pick up a paper without there being negativity around police action, inaction, police response, it was a real time of beating the police up.* (Site 1)

> *When all of this was going on… you'd go to the pub and they'd say 'I read the paper today, and you are institutional racists'. And if they think that, then what are the public thinking?* (Site 5)

The association of the Inquiry with individual racism was reinforced by officers' interactions with the public. Officers, in all sites, reported being called racist by people they encountered. For example, one MPS officer said that after the inquiry: "I had a group of Black kids shouting 'murderer' at me." Such encounters were not just with local BME communities, but reported to be with "middle class" or "local English White residents" as well.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the Lawrence Inquiry's definition of institutional racism is likely to have contributed to the widespread misunderstanding of the term because the Inquiry shifted its focus between individual conduct and organisational processes. The definition of institutional racism used by the Lawrence Inquiry elided three different processes – conscious racism, unwitting (individual) discrimination, and collective or institutional discrimination. Furthermore, the inclusion of the word 'racism' may have reinforced this misunderstanding. As a powerful term, with a deeply embedded social stigma, those hearing the word racism may have difficulty disassociating it from the actions of individuals. As a result, it was likely to have contributed to confusion between the complex notion of systemic discrimination, and the better understood and more potent notion of individual racism. In suggesting this, the researchers are not arguing against the idea of institutional racism, merely seeking to explain why it was so widely and comprehensively misunderstood. The following quote, from an Independent Advisory Group (IAG) member, is critical of police officers for failing to take on board – indeed, failing to 'hear' – some of the lessons of the Lawrence Inquiry and, yet, mirrors the difficulties that many in the service faced when confronted with the Inquiry's most resonant phrase:

I didn't believe this in 1999, but I genuinely believe this now, that there are people in the police service who are institutional racists who genuinely don't know they're doing it. And I don't like saying that. They genuinely don't know, you say things to them and they don't hear. And that's my experience… when you say things they simply cannot bring themselves to listen to you.

The central point this interviewee was seeking to make was that there were officers within the police service who genuinely believed themselves to be acting fairly and appropriately but were nevertheless unwittingly racist in their conduct. However, this is described as being 'institutionally racist' – a quality that is exhibited by organisations, not individuals. It was precisely this difficulty – of failing to understand the difference between individual and institutional racism replicated among police services and the public more widely – that lay behind so many of the officers' negative views of the Inquiry. In the ACPO survey, officers felt that, on balance, institutional racism was an unhelpful term in attempting to implement the Inquiry's recommendations. Only a third of respondents rated the impact of the term as 'positive', almost two-thirds (64%) felt it had been 'negative'.

Perceived impact on policing

In the ACPO survey, officers were asked a series of questions about the impact of the Lawrence Inquiry. Four-fifths (80%) suggested its recommendations had a positive impact on their force. Senior officers were asked to rate the service their force provided to BME communities at the time of the research compared with that prior to the Lawrence Inquiry. Though only two-fifths were able to make a direct comparison (most having moved forces during that period) the overall impression was of improvement with 90 per cent of ACPO officers rating their forces' service positively compared with one-half prior to the Inquiry.

In a similar exercise, front-line officers in the main survey were given a list of areas in which change might have been expected and were asked to rate – on a five-point scale – how good a service their police force provided in 2003 compared with that at the time of the Lawrence Inquiry (1999). As the results (see Table 3.4) illustrate, officers overwhelmingly believed their forces had improved markedly and were performing well in almost all the items listed. The only exceptions were public confidence in the way police deal with racist incidents – which contrasts with police officers' own perceptions of a marked improvement in the recording and investigation of racist incidents – the recruitment of minority ethnic officers, first aid at the scene of incidents, treatment of victims and witnesses, and, most conspicuously, officer confidence in using stop and search. Indeed, of all the items, only

confidence in the officer use of stop and search was perceived to have declined since the Lawrence Inquiry. Interestingly, whilst most activities individually were rated as being 'excellent' or 'good' by between two-thirds and four-fifths of officers only 55 per cent of officers rated the overall quality of service provided as 'excellent' or 'good'.

Table 3.4 Assessment of police services and change since the Lawrence Inquiry

How would you rate your force's performance in the following areas…?	% 'excellent'/ 'good' four years ago	% 'excellent'/ 'good' now	Difference (% points)
Consultation with a range of different communities	12	69	+57
Responses to critical incidents	38	80	+42
Opportunities for the public to report racist incidents	21	91	+70
Public confidence in the way police deal with racist incidents	7	31	+24
The recruitment of minority ethnic officers	17	54	+37
Police confidence in using stop and search	68	27	-41
First aid training	23	40	+17
The recording of racist incidents	16	89	+73
The investigation of racist incidents	22	85	+63
Management of major crime inquiries	57	83	+26
Quality of murder investigations	72	89	+17
The seriousness with which forces take complaints of police racism by the public	53	93	+40
The seriousness with which forces take complaints of racism made by police staff	54	91	+37
Co-operation with other agencies	20	77	+57
Liaison with families of victims	20	70	+50
The treatment of witnesses by the police	17	44	+27
The treatment of victims	24	54	+30
First aid given at the scene of incidents	28	48	+20
The overall quality of service in your force	36	55	+19

One of the most significant impacts of the Lawrence Inquiry was that police officers felt under greater and more intense scrutiny. Four-fifths (81%) of respondents in the officer survey agreed with the statement, 'I have to be more accountable for my actions as a police officer now than four years ago'. Although this new 'transparency' was viewed positively by some – "by being open and honest you get that trust, don't you?" (DC, Site 7) – there developed, in most areas, something of a "cover your back" mentality – to protect against potential complaints and disciplinary action. For example, one PC in an area with a small BME population said when he "comes across" cases involving a person from a minority ethnic background "we dot the 'I's and cross the 'T's… we go into a lot more detail than we would with other cases" (Site 3).

Officers, in all sites, reported heightened sensitivity and anxiety in dealing with BME communities after the Inquiry. According to some officers, public awareness about the Inquiry changed the power balance and officers feared being accused of racism in their dealings with minority ethnic people. For example, a sergeant in Site 6 described how he stopped an African-Caribbean man. He reported that the man said: "I know all about Stephen Lawrence, I'm going to make a complaint about you'… His defence was going to be because he was Black, we were racist." In a climate where officers felt accusations of racism could have extremely serious consequences, this was a source of considerable anxiety.

These anxieties also suggested the Lawrence Inquiry had alerted officers to the possibility – or increased their awareness – that their behaviour might be perceived and, crucially, successfully defined in a way that was at odds with their own intention and perception. In the aftermath of the Inquiry claims of 'racism' had particular potency. Officers were aware that actions that were not the product of racist attitudes or intentions could still be defined as racist. Some officers sought to explain the gap between their own intentions (non-discriminatory/non-racist) and the ways such actions were received as the result of the manipulative behaviour of minority ethnic people. A suggestion, made by officers in all sites, was that ethnicity could be used as a weapon against officers where an accusation of racism was easy to make and hard to refute. As an officer in Site 3 explained: "I think a lot of IC3s [Black African and African-Caribbean people] know if they play the race card, a lot of officers would back off, especially young in service officers."

The officer survey indicated that the greatest anxiety existed in relation to the use of stop and search powers – with officer confidence having notably declined since the Lawrence Inquiry. Indeed, in all sites, observed officers reported a climate in the aftermath of the Inquiry in which "people were too afraid" to stop and search for fear of being accused of

racism. This effect seemed to be particularly powerful in MPS sites, where officers said the use of searches dramatically declined. In Site 5 a common though somewhat misleading impression was that following the Inquiry "no one did any stop/search for about two years" (PC, Site 5). The anxiety about the use of stop and search contributed strongly to negative views of the Inquiry. Officers in all sites felt it obstructed their work. A PC in Site 7, for example, said: "It's like patrolling with one arm tied behind your back."

It also appears that the Inquiry brought into focus officers' uncertainty and confusion about the legitimate use of their powers. As one officer explained: "It makes police officers scared. If I saw a Black youth on a street corner I would probably not search him, unless he's done something physically tangible that I have seen, I won't do it" (Site 3). It seems likely that because officers felt under increased scrutiny in the aftermath of the Inquiry, and that they might therefore be held to account for their actions, there were times when they realised they could not always account for their conduct. Officers reported that the perceived increase in scrutiny meant that they could no longer go on 'fishing trips' where they knew they did not have proper grounds for searching. The climate before the Inquiry appeared to have made it either acceptable and/or possible for some officers to break rules in relation to stop and search. Since the Lawrence Inquiry Report this was perceived to be more difficult.

By contrast, for some officers, the need to be certain about their grounds brought about a new confidence in the use of stop and search powers. For example, a PC in Site 5 explained that he did not fear accusations of racism in the use of stop and search because "if you've done it by the book and you've got the grounds, it doesn't matter what anyone says".

Policing and diversity

The main survey included a series of questions on sexism, racism, the toleration of racist language, the treatment of gay and lesbian officers and the relevance of the Lawrence Inquiry (see Table 3.5). Several statements focused on the treatment of minority staff within the police service.

Table 3.5 Issues in contemporary policing (main officer survey)

To what extent do you agree with the following statements…? (%)	Strongly agree ←				→ Strongly disagree
Compared with other agencies, the police have a better understanding of the needs of local minority communities	6	32	35	22	2
I have never met a racist officer in this police force	7	13	8	47	25
Minority ethnic officers have a better chance of promotion than White officers	6	23	32	27	10
We need more women officers in this police force	8	28	46	16	3
I have to be more accountable for my actions as a police officer now than four years ago	37	44	7	8	4
Lesbian and gay officers are fully accepted in this police force	14	46	19	16	3
Officers at my rank are now more likely to challenge their supervisors	14	60	15	9	1
We need more minority ethnic officers in this police force	21	45	28	4	1
My supervisor will not tolerate racist language in my team	45	42	8	2	1
The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry is not relevant to my day-to-day job	2	8	12	48	29
The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry is relevant to this force	33	54	8	4	1
Minority ethnic victims get a better service from this police force than other victims	5	27	25	35	7
There is very little sexism in this police force	2	25	28	37	7
Political correctness gets in the way of me doing my job properly	14	32	21	28	5
Improving community relations is the responsibility of all officers	50	48	1	1	*
Too many incidents are now treated or categorised as racist	10	32	22	29	5

Perhaps of all the findings in Table 3.5 the most surprising of all was that 11 per cent of officers believed that 'the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry is not relevant to my day-to-day job' and five per cent disagreed with the statement that 'the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry is relevant to this police force'. Whilst these proportions are small, that between five and ten per cent

of police officers should question the relevance of the Lawrence Inquiry to the service is, at the very least, a warning against complacency.

Once again, there were also noticeable differences in opinion between White and BME officers. Thus, considerably fewer White officers disagreed with the statement 'minority ethnic officers have a better chance of promotion than White officers' (7% compared with 34%). Similarly, where just under one-fifth of White officers (19%) strongly agreed that 'we need more minority ethnic officers in this police force', 45 per cent of minority ethnic officers did so. There were similar differences between BME and White respondents in relation to the services received by BME victims. Where just over one-third of White officers agreed that 'minority ethnic victims get a better service from this police force than other victims', only nine per cent of minority ethnic officers did so. Differences were not as marked in responses to the relevance of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry (individually and to forces) or to the categorisation of incidents as racist.

The majority of survey respondents in the police service at the time of the Lawrence Inquiry indicated that the service their police force provided to minority ethnic communities had improved since the Inquiry. On a ten-point scale, where one = very poor and ten = excellent, the proportion of officers rating their force between six and ten rose from 42 per cent prior to the Inquiry to 86 per cent at the time of the research. Though minority ethnic officers generally rated service delivery somewhat lower than White colleagues, the degree of improvement was broadly similar. However, respondents felt morale in the force had declined. On the same ten-point scale, officers' ratings of force morale had fallen from a mean of 5.45 to 4.55. Again, minority ethnic officers' ratings of force morale was generally lower than that of White colleagues.

Interestingly, despite the strength of feelings provoked by the Inquiry and the problems emanating from the use of the term 'institutional racism', just under three-quarters (72%) of officers felt the overall impact of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry had been positive. The Inquiry's impact was even more strongly endorsed by minority ethnic officers in the sample with 81 per cent feeling the impact had been positive overall. Male and female officers were almost identical in their assessment, but a smaller proportion of constables were positive (69%) than more senior officers (78%). A larger proportion of those who had never served in the MPS (75%) were positive than those officers who had served or currently worked there (63%). Some of these issues are discussed in greater detail in Chapters 4 to 6.

Conclusion

The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry generated strong feelings within the police service. In sites outside London the Inquiry, though it was perceived to have been an important moment in policing, appeared to have less resonance. These forces collectively, and officers individually, distanced themselves from the Inquiry and its recommendations by seeing the MPS as the main focus of criticism and, by implication, that forces outside London did not exhibit the same problems. Officers in London sites, as well as those outside, also distanced themselves from accusations of institutional (and individual) racism by arguing that the main problem experienced in the Lawrence case was incompetence – the implication, often made very explicitly, that incompetence is colour-blind.

Perceptions of fairness also differed by force, with MPS officers consistently perceiving the Report to have been less fair – to their force, to senior officers in the MPS, and to detectives involved in the case – than officers from other forces. Interestingly, given the Report's focus on discrimination, BME officers generally felt the Inquiry was fairer than their White colleagues.

At the core of the anger expressed by many officers toward the Lawrence Inquiry Report was the term institutional racism. There was widespread misunderstanding of this term across forces, where confusion stemmed from a seeming inability to distinguish institutional from individual racism and led to a widespread perception among officers that they were being 'branded as racists'. Not surprisingly this led to very considerable resentment.

Some of this confusion derived directly from the definition of institutional racism employed by the Lawrence Inquiry. We think that the inclusion of the word *racism* within the term institutional racism inevitably led to misunderstanding. *Racism* is such a powerful word that it is almost impossible to deploy a term like *institutional racism* in relation to any organisation without the members of that organisation feeling they are being targeted, or even accused, as individuals. A further source of confusion, in our view, was the way in which the Lawrence Inquiry Report shifted its focus between individual actions (intentional and unwitting racism) and collective policies and practices.

One of the most significant consequences of the Lawrence Inquiry was police officers' perceptions of being under enhanced scrutiny. This resulted in increased anxiety in interactions with minority communities, particularly in relation to stop and search where confidence in the use of these powers declined after the publication of the Lawrence Inquiry Report. Some officers feared false accusations of racism, others suggested the need

to be more careful in their use of searches and, in particular, being certain of the grounds for the search. Interestingly, although the accusation of 'institutional racism' caused considerable resentment, and officers felt morale within the police service had fallen in the aftermath of the Inquiry, the majority of officers felt the Lawrence Inquiry had been positive in its impact overall.

4. The changing climate of policing

Introduction

This chapter describes the impact of the Lawrence Inquiry on the internal climate of the police organisation. As outlined in Chapter 1, the Inquiry implied that the conduct of officers towards one another should be informed by the same standards as those governing their relationships with the public. This connection was explicitly acknowledged by HMIC (1997: 9) in its initial thematic report on diversity in which it observed that there is "a direct and vital link between internal culture in the way people are treated and external performance".

The analysis of the organisational culture focused on a broad range of discriminatory behaviour and language including racism, sexism and homophobia. These issues are included because, as the Lawrence Inquiry acknowledged, "the police services must examine every aspect of their policies and practices to assess whether the outcome of their actions creates or sustains patterns of discrimination" (para 45.24). Sexism and homophobia are forms of discriminatory behaviour and language that may be considered to be similar in their effects to racism. Moreover, as will be illustrated, they were so widespread in the case study sites that in the context of a study of policing and discrimination they were impossible to ignore. Indeed, the forces' responses to these forms of discriminatory language and behaviour provide an important contrast to the responses to racism and consequently help inform an understanding of the changes in the organisational culture of police services in the aftermath of the Lawrence Inquiry.

Racist language

A number of important changes were noted in the climate of policing following the Lawrence Inquiry Report. Most obviously, the use of explicit racist language was no longer tolerated. This was felt to be an important change from the climate as little as ten years ago, in which officers suggested overt racism was commonplace. As an officer in Site 5 said: "Black people were wogs, coons, the lot, it did go on." Police officers, in all sites, thought that change had been so marked that there was now less tolerance of inappropriate language in the police service than in other agencies, and among some sections of the public. For example, a PC said: "I go to meetings and you know that something's going to be said which, if it were said here [within the force], would probably end up with people being disciplined" (Site 5).

Some staff, in all sites, suggested the changing climate in their forces reflected societal change more broadly. For example, a minority ethnic PC in Site 6 where there was a very small BME population described how a climate of overt racism inside the organisation when he first joined the force a decade ago replicated the overt racism he experienced externally at that time: "I've never experienced anything like it. I was the first Black face up there. I'd walk down the streets, they'd [the public would] be shouting 'nigger', Black this, Black that… You come into the station, you'd be having that too. That was the mentality." Some staff, in all sites, felt the changing external climate meant that there was a will and ability for the culture of the service to change. For example, a PC explained that the use of explicitly racist language in his force had decreased because "there's more social awareness of it now" (Site 3).

Observations in all case study sites supported officers' perceptions that the use of explicit racist language is now uncommon and there were very few instances where it was witnessed during the research. Terms such as "coloured" and "half-caste", identified by the Lawrence Inquiry as inappropriate, were used in some sites, though rarely. The one significant exception, however, was Site 6. Here, such terms were used more routinely and officers seemed to be unaware that this terminology was inappropriate. Moreover, in Site 6 there appeared to be a lack of urgency about addressing discriminatory language. As a supervisor said, awareness about terminology in the force was "not that sharp at all" and this was apparent in logs of calls for service. For example, one log read: "Two coloured males seen breaking into a house." The use of such terminology in routine processes suggests that it was not routinely challenged by the officers and supervisors who viewed these logs. This reinforced the impression that the lack of awareness about inappropriate terminology was endemic in this site.

The managerial scrutiny of officers' behaviour and language was also far less marked in Site 6. For example, a PC broadcast a message over the radio that she was looking for a suspect, who was Black with white hair. She added: "He looks like a pint of Guinness." This comment was condoned by her supervisor, who told the assembled officers he thought it funny. The sergeant's tolerance of this comment was striking in comparison to other sites, where the climate was such that comparable comments would have demanded a response. Staff at all levels, in all sites, knew that explicit racist language was not tolerated in their force (though, as outlined above some officers, particularly in Site 6, continued to use inappropriate language).

The BBC documentary *The Secret Policeman* was aired during the research in Sites 6 and 7, in which undercover filming was used to expose racist language and behaviour among recruits to a number of forces in the north of England and North Wales. The documentary

was widely seen by officers in these sites as demonstrating what they saw as the change in cultural climate in their police forces. Staff said they were "disgusted" and "shocked" by the programme. One respondent said: "I've never met anyone who had such views." However, all officers felt the climate within their force was now such that probationers, or any other staff who used explicitly racist terms "would never have lasted" in their force, a view shared by 71 per cent of respondents to the ACPO survey who agreed with the statement 'I am confident that supervisors will not tolerate racist language in this force'.

The general excision of explicit racist language from the service contrasted significantly with research conducted in London during the 1980s where racist language and insults were commonly used (Smith and Gray, 1983; Holdaway, 1993) and where it appears senior officers were reluctant to challenge such behaviour (HMIC, 1997 and 1999a). These changes were important, especially in a context where the research literature on policing generally suggests such behaviours are particularly resistant to change (Chan, 1997). It is difficult to be specific about when these changes might have occurred. Indeed during the course of the Lawrence Inquiry, inappropriate language was said to be uncommon (para 46.28 vi). This may have been a product of the Inquiry process itself, not least the very public nature of the proceedings though, equally, it may be evidence that changes in language were already well under way. Nevertheless, the Lawrence Inquiry appeared to have been an important catalyst for change within the police service. As outlined in Chapter 3, officers in all sites described a climate of greater scrutiny and sensitivity in the aftermath of the Inquiry, particularly in relation to racist language and behaviour. As a senior officer in Site 3 (rather unfortunately) put it: "Since the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry we've had to be whiter than white." This suggests that the widespread association of the term 'institutional racism' with racist language and behaviour among police officers was replicated in forces' responses to the Inquiry. That is, one of the ways in which forces could discharge some of their post-Lawrence Inquiry responsibilities, and be seen to be doing so, was to endeavour to ensure that the use of inappropriate or offensive language related to race was not tolerated.

In Sites 1-7 incidents of disciplinary action taken against officers in response to allegations of racist behaviour were spontaneously mentioned. Furthermore, almost nine-tenths (87%) of respondents to the main officer survey said their supervisor would not tolerate racist language in their team. On a five-point scale where one = 'a great deal' and five = 'none at all', only four per cent of officers rated their line managers four or five in relation to their willingness to challenge racist attitudes. In all sites, staff reported that behaviour deemed to be racist would be challenged by their peers as well as their supervisors. Some staff thought that the climate of scrutiny compelled them to report racist behaviour because, as one officer said if they failed to do so "they would be seen to acquiesce" (Site 7).

There were generally very strong expressions of support at all ranks for the principle of not tolerating racist language. For example, a long-serving PC said: "You look back on what we were like 14 years ago [when he joined the service] and you think, 'well actually that was wrong'" (Site 7). In Site 3, several staff described how intolerance of overt racism led a group of officers to report one of their colleagues for overtly racist language and behaviour towards another officer, ultimately leading to his dismissal.

However, officers' accounts of feeling under scrutiny were often phrased negatively, in terms of a stifling 'political correctness' especially in the London sites. In Site 2, for example, a climate of "OTT, McCarthyist policing" was described in which it was felt 'innocent' remarks or jokes could lead to reprimands or even risk losing their jobs. Here, officers reported that their colleague was disciplined for describing another officer as "chocolate coloured". There were mixed responses to such instances of disciplinary action with some officers thinking it was a "stage-managed farce", undertaken in order to demonstrate that senior managers were taking complaints of racism seriously.

Slightly under half (46%) of respondents to the main officer survey agreed with the statement 'political correctness gets in the way of me doing my job properly'. In particular, staff in all sites lamented a perceived loss of workplace 'banter' associated with the more 'sensitive' environment, in which "you can't have a laugh and a joke like you could" (PC, Site 2). One officer said: "It's the banter that keeps the force together" (Site 4). Although some might have missed this workplace banter it was clear from the comments of other officers that having 'a laugh and a joke' was often inappropriate in its nature and focus. For example, while many staff described the loss of workplace banter as a negative consequence of the Lawrence Inquiry, some women and minority staff found this banter exclusionary and offensive. A woman officer said she had "developed quite a hard skin" in order to prevent herself getting "upset" by the banter in her team "so whatever's going on goes over my head. A lot of time I choose to ignore what they say, because my work is far more important". A woman officer in Site 7 said the decline in workplace banter "has taken the fun out of the job, but when you were at the receiving end it was never so much fun, was it?".

Racist language and cultural change

Although the general excision of racist language from the police service is an important and marked change, it raises the question of the extent to which this is indicative of changes in the culture and practices in the police service more broadly.

As suggested above, the decline in the use of exclusionary language appeared to be strongly related to a heightened awareness of a potential disciplinary response rather than reflecting a change in officers' attitudes towards, or understanding of, racist language. Thus, some officers indicated that they modified what they said because they knew it would not be tolerated, rather than because they knew it was unacceptable. For instance, an inspector said: "You can't make remarks in a carrier, in a car… We used to have a laugh and a joke, now we can't in case someone takes offence" (Site 2). A PC in Site 7 said officers did not use racist language because it was too risky: "Too many people are scared of not grassing you up."

An indication that changes in the use of language did not necessarily reflect changes in attitudes or understanding of inappropriate language came from minority ethnic officers and staff. Some BME staff thought that the absence of racist language was largely cosmetic and did not represent a genuine change in the culture of the force. For example, a minority ethnic PC in Site 6 said, while he was no longer confronted with the explicit racism he experienced at the outset of his career he was confident that this had merely "gone underground":

It's not going to happen to my face, or in earshot of me… Officers that joined 10, 11 years ago that I've seen making racist comments, they're still around. I see the same faces, they're still here, don't tell me their views have changed.

Another BME officer in a county force said:

People don't make racist comments now as much… If I go back to my days on patrol… terms like 'Paki' were quite common, you know, 'the Pakis have done this'… 'they're troublemakers', or 'they're criminals'… You wouldn't hear that now in the canteen. You see people aren't saying it, doesn't mean they're not thinking it… before you knew the racists, now you don't.

The main officer survey uncovered differences in perceptions of discrimination within the police service, where BME officers were more likely than their White counterparts to believe that minority officers faced discrimination in their work from colleagues. BME officers' views on the changes in the use of inappropriate language in the police service are, in part, likely to be a reflection of their experience, or expectation, of discrimination. BME officers did feel that there had been real and significant changes in the use of language, but were sceptical about how this should be interpreted and understood.

The view taken by some officers, especially at a senior level, was that the priority of the force was to address inappropriate behaviour, irrespective of whether this changed underlying attitudes. As one senior officer put it: "Quite frankly I suppose, without being idealistic about it, who cares? As long as they don't compromise the organisation… and they don't upset anybody, then whether they believe that is the right thing to do or not, I can accept." Whether this is an appropriate position to adopt is of course a matter for debate. Yet the question of whether the appropriate focus for the service should be addressing inappropriate behaviour and language rather than the potentially more difficult problem of changing underlying attitudes was rarely the subject of explicit discussion.

Other discriminatory language

While police forces had sought to outlaw racist language the same urgency was not apparent in tackling other forms of discriminatory language. In particular, it was often acknowledged, in all sites, that there was a greater tolerance of sexist and homophobic language compared to racist language. For example, a sergeant in Site 6 said in his force "it's acceptable to [make] homophobic comments, it still is. Sexist comments people are guarded against. Racist comments are taboo". The majority of respondents in the officer survey (87%) suggested racist language was not tolerated, whereas only 27 per cent agreed with the statement 'there is very little sexism in this police force'. These very different responses reinforce the view that attitudes toward the use of racist language were significantly more stringent than in relation to the use of sexist or homophobic language.

Observations in all sites revealed that sexist language was widespread. Women reported sexist comments both from their colleagues and supervisors. For example, one officer was told by her inspector to "run along little girl and do your job"; when she complained about his comment she was asked "is it your time of the month?" Another officer said she was paired with a male officer during a night shift, and other men on the team repeatedly phoned her to ask "are your legs still closed?" Other women reported being called by derogatory terms, such as "dizzy blonde", "Coco the clown" or "dolly". Women, in all sites, were routinely referred to as "girls". In one site a female civilian officer described "sexual banter… you know, rude, sexually crude". Explicitly homophobic comments were also made in Sites 3 and 6 during observations. For example, in Site 3 an officer referred to a gay man by saying "he puts gerbils up his bottom"; in Site 6 officers attending a call at a nightclub joked that they were glad it was not the lesbian and gay night, as "you don't want to go in there in uniform, they might think we're part of the entertainment"; and officers who considered a (male) colleague to be vain teased him by calling him "gay".

The vast majority of overtly discriminatory language and behaviour observed during the research did not occur in interactions with the public, but among officers, away from public view, inside police stations or in cars. This may, in part, have been due to the increased scrutiny noted earlier and may demonstrate the degree to which officers managed their interactions according to the context. While officers may have felt constrained in their conduct with members of the public this did not always extend to their conduct with colleagues. However, the more widespread use of sexist and homophobic language was indicative of a broad acceptance of such behaviour. It was clear from the observational work that there were many occasions when (both male and female) officers were uncomfortable with colleagues using explicitly homophobic and sexist language. However, this language was rarely challenged and this stood in sharp contrast to the apparent intolerance of racist language described by staff in all sites.

Broader policing culture

The experiences of women and minority staff suggest that the excision of explicitly racist language in the service had not led to broader changes in the internal culture of the police organisation. Women, minority ethnic officers, and LGBT staff, in all sites, reported a climate in which they felt less overt forms of discrimination were widespread, and in which they felt excluded, isolated and uncomfortable. Staff described the nature of this exclusion as all-pervasive and often difficult to articulate. A woman officer described it as an always present "sexual undercurrent" (see also Young, 1991; HMIC, 1992). A gay PC explained that it was manifested in seemingly mundane behaviour:

> *It's a drip, drip, loads of silly insignificant things which if you didn't write down you would probably forget, but then as it mounts up you think is it me, am I being paranoid, am I being too sensitive… you know, because it's summer, people wear less clothing, a girl walks past the window they all shout 'window', and literally they all run to the window to ogle out the window, even the sergeant… There's that sense of exclusion that they don't know about, they don't feel.* (Site 3)

A minority ethnic officer in Site 8 said a number of officers felt "under attack", and did not feel comfortable or accepted. One of his colleagues said: "When we get together and talk in our language, some of the officers here don't like it. They will give funny looks when they pass us by." A Black officer described feeling conspicuous in a predominantly White force and felt her White colleagues were uncomfortable around her: "They don't know how to talk to me… They're not used to Black people are they? I can hear them thinking how to

speak to me, they apologise before they've said anything" (Site 3). An Asian officer in Site 8 said her colleagues were "very careful about what they said" around her: "The conversation suddenly stops when you enter the room and there is silence." This discomfort around minority ethnic staff appeared, in part, to be a product of officers' feelings of scrutiny in the aftermath of the Lawrence Inquiry. For example, a Black officer in Site 3 described how a colleague used the phrase "digging with a spade", then apologised in case he had offended her. It had been quite clear he was referring to a garden implement. She said: "I was more offended that he apologised without doing anything." This incident "made me feel horrible, and I felt horrible for a long time". This example is perhaps indicative of the climate in which many officers operated – one in which they were unclear about where the boundaries between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour lay, but were aware that behaviour and language defined or perceived as inappropriate, whatever their original intention, could have quite serious consequences for them.

Women and gay and lesbian officers, in all sites, reported feeling excluded by a predominantly male, heterosexist culture. Women officers commonly said they felt undermined and undervalued by their male colleagues; that they were ignored and excluded in their teams; that they were restricted in the roles and tasks made available to them; and that they felt they had to work harder than male officers to "prove themselves", perceptions and experiences that have long been documented in the policing literature (e.g. Heidensohn, 1992). For example, one officer said: "The only thing I can do is just put my head down, work hard and prove myself. Which is depressing, but it's reality isn't it. The only way I can earn respect is to work harder than everybody else... And I just have to clench my teeth and think that's how it's going to be." These experiences were felt particularly strongly in Site 5, where women officers described an atmosphere of all-consuming sexism.

In all sites, there were fewer openly gay male officers than lesbian staff, and in Sites 6 and 7, there were no named LGBT representatives available to staff. This lack of visibility suggested a climate in which LGBT officers did not feel comfortable. For example, an officer in Site 6 said she had been approached by senior management to become a force LGBT representative, but had refused to do so as she felt identifying herself publicly as lesbian would "leave myself vulnerable to abuse". An officer in Site 5 said: "There's always that fear that if you come out, there's going to be some form of retribution, like homophobic remarks." In two of the sites, staff described homophobic incidents that they were convinced had been perpetrated by their colleagues. A male officer in one site was sent anonymous mail containing gay pornography; a lesbian officer found that someone had spat on her car. The strong conviction that their colleagues had been responsible for these attacks

indicated the level of vulnerability that these officers experienced as a result of their sexuality. That there were fewer openly gay male officers, in all sites, suggested gay men felt particularly uncomfortable. This reflected a perception among officers in most sites that the climate was less sympathetic towards gay male staff, an observation documented a decade ago (Burke, 1994). A gay officer in Site 3 said: "They can accept lesbians far easier than they can gay men, because it's no threat to them is it." A lesbian PC explained: "At the moment I wouldn't recommend being a gay police officer being in the police force. Even if [a man] is slightly effeminate, he'll be homed in on, and bullied. I'd hate to be a male police officer who is gay" (Site 6).

Responses to feelings of exclusion

The strongly felt sense of exclusion and discrimination described by women and minority staff, in all sites, was largely unrecognised and unaddressed in all forces. There were some exceptions: for example, in Site 1 a senior officer held focus groups for women, gay and BME staff to discuss their experiences; in Site 5 a lesbian PC described how a senior officer endeavoured to create strong lines of communication with LGBT staff, and recognised that the relatively small number of openly gay male staff was likely to reflect feelings of discomfort and was concerned to address this. However, these examples were unusual.

The less tangible nature of some sexist and homophobic behaviour made it harder to address than the more obvious and explicit example of inappropriate language. Where staff could not easily describe the exclusion they experienced, it was more difficult to speak to supervisors about it. For example, a woman officer in Site 5 described how she was told by her supervisor: "'Listen, there is some banter that goes on in the office, if you find it inappropriate you will let me know', so I said 'fair enough', but I haven't really had much aggravation in the office apart from the fact sometimes I feel completely disregarded, or if something's coming up I'm left out." Only one officer said he had reported his feelings of general exclusion to his supervisor. His sergeant's response was to move him to another team. "It was almost as if [the sergeant] was at a loss of what to do about it, not being able to change the attitudes of the [team] and the way they were. It's almost as if it's been put in the 'too difficult box'."

During observations, some supervisors encouraged and participated in exclusionary behaviour themselves, by undermining, isolating or flirting with their staff. Other staff and supervisors appeared resigned to the climate. A woman officer in Site 5 said: "The problem is you're still a woman in the job and it's always going to be a struggle. You're never going

to be taken 100 per cent seriously… It's historically been a male profession… It's a male profession that's had to adopt females, and gays, and Black people. I think you're going to have change, but I don't think you're going to find a complete acceptance of females." Similarly, in Site 6 it was widely acknowledged, among staff at all ranks, that homophobia was widespread in the force but this was thought to be an inevitable consequence of a macho external culture in the region, where, as a senior officer described, "we are paranoically anti-male homosexuality". The implication of his comment was that there was little the force could do to address the issue.

A further indication of some of the difficulties faced by BME officers was the general absence – across the research sites – of organisational understanding of the differential needs of minority ethnic staff that reported abuse from the public because of their ethnicity. Racist abuse was not uncommon. In Site 6, for example, minority ethnic staff were racially abused by members of the public while on patrol; in Site 5 minority ethnic staff reported being called traitors and were spat at by BME residents. An Asian officer in Site 8 said: "I get abused in our own language… Asians tend to attack Asian officers on a personal basis first." In the context of a difficult internal working environment, BME staff reported feeling uncomfortable. a PC said: "You get it both ways, so at the end of the day you don't know where you belong." However, there was little recognition of these pressures and no apparent support for BME staff from supervisors or managers in any of the research sites (see also Holdaway and Barron, 1997).

Officers' feelings of marginalisation often deterred them from actively seeking assistance. One officer said: "The only support I have is from myself" (Site 5). BPAs had been established in some sites and were used by some minority ethnic officers as a source of support. Others, however, felt the BPA made them more conspicuous and therefore more uncomfortable within the organisation. For example, in one site a BPA had not been established as the small number of BME officers said they did not want to be singled out as "different". In Site 8 a minority ethnic officer said he felt the BPA was an attempt to segregate BME staff "by making them join separate clubs". Another BME officer in the same site reported that other minority ethnic staff kept their BPA membership hidden as they felt it would prevent them "fitting in". She said the BPA was viewed with suspicion by some White officers, who felt it gave an "unfair advantage" to BME staff.

A variety of coping strategies for the difficulties they faced in the organisation were described by women and minority staff. Some tried to ignore it. For example, a gay officer said: "When you live it day in and day out you blank it off. Because you're part of it and you have no one else to talk about these things with you just get used to it." Some female

staff tried to make themselves feel more included by becoming "as bad as the men". For example, a female PC in Site 4 said: "They [women] either don't survive and go somewhere else or they take on all the worst macho characteristics of the men" (see Heidensohn, 2003). A BPA representative said some minority ethnic staff denied their experiences of racism:

> *Those* [minority ethnic staff] *who do survive, who do stay in, quite a number of them don't want to be part of the association* [BPA] *because they will acquiesce… I've had Black officers who I know have been subject to direct forms of racism and abuse and comments, direct to my face they've said they've never seen it, never experienced it because that form of denial suits them… And that means putting up with some awful behaviour that they won't share.*

Other staff reported becoming acclimatised to the environment. A woman civilian officer explained: "I think you do get used to it 'cause I can remember… when I first joined… we used to have an office manager… and he used to say 'sweetie' or 'sweetheart', which is nothing is it? But it used to really upset me, now how pathetic is that? But now you wouldn't think twice about it."

Some women and minority staff reported sticking together to make themselves feel more comfortable. For example, a woman officer in Site 5 described her female colleagues as "very tight" as "life can be made so hellish". Minority ethnic staff in Site 5 also grouped together and tended not to join in team activities, such as eating meals together in the canteen. Some White officers recognised this as an indication of discomfort. One PC explained: "They feel more comfortable, it's a struggle for them." However, this discomfort was not addressed. In one instance, a (White) inspector described how a Black officer on his team, who did not 'join in', was thought not to be a 'team player' and his (White) colleagues complained about him.

Perceptions of discrimination

As outlined, overtly discriminatory conduct, such as the use of racist language, appears to have changed significantly over the last decade or more. However, women and minority staff overwhelmingly felt they continued to be subject to less visible or overt forms of discrimination. Responses to the officer survey suggested these experiences of exclusion were often not recognised or understood.

In the main survey, officers were asked about discrimination within the police service (see Table 4.1). Responses revealed some noticeable differences in perceptions. Less than one per cent of White officers, compared with 14 per cent of BME officers, felt Asian officers experienced 'a great deal' of negative discrimination. The respective proportions feeling that African-Caribbean officers experienced a great deal of negative discrimination were also less than one per cent for White officers, compared with seven per cent of BME officers. Similarly, although 31 per cent of male officers felt their female colleagues faced no negative discrimination, only 22 per cent of female officers agreed with them.

Table 4.1 Perceptions of negative discrimination (main officer survey) (%)

To what extent do you feel the following groups experience negative discrimination?

	Women officers	Asian officers	Lesbian officers	Gay officers	African-Caribbean officers	White officers	Civilian staff	Male officers
Not at all	29	45	45	40	46	52	32	53
↕	33	30	29	29	31	26	29	26
↕	22	17	15	17	15	17	26	15
↕	15	6	8	10	6	4	13	5
A great deal	1	2	3	4	1	1	0.5	1

The divergence was also apparent in relation to promotion where some White officers felt women and BME officers had an unfair advantage. For example, a White, male sergeant in Site 5 said:

> *I've never had any complaints from any ethnic officers about the way they've been treated, in fact it's gone too far the other way. It's not just for ethnics it's for females as well... I've just been promoted and nobody helped me. We worked hard for it, but you see some of these people have been promoted through the ranks and you think how did you get there?*

In a more extreme vein, a detective said: "You won't get on in this job if you're not a woman or coloured. You won't get it" (Site 1). Another felt "Whites are poorly treated [in the service], and the Job is too scared to speak up."

By contrast, some BME staff thought that minority ethnic officers were not recognised for the work they did and were held back from promotion. For example, one minority ethnic PC said of an Asian colleague "look at her, she is one of the best officers they have, she is so hardworking and her knowledge is phenomenal, but they will not even give her the required support to do her job properly" (Site 8). Another minority ethnic officer said he felt BME officers were promoted "as a token", and that once promoted, BME officers would be disproportionately scrutinised for mistakes. A BME sergeant said she felt she was in "a no-win situation". "If you get a particular job or promotion, it is said that it is because you are Black and a woman, but if you don't get it, no one says the reverse or acknowledges that it could be because of racism."

This divergence in perception was reflected in the officer survey. Only seven per cent of White officers strongly disagreed with the statement 'minority ethnic officers have a better chance of promotion than White officers' compared with 34 per cent of minority ethnic officers. Similarly, 19 per cent of White officers strongly agreed that 'we need more minority ethnic officers in this police force' compared with 45 per cent of minority ethnic officers.

The Morris Inquiry into professional standards and employment in the MPS concluded that the MPS had "made great strides since the Macpherson Report into the death of Stephen Lawrence. It has provided a significant response to its statutory duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, as a public authority, 'to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity and to promote good relations between persons of different racial groups'" (Morris, 2004: para 5.9). Much of the evidence collected during the course of this study suggests such a view might be broadly applicable to police services across England and Wales. However, as this chapter has illustrated, considerable disparities remain in the everyday experiences and views of White and BME officers, between male and female officers and between heterosexual and gay and lesbian officers. In particular, women and minorities either experience or expect to experience discrimination within the police service. This may take various forms but is perceived by these staff to affect postings, promotion opportunities and their everyday interactions.

Conclusions

Although institutional racism was arguably the central focus of the Lawrence Inquiry, one of the primary responses of the police service to the Inquiry focused on eliminating overt racist language among individual officers. In this it appears to have been largely successful. In marked contrast to the climate as little as 20 years ago, explicit racist language had been

almost entirely excised from the police service. Though in part reflecting broader social changes, the Lawrence Inquiry and a climate of increased scrutiny that it engendered within the police service appears to have been an important catalyst either in bringing this about, or at least in encouraging the process.

It is not entirely clear how this change was brought about. Undoubtedly, a consensus has emerged within the police service, encouraged by the Lawrence Inquiry, by the HMIC thematic reports on diversity, and by a broader social intolerance, that the verbal expression of racism is unacceptable. Certainly by the time of the research, it was widely accepted and expected that managers would discipline officers using racist language. One of the very visible consequences of the Lawrence Inquiry was that it increased the degree of scrutiny of officers' use of language. Officers felt they were being watched and that they would be punished if found to be speaking inappropriately. This is an important and marked change. However, some officers felt the changes 'had gone too far'. There was some resentment of what was perceived as 'political correctness', a feeling that the actions of some senior officers were unreasonable and that the working environment had suffered as a result.

Despite the marked increase in awareness about racist language and behaviour, other forms of discriminatory language still appeared to be widespread. It was clear that sexism and homophobia were not subject to the same scrutiny or disapproval as racism by supervisors and managers. This reinforced the sense that the threat of disciplinary action was a key factor in changing the use of racist language and behaviour. Furthermore minority officers believed changes in the cultural climate were largely 'cosmetic' and that more fundamental expressions of discrimination continued largely unchecked.

More intangible but pervasive feelings of exclusion and discrimination reported by women and minority staff were largely unaddressed in the case study sites. They were frequently not recognised at supervisory and managerial levels, and instead could be reinforced by supervisors and managers, who often tolerated and sometimes participated in exclusionary behaviour themselves. Some officers' suggested, given the intangible nature of some of the discrimination, they found it difficult to complain. Consequently, the central issue was often not supervisory 'responses to' perceptions of discrimination, but rather that supervisors seemed unaware that women and minority staff felt excluded. While these officers described perceptions of discrimination rather than discriminatory behaviour itself, such subjective perceptions of racism and discrimination should themselves be a focus of police attention and reform and represent a significant problem for the police service.

In part, the focus on racist language is likely to be a product of the impact of the Lawrence Inquiry and police perceptions that many of its primary concerns revolved around questions of individual racism. Yet, one of the fundamental assumptions at the heart of the Lawrence Inquiry Report was that police services should examine all areas of their policies and practices in an attempt to identify and address problems of discrimination. In so doing, it signalled the importance of focusing on relationships, practices and policies within the organisation and outside, as well as moving beyond discrimination on the basis of race or ethnicity to encompass discrimination more broadly. Not surprisingly, as has been suggested, given the greater stigma within the police service associated with racism (compared with sexism or homophobia) and the relative ease with which overt behaviours, such as language, can be challenged compared with underlying attitudes, this is where much police organisational activity concentrated in the aftermath of the Lawrence Inquiry. The Inquiry's desire that the police service focus more broadly on discrimination has to date not met with the same level of concern and activity as the specific focus on racism. Finally, as will be outlined in the following chapter, awareness about explicit language was not necessarily reflected in awareness about discriminatory practice more broadly or in the provision of services to minority groups.

5. Relationships with minority communities

The idea of 'consent' is central to discussions of policing in England and Wales. However, notions of 'community' and 'public' hide considerable complexity (see Crawford, 1997). Recent decades have seen growing social and cultural pluralism with religion, age, gender, race, region, nationality, ethnicity, sexuality, and lifestyles increasing in importance alongside more traditional divisions of social class (Delanty, 2003). These developments pose huge challenges for a police service that must attempt to balance and respond to conflicting demands from an increasingly diverse society (Johnston, 1999).

As noted in Chapter 1, the task of fostering trust between minority ethnic communities and the police was at the heart of the Lawrence Inquiry's recommendations. In particular, the Inquiry noted that there is "a striking and inescapable need to demonstrate fairness, not just by Police Services, but across the criminal justice system as a whole, in order to generate trust and confidence within minority ethnic communities" (para 46.30). This, it suggested, "must be accompanied by a vigorous pursuit of openness and accountability across Police Services" in which a "genuine partnership between the police and all sections of the community" must be developed (para 46.40). Although the Inquiry team acknowledged that this partnership could not be achieved by the police service alone, it suggested the onus was upon the police to begin the process, and that the active involvement of local citizens from diverse ethnic groups was essential. This chapter outlines how the police service developed their relationships with communities, drawing primarily upon the in-depth qualitative research in Sites 5-8.

Communication and community consultation

In all sites there had been some significant changes in the last five years in relation to the development of structures for consulting with local BME communities, and in the acknowledgement of the need to consider community impact more broadly. Not all these developments were directly attributable to the Lawrence Inquiry. In at least two sites other significant factors, such as urban disorders and high profile racist crimes had also stimulated renewed consultative activity. Nevertheless, it is clear that the Inquiry was an important stimulus in most sites for police-community consultation.

In all sites senior police officers felt they had made significant advances in the way they consulted with their local communities at a strategic level. These perceptions were confirmed by community members and key workers. For example, an IAG member in Site 4 said: "We're viewed positively, very welcoming, very open… a clear message was we will have access to any information that we want… the fact that you can go in and do that now, five years ago that would have been unheard of." Even community representatives who had previously held highly negative views of the police felt they were now either equal or better than other agencies consulting with communities.

> *The police have built upon the good relationships they developed. There's still things that are wrong. And still police officers don't always get it right. But they're more likely to advise, consult, listen, communicate, that's new. Their communication is better. You get more out of the police telling you what they're planning to do or what they hope to do than you will from the council. Now that's extraordinary. Who would have thought it.*
>
> (Community member, Site 5)

Data from the ACPO survey confirmed that IAGs had been a significant development since the Lawrence Inquiry. Of forces responding to the survey, over four-fifths had established a force-wide IAG, seven in ten had set up IAGs at BCU level, and two-thirds had established IAGs for specific campaigns or operations. Senior officers were overwhelmingly positive about the impact of IAGs, with 93 per cent saying that they felt they had made a positive contribution to the implementation of Lawrence Inquiry recommendations locally.

In all sites, senior staff recognised the need for liaising with communities in response to events that had the potential for 'critical' impact on local communities although, as described below, there was some variation in the understanding of what constituted a 'critical' incident. In Sites 5 and 7, both urban areas with relatively large minority ethnic populations, staff recognised that "critical incidents aren't just about murder and blood and guts": they are "anything at all whereby you can lose the confidence of community, family, media" (Senior officer, Site 5). In Site 7, in part because of the demographic profile of their area, staff appreciated that national and international events as well as local issues could have significant repercussions on local Indian and Pakistani communities and these were routinely monitored and assessed. For example, consultation was set in train after the arrest of Asian men on suspicion of terrorism elsewhere in the UK to discuss the impact of these events on local communities. In Site 5, a London site with diverse BME communities, senior officers said they tried to anticipate the impact of policing and external factors on their communities and address these proactively: "We try and get ahead of the game, look to see if something's going to cause a problem for any group, and then just keep on top of it that

way." For example, in the months leading up to the Iraq war, a forum comprised of key community representatives was put in place to report and address any tensions locally.

In some sites, officers perceived themselves to have the ability to mobilise communities and other agencies in partnerships. A senior officer in Site 5, for example, described his role as "community leadership" and explained: "As police you probably have bigger licence to do it. And it's easier for us to do it and I just wonder if we didn't do it who would." In Site 7, an inspector described how the local health authority planned to open a drugs treatment centre in the heart of a large Asian community and "openly admitted they hadn't consulted with the community at all". Through his contacts, the local inspector learned that the strength of opposition to the centre was such that local youths had threatened to burn it down. In response, the police organised a meeting for residents, councillors and religious leaders to discuss their concerns with health authority representatives. The inspector said: "You need to consult them, with anything that you're going to do there, you can't just take it for read that we can do this, even though you might be allowed to do it on paper, you still need to consult with them."

Although the principle of consultation between the police and local citizens appeared to be well-established, its precise purpose was often unclear and problematic. Previous research in this area has shown that consultation tends to be understood differently by police and community participants (Newburn and Jones, 2002) and to be dominated by police-led agendas rather than community concerns, particularly where the police service have less well developed community contacts (Jones and Newburn, 2001). Similar tensions were visible in the research. Reflecting this, an IAG member in Site 5 said: "I would say… I'm not there to be your [the local police's] insurance policy. I am there to make policing better for my community…. If it has some added benefit for the police, well that's not my business." The implication of the Lawrence Inquiry Report's discussion of police-community consultation is that generating trust among minority ethnic communities must be based on consultation processes oriented primarily to community interests and concerns. However, case study sites varied in the extent to which their consultation processes were likely to be successful in that regard.

First, forces varied in the extent to which they actively involved communities. There were considerable differences between forces like the MPS where they introduced independent advice to comment on force strategy and practice, and some of the consultative frameworks set up in other sites. In the London site (Site 5), senior officers reported a marked change in the mindset of the organisation in which liaison with communities and other agencies were at the forefront of decision-making. Independent advisors identified concerns and added a critical voice, as one senior officer explained: "I would far rather have [a community

representative] that's a bit prickly and that I have to work much harder with… [who] holds us to task much more, is seen publicly to hold us to task much more, 'cause then her value would be much greater to us." In this site the advisory groups were linked to strategic operational groups, so that community impact was routinely considered in strategic decision-making. By contrast, in Site 7 consultation was largely described as a means to disseminate information. An officer described it as "myth-busting", a way of correcting rumours which spread rapidly in the local BME communities and which threatened to undermine confidence in the police. These contrasts highlight the different ways in which consultation can be used: in Site 5 independent advisors were, at least in part, seen as a means by which police decision-making could be held to account, whereas Site 7 continued to operate what arguably was a more traditional police view of consultation in which it was seen primarily as a means of getting messages across to the public. As outlined above, 'police-oriented' consultation is unlikely to be effective in stimulating trust within local communities. Thus, where consultation was primarily used in response to (police-defined) critical events, some community members felt consultation was a process oriented to the benefit of the police rather than the community. For example, a PC in Site 8 described how senior officers had called a meeting with community representatives immediately after the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks. A community leader felt the meeting was "just paying lip-service to community policing. In a few days all this will be forgotten. They only call us when there is an emergency".

Secondly, some community members were critical not of the consultation forums themselves but of the absence, as they perceived it, of useful activity within the consultative forums. Describing a consultation panel, and reflecting similar experiences in other sites, a community member in Site 7 said: "There's no substance to the meeting. I just can't tell you what we discuss cause there's nothing there that we do discuss except for petty things. What is the outcome of it? I've been on [the panel] for years and not one meeting has been productive." Without productive outcomes, the consultation process was seen as "a gimmick", "a football for [police] advantage."

Thirdly, well documented difficulties associated with membership and representation (e.g. Fitzgerald *et al.*, 2002) were recognised by both officers and community members. For example, in Site 8 Asian women felt they were a neglected group in community consultation: "When the police said they consult with the community or its leaders, they are basically talking to the men." Sites varied in their attempts to secure a more representative membership. In Site 5, the membership of community panels was under constant scrutiny and reappraisal. By contrast, in Site 7 a senior officer said: "I do not have an answer for it. And I've actually come to the conclusion and it might seem very simplistic, that any consultation, even poor consultation is better than none. And if we can consult with the self-appointed leaders and the self-appointed street worker, then at least we are consulting."

Finally, in one site (Site 6) an insensitivity towards cultural diversity meant that the critical consequences of incidents and the need for consultation was not always recognised. For example, a group of young Iraqi asylum seekers were involved in a sustained and complex series of incidents with a gang of local Pakistani youths, culminating in large-scale disorder and the arrest of members of both groups. A lack of transparency in the police handling of this incident led to a profound loss of confidence in the police among the Iraqi youths, who perceived themselves to be victims of assault, did not understand why they had been arrested, and (wrongly) thought that no action was being taken against the Pakistani gang. A key worker explained that their cultural expectations of visible action were not met:

> *We've tried to explain that in Iraq, the police are very much seen as an authority, and the police acts, rightly or wrongly, but the police acts in a way that can be seen. So that's what these boys expected from the police, to act… What happened, happened behind the desks, but not in a way that was visible for these Iraqi boys… So it is not only the racial issues, but also the cultural issues that people have to bear in mind, that is even more difficult.*

One of the youths said before the incident, "We were respecting of the police", but now "I don't think the police believe us any more or take care of us". As a result, the youths said they would "never" call the police if they had further trouble but would prefer to rely on gangs of friends for support. Key workers with the Iraqi youths thought this incident risked major disorder. One said: "We could see another [riot] happening." The potentially serious impact of these incidents was not understood either by the investigating officers, or by staff with the Community and Race Relations (CRR) portfolio, one of whom described the incident as "some crappy bloody-minded disorder between a group of Pakistani boys and a group of Kosovans, you know, don't make a big thing of it". As a result, no consultation was initiated over this incident. Such attitudes and language were illustrative of a policing environment in which there was little appreciation of the diversity of local community needs and, consequently, a failure to generate confidence among local communities.

Liaison officers

In addition to the formal consultative and advisory group frameworks introduced, amended or reinforced in all sites following the Lawrence Inquiry, all had created posts dedicated to liaison with BME and other minority communities. Again, not all these developments may be directly attributable to the Lawrence Inquiry, but it appears that the Inquiry was certainly an important stimulus to work in this area.

Liaison staff took part in a number of activities intended to develop relationships with minority communities, such as outreach work with religious centres and schools; informal 'surgeries' for minority groups; and liaising between minority ethnic communities and other police departments. Some of these staff made considerable efforts to establish productive relationships. For example, in Site 3 where there was a small and disparate BME population, liaison officers tried to contact hard-to-reach groups by sending leaflets to all the listed takeaway restaurants, holding talks and surgeries at local language schools, and establishing a drop-in surgery at a kebab restaurant used by many Middle Eastern students. In Site 8, a White officer with a liaison portfolio was learning Punjabi to facilitate contacts with the local Asian communities.

Community workers, in all sites, described liaison officers as a valued source of information or service, especially where the service was otherwise perceived to be fragmented or confusing. For example, a community worker in Site 6 said the liaison officer was "like a point of contact to find out any information really that we need because you know, you can't get hold of the officer. If we didn't have someone like [her] it'd be a bit of a mess because of lack of continuity". Sustained contact with known officers was felt to be crucial for developing trusting relationships with the police. One key worker in Site 8 said: "People need to see police in schools and community centres without wondering 'now what has happened?'."

The relationships established by liaison officers could have a positive impact on minority groups' confidence in the police more generally. For example, a key worker in Site 6 described how the efforts of a community outreach officer to develop the trust of a group of asylum seekers had a direct impact on their willingness to report incidents to the police: "I thought this is a very good thing, and I told [the officer] and I said this really shows their confidence in you." Similarly, in Site 5 a youth worker with African-Caribbean boys who had highly negative views of the police, described how an outreach officer had developed such a "powerful" relationship with the young men that when they became involved in a fight between rival gangs they asked the youth worker to call the police for assistance. She explained that "for them to feel that they could ask for that kind of stuff is quite extraordinary".

However, the work of liaison officers did not seem to be integrated into mainstream policing. There was a general lack of awareness among front-line staff, in all sites, about the work they did, and some liaison officers felt their work was not valued in the force. For example, the PC with the diversity portfolio in Site 4 said her colleagues "think I come in here and get me cravat and me slippers out, light up me pipe. They don't think it's real police work". Such marginalisation could have both practical and symbolic consequences. First, it potentially limited the officers' ability to liaise between the police and minority communities. For

example, in Site 6 a key worker with asylum seekers asked the diversity officer to check the progress of an inquiry. The police officer dealing with the case did not understand the diversity officer's role, and refused to give her any information as "it might jeopardise the case" if she spoke to the officers as well as to the boys. In other words, because of her position as a liaison officer she was considered partisan and information was withheld. In addition, community workers also felt their posts were marginalised within the service and understood this as symbolising a lack of commitment to their communities. For example, in Site 8 funding had been withdrawn from a post dedicated to liaising with asylum seekers. Both the liaison officer and the key workers with whom she worked understood this as evidence that asylum seekers were not considered a priority within the service.

Other relationships with minority communities

In every site there were individual officers without a specific community portfolio who had made considerable efforts to develop relationships with local minority communities. Some minority ethnic research participants were able to identify officers that they knew and trusted, even where confidence in the police was otherwise low. For example, while African-Caribbean youths in Site 5 reported overwhelmingly negative attitudes towards the police, they spoke warmly of a local beat officer: "He was safe, he weren't racial or nothing, he used to play football with the Black kids… I've never seen a decent one after him."

In general, officers who had more contact with local communities, such as beat officers, had a better understanding of local needs and concerns, and were able to foster trusting working relationships. Of course, there was a wide variety in efforts made among individual beat officers to establish contacts with the communities in which they worked. However, the pace of their work gave beat officers the opportunity to develop relationships with local communities. As one patrol officer put it: "We don't have time to build bridges unfortunately, that's for the home beats." This contrast was described by a beat officer in Site 7. He and a colleague made concerted efforts to establish relationships with a group of young Asian men who were generally perceived to be a focus of conflict with the police. Eventually, the beat officers and young men gradually developed mutual trust, where "they would only talk to me and my colleague… We had a lot of belief in those youngsters". In contrast to the hostility between the young men and local patrol officers, "we had nothing to fear from those lads, cos we knew them". This enabled the beat officers to develop productive working relationships with the young men, in which they "acted as buffers" mediating the tensions between the police and the youths.

Despite the importance of their work, beat officers, in all sites, reported that their roles were not a priority within the police service. In the context of pressure for attaining performance targets and other national priorities, senior officers explained that it was difficult to justify putting resources into these types of police work. For example, a senior officer in Site 7 said: "Day in and day out, performance, you live and breathe it. You wake up in the middle of the night dreaming about it. So I think, where am I going to put my staff to deliver performance?" Beat officers said they were frequently abstracted into patrol policing, or their role reshaped into more quantifiable tasks, and this detracted from their dedicated work in communities. The abstraction of beat officers often prevented them from sustaining relationships with communities and providing any consistency of service – seemingly a common experience even in dedicated posts (Crawford *et al.*, 2003). A youth worker in Site 5 said her community officers were abstracted so often that she no longer bothered contacting them. "I think they're being asked to do a lot of things that actually is not their job and as much as they [say] 'we want to get to know the community and we want to work alongside the community'. Bull. It's never going to happen."

In some sites, senior officers recognised the need to increase contacts between front-line staff and local minority communities in order to develop relationships and partnerships, and in Sites 1, 2, 3 and 5, projects had been established to this end. For example, in Site 3 Community Relations Officers took new probationers to the local mosques and Islamic centres as part of their probationary training. In Site 5 police officers and youth workers developed a project to increase young people's awareness of violent crime. A youth worker said the project had a powerful impact on the young people's views of the police officers involved: "They made them their heroes, which I thought was extraordinary." In Site 2, all new probationers undertook a research project where they were encouraged to talk to local people to find out about their communities and present their findings to their colleagues.

Conclusions

In all sites, there had been some significant improvements in the last five years in relation to the development of structures for consulting with local BME communities, and in the acknowledgement of the need to consider community impact more broadly. Not all these developments were directly attributable to the Lawrence Inquiry, but it is clear that the Inquiry was an important stimulus to police-community consultation. There was a widespread feeling among both police forces and local communities that there had been improvements in local consultative activity since the Lawrence Inquiry. In particular, there was now much greater understanding and use of local minority community representatives

in responses to critical incidents – though there was considerable variation in what was understood by the term 'critical'. One consistent development appeared to be the appointment of liaison officers with a specific brief to develop relationships with minority communities. Such officers, together with local beat officers, tended to have far better relationships with local communities. Though a positive development, and indicating what can be achieved in terms of local liaison, these roles were generally not very well integrated into mainstream policing – an experience that has previously been noted in relation both to other specialist roles (Harvey *et al.*, 1989; McConville and Shepherd, 1992; Fielding, 1995) and to work not perceived or defined as mainstream crime-fighting (Punch, 1979). In addition, local beat officers in particular were also subject to other pressures, such as frequent abstraction, and this further undermined their ability to sustain local contacts. For local communities, the sense that liaison officers and local beat officers were not highly valued within the police organisation was perceived to be symptomatic of the police service's lack of concern about the community itself.

Four significant shortcomings were identified in relation to police-community consultation. First, though this was not observed at all frequently, there were occasional failures to appreciate cultural diversity, and a related insensitivity to the consequences of serious or critical incidents. Though infrequent, examples were witnessed where officers failed to appreciate the cultural expectations or perceptions of one or more parties to local conflicts which led to potentially serious outcomes – not least for local relations of trust. Second, local consultative activity was often dominated by police-led agendas rather than community concerns or needs. Particular strides had been made within London, with practices varying somewhat in other forces. Third, in some cases, local citizens felt consultative activity was a waste of time, with forums being established but little activity taking place. Finally, there were the long-standing and not easily soluble problems of representation.

6. Local service delivery

As outlined in Chapter 5, police services had sought to generate trust among minority communities by improving structures and methods of consultation and liaison with minority ethnic communities. However, less attention appears to have been given to the ways in which some routine working patterns and styles of service delivery might serve to undermine relationships between minority ethnic communities and the police. Many of the difficulties observed were related to differences between the way in which policing was perceived by police officers and minority communities. Two related areas of difficulty are outlined here: first, the ways in which patterns of routine police practice were divergently experienced by different communities, and second, the extent to which this divergence was recognised and accommodated by individual police officers.

Policing according to need

The Lawrence Inquiry Report stated that in order to provide a service that is "professional and appropriate" to all communities, the police must not deliver a service which is "colour-blind" but rather one which "recognises the different experiences, perceptions and needs of a diverse society" (para 45.24). The principle of "policing according to need" has since become widely utilised, particularly as a result of encouragement by HMIC (1997; 1999b).

In all sites, there was considerable confusion about what 'policing according to need' entailed, and consequently what constituted discriminatory practice. Many officers thought that non-discriminatory practice meant "treating everyone the same". As a senior officer in Site 3 explained: "I don't want officers to be more sensitive to issues involving race and ethnicity, or gender… you've got to be careful that… everybody is treated exactly the same, it makes no difference what their colour [or] race is." In part, this understanding arose from previous thinking about what constituted discriminatory practice, where "we'd been telling everybody up until that time under equal opportunities you must treat everybody the same. You must treat everybody the same. And it was like a mantra, you must treat everybody the same. And we shouldn't have been saying that" (Senior officer, Site 1). Some officers understood that this way of thinking had changed, and that they were now required to adjust their practice according to the people or communities with whom they were dealing. However, without an understanding of the principle behind this shift, "policing according to need" was understood as demanding unequal practices. Some staff explained that they

made it a point of principle to 'treat everyone the same', as to do otherwise might be seen as discriminatory. One officer explained: "I'm not a racist, if a Black guy and a White guy need nicking, I'll nick them both" (Site 3).

In response to the Lawrence Inquiry, all forces instituted diversity or CRR training, as a means of sensitising staff to the diverse cultures and experiences of minority groups. Amongst respondents to the staff survey, 89 per cent had participated in CRR training since the Lawrence Inquiry and 72 per cent had done so within the last year. While not the focus of this report, the training was described as an important response to the Lawrence Inquiry by staff, in all sites, and in the ACPO survey senior officers were generally very positive in their assessment of CRR training; 95 per cent felt it had either a 'positive' or 'very positive' impact in raising officers' awareness of discrimination. Very high proportions also felt CRR training had a positive impact in changing officers' behaviour (87%), in improving relationships with local BME communities (81%), and, in changing officers' attitudes (74%).

Three-quarters (76%) of officers in the main officer survey agreed that 'overall the training was worthwhile'. Police officers, in all sites, described the impact of CRR training primarily in terms of an increased awareness of some differences in cultural protocols. For example, officers in all sites knew that they should not wear shoes in a mosque, and were aware that it might be necessary to interact with men and women differently among some minority groups. However, officers' understanding of cultural protocols was variable and there were occasions in which officers' behaviour was unwittingly inappropriate, for example, in Site 7 during observations a Muslim woman taken into custody was forced to remove her headscarf in front of a team of male police officers.

Officers were generally aware of the limits to their cultural knowledge and 68 per cent of those who had attended CRR training agreed that it had given them 'a better understanding of race issues' while 65 per cent agreed that the training gave them 'a better understanding of diversity more broadly'. Some officers reported feeling anxious that they might inadvertently behave inappropriately. As one officer explained: "We make mistakes, but we don't do it maliciously" (PC, Site 4). However, many officers did not feel comfortable enough to ask how to behave and this was a barrier to increasing understanding. In part, such feelings of discomfort appeared to be linked to officers' anxiety in interactions with minority ethnic people in the aftermath of the Lawrence Inquiry, as described in Chapter 4. Describing this apparent anxiety among police officers, a Racial Equality Officer said: "I still make mistakes. What I have learnt is to be more comfortable, so I learn to speak to people, I learn to ask questions instead of being put off by skin colour being different, or worried about not taking my shoes off, I just ask" (Site 6).

Difficulties with language were a relatively common problem in interactions with some BME groups and, on occasion, had negative consequences for relationships with some local communities. Police services sometimes struggled to provide an appropriate and professional service for those minority communities who had little or no spoken English. While all sites offered some form of interpreting service, trained interpreters were often scarce, and sometimes not appropriate for the needs of the victim. For example, in Site 8 key workers with Asian women who were victims of domestic violence reported that most interpreters used by the police were middle-aged Asian men. For the women concerned, reporting domestic violence to the police was problematic under any circumstances, doing so in front of a male interpreter even worse.

Officers were often unsure how to access interpreters, or when it was appropriate to do so. Moreover, it was not often feasible for interpreters to be available for help at the point of immediate need. As an inspector said in response to community workers' concerns about interpretation: "Do you expect us to stick an interpreter in the back of the car, just in case, every time we are called out?" (Site 8). In the absence of official interpreters, officers often sought alternative sources of help. Friends and family of the suspect or victim were sometimes used as interpreters. However, while this was an understandable solution to a difficult problem, it was not always appropriate. For example, in Site 6, one of a group of young asylum seekers arrested after a fight was asked to translate when his friends were being questioned. A key worker with the asylum seekers explained: "If you use friends, …they do not use enough English to know how to interpret properly, you can't check whether they do, …if they perceive things different or they understand things different they will interpret things different… they are involved as well. There's safety issues, there's confidentiality issues." Some minority ethnic staff reported that they were frequently asked to interpret and this was sometimes resented. For example, a minority ethnic PC in Site 8 felt it was "unfair" to use staff this way, and that they were "taken for granted".

Where no interpreters were available, problems with communication inevitably affected the quality of policing response. During observations, some officers became visibly frustrated and impatient when they could not understand or make themselves understood. On some occasions officers resorted to shouting, or gave up trying to communicate and withdrew. This could discourage further contact with the police, in particular among those groups where confidence in accessing police services was already low. For example, workers in refuges for Asian women in Site 7 reported that, despite their encouragement, many service users were reluctant to report incidents as they did not expect to be understood and therefore to receive an appropriate response. Clearly, in an increasingly diverse society, there will always be limits to the ability of the police to access appropriate interpretation

services and they will inevitably be drawn into interactions that citizens and police officers alike find frustrating. Such situations, where sustaining or improving community trust and confidence is a key objective, pose a particular challenge to police officers.

Mistrust and perceptions of policing

In all the main research sites, there were clear examples in policing practice that suggested a failure to recognise differences in the ways policing was perceived by White and BME communities. In particular there were considerable differences in levels of trust in the police that had important consequences for how policing was perceived (see also Fitzgerald *et al.*, 2002). In all sites, BME research participants described mistrust of the police and an expectation of discrimination. For example, an African-Caribbean woman in Site 8 said she worried about her son being "stitched up" by the police "because I am Black. We worry, worry, worry until our men and boys are back home safe every night. I tell my son if you see the police, don't give them any excuse, stand perfectly still, hands away from your pockets and answer politely and truthfully. But you know, the problem is if you do that they think you are being lippy." Minority ethnic research participants in Site 5 described how their expectations of the police were strongly influenced by their past experiences, and by those of people in their communities. One African-Caribbean woman in Site 5 said:

> *I don't think that Black people actually feel, on a whole, that they are protected by the police… But they* [the police] *created that with the 'sus' in the 80s. I regularly remember seeing Black men plastered against walls… being searched by the police, just walking about, minding their own business. Now if you see your protectors being treated like that on a regular basis… you have built up a mental picture that is going to last 30, 40 years and that is going to be passed on. That is a memory. There's nothing they can do about that… Now, they're not going to get away with that. You treat my men like that… I'm not going to trust you. I'm not going to work with you. I'm going to have nothing to do with you.*

Youth workers in Site 5 thought that these experiences and the mistrust and hostility they engendered had been passed on to younger people who may not have had such experiences themselves. This appeared to be corroborated by research with local African-Caribbean young people in the site who strongly believed that the local police were racist, but were unable to describe instances of behaviour which they had experienced as racist. A youth worker explained that young people were unable to untangle: "What is actually their experience and someone else's, what is the truth of the situation, what is prejudice and what is the law and what is just a person's attitude. It's all got mixed up."

A history of racism, poor police-community relations and low levels of trust generates a continuing expectation of racism and insensitive policing (see also Fitzgerald *et al.*, 2002). One of the implications of the Lawrence Inquiry's desire to promote policing styles that are not 'colour-blind' is that forces, and individual officers, recognise the importance of local community expectations in framing how policing is received. If one of the aims of policing is to increase trust then the experiences and expectations described here must form an important backdrop to decision-making. The research provided numerous examples where the distinct ways in which policing was perceived by minority communities was not recognised. The result was a failure to provide an 'appropriate and professional service' to these communities. In other words, these problems were indicative of institutional racism. This could be seen on two levels: first, in institutionalised patterns of police practice; and second, through the actions of individual officers.

Policing patterns

The following examples demonstrate the divergent ways in which patterns of routine policing practice may be experienced, and how failure to take this into consideration could lead to a collective failure to provide an appropriate or professional service to particular communities.

First, although the targeting of particular groups through 'intelligence-led' policing strategies appears neutral, within a context of poor police-community relations, such activity may be experienced as discriminatory and reinforce expectations of unequal treatment. For example, in Site 5 a large street robbery problem led to explicit targeting of young African-Caribbean men through stop and search. Officers explained this strategy was 'intelligence-led' and that targeting reflected the participation of young Black men in street robbery. However, while all officers understood that individual stop and search encounters could be perceived as racist, some seemed unaware of the cumulative impact of disproportionately targeting Black youths on the confidence of local BME communities in the police (see Bowling, 1999). For example, a sergeant in Site 5 explained that stop and search did not appear to cause tension in the Black communities because they were carried out with proper grounds, and few appeared to be "resented". However, local Black youths recognised that they were being targeted and understood this as evidence of police racism. A young Black man explained: "They'll go for the Black boys. Because they look suspicious. It's because we're dark skinned."

One might argue that this is precisely the territory within which many police-minority community problems currently occur – and which the Lawrence Inquiry's use of the term 'institutional racism' sought to highlight. Thus, as in the example above, a set of policing practices that, taken individually, may not be racist in intention, can have a cumulative effect

that disproportionately targets a particular minority group. Whatever the intention, and however much it was underpinned by intelligence, the 'delivery' of these policing practices was experienced as being disproportionate by those who were targeted, and this disproportionality was defined as 'racist'. For the post-Lawrence Inquiry police service, this is problematic on a number of levels. First, there is the failure to perceive how a series of individual acts may, collectively, have consequences that were not intended. Second, there is the failure to acknowledge that this may result in a widespread feeling that this element of policing is racist. As discussed in Chapter 1, even where actions are not racist in intention, they may still be experienced as racist. Thus the Lawrence Inquiry's definition of a racist incident relies not upon some estimation of intention but, rather, how the incident was perceived by the victim or others. Overall, there is the failure to recognise the existence of differential perceptions of policing and the differential impact of policing practices.

The lack of recognition of differing perceptions and take-up of policing services among diverse communities resulted in a lack of service to some minority groups. Members of some minority ethnic communities in Sites 6, 7 and 8 described strong cultural barriers to asking for help from the police. For example, a key worker with Asian women in Site 8 explained that many members of the local Asian communities considered it "shameful" to involve "outsiders" in personal affairs. Similarly, a Chinese community worker in Site 6 said: "The Chinese don't like to call the police because they like to say that they can sort themselves out… [it's] a loss of face I think that they've got to call the police."

The primarily reactive policing style in all research sites meant that, where there were no proactive attempts to contact these groups they received little service. For example, in Site 6 there were few attempts to develop new contacts beyond those generated by calls. Some staff explained that they were rarely called to minority ethnic communities, and as a result had little contact with them. A sergeant explained that the local Asian community had "very little involvement [with the police]. They try and deal with their own issues". A PC said he hadn't met the local BME shopkeepers because "some of these places you don't get any calls to. They don't have any trouble". There was little evidence that officers understood that a different approach to policing these communities might be required, and the principle of developing contacts with BME communities was not understood. For example, a sergeant explained that there was little effort made to foster relationships with local minority ethnic communities: "Why should we when we don't do it anywhere else?" As a result, officers' knowledge of local minority ethnic communities and their policing needs was low. For instance, a sergeant in an area with a large Asian population said: "To be honest, I haven't got a clue what goes on there. I can't tell you. The sergeant with responsibilities there knows the Imam but he knows his name and that's all. It's a closed community. Or it would appear to us to be a closed community."

By contrast, in Site 7 there was some awareness at both senior and front-line level that routine policing activities could be perceived as provocative in areas with high BME populations. For example, officers working in a large Asian area were told to vary the areas in which they patrolled, as a constant heavy police presence in the area might appear disproportionate. There were also examples of officers' decision-making that illustrated an understanding of the need to consider how their actions might appear to local BME communities. For example, a PC explained that she wasn't going to intervene in a large disturbance between Asian gangs even though she was patrolling nearby, as "they're not calling for units, and it'll cause problems, the more the police come, the more people come out of the woodwork".

Individual policing practices

The strong feelings of mistrust among BME communities and the expectations of discrimination formed a lens through which the actions of individual police officers were understood. Thus poor service, aggressive communication styles or inappropriate behaviour were often perceived as being racially driven. For instance, in Site 6 a Chinese woman arrived at an appointment to discuss a racist attack on a neighbour to find the officer "wasn't available". She interpreted this as a lack of interest in the Chinese community, and said this deterred her from further contact with the police: "After that, I never bothered. I thought it's no good asking because if he couldn't bother to keep that appointment with me, then of course we're not important enough."

In this context, a failure by officers to recognise the sensitivities involved in dealings with members of BME communities could very quickly inflame tensions between the police and these communities. For example, in Site 8, BME research participants described an incident in which police officers pursuing two African-Caribbean men who had stolen a car saw an African-Caribbean man sitting outside a house, and believed he was one of the offenders. The man was mentally ill and became aggressive when apprehended. This escalated into a violent incident in which his parents became involved and a number of officers were called to assist. During the incident, the man was sprayed with CS spray and struck several times with a baton. Both he and his father were arrested and charged with assaulting police officers. This incident very quickly entered community consciousness, and was mentioned spontaneously during the research by five separate respondents. It was widely seen as having led to a further breakdown of trust between the community and the police. One community worker described it as an example of how the police have "never treated Black people with respect". Another community worker said the incident "created a lot of resentment in the community and people are very angry about the police response and treatment. Now this incident is not an exception and the community has rallied around this family".

These situations were often extremely complex and difficult for officers to negotiate. For example, in Site 8, members of a Sikh community group described an incident in which police were called to a fight between two White and two Sikh men, which had erupted after one of the White men had pulled off a Sikh man's turban. An officer asked one of the Sikh men if he would have used the symbolic dagger he carried offensively. The man replied that he would use it in self-defence, and the officer decided that the knife was therefore an offensive weapon and charged him accordingly. Both Sikh men involved in this incident felt the officers did not understand the strength of the insult incurred when the turban was knocked off, and that they had been disrespectful of their culture and religion. Whilst the decision of the officer to charge the man with possessing an offensive weapon might be legally defensible, it involved the exercise of discretion in a way which reinforced rather than challenged local minority communities' expectations that they could not expect culturally sensitive practices. It also demonstrated the way in which this could have an impact on community confidence. Sikh interviewees said before this incident they had "good relations" with the police, "the officers would come in and we would treat them very well… but not any more".

Both examples above illustrate an important point about policing where any action can have unintended consequences. Not only must a police officer select an action from a repertoire of possibilities – thinking through which is most likely to achieve the intended outcome – but must also consider how the selected action will be understood and responded to by others (and, crucially, must anticipate that they may not see it the way the officer does). In other words, there may be a significant gap between how an act is *intended* by the actor and how it is *received*, *interpreted* or *defined* by the audience (e.g. Goffman, 1961). Furthermore, because police officers are authority figures and hold the sanction of coercion and violence (Bittner, 1990; Manning, 1977), police-citizen encounters have particular resonance – all the more so where citizens are members of minority groups that regularly perceive themselves to be discriminated against.

The research showed that it was relatively easy for a negative cycle to develop in which the feelings of mistrust towards the police among some BME communities, and police officers' perceptions of those communities as unreceptive or hostile, could result in incremental but almost continuous deterioration in police-community relationships. For example, Sites 5 and 7, particular areas with large BME populations were considered to be particularly volatile and hostile environments to police, and were experienced as such. Officers said they routinely experienced abuse (including racist abuse) and intimidation from minority ethnic residents in these areas. These stories were confirmed by minority ethnic people in both sites, who reported overwhelmingly negative attitudes towards the police. For example, local Black youths in Site 5 said: "I don't like no police officers, if they wear that uniform I don't like them",

"I call them names when I walk down the street" (Focus group participants). Youth workers explained that this was "very intimidating" for police officers, who were "fearful": "The young people will kick arse with them. They know that those young people will kick arse."

The perception that these were threatening environments to work in affected service delivery in these areas. Staff said they were reluctant to walk in the areas alone, and some avoided them entirely. For example, a PC in Site 7 had been asked to go out on foot patrol in an area with a large BME population which local officers considered hostile. He stayed in the office instead, explaining: "I can't go out on my own, I'll get beat up." On occasion officers would appear to overreact to incidents in these areas, for example through unnecessary use of handcuffing, an aggressive and confrontational manner, or disproportionate responses where large numbers of officers arrived to deal with a single person. Such reactions seemed to be a response to officers' feelings of vulnerability. In one case in Site 5, eight officers arrived to arrest an African-Caribbean man in an area they perceived to be hostile. A PC explained: "He's a big guy and if he kicked off it would take four officers to hold him down and get him in the back of the van." A sergeant who had transferred out of a similarly volatile London site explained: "When it's you and seven blokes in a van you're much more confident" (Site 3).

Whilst the risks were, in some cases, very real, such responses were often perceived by local people to be overreactions and thereby risked reinforcing the negative views of the police in these areas. For example, all focus group participants in Site 5 reported experiences of police officers who were aggressive and confrontational. A youth worker explained: "The way the police dealt with [young people] on the street made them feel bad and they were disrespect[ed]." This perpetuated their hostility towards the police: "They're police. They can't stand them… Police are the police. They're not there for no good. They're just there to cause them problems, to bang them up and to beat them up in cells, to talk to them harshly and grab them up and all the rest of it. End of story" (Youth worker). It is almost certainly these communities that also perceive themselves to be over-policed and under-protected, where trust is lowest and where the greatest challenges for the police lie.

Conclusions

Although the police service has placed considerable emphasis on improving structures and methods of consultation and liaison with minority ethnic communities since the Lawrence Inquiry, there have been continuing problems connected with routine police working patterns and styles of service delivery that could undermine relationships or trust between minority ethnic communities and the police. There appeared to be considerable confusion among officers about

what was intended by the principle of 'policing according to need' and, as a consequence, what constituted discriminatory practice. In part, this appeared to be a result of changes in the messages about how to respond appropriately to diverse communities. Prior to the Lawrence Inquiry the 'equal opportunities' training and discourse influencing policing aimed to ensure, as one officer put it, that, 'everybody is treated exactly the same'. The Lawrence Inquiry contained a very different message: that policing should not be 'colour-blind' but should be provided according to the needs of the people receiving it. Officers were generally aware of being subject to changed expectations but, in many cases, were far from certain what these changed expectations were, or how they should be operationalised in policing practice.

The widespread distrust of police detected by the Lawrence Inquiry within BME communities was clearly visible, and articulated, in all sites. However, there were numerous examples of failures to recognise the nature and impact of the divergence in perceptions of policing in different communities. This was visible both in general policing patterns and in the actions of individual officers. Tactics that focused police activity on BME communities, in particular on minority youth, were frequently experienced as provocative and discriminatory. Appreciation within police forces that routine policing might be experienced in such a manner varied considerably. The absence of such appreciation was without doubt a barrier to increasing trust in local communities and the widespread expectation of discrimination within BME communities was a key lens through which the actions of individual police officers were understood. Within such a context, inappropriate or simply poor service by individual officers would often be perceived as racially driven. The failure to appreciate such expectations and understandings, or simply a failure to appreciate cultural differences and needs could easily lead to the inflammation of existing tensions and difficulties. It is crucial for police officers to consider how their actions might be received and perceived by citizens in ways very different from their own intention. Such an appreciation within the police service – at all levels – is likely to diminish the likelihood of inappropriate tactical or individual decisions being employed.

It is almost certainly communities that end up perceiving themselves to be over-policed and under-protected and where trust is lowest that the greatest challenges for the police lie. It is in these communities therefore where some of the more positive developments outlined in Chapter 5 – improving consultation mechanisms, employing liaison officers for particular communities, and using independent advisors – might be expected to have the greatest potential. However all such mechanisms will only be window dressing without a fully-fledged understanding of the idea of, and practices involved in, 'policing according to need'.

7. Murder investigation

Part 1 of the Lawrence Inquiry focused on a detailed analysis of the police investigation into Stephen Lawrence's murder. The Inquiry team concluded that "fundamental errors" occurred in the investigation and that these resulted from "professional incompetence, institutional racism and a failure of leadership by senior officers" (para 46.1).

The MPS introduced a number of changes to murder investigation as a result of the Lawrence case, and the Inquiry's findings, including new standards and procedures for the management of murder scenes, a requirement to record investigative decisions and their rationale, trained and dedicated family liaison officers and additional resourcing (given considerable impetus by the highly critical HMIC (2000) inspection of murder investigation in the MPS prompted by one of the recommendations in the Lawrence Inquiry Report).

Other changes to murder investigation also occurred between Stephen Lawrence's death and the Lawrence Inquiry Report that were linked (though not exclusively) with the Lawrence case. These involved the introduction of dedicated Murder Investigation Teams (MITs) to concentrate skills and improve the quality of investigations; a Homicide Assessment Team who attended and advised at life threatening assault, unexplained death and murder scenes; more oversight of SIOs and their investigations; critical incident training; and formal reviews of murder investigations.

The ministerial priority "to increase public trust and confidence in policing amongst minority ethnic communities" was tackled through the creation of IAGs; community impact assessments; and Gold Groups whose membership included senior officers and lay advisers to ensure that broader community concerns were addressed on high profile or potentially sensitive critical incidents. These reforms emanated from the Race and Violent Crime Task Force (RVCTF) established in 1998 prior to the report's publication. The impact of these changes is outlined below.

Murder investigation in London

At the time of the research there were approximately 200 murders annually in London investigated by 1,200 staff divided into 27 dedicated MITs, four Trident teams who dealt with 'Black on Black' shootings, and a proactive Homicide Task Force who sought to prevent

murders. Although having more than doubled since 1995, staffing levels still fell below ACPO-endorsed national minimum standards for murder investigations (MIRSAP).

The MIT teams (divided into three areas) took a new case on average every eight weeks and teams on the area observed had between 13 and 28 active cases. An ACPO officer openly admitted that the MPS operated "a system that creaks along" and many detectives acknowledged that "the volume of what needs to be done directly affects the quality of how we do it". There seemed to be a fatalistic acceptance at all levels that little could be done to rectify this situation.

Unlike many county forces, where the number of homicides is small and the majority involve cases where the offender is known (Innes, 2003), the situation in London is the reverse, with the majority of homicides involving cases where the offender is unknown and where almost one in ten cases are very high profile, resource intensive and likely to cause significant public anxiety (Metropolitan Police Homicide Briefing Paper). This pattern was reflected in the work of the observed team.

Although "homicide is highly diverse in its characteristics" (Brookman and Maguire, 2003: iii), there are marked patterns by ethnicity, gender, age and socio-economic status (Cotton, 2003; Rock, 1998). In London the majority of victims are from minority ethnic groups (in 2002, for example, 58 per cent came from BME groups including 38 per cent African-Caribbean and 10 per cent Asian [MPS Homicide Statistics, 2003 unpublished]). As described later, this profile, and its implications for the nature and conduct of murder investigations in the capital, featured little in murder officers' perceptions or understanding of their work.

Initial response

> *Anybody who listened to the evidence of the officers involved in the initial police action after the murder would… be astonished at the lack of command and the lack of organisation… It is difficult to reconstruct with any accuracy or confidence what exactly was done and when it was done. This is because there was almost a total lack of documentation and record in connection with the whole of the first night's operation.* (Macpherson, 1999: paras 11.1-11.2)

Although considerable ambivalence existed among detectives on the team about some aspects of the Lawrence Inquiry Report, murder staff felt its impact on the procedures for the

management of murder scenes and other elements of murder investigation was marked: "[It] changed everything about the way murders are run and scenes are managed," an MIT member explained, "[and] a lot of that is a good thing."

SIOs, their DS, and the indexers who collated the information coming into an inquiry were the only permanent staff involved in murder investigation at the time of Stephen Lawrence's death. The later introduction of dedicated murder teams (that predated the Lawrence Inquiry Report) with roles allocated in advance using knowledge about the strengths and weaknesses of individual officers put an end to the *ad hoc* practices of seconding officers to an investigation in its first and vital hours, while the introduction of scene, and decision, logs were important elements in attempts to record actions taken at the scene and throughout an investigation.

The impact of these changes was evident in fieldwork observations of the initial response to life threatening, unexplained death and murder scenes where the line of command, and responsibilities of officers at the scene, was clear, and a prescribed methodology covering scene management, record keeping, house-to-house inquiries, witness handling, and forensics was followed.

Despite the procedural changes in murder investigation, the initial response still rested with boroughs and the often inexperienced and generalist officers first to arrive at the scene. The contrasts between these officers and those on the MIT was marked and fieldwork observations with the night duty on-call Homicide Assessment Team, discussions with murder investigators and an analysis of murder reviews all revealed concerns about the quality of initial borough responses including poor scene preservation (with inappropriate placing of cordons, or problems with forensic capture), failure to inform families, poor awareness of the appropriate responses to critical incidents and a lack of awareness about murder investigation and its sensitivities – some of the same issues raised in the initial response to Stephen Lawrence's murder. In one case, for example, a uniform inspector dealing with a potentially suspicious death had decided to wait until after the post mortem to inform the next of kin (so the cause of death was clear), a decision that was immediately reversed following advice from the attending MIT detective.

Some problems on borough were directly linked to inexperience, but analysis of murder review cases for this study demonstrated that experienced officers also made fundamental errors at murder scenes. In one case, for example, it was the relatively inexperienced young officers who urged their more experienced colleague to be mindful of forensics and not to disturb the scene.

Despite the problems outlined above the general perception among the murder team was that the management of scenes had improved. "We want perfect and we don't get it," an MIT officer said, "but what we get is a lot better than we would have had ten years ago." Murder detectives at all ranks were reluctant to criticise their borough colleagues. "There is a great feeling of vulnerability on borough," a senior detective explained, "because of Macpherson." Another said: "We can stand back and say… 'uniform should have done this, should have done that'. It's a bloody easy thing to say… [but] first on scene at a murder… it's just pure madness for a while… and they are very, very difficult things to deal with" (DS).

Given that many of the criticisms contained in the Lawrence Inquiry Report directly related to the failures in murder investigation, it is interesting that the sensitivity detectives identified in the borough context did not appear to be reflected in the murder teams' perceptions of their own working environment. However, their reluctance to criticise colleagues may also have arisen from the knowledge that even the MITs, despite concentrating expertise and skills, were stronger in some areas, for example exhibits handling and family liaison, than in interviewing and statement taking. Concerns were expressed by most officers on the team about the calibre and experience of some MIT staff. Indeed experienced detectives highlighted that increased staffing did not necessarily translate into enhanced investigative practice.

Supervision, scrutiny and accountability

The Lawrence Inquiry was highly critical of the failures of senior police officers 'to supervise and manage' the investigation into Stephen Lawrence's death and it was evident from the research that this criticism had influenced senior staff's involvement with, and oversight of, murder investigations. "There's so many intervention points now", an SIO explained, including a series of mandatory processes, for example, 24-hour and 10-15 day reviews in which all aspects of an investigation, including relationships with the family, were examined by a senior officer. These were followed, if a murder remained unsolved, by a full examination of every element of an investigation by the Murder Review Group. These structures did not exist at the time of Stephen Lawrence's murder.

SIOs and ACPO officers were acutely aware of their vulnerability and the risks of failure, feelings that were communicated to officers at other levels. For example, a DC said that, following the Lawrence Report's publication, "every inquiry we had, the argument from the senior officers was, 'I don't want to be on a public inquiry in two years' time'". At the time of the research this thinking still formed an important part of the climate in which senior officers operated and as described later the intervention of senior officers was sometimes helpful in providing a better quality of service to victims' families.

Family liaison

Six of the seventy recommendations (recommendations 23-28) in the Lawrence Inquiry Report concerned family liaison which was deemed to be "one of the saddest and most deplorable aspects of the case" (para 46.7). The recommendations included: dedicated Family Liaison Officers (FLOs); specialised training; the need to keep families informed about the investigation; recording decisions where requests or complaints were made by the family, and the requirement to refer these on for consideration by a senior officer; and finally 'proactive use' of BME community representatives 'to assist with family liaison'. These changes were welcomed by many detectives: "We've learnt an awful lot from [the Lawrence Inquiry]", a DC explained, "I mean family liaison logs and officers being trained and all that… That's one of the really good things that's come out of Macpherson… It's a marvellous innovation."

The relationship between murder victims' families and the police involve a number of critical tensions not least because family members are sometimes implicated in the murders of their relatives (Innes, 1999 and 2003). FLOs provide a link between the family and the investigation, updating them on progress and providing support throughout the investigative and court phases. This is a difficult role that, as an SIO acknowledged, "requires skilled individuals who can undertake their tasks very sensitively". In some cases, good family liaison could solve cases (especially where the suspect was inside or connected with the victim or family circle) and, perhaps because of this, FLOs primarily saw themselves as investigators. However, there were examples in the research where FLOs worked creatively to support families in any way they could, for example, brokering solutions to problems with mortuary staff (who were not always responsive to relatives' requests) and, in some cases, supporting families in ways that were well outside their formal remit. In one case, for example, an FLO helped a family member dress a victim for burial.

Observations of, and discussions with, victims' families and detectives suggested there was an added dimension in police interactions with minority ethnic families where powerlessness and marginality seemed to be so etched into their experiences that it shaped expectations of the investigation and its likely outcome. SIOs and FLOs reported being exhorted by families "not to make this another Lawrence" and such comments highlight the resonance of the Lawrence case itself, and how it chimed with an absence of legitimacy or confidence in the police among minority ethnic groups. It was not uncommon for minority families to mistrust the police and assume they would receive a substandard service *because* of their ethnicity. A father, for example, felt a normal pre-trial court hearing had only been called because his son was Black. In other cases, families believed their child's death would not count as much as the death of a White child, and that the difference would be reflected in the investigation and trial.

Although some individual officers were sensitive and understanding about minority ethnic families' experiences and needs, others seemed to have more difficulty. These officers appeared to have little appreciation that minority families might have particular concerns linked with broader experiences of disadvantage and discrimination, or how these were themselves linked with issues of trust, legitimacy and community confidence raised by the Lawrence Inquiry Report. One officer said simply: "Why can't they [the family] just *accept* that it's in the hands of the professionals?"

Some officers resented pleas by families to avoid 'another Lawrence'. In one case an FLO recounted being asked if "they was all White would we have dealt with it differently? …And that's when you start thinking, 'we've given everything to 'em. Why are you putting it in[to] a racial thing?'". Another officer described being told by a victim's father at the first meeting: "Just because he's Black, don't let this be another Lawrence." The detective said: "I've gotta say that really fucked me off, you know, I'm sick of it, I'm sick of being battered to death with the Lawrence stick." This response was far blunter than those expressed by other team members, but demonstrates the extent of anger that some officers felt about the Lawrence Inquiry and the absence of understanding about the issues concerning trust and confidence contained in the Lawrence Inquiry Report.

It is possible that the officers quoted above were also expressing their frustration in the face of continuing distrust, when most felt the service given to minority ethnic families had significantly improved and therefore that the criticisms being directed at them seemed unjustified. However, the fieldwork revealed that some FLOs were far more skilled than others in their relationships with minority ethnic families. If officers were angered or defensive when the police's legitimacy was questioned, or simply could not understand *why* minority families were concerned, this was not a helpful starting point and the more 'demanding' (i.e. those who challenged police legitimacy, questioned procedures and processes and did not automatically trust the police) a family was perceived to be the more likely they were to be seen as 'the problem', just as the Lawrence family were perceived to have been (see Macpherson, 1999), and could end up receiving a poorer level of service even though their *needs* were greater.

During the fieldwork, for example, a direct contrast was made by some officers between a 'dream' (White) family who were supportive of the team and a 'demanding' minority ethnic family who were perceived by some officers to be 'getting too much' time, resources and support. The cases were not comparable in terms of murder types (one involved an intimate relationship between the victim and offender, the other a 'stranger' murder), or the needs of the families involved.

Some families appointed independent legal advisers in order, as one family member put it, "to ensure the police did their job properly" and were following every relevant line of inquiry. This act clearly signalled a family's lack of confidence in the police. Many detectives felt threatened and undermined by this and it could serve to reinforce their views that a family were 'difficult' and should be kept at a distance. In one such case a family, aware of the ambivalent feelings of their FLO, requested contact solely through the SIO whom they felt was responsive to their needs.

It is perhaps a mark of the changes in family liaison that, in the Lawrence investigation, the SIO did not meet the family even when it was apparent that there were significant difficulties in the FLOs' relationships with them (para 26.10). Following the Lawrence Inquiry, SIOs were expected, and in all observed cases did, meet with the family within 24 hours and maintained contact with them throughout the investigation and subsequent trial. The "approach to family liaison has changed dramatically", as a DI explained:

> *We will now… include the family in the investigation, rather than letting, or leaving them to feel distant and excluded… We are far more open with families… We now see it as their right to be told, as much as, or probably on many occasions more than, we really think is appropriate to tell them… My rule is that unless there is a very special reason I will tell the family just about everything that I know and if there is something that I decide I won't tell them then I'll make a separate decision explaining what it is that I won't tell them and why… Occasions where that might happen, could be where one of your family members is a potential suspect and clearly you can't share all the information.*

The extent of change in relation to families was reflected in the astonishment of prosecution counsel in one case about the level of detail and information the police had shared with a victims' family.

At senior levels, the results from the fieldwork suggested the vital importance of maintaining relationships with the family, early intervention where difficulties existed, and a more externally focused approach were generally well understood and supported by most senior officers and, in some cases, their intervention made an appreciable difference. For example, a minority ethnic family's request for improved home security was refused by the MIT who judged their level of risk to be low and deemed further enhancement 'unnecessary'. The request was regarded in a very different light by an ACPO officer who focused on the family's fears about their security and agreed to upgrade security in order to alleviate them.

Developing community confidence

A central theme in the Lawrence Inquiry Report was the need to actively consider minority ethnic communities and address poor levels of trust and confidence in the police. Community Concern Assessments were introduced as a response to this priority. These were completed by the SIO, in consultation with the Borough Commander, within four hours of a murder being discovered. In particularly sensitive or high profile cases, Gold Groups were also convened where independent advisors, the SIO leading the inquiry, the local Borough Commander and an ACPO officer discussed investigative strategies and how to ensure community concerns were taken into account. These meetings were intended to be proactive and preventive and, as a former murder detective said, became "routine on many murders where community tensions might be raised". In the Damilola Taylor case, for example, a Gold Group meeting, with independent members, was held within hours of the murder.

The RVCTF (that later became the Diversity Directorate), in their creation of IAGs, deliberately sought out some of their harshest critics to challenge their thinking and help the police improve their service and responsiveness to minority ethnic communities. Many of these advisers also sat on Gold Groups. A minority ethnic IAG and Gold Group member who described himself as a harsh critic of the police before the IAGs, said these structures had improved links between the police and communities, and had been beneficial in the police's approach to individual investigations.

Despite the perceived benefits of IAGs, analysis of murder review cases demonstrated that, although community impact assessments were undertaken, they were not always updated or continuously reviewed but tended to be seen as a one-off document: "We've got one and it's done." There were also examples where SIOs did not enlist the support of independent advisers where it was important to do so and lack of communication between inquiry teams and boroughs meant that, in some cases, communities were not always as well informed as they could have been. Furthermore, these meetings involved officers at SIO level and above – not those involved in the hands-on elements of murder investigation. The value that independent advisers brought to investigations and the need to consider community perspectives did not appear to form an integral part of officers' thinking at more operational levels within the murder teams. Therefore, despite some important and creative approaches to building trust and confidence in minority ethnic communities, community concerns did not appear to have become embedded in the *modus operandi* of officers' practice in the same way as had occurred with the initial response to murder investigation and some of the principles of family liaison.

Institutional racism

As outlined in Chapter 1, the Lawrence Inquiry's definition of institutional racism incorporated and, to a degree, confused three separate processes: unwitting (individual) discriminatory behaviour; conscious racism; and organisational processes (institutional racism). The Inquiry argued that institutional racism was reflected in: Mr and Mrs Lawrence's treatment at the hospital; family liaison; the treatment of Duwayne Brooks; a lack of 'urgency and commitment' in some aspects of the investigation; and a "failure to see the murder as a purely 'racially motivated' crime" (para 6.45a). Whilst these are arguably indicative of a failure "to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture and ethnic origin", in the absence of evidence of similar shortcomings in other murder investigations, the *institutional* or systemic nature of the failure was not fully established.

On the murder team observed during this study, officers up to DI rank, working from a perspective that the Lawrence Inquiry Report had "labelled all of us as being racist", felt they had been accused of *witting* discrimination. A DC, for example, said: "They've made racism more than it was. There was certainly no racist officers on the inquiry. Nobody said anything about Blacks… didn't look at him [Stephen Lawrence] as Black. It was a kid who'd been stabbed and that's it. He just happened to be Black." This comment is illustrative both of a continuing confusion of individual and institutional racism, and an ongoing failure among some officers to recognise the implications of the Lawrence Inquiry's recommendation that policing should not be 'colour-blind'.

There was a fervent belief among detectives that every murder investigation received the same high level of service because of the seriousness of the offence: "It doesn't matter what the colour of someone's skin is", a DI explained, reflecting a widely held view on the team, "Everyone gets a good quality of investigation if there's a murder." A DC said: "Your victim, it can be any person they all get the same treatment." Such views led detectives to assume that the Lawrence Inquiry was of less relevance to their work, than that of their uniform or detective colleagues on borough. However, this perception also meant that race frequently remained at the periphery rather than at the centre of murder investigations.

Despite a firmly held belief that all victims received equal treatment, the theory and the practice differed in some important respects in the team observed for this study. For example, some victims generated little sympathy among detectives because they were viewed as having contributed to their own demise and it was not uncommon in these cases for a key witness in one murder to be a suspect in another. In one such case, a detective described a victim as a "lowlife" killed by his associates, adding, "we'll do our best but it's difficult to work up any

enthusiasm" (indicative perhaps of 'the lack of urgency and commitment' highlighted by the Lawrence Inquiry Report). In another case, the SIO reported having to remind officers that the victim (a known drug dealer and suspect in another killing) was a victim because he was perceived in such an unsympathetic light. In both examples the victim was Black.

The sample of observed cases in this research was small. It involved murders that were not directly comparable, and minority ethnic victims formed the majority of the team's case load. It is difficult, therefore, to establish whether the comments above were examples of racist stereotyping, indicative of detectives' attitudes to those who pursued criminal lifestyles generally, irrespective of their ethnicity, or, as with the observations of families, that these attitudes reflected deeper organisational processes that could disadvantage the investigation of murders involving minority ethnic victims particularly those involved in crime.

Despite these problems of attribution, the results from the fieldwork suggested some embedded and largely unquestioned organisational processes in murder investigation (and, as argued elsewhere in this report, in other aspects of policing practice too) certainly had the potential to disadvantage minority ethnic groups. This was not widely understood among those interviewed and observed during the research. Indeed there appeared to be little understanding among officers routinely involved in murder investigation that the police organisation could deliver a less than adequate service to minority ethnic victims, suspects, and their families *because* of their ethnicity.

The dangers associated with the negative attitudes expressed towards murder victims by the detectives above were articulated by a chief officer: "Just because someone's a criminal and Stephen [Lawrence] certainly was not a criminal, but let's say he was a drug dealer, does that make it any better? ...Does that justify it? No, it bloody well doesn't." He also recognised that such attitudes might, in the case of minority ethnic victims also "risk... a collective failure because it leads to disadvantage of that community group". A relatively senior officer illustrated his point describing the resourcing of a murder involving "a Black robber... stabbed to death in the street" in an area he characterised as "hardened to young Black lads getting stabbed by other Black lads" where the motive for the killing was "probably over drugs". He said that, although the case would "be investigated properly", he would "not... give additional resource" to it. He acknowledged, however, that if the case were "to attract huge public attention, the resource I've put into that would be slaughtered".

Senior managers are forced to make difficult decisions about where to allocate resources; however, the rationale above seems to involve an unquestioned assumption that in poor areas, where murders appear commonplace, the victim and perpetrator are Black, and

have criminal connections, less investment is acceptable practice. Yet no level playing field exists in relation either to becoming a victim of murder or the kind of investigation required. Indeed as Brookman (2005: 37) highlights, using the most recent Census data, although Black minority ethnic groups form just two per cent of the population of England and Wales, ten per cent of murder victims in England and Wales between 2001 and 2004 were Black (Home Office, 2004). In the same period in London over a quarter of victims (27.6%) were Black, double the victimisation rate of Asian groups (13%) and almost three times that of other minority ethnic groups (11%) (Home Office, 2004: Table 3.5). Therefore as the Lawrence Inquiry Report identified, in order to provide an *appropriate* service, minority ethnic groups may require far more, not less, attention. The Trident teams that dealt with black on black shootings were formed in recognition of differing needs but this thinking did not appear to have extended to murder investigation more broadly.

The Lawrence Inquiry Report's definition of a racist incident had as one detective explained, made "it far easier for the police to decide what is a racist crime" because "if anybody perceives it as being a racist crime then… it's a racially motivated crime" thus eliminating the "confusion or doubt" that operated in the Lawrence investigation between police accounts and community perceptions. While this is a positive change it did not appear to be accompanied by a broader understanding of the patterning of homicide. For most detectives the relevance of racism in investigations was framed in terms of individual incidents not, as described below, in the broader context of differential levels of victimisation and the existence of discriminatory processes.

Despite the fact that race and ethnicity are vital components in homicide patterns this was rarely acknowledged by detectives who seemed to focus solely on circumstances surrounding individual offences, not the context in which they occurred or the broader factors that might shape investigations or their outcomes. For example, when a detective was asked about commonalities in the murder cases he had worked on, he said: "The only common factor is that somebody's dead." Yet observations with the Homicide Assessment Team exemplified the marked patterns in homicide in which the ethnicity, age and sex of the victims was marked, as was the connection between murder and mental health issues and the relationship between victims and offenders.

This pattern had a profound, though almost entirely unacknowledged, impact on murder investigation. For example, the willingness of witnesses to provide information and give evidence in court is a key element in most successful investigations. Where trust is fragile, or absent, as it is in many minority ethnic communities (Clancy *et al.*, 2001), witnesses are less likely to come forward and the possibilities for solving a murder are immediately diminished.

Detectives may therefore have to work far harder to gather evidence and sometimes anticipated having to operate within a "community which is not going to help you" (DC).

Lack of trust and the difficulties officers perceived in obtaining information, may, in part, help to explain why in 27 per cent of homicides involving Black victims in England and Wales between 2001 and 2004 no suspect was found (the corresponding figures for Asian victims was 15% and for White 13%) (Home Office, 2004: 20). In a climate where murder teams in London took on a new case approximately every eight weeks this left a very small window of opportunity for focused investigation and, alongside managing multiple cases simultaneously, inevitably meant that more problematic or less easily solved cases could slip down the list of investigative priorities (HMIC, 2000). If cases involving minority groups were more difficult to investigate then such cases could be disproportionately represented in those cases receiving less attention.

The Lawrence Inquiry Report suggested "there must be an unequivocal acceptance of institutional racism and its nature before it can be addressed" (para 6.48). The climate in murder investigation in London, however, was one of misunderstanding, ambivalence and, in some cases, denial that individual or collective practices played any part in the events surrounding the investigation into Stephen Lawrence's murder.

The changes in murder investigation focused on tangible areas, for example the processes for managing scenes and improving investigative competence that could be easily scrutinised. These were important and significant changes, but were primarily generic (i.e. not focused on policing according to need but murder investigation practices more broadly). The ability of MIT officers to deliver a service that was sensitive to the needs of minority ethnic victims, communities and families was not directly addressed at operational levels. CRR training (the key response aimed at enhancing officers' awareness) was generic and did not relate to the particular context in which murder teams operated. As a consequence the mistaken belief that the issues raised by the Lawrence Report were *less* relevant to murder investigation does not appear to have been challenged in any consistent manner. These issues were discussed in SIO training and ACPO critical incident training.

Officers appointed to murder teams had no specific preparation that outlined the profile of murder in London, how individual attitudes might influence investigations, or how organisational processes can generate systemic discrimination. Nor was explicit attention paid to the importance of persevering with communities who for historical and other reasons might be suspicious and distrustful of police and who therefore may require additional support. This knowledge was either assumed, or in the words of one senior officer, unnecessary 'sociology' that detectives did not need to perform their roles. However, without such a framework

detectives could not actively consider how taken-for-granted processes and attitudes affected their individual or collective investigative practice. Even murder reviews did not examine the broader processes that might expose organisational failings, but rather focused on particular elements of investigations such as failures in forensic capture or intelligence.

Conclusion

In an inquiry where three components (i.e. professional incompetence, the failure of leadership and institutional racism) were believed to account for the 'fundamental errors' in the investigation into Stephen Lawrence's death, only two of the three appeared to be have been *directly* addressed in investigative practice.

It was apparent that significant changes in the organisation and structure of murder investigation in London had occurred with the introduction of specialist and dedicated teams, improved initial response, changes in recording practices, dedicated and trained family liaison officers and, albeit to a lesser extent, community consultation. As a chief officer said: "I'm nowhere near confident that we're through it but what I am confident about is the systems we've changed are for the better [and] should deliver a better system overall."

However, it also appeared that the strategies employed by senior staff, and the way in which they were understood by operational officers, were oriented around pragmatic and tangible measures that favoured procedural changes in investigative practice. This approach left the broader issues raised by the Lawrence Inquiry Report and its findings, particularly in relation to institutional racism, relatively unaddressed within murder investigation. As a consequence, many established ways of working continued relatively unquestioned and murder investigation remained largely 'colour-blind'.

In his evidence to the Lawrence Inquiry, Holdaway (1999: para 6.37) highlighted how the failures of the investigation "were compounded precisely because the officers in charge… did not place race at the centre of their understanding of the Lawrence murder and its investigation". The research suggests that this remained the case, five years after the Lawrence Inquiry Report. Where the recommendations were clear and the messages readily understood the MPS had, in the words of one DC, "come a long way" in terms of the routine practices employed in murder investigation relative to where they were at the time of Stephen Lawrence's murder. Much work remains to be done, however, in exploring the 'attitudes, processes and structures' that shaped murder investigation and had the potential to discriminate against minority ethnic groups.

8. Responding to hate crime

Introduction

The publication of the Lawrence Inquiry Report drew considerable attention to racist victimisation, with the then Home Secretary placing great emphasis on the need for both the police service and other agencies to improve their practices in this area (Home Office, 1999). Further high profile crimes, particularly the nail bomb attacks in Old Compton Street, Soho, and in Brixton, led the police service to issue a guide to *Identifying and Combating Hate Crime* (ACPO, 2000).

Responding adequately to hate crimes was at the heart of the ministerial priority recommended by the Lawrence Inquiry, and accepted by the Home Office, that police services should seek: "To increase trust and confidence in policing amongst minority ethnic communities." It made a number of recommendations concerning the definition of a 'racist incident' and the recording and investigation of such incidents. This chapter examines the police service's response to hate crimes – defined by ACPO (2000) as "a crime where the perpetrator's prejudice against any identifiable group of people is a factor in determining *who* is victimised" – and attempt to explore the role played by the Lawrence Inquiry in stimulating or driving change.

The fieldwork suggested responses to hate crimes differed from force to force. It was poorest in Site 6 where hate crime did not seem to be a priority. The reason for this appeared partly demographic: Site 6 had a small BME population and was generally perceived to have low levels of racist incidents. There also appeared to be a relative lack of external drivers for change in this area. The general perception of the Lawrence Inquiry in Site 6 was that it had little direct relevance to the area in general or to the force in particular. Perhaps the general absence of any major racist disorder also meant that at senior management level there was a lack of pressure to drive activity forward in this area.

By contrast, the Lawrence Inquiry appeared to be an important catalyst for change in the London sites in relation to racist and other hate crimes. Interestingly, while police provision for dealing with hate crime appears to have made equally important advances in Site 7, the connection with the Lawrence Inquiry was less easy to detect. While the Inquiry was not a peripheral matter, as in Site 6, neither was it the central feature that it became in the London sites. Rather, it appears to have been one of a number of factors driving change in this area.

Definition of a racist incident

All forces had adopted the definition of a racist incident recommended by the Lawrence Inquiry Report, as "any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person". In all but one of the sites, officers at all ranks were able to give an accurate definition of a racist incident. However, in Site 6 the definition was often misunderstood. Front-line officers commonly thought that incidents were only racist if minority ethnic victims were being targeted exclusively, if the racist motivation for the incident was explicit (for instance by being accompanied by racist verbal abuse), and if there was no other motivating factor. For example, a Chinese woman who reported that a Chinese takeaway had been pelted with stones and eggs suggested this was racist. The PC replied that it might not be a 'racial' incident, explaining: "If all the shops were targeted, it's not racial. If just her shop was targeted, it might not be racial. If her shop was smashed and they shouted 'you fucking Chinks', that would be racial."

The widespread misunderstanding of the definition in this site strongly affected the quality of service to victims of racist incidents. For example, a key worker described how the harassment experienced by a family of asylum seekers, where local youths "threw mud at the window and they were shouting and screaming" was interpreted by the police as "a gang of youths that were being nasty to the whole neighbourhood, not just to them, so it's not racially motivated". As a result, no interventions or support were provided.

The widespread misunderstanding of the definition of a racist incident in Site 6 was unusual, and not replicated in any other site where instead, as one inspector put it: "Officers are more aware and more willing to self-classify issues as racial issues… the majority of officers would give you a working or word perfect definition of [racist] incidents" (Site 3).

In Site 7, there were a relatively high level of racist incidents against White people, comprising almost a third of reported incidents, and the definition of a racist incident was therefore commonly used to include incidents against White people. Although the majority of racist incidents in Site 7 involved minority ethnic victims there was some indication that incidents involving White victims tended to dominate officers' thinking in this area. When asked about racist incidents, almost all the examples given by uniform and CID officers involved White victims and Asian perpetrators. Officers explained that this was due to the nature of the area which had a predominately Asian population, with a volatile history, and a visible group of very vocal and antagonistic young Muslim men. However, the dominant thinking about racist incidents, and its contrast with the overall nature of recorded racist incidents in the site, raises a question about the extent to which the victimisation of visible minorities was fully accepted as a priority among front-line staff within this force.

Recording and monitoring of racist incidents

The main officer survey suggested there had been significant changes in recording and monitoring racist incidents since the Lawrence Inquiry Report. Nine-tenths of respondents in the officer survey thought their force was either good or excellent in the recording and monitoring of racist incidents compared with 16 per cent at the time of the Inquiry, when almost half (48%) rated it as poor or very poor.

Officers in all fieldwork sites understood that once an incident had been defined as racist or homophobic, there was a need to act on the definition and that it should be recorded and monitored as such. Measures had been put in place for monitoring racist and homophobic incidents. In all sites other than Site 6, officers understood the processes of recording and monitoring and these seemed to work effectively. Supervisors checked computer logs daily to check they had been flagged correctly, and that appropriate action had been taken. If it had not, the logs were returned to the officer or supervisor with recommendations. For example, in Site 4 a man reported that he had been called a "Black bastard" and a "Paki". The victim described himself as 'White' but said he was very tanned, and felt this was why he had been identified as Black or Asian. Because the victim was White, the officer attending the call did not record the incident as racist. However, the supervisor monitoring the logs picked up the incident, and was able to explain to the officer why it should be defined as a racist incident and ensure that it was recorded correctly.

Racist incidents were monitored particularly closely in Site 7, where every racist incident was overseen by chief superintendents and monitored by headquarters. Consequently, as one inspector explained, a racist incident "might be the most minor crime" but would be supervised at a higher level than more serious incidents: "Here you have someone who has touched someone on their arm, or just verbally abused them, but it's supervised by headquarters, and the most senior officer here. They never see murders, or stabbings." Some staff thought that such close scrutiny made officers prioritise racist incidents: "People would be on your back to see what you're doing with it. So you'd have to deal with it" (DC). Every racist incident was also reviewed by an external panel, consisting of lay people and partner agencies. This was intended to provide transparency in investigation and expertise in dealing with particular incidents.

By contrast, in Site 6, officers and supervisors were confused about the processes involved in recording racist incidents. As many staff did not understand the definition of a racist incident, some racist and homophobic incidents were not recorded as such. All logs of calls were monitored by a BCU diversity officer and at headquarters to check that they had been

correctly flagged, but this process did not seem to be effective. Staff were not aware of the monitoring process, which suggests that, unlike Site 7, monitoring was not an effective tool for encouraging compliance.

Self-reporting schemes

Staff and community members, in all sites, felt hate crime was significantly under-reported, the main reasons given being those often associated with non-reporting such as a lack of confidence in police response, a lack of confidence in approaching the police, language problems, lack of support for victims, and fear of retribution (Aye Maung and Mirrlees-Black, 1994; Maynard and Read, 1997). Measures to improve self-reporting schemes existed in all sites apart from Site 6. Site 3 had developed new self-report forms which were placed in public services and facilities used by minority communities, Site 4 were developing on-line reporting, and Site 5 had launched an 'assisted reporting' scheme whereby community members were trained to record incidents and report them to the police. Site 7 introduced self-reporting centres that resulted in a large increase in reported racist incidents. This was viewed positively: "We have to accept the downside on performance but it shows confidence [in reporting] went up." The principles of self-reporting were not generally understood in Site 6. An officer with the diversity portfolio explained: "We try to encourage them [victims] to come into the station. If we run round and do everything for them, we're seen to favour them. We wouldn't do it for the old lady up the road."

In the officer survey, respondents believed there had been considerable improvements in practice since the Lawrence Inquiry. Only 21 per cent of respondents thought that opportunities for the public to report racist incidents were 'good' or 'excellent' at the time of the Inquiry compared with 91 per cent at the time of the survey.

Responding to hate crime

The response to hate crime was structured differently in the London sites (1, 2 and 5). Here, racist incidents were dealt with by dedicated Community Safety Units (CSUs), which were expanded to incorporate race hate crime in all MPS boroughs after the Lawrence Inquiry. In all three London sites, the bulk of the units' work involved domestic violence (85-90%); 'racially motivated crime' comprised most of the rest. The number of reported homophobic incidents in the sites was relatively small, but in Site 5 efforts were made to demonstrate it

was given the same priority. As a DI explained: "It is underreported. If we can show we're putting effort into it, it makes it seem to the LGBT community we are interested, and I hope it encourages them to report it further." In all other sites, hate crime was dealt with by generalist officers. Uniform (patrol) officers responded to all incidents other than those considered "serious" (such as an assault) or a part of a series of offences that were investigated by CID.

Quality of policing response

The quality of police investigation of racist crimes was also believed to have improved since the Lawrence Inquiry. While only 22 per cent of respondents rated investigations as 'good' or 'excellent' at the time of the Inquiry, 85 per cent did so in 2003 (when the survey was conducted). Interestingly, and perhaps revealingly, although public confidence in police investigations was perceived to have increased during the same period – from seven per cent to 31 per cent – overall estimates of satisfaction remained low and, indeed, only just outweighed perceived dissatisfaction – 26 per cent of officers felt public confidence in the way police deal with racist incidents at the time of the survey was poor or very poor (63 per cent thought it was poor or very poor at the time of the Lawrence Inquiry).

There was a wide variation in the quality of response to victims of hate crime. For example, in Site 5, staff in the CSU had a nuanced and sympathetic approach to their work, and pursued frustrating investigations with dedication. By contrast, the quality of service to victims of hate crime in Site 6, for example, was often poor. Victims of hate crime reported instances of the police not responding to calls, responding inappropriately and not keeping them informed of the progress of investigations. Such variation reflected a difference in understanding of the nature and effects of hate crime and repeat victimisation. As a key worker with asylum seekers explained, these are often complex and difficult to articulate: "It's often the nasty little things. Name calling, pushing, teasing or being nasty to the children, saying nasty little things, just when someone passes, and that's so difficult to really get across" (Site 6).

The staff in dedicated CSUs were experienced in dealing with these complex issues, and observations showed that this had provided them with a more subtle understanding of their work, which enabled them to respond appropriately. This was evident, for example, in the respectful and patient way staff in Site 5 dealt with a transgendered woman who was generally regarded by uniform officers as being extremely difficult to deal with. CSU staff treated her complaints seriously and sympathetically, and showed a clear understanding of

the vulnerabilities of her situation. For example, although some of the incidents she reported were relatively minor and would not usually be dealt with by the CSU, a DS understood that "because of the circumstances and the background she would benefit from being dealt with by us, we can give her more time, and we're used to dealing with this kind of thing, she's a vulnerable adult, and a repeat victim".

The understanding of these issues among CSU staff was not mainstreamed into other areas of policing in the site. CSU staff thought that the level of understanding of these issues among patrol staff was poor, and this had a negative impact on the quality of response to hate crime incidents in the site. A DS in the CSU said: "The people dealing with it don't know how it can be dealt with. They don't do a little bit extra work which would allow us to do a whole range of measures that they're not even aware of." For example, a DS picked up a log reporting a racially aggravated breach of the peace, where the officer on the scene had left after giving words of advice. The DS felt further action should have been taken: "It's not a gamble I would have made, and I suspect nobody in here would have made either." Yet the front-line officers' response as the first contact with the victim is particularly crucial in instilling confidence: "Just the way of intervening can show we're taking it seriously. They [patrol officers] set the tone for how it's going to be dealt with" (DS, Site 5). In Site 1, the duty inspector was informed of all racist incidents and this provided an important check on front-line service delivery. For example, when a woman reported unprovoked verbal abuse and criminal damage to her flat, the inspector was able to despatch an officer to talk to the victim, to offer some reassurance and for photographs of the damage to be taken for evidential purposes. Consequently, while the incident was "relatively low level", the inspector's intervention ensured that officers attending would provide an appropriate service.

In Site 6, the study results showed that understanding of the context and effects of hate crime was particularly poor. Officers said they dealt with racist or homophobic incidents "as any other offence", and that the context as a hate crime did not mediate their response. This understanding could strongly affect the quality of the policing response. For instance, there was a tendency to dismiss racist verbal abuse or criminal damage as trivial, and victims reported that officers had not responded at all as "they said this was not serious enough for them to come out" (Key worker, Site 6). There was little recognition of the impact of repeat victimisation and incidents tended to be treated in isolation. In one case, a family had reported 27 separate racist incidents without this being recognised as a pattern of repeat victimisation and treated accordingly.

The status of work with hate crime

In all three London sites (1, 2 and 5), CSU staff felt their work was not valued in the wider policing environment, an experience noted earlier in this report in connection with liaison and beat officers. The work of the CSU was generally considered frustrating, with a high workload, and a high proportion of victim withdrawals. It was widely disparaged as "pink and fluffy" in contrast to the "glamorous and sexy" work in other departments. In Site 2 it was also undervalued by some of its staff, who felt their work was not "appropriate" for detectives. A DS said: "Some of the detectives argue you don't need a detective in here. You don't need a detective to investigate criminal damage, but you do need a detective to investigate an abduction."

These comments indicate that despite the importance of work with hate crime after the Lawrence Inquiry, and the significant changes instituted, particularly in the MPS, the importance of hate crime was still not widely understood or believed to constitute 'real police work'. As a DS in the CSU in Site 2 put it: "We do a lot of social work. We're police officers, our job is to arrest people and investigate crime… we're not social work. We're a law enforcement agency." This view appeared to be typical of the status of work with hate crime in the police service more broadly. Yet as a CSU DS said: "The CSU is officially a very high profile, positive thing the police do. I don't think it's treated in any police station like that" (Site 5).

In Site 5, although staff acknowledged the same negative issues found elsewhere, these were not replicated in the unit itself. Instead, an internal culture had developed which attributed to the CSU some of those values which are prized in the wider policing environment. For example, the high workload in the CSUs was a source of despondency in Site 1 and 2, where staff described it as "soul destroying" (DS, Site 2). In Site 5 it had created an ethic of intense work, which was perceived as giving the unit a higher status. For example, a DI said: "People still think this is a pink and fluffy unit, though I think this is the hardest working unit I've worked in." Officers were excited about the autonomy and experience the work afforded them: "The level of investigation will be sanctioned far more than in other CID units" (DI); "They treat you more like an adult here" (DS); "You work a lot with outside agencies that you don't in other roles" (DS). Staff also had a more flexible and subtle view of the performance of the unit which added to their understanding of the value of their work. There was a general understanding that "a successful outcome doesn't require a court conviction" (DI), and that the other work of the unit was as important (mediation, referrals to other agencies and units, and so on). Staff also understood that "the main goal of this place is to prevent it escalating into murders, whether we get a

prosecution out of it or not. Success is measured by not having any more allegations about the same person" (DS). This understanding of the importance of the work appeared to have a positive impact on service delivery and there was evidence of staff pursuing frustrating investigations with dedication.

Conclusions

Significant strides appear to have been made by the police service in dealing with and responding to hate crimes and the Lawrence Inquiry seems to have been an important catalyst in this regard. The greatest changes, especially structurally, had been made in the MPS sites. Outside London the story was mixed. In particular, one site lagged significantly behind all others. Little regard was paid there to the issue of racist or other hate crimes and officers even struggled to come to terms with the nature of 'racist crimes' as defined by the Lawrence Inquiry – something all officers in all other areas appeared to have fully taken on board. Despite variations in the quality of response to hate crimes in different areas, services had generally improved in all sites particularly in the recording and monitoring of racist incidents. The greatest continuing concern arises from the low status of such work. Even within the MPS it was commonly felt such work was not perceived to be 'real police work'. As in other areas of activity considered earlier in this report there appears to be an entrenched cultural resistance in some parts of the service to some of the changes that have resulted, directly or indirectly, from the Lawrence Inquiry.

9. Conclusions

The publication of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report was one of the most significant events in British policing in the last decade (McLaughlin and Murji, 1999). This report has sought to assess the impact of the Inquiry on policing in England and Wales – a complicated task given the broad range of recommendations and far-reaching nature of some of the criticisms. The research undertaken for this study was extensive. It included three surveys, numerous interviews with police officers and members of BME communities, and many months observing policing in practice.

The assessment made in the report of the nature and character of contemporary policing was closely guided by an analysis of the assumptions adopted by the Lawrence Inquiry, namely:

- racist language and behaviour is *per se* wrong;
- policing should not be 'colour-blind';
- understanding and identifying racism requires an appreciation of the viewpoint and perception of those subjected to it; and
- no aspect of policing lies outside these values and norms.

As noted in Chapter 1, it was the Lawrence Inquiry's use of the term *institutional racism* that generated most debate and gave rise to very strong feelings – primarily anger – within the police service. This was still apparent in all research sites several years after the Report's publication. The term also generated considerable confusion. Despite Sir William Macpherson's belief that the Inquiry "made it crystal clear that, because we call the Metropolitan Police institutionally racist, not every policeman is a racist" (*The Times*, 1 April 1999, quoted in Rock, 2004), widespread misunderstanding of the term still existed, with many police officers in forces across England and Wales, not just the MPS, feeling they had been branded as racists. In part, this was a result of the particular definition used by the Lawrence Inquiry which did not distinguish institutional racism sufficiently from other acts of racist prejudice. It may also be a reflection of the nature of the Report itself which shifted its focus back and forth between the actions of individuals and the activities of institutions.

Furthermore, some of the defensiveness displayed within the police service may have stemmed from the inclusion of the word 'racism' within the term institutional racism. It seems to us that the power of the word, and the now deeply embedded social stigma associated with it, is such that when it is deployed, even within a term such as institutional racism that carries different meanings, it is impossible to dissociate it from the actions of individuals.

Despite the problems surrounding the definition and interpretation of institutional racism, the survey data suggested officers were generally positive about the Lawrence Inquiry and its impact, and there was little evidence that the anger and resentment described by officers acted as a fundamental barrier to change. Indeed, this research suggests that a number of quite considerable changes have occurred in policing since the publication of the Report and the application of such a powerful term to the police service may have been the catalyst for some of those changes.

The research identified a number of areas in which the Lawrence Inquiry appears to have been an important lever for change in the police service. For example, there had been marked changes in police responses to hate crime, and in the recording and monitoring of racist incidents. Other positive developments included improvements in the management of murder investigation and some areas of family liaison. Similarly, in all case study forces, considerable emphasis was placed on developing or improving structures for consulting with local minority communities, together with the need to consider community impact more broadly. Many of the positive examples of progressive work in this area involved officers with specific responsibilities for particular communities – liaison officers, beat officers – or those who worked within dedicated hate crime units. However, officers in all these roles often felt marginalised within their forces and there were numerous examples of practical and symbolic ways in which such work was undermined or undervalued.

One of the most positive changes concerned police officers' perceptions of increased scrutiny where particular forms of behaviour (racist language), or areas of policing activity (interactions with minority communities and, more particularly, the use of stop and search), benefited from increased oversight by supervisory officers and managers. The virtual disappearance of explicitly racist language from the everyday lexicon of police officers contrasts starkly with the nature of policing observed in the *Police and People in London* (Smith and Gray, 1983) 20 years ago. There can be little doubt that the Lawrence Inquiry was an important element in bringing about this change. However, inappropriate language related to race and ethnicity had not disappeared from policing entirely. Confusion remained in some areas and among some officers about what was and was not permissible. However, racist language and behaviour is now closely scrutinised and officers were clear that explicitly racist epithets would not be tolerated and, if used, would lead to disciplinary action.

Whilst the Lawrence Inquiry was concerned with racist language, it also had a broader focus examining individual and institutional actions which might lead to a failure to provide an 'appropriate and professional' service to minority communities. Although, as described, the climate of policing appeared to have changed, the decline in the use of explicitly racist language was not necessarily accompanied by other progressive change. Some officers continued to feel that the stringent attitude taken toward racist language was unreasonable and excessive. In addition, the association of the Lawrence Inquiry with questions of racism meant that much police organisational activity was concentrated there while other aspects of discriminatory language and behaviour such as homophobia and sexism remained widespread. Indeed, observational research suggested sexist language and behaviour was all but endemic within the police service. The fact that these behaviours were so widespread was indicative of a managerial failure to apply the disapproval that accompanied racist language to other forms of discriminatory conduct.

There was a strong sense among minority officers that changes in the general climate of policing were largely 'cosmetic'. Women, minority ethnic and LGBT officers continued in large numbers to feel excluded, uncomfortable and discriminated against, feelings that appeared to be confirmed in the observational research. However, their experiences went largely unrecognised and unaddressed in the research sites and clearly need to be a focus of police attention and reform.

Even in the area of racism, the degree of attention paid to overt signs such as language was not necessarily matched by developments in other areas of policing practice. Thus, for example, whilst considerable efforts had been made by many, if not most, forces in relation to consultation with minority communities, the research highlighted continuing problems connected with routine police working practices and styles of service delivery. These largely stemmed from a failure to understand the ways policing is perceived and received in different communities, and, more particularly, to understand the principle of 'policing according to need'. A similar pattern was observed in the police service's treatment of some murder victims' families. Such failures are undoubtedly a barrier to increasing trust between minority communities and the police, may actually serve to undermine such trust as currently exists, and lead to the inflammation of existing tensions and difficulties.

This latter issue is of crucial importance to the police service and in many ways goes to the heart of why changes in policing since the Lawrence Inquiry were limited. The examples in this report of policing practices and patterns which failed to recognise the different ways in which policing was perceived and received by White and BME communities, are indicative of a broader failure by forces to think through what *institutional racism* might mean in practice, how and through what means it might occur, and how it might be mitigated or prevented.

The Lawrence Inquiry focused many of its recommendations on discrete areas for reform such as improving relationships with BME communities, training for FLOs and introducing a new definition for racist incidents. However, though centrally concerned with institutional racism, it did not include in its recommendations any details on *how* this might be tackled. Of course, this was not necessarily the responsibility of the Lawrence Inquiry and it may reasonably have been assumed that forces would begin by examining their practices and the ways in which they might wittingly or unwittingly disadvantage BME groups. However, in practice it appears many forces concentrated their reforms on areas where there were explicit and clear recommendations and, more particularly, where structural changes might be made. This helps to explain why, even in murder investigation where institutional racism was a central element in the Inquiry's criticism, major reforms focused on the organisation and management of investigation. Introducing logs to document initial actions at a murder scene is relatively straightforward; attempting to deal with underlying stereotypes which may lead to families and witnesses receiving an inadequate service is an altogether more difficult task.

In practice, forces tended to place much greater emphasis upon, and devote many more resources to, responding to individual acts or instances of racism. Much less attention appears to have been paid to the Lawrence Inquiry's central concern with institutional racism. Of course, these processes are by no means distinct or easily separable. Moreover, police responses to the Lawrence Inquiry such as the widespread use of CRR training, whilst focusing on individual officers, might reasonably also be defended as part of a package for tackling institutional racism (although, as the murder case study demonstrated CRR training was too generic to provide officers with the kind of context specific training required to treat BME groups according to their needs). Yet the overall sense from this research is that forces put greater efforts into tackling racism and discriminatory practices at an individual, rather than at an institutional level.

It therefore appears that, although the term 'institutional racism' was the single most powerful message that officers received from the Lawrence Inquiry, it did not prompt forces to consider very fully the collective and systemic aspects of discrimination which the term was trying to capture. There are a number of potential reasons for this. In part, it is likely to have resulted from the fact that individual acts and instances of racist behaviour are easier to understand and address than more intangible and embedded aspects of police practice. It is also possible that the term 'institutional racism' may itself have acted in some respects as a barrier to change. Despite the avowed intention of the Lawrence Inquiry to prompt police forces to focus upon those institutionalised policies and practices that might lead to the provision of inadequate, inappropriate or unprofessional services to minority communities,

the extraordinary resonance of the word *racism* within the term *institutional racism* was sufficient to deflect considerable police service attention away from the complex problem of indirect corporate discrimination.

While the changes stimulated, in part, by the Lawrence Inquiry were evident in all research sites, there were some notable differences among forces in the extent of change that occurred. In particular, one site – Site 6 – had made far less progress in all areas. The context in which forces operated appeared to be an important factor in the immediacy with which the Lawrence Inquiry and its recommendations were seen to be relevant to the force area, and whether they were tackled. In Site 6, the policing environment appeared to have fostered a general perception that the Lawrence Inquiry had little direct relevance to the area in general or the force in particular. Like other sites outside London, the Lawrence Inquiry was associated with the failings of the MPS, while the demographic profile of the force (with a small BME population and perceived low levels of racist incidents) made it easier for the force to distance themselves from the Inquiry and its recommendations as had the absence of any racist disorder which meant that at senior management level there was little impetus for change. Certainly the lack of awareness of even the most tangible changes emanating from the Lawrence Inquiry, such as the definition of a racist incident, suggests that, unlike other sites, efforts had not been made to communicate these developments to front-line staff.

We conclude, therefore, with a mixed message. There have been some substantial changes in policing in the past five years, not least the general excision of racist language, together with other positive developments in relation to the reporting, recording and investigation of hate crimes, murder investigation, family liaison and community consultation. However, there remain a number of very important caveats to this picture. First, the positive developments noted here are not uniformly visible across police forces. Second, forces – perhaps understandably – have tended to focus attention on those changes that are most obviously identifiable and, possibly, achievable. Finally, as has been outlined in some detail, the greatest continuing difficulty is understanding the nature of, and designing responses to, the problem of 'institutional racism' and that, despite intentions, certain groups may receive an inappropriate or inadequate service because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin.

Appendix

Lawrence Steering Group members

Charles Clarke (Chair)	Home Secretary
Hazel Blears	Minister of State, Home Office
Jacqui Smith	Minister of State, Department for Education and Skills
Doreen Lawrence	Independent
Maqsood Ahmad	Independent
Steve Allen	Metropolitan Police
Sarri Bater	Independent
Jan Berry	Police Federation
Iqbal Bhana	Independent
Aminah Bhatti	Independent
Judy Clements	Independent
Lincoln Crawford	Independent
Peter Fahy	Association of Chief Police Officers
Robin Field-Smith	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
Baroness Ruth Henig	Association of Police Authorities
Everett Henry	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
Baroness Ros Howells	Independent
Sukhvinder Kaur-Stubbs	Independent
Keith Kerr	Independent
Ken MacDonald	Director of Public Prosecutions
Rick Naylor	Police Superintendents' Association
R. David Muir	Independent
Trevor Phillips	Commission for Racial Equality
Ray Powell	National Black Police Association
John Roberts	Metropolitan Police Authority
Gil Robinson	Independent
Nick Smedley	Department for Constitutional Affairs
Paul Stephenson	Deputy Commissioner, Metropolitan Police
Beverley Thompson	Independent

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