

London Assembly's Police and Crime Committee – 23 January 2019 Transcript of Item 4 – Stop and Search

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair in the Chair): The main item of the agenda for today's business is stop and search. Can I firstly welcome our guests? Perhaps we could start off by you introducing yourselves. If I can start with you, Neena?

Neena Samota (StopWatch and Programme Director, St Mary's University): Good morning and thank you very much. My name is Neena Samota. I am here in my capacity as a trustee for StopWatch and also as an academic teaching criminology and sociology at St Mary's University. Thank you.

Jay Bance (Peer Outreach Team, Greater London Authority (GLA)): Hello. I am Jay Bance and I am a Peer Outreach Worker at City Hall.

Derreem Huggins (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): Hi. My name is Derreem Huggins. I am also a Peer Outreach Worker here at City Hall.

Oluwatosin Adegoke (Stop and Search Monitoring Group, Hackney Council Voluntary Service): Hello. My name is Oluwatosin Adegoke. I am a Team Leader at the Hackney CVS (HCVS).

Deji Adeosun (Youth Leadership Manager, HCVS): Good morning. My name is Deji Adeosun. I am the Youth Leadership Manager at HCVS and have been co-ordinating the Youth Monitoring Group now for the last six years.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair in the Chair): We have a number of questions to ask of you. It is your show today. As I said, it is a formal meeting and it will all be recorded, but do feel at ease. We want to listen to your experiences.

My colleagues will come in at various stages, but if I can kick off, the first section is about changes in the use of stop and search. If I can ask you Jay, Derreem or Oluwatosin about your experiences of the way that [police] officers carry out stop and search, Jay, do you want to come in with your own experiences?

Jay Bance (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): Yes. My experience personally has been quite bad, if I am entirely honest. I feel like a lot of young people in quite crime-ridden areas are quite stereotyped. You may grow up in an area that has a high knife-crime rate, for example, but you may not be a part of that percentage of people involved in that crime but, because you have grown up in that environment, you are still being prosecuted as one of those people. For example, there was a point in my life when on my way to school I was getting stopped every single morning. It made me feel like I had to take a different route to school just because I did not want to get stopped and for it to affect my journey.

Once you do get stopped, it makes you feel quite powerless. You feel like there is nothing you can do. You cannot get away or anything. You cannot. You just know you have to just face it. There is a point where young people might have nothing on them but they just run away. They do not want to be in that situation again. It makes them feel like they want to avoid it or try to run away.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair in the Chair): Can ask you when did this take place? Over what time period? Which part of London?

Jay Bance (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): South London.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair in the Chair): Over what time period?

Jay Bance (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): About a year ago when I was getting stopped every morning, when I was going to school still, yes. I finished school a year ago.

Peter Whittle AM: Whereabouts in south London?

Jay Bance (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): Peckham.

Derreem Huggins (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): In one of my experiences in my local area, I was stopped because they said I looked suspicious. I did not think I looked suspicious. I did not have a hood on. I was not wearing anything that may have made me look suspicious.

When they stop you, even though you do not have anything on your person that may be incriminating, you lose your self-worth in a way because it is like they are almost telling you that you are a bad person, telling you, "You look like this", or, "You are moving in a certain way". When you question it, they do not give you enough clarification on the things you have done, and so it just makes you feel, like Jay [Bance] said, powerless and just not in a position where you feel like you are a normal citizen, really.

My area is Finsbury Park. I am from Islington.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair in the Chair): Again, how long ago was this? Over what time period? How many weeks or months?

Derreem Huggins (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): This was, I think, about the end of 2017. I believe it to be about mid-December 2017.

Oluwatosin Adegoke (Stop and Search Monitoring Group, Hackney CVS): For my experiences, which have taken place in Hackney, I can only speak of my experiences of being stopped from three years ago because I have not been in London for the last three years and then my experience with being reintegrated in Hackney over the last three or four months.

I am going to start with three years ago. I would say my experiences were largely negative, but it is important to recognise that with the stigma, the police tendency to stop and search, with them being unwarranted stop and searches, there is also the tendency to provoke. There is also provocation going on where some individuals might throw up a hand gesture. I can speak for myself. One of my hand gestures was, say a positive one. It was very much just, "Hey". Just the act of any provocation leads to you being stopped and searched.

From my experiences over the last three or four months of actually going in to speak to some of the police officers with my work at HCVS, we found out that there has been internal scrutinising going on where officers are questioning each other and testing each other to see at what terms they turn to stopping and searching someone. What has been concluded is that some of them are doing it unwarrantedly.

Those are my experiences and it has been, in a sense, validated with the internal work that the police officers are doing.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair in the Chair): You said you had been in Hackney for three years?

Oluwatosin Adegoke (Stop and Search Monitoring Group, Hackney CVS): I have not been in Hackney for three years. I was at university.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair in the Chair): All right. I do not want to go into hearsay and anecdotal evidence as such, but what is your experience of your friends and other people?

Jay Bance (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): It is similar, yes, similar experiences.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair in the Chair): There is some strong stuff here. You said, Derreem, you do not feel like a normal citizen. Oluwatosin, you talked about the tendency to provoke and so on. I just want to know what the general pattern is.

Jay Bance (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): The police also try to provoke the young people they are stopping as well sometimes. For example, there have been situations where I have been stopped and I have not been found with anything on me and there has not been a crime committed, and officers have said provoking things to me such as, "I will see you in court soon", or things along those lines before. I personally feel that there was an attempt to provoke a reaction from me, which I did not give in to and react. I just walked off and carried on with my day, but I do not feel like that is acceptable.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair in the Chair): You talked about the experience with your friends. We have put questions to senior [police] officers over the last few months. Complaints seem to have gone down, for instance, but obviously you are saying that that is still continuing from the experience of your friends and so on. Can you shed any light on why that? The police have said that complaints are going down about stop and search or misuse of powers of stop and search.

Jay Bance (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): The complaints have gone down not because there has been a lower rate of the things that the police are doing wrong and are committing. Complaints have gone down because we do not feel like any action will be taken if we do complain.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair in the Chair): There are various tests done by the College of Policing and so on. I will not go into all of that, but they are meant to do certain things. When you were stopped, Jay, were you told why you were being searched?

Jay Bance (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): Yes. It could be different things on different occasions. One time it could be, "The knife-crime rate is high in this area, so we are obliged to search you". Another thing could be like, "Someone was robbed around the corner. Someone was robbed on this road here and you match the description", for example. I think that is quite a common one. Sometimes it is quite hard to believe when they say that because you think, "Do I really match the description of someone that has just robbed around the corner?"

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair in the Chair): And your experience, Derreem?

Derreem Huggins (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): Yes, everything that Jay [Bance] said I agree with because there is no specification on exactly what they are going to stop you for. They could tell you anything and they make it sound in a way where, "We have the right to search you now. Because of what we just told you, we have the right to search you". If you do not know your rights it is a lot harder to speak up for yourself and stand up for yourself.

You were talking about friends and if they have been through similar situations. I can say yes because one time I went to my friend's house and he lives on an estate, which is really bad in north west London. We stepped out of his house to go to the shop and, as soon as we stepped out of his house, a police car was driving past. They drove past and they looked at us and then they circled back and came to us. They stopped us, saying that there was this crime just at the top of the road and we matched the description, but when we said to them, "We just stepped out of the house. We have not gone anywhere. We just came outside to go to the shop", they said, "We still have to search you because of what has happened up the road".

At the time, I did not know as many rights as I do now and we just let them search us, but we felt like we cannot even go anywhere. We cannot go to the shop if we want to. We cannot just walk down the road casually, basically. It does not help when you know that there are some police out there who are actually trying to do good for the community.

Oluwatosin Adegoke (Stop and Search Monitoring Group, Hackney CVS): Yes, in short, they move with great authority and little clarity and you are not really made clear of why you are being stopped. But even once you are told something, it is such a convoluted description that it does really make sense to you and you just accept it. On top of that, I did not even know that you can refuse to accept being searched, which is another bit of information that is not really given to you, which should be given to you, and that is the responsibility of the officers. In that sense, that is also diverting from their true responsibility.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair in the Chair): OK. Let us move on. I did touch on the issue of complaints but one of my colleagues will come in later on to ask a more specific question.

If I can come to Neena and Deji, starting off with you, Neena. You contributed to the Committee's last investigation into stop and search, which was in 2014. What, if anything, has changed in the way the police use their stop and search powers over the past five years?

Neena Samota (StopWatch and Programme Director, St Mary's University): Thank you. I would like to just put that into the context of the work that StopWatch does. We are a coalition of academics, lawyers, civil society organisations, young people and community stakeholders. Our aim is to promote fair and effective and accountable policing. Since 2010, we have campaigned against disproportionate use of stop and search, the use of exceptional stop-and-search powers and also the weakening of associated accountability mechanisms.

I welcome the opportunity, actually, to provide evidence to this Committee five years on from 2014. That period marked a high point in the reform of the use of stop and search powers and led to some useful changes. Police forces across England and Wales, including the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) appeared to reduce the numbers of stops and searches year-on-year. However, claims made of targeted searches, intelligence-led searches, evidence-led searches, powers used with reasonable suspicion applied accurately have not actually amounted to improving the effectiveness of stop and search. That really is the key here.

In some ways, things have actually moved backwards. For example, at the end of last year police chiefs were calling for the expansion of stop and search powers by lowering the threshold for the suspicion required to use the power. These calls to lower reasonable grounds are profoundly misguided and detrimental to the legitimacy of the principle of policing by consent, and we have just heard some of these young men talk about that. Existing evidence indicates that reasonable suspicion is not a sufficient safeguard against misuse and diluting this requirement leaves it open to abuse and also widens discretion. Surely this type of thinking is a step in the wrong direction.

Also, this represents a significant U-turn in Government thinking. While in 2014 [The Rt Hon] Theresa May [MP], then Home Secretary, said that in relation to effectiveness, stop and search was a “dreadful waste of police time”, “conducting pointless stops and searches with all the bureaucracy that goes with them”, and:

“Nobody wins when stop and search is misapplied. It is a waste of police time. It is unfair, especially to young, black men. It is bad for public confidence in the police, too.”

Now [The Rt Hon] Sajid Javid [MP, Home Secretary] demonstrates no such concerns and wishes to ensure that not only will he make it easier for police officers to be able to use the powers to stop and search but also to reduce bureaucracy around it. That is worrying.

Since your last Committee report of 2014, ethnic disproportionality has been the highest it has ever been since records began. Our recent report, *The Colour of Injustice*, was published by StopWatch more recently. The use of stop and search has fallen sharply, dropping by 75% from the 2010/11 to 2016/17 periods. The million and half stop and searches that were conducted in 2008/09 now have dropped to 300,000 in 2017/18 and so a significant drop. Disproportionality has in fact increased and the use of stop and search has fallen, indicating that residual use of the powers is more heavily concentrated on black and minority ethnic (BAME) groups. Black people are now stopped and searched for any reason at more than eight times the rate of whites. Black people are nine times more likely to be stopped and searched for drugs, despite using drugs at a lower rate compared to white people. Similarly, arrests for drugs as a result of stop and search fell by 52% for white people between the 2010/11 and 2016/17 periods but did not fall at all for black people. Black people are prosecuted and convicted for cannabis possession at 11 and 12 times the rate of white people. Note that this is the statistic for possession of cannabis rather than the supply for class A and B drugs combined.

The point is that if knife crime, gangs or serious youth violence are such serious issues, how come police are still spending a disproportionate amount of time and their powers policing vulnerable groups for low-level drug possession? That should be noted. London data, in particular, highlights high rates of stop and search and indicates that that is a driver for ethnic disproportionality in to the criminal justice system because a large portion of these groups are resident also in the capital.

Overall, the rates of stop and search are higher among inner than outer London boroughs. The variations between boroughs are strongly linked to levels of deprivation and overall rates of stop and search are highest in the more deprived boroughs with considerable inequality. Rates of stop and search appear to be more sensitive to deprivation and inequality rather than crime, and I will turn to that in a later discussion around the use of Section 60 [of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994] as well.

There are patterns that are fuelling the disproportionality levels from back then. We have made step backwards rather than a move forwards in any positive direction.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair in the Chair): Thank you. There was a lot there. We do have specific sections on disproportionality, Section 60 [of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994] and community engagement coming up as well, but I did not want to stop you in full flow. Deji, your thoughts?

Deji Adeosun (Youth Leadership Manager, Hackney CVS): Yes. Neena [Samota] has outlined excellently in terms of the statistics and some of the feeling that has been happening since 2014. To be honest with you, I would say not much has really changed.

We talked a lot five years ago in terms of some of the recommendations that we wanted to implement, especially being more active in the community, and actually what we have seen is a dip. That dip has happened because the police would often say there is a lack of resources and so they are not able to engage in

the community stuff, but actually it is the community engagement that helps with policing. If you have a good relationship with your community, then there is a better feeling with officers and there is a better feeling with the community. That has gone. We hardly see officers coming into the community and taking that time out. They are more reactive. When you have more reactive officers, it creates tension and so there is a lot of tension on the ground.

Young people do not feel safe. We had a big incident that you all know about that happened with Rashan Charles and there is that sense that, "Could I be next?" Some people have said that. "What do I need to do to protect myself?" In fact, the latest quote is, "That the biggest gang is the police". Actually, that is quite disappointing to hear.

A trick was missed in the last report, especially around the community engagement piece. The police excuse for that has really been that their numbers have reduced and it is acknowledged that they have been reduced, but something needs to be done to keep that going.

Yes, we have seen the number of searches reduced. Young people are not reporting that they are being stopped and searched as regularly as they were, for example, in 2011 or 2012. However, also within that same period one of the things that we wanted to do was look at confidence in the police and do a piece of work to survey on the ground how people feel. The reports would often suggest that confidence in the police is quite high, actually. I think for Hackney it is about 70%, but when we actually unpick that, it is 300 people who happened to pick up their landline telephones. I do not know how many people have landlines. I do not anymore. Are they actually getting to the right people and asking the right people questions? That is a piece of work that we wanted to do. That has not happened. I believe that that would unpick and get more accurate information in relation to police confidence.

Visibility has diminished. We do not see police as often as we should. Therefore, young people do not feel safe and if young people do not feel safe, then you will see the repercussions of that in some of the knife crime that is going on in the capital at the moment.

In essence, I would say that we really have not moved forward. I echo Neena's point, actually. It does feel that we are going backwards.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair in the Chair): I can see some of my colleagues want to come in.

Susan Hall AM: Just a quick one. Do youngsters feel safe, then, when they see the police?

Deji Adeosun (Youth Leadership Manager, Hackney CVS): Yes, they do. There is a difference. With stop and search, the issue has always been about how the stop and search is carried out and the conduct of officers and, like these young men have said, the provocation does not always help. But actually just seeing officers being present and being there, yes, young people do feel safe. It is nice to see officers there. One young person said to me, "Look, if there were two rival individuals, as it were, and there was an officer there, nothing would happen". Things happen when there are no police. It is that simple. They want to see more officers but they want to see less stop and search as well.

Jay Bance (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): Could I add something to that as well? I feel that if the officers are present, they should be doing more than just patrolling the area. In terms of just talking about them having a better relationship with the community, if police are present, I feel like the majority of youths feel like they are only patrolling with the intention of stopping people rather than doing things in the community. If there was that presence to prevent rival people or crime being committed in an area, I think they should

actually be doing things in the community, specific things: doing work in the community centres or entering shops or doing anything rather than just patrolling up and down the roads looking for people to stop.

Susan Hall AM: Back on stop and searches, very often knives are taken off the streets, which obviously makes you safer. What do you think about that? Whilst they may stop people who do not have knives or anything else, thousands of knives have been taken off the streets because of stop and search. Young black lads are more likely to be victims than any other group. With fewer knives on the streets, do you not think that then makes you safer?

Jay Bance (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): It is actually a thing where you need to change the mindset of the youth rather than just continuously punishing them because, if someone feels like for them to feel safe they need to carry a knife on them when they step on the street, I do not think the punishment - the knife being taken away from them and them being given a charge - is big enough for someone to think, "OK, I am going to change my mindset now and now I am going to stop carrying a knife".

Susan Hall AM: OK. We will come back to that.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair in the Chair): Yes. In this session, what I want to do is get your experiences out, but we will be coming later on to how to go forward.

I just have a couple of questions before I hand over to Caroline Pidgeon [MBE AM]. The three of you, Jay, Derreem and Oluwatosin, when you were stopped, from what you have said as I understand you, you were stopped and searched but nothing else happened after that? Did the police write to you? Did they correspond?

Oluwatosin Adegoke (Stop and Search Monitoring Group, Hackney CVS): : After that? At a later date?

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair in the Chair): Yes. You were just stopped and searched and there was no further action of any type?

Jay Bance (Peer Outreach Team, GLA) and Derreem Huggins (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): No.

Oluwatosin Adegoke (Stop and Search Monitoring Group, Hackney CVS): Not in my experiences.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair in the Chair): Not in your experiences. Has it changed your outlook? You talked about Peckham, Hackney and Finsbury Park. I know it is a year on now, more or less, but has it changed your perception when you see a police officer on the street or a police van or whatever? Does it make you feel safer or apprehensive?

Oluwatosin Adegoke (Stop and Search Monitoring Group, Hackney CVS): I think what is important to note, which might touch on the previous speaker's point, is that despite the many knives that have been taken off the streets, if a knife has not been taken from me I am not really going to be aware of how safe I should feel because of how many knives have been taken off the streets. The only thing that will affect my perception of safety or my perception of being at home is what I experience when I get stopped. I am saying that the statistics of how many knives have been taken off the streets is all good and well and that is amazing, but my fundamental experience is that of being unwarrantedly stopped and, therefore, I will not feel at ease in my own community.

Derreem Huggins (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): I would also agree because now my perception has not really changed. Yes, it is good to see police in the area, but if a police officer looks at me I try to avoid eye contact because I feel like it is going to give him a reason for him to come and stop and search me. I have not done anything wrong. I know I have not done anything wrong and I am just a person walking past, but I would avoid the eye contact. When they look at you, they are trying to assess you in that split-second, especially when you make eye contact. If you stare at them for too long, then they feel like they have a right to come and stop you now. No, my perception has not really changed.

Jay Bance (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): Yes, I agree with the other three [panel] members as well. I do not feel like my perception has personally changed because I still have younger cousins and younger nephews who still experience the same things and I have seen it with my own eyes as well. I do not feel like there has been a change in the way the police handle it because I have seen the same things that have happened to me a year or so ago happening to my younger cousins and younger family members.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair in the Chair): Thank you. Can I hand over to you then, Caroline? You have two specific areas that you are going to talk about.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Yes. There are a couple of things that I want to talk about. One of the big things that has changed since we last looked at this as a Committee is that body-worn video cameras have been rolled out right across the MPS. At least in theory, every frontline officer will have a camera on them and, if they want to stop and search someone, they should immediately put that camera on.

Have you either personally or through people you know had any experience of stop and search with those cameras on and has that changed how the police behave? I do not know who would like to go first.

Oluwatosin Adegoke (Stop and Search Monitoring Group, Hackney CVS): I personally have no experiences with that and I have not heard of anyone with any experiences, which could be either a testimony to how ineffective is or a testimony to how underused it is. I am not sure. Take it how you will.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: The evidence we have had is that over 90% of stop and searches are being recorded and so it is a very high proportion, not 100% which we would like, but a very high proportion. Are you aware of --

Jay Bance (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): Yes, I have seen the cameras on the police officers when I am being stopped and searched, but there have been situations when I have not seen them turn it on or I have actually seen them turn it off.

There was one time when I saw that. I was not actually involved in this. I was walking past on my way to training and I saw there was an altercation going on and the police stopped a girl. There was a girl and she was getting arrested. Everyone was aware of this because it was quite spoken [about] in the community. They turned it off and put her in the van. They were restraining, but they were kicking her and hitting her while she was in the back of the van. This was after turning their cameras off and then they proceeded to bring her to the station.

I do not think it is as effective because they have the power still in their hands. They can just press it on or turn off. I do not think any punishment will be taken if they were not to turn it off.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: A number of officers would be at that incident and, if they all turned their cameras off, that would be pulled out as something strange that has gone on here. If the person then reported that there had been violence and so on as you have described, it would be a very serious matter.

Deji Adeosun (Youth Leadership Manager, Hackney CVS): I know that body-worn [video] is something that has recently been rolled out in Hackney, for example. Maybe within the last twelve to nine months it has just come out.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Yes, in the last year or so.

Deji Adeosun (Youth Leadership Manager, Hackney CVS): We will have an opportunity to do some dip-sampling of some body-worn footage, which is a change. They have agreed to allow us because, although I have not met any young people at the moment who have experienced that, from what I am hearing on the ground, at least from an officer perspective, they are quite happy to have body-worn [video] because at least they feel like they have some evidence. In terms of young people, they are happy but still are wanting to record from their own mobile phones and stuff.

My thing would be that more information needs to be rolled out about body-worn and how it works so that people are aware. There are a lot of assumptions about how it works. The police are aware of these assumptions and they need to do more to quash some of the concerns that people do have about it, really. We will have a better sense once we are able to do the dip-sampling and see how it is actually working in practice.

Sian Berry AM: Are they not already doing that?

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: On dip-sampling, I had been to Hackney last year and talked to the officers there. I thought dip-sampling was just routine now. Is that not the case?

Deji Adeosun (Youth Leadership Manager, Hackney CVS): Not yet. Not yet at all. This is something that we have been pushing for, but I am delighted to say that now we will have an opportunity at the end of the month to do our first dip-sampling session. It has not happened in the last year.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: That would be your local group looking at that?

Deji Adeosun (Youth Leadership Manager, Hackney CVS): That would be a local group looking at that, yes.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Hopefully, you can then tell the community what you have found and that might help confidence in it. I am not saying that it will solve by any means all the issues. Neena, you wanted to come in?

Neena Samota (StopWatch and Programme Director, St Mary's University): Yes, thank you. I was just going to add that there has been a great degree of enthusiasm about body-worn cameras. It is still mixed. I would say we need to also tread with a little bit of caution because, when they were initially rolled out, the question was what evidence was there, where the evaluation was in the pilots as well, to what extent that was shared widely and what were some of the concerns back then.

There certainly is an issue like has just been suggested in relation to how the camera is being used, the timings of when it is being turned off and on by the officer. There are critical moments which actually miss out on the context of the contact with the person involved on the street which are not clear.

Also, what is not clear is the length of time that the recording is kept and held in case of a complaint. Already we know that the trust and confidence in the complaints system is really low and poor. Added to that, using

body-worn video cameras and using that as evidence if it is only going to be kept for a certain period of time is certainly limiting.

There are so many other issues involved in the use of body-worn cameras. Yes, it does seem to improve -- OK, there is evidence on both sides and a clearer picture can emerge. We are not there yet. We should treat this carefully. At StopWatch we are doing some work looking into this in depth and we will be publishing a briefing on this soon, highlighting some of our concerns around the use of body-worn video.

I totally agree with Deji. I know that the scrutiny of the dip-sampling and the scrutiny of this body-worn video footage is not currently as accessible as it seems. Access is denied routinely. That is the reason why more work needs to be done to really understand the legal implications, the boundaries within which it can be used, the basis on which it can be challenged, who keeps what information, to what extent of time and so on. There are so many issues there that still remain to be uncovered. That is not just in the MPS. It is in other areas as well. We really need to track and monitor how this is proceeding.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: It has the potential to be a useful tool to help to improve the quality and the use of stop and search. Would you agree?

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair in the Chair): The Mayor has called it a gamechanger.

Neena Samota (StopWatch and Programme Director, St Mary's University): He has and we noted that as well. We are not convinced that it is a gamechanger yet because, if it is being disproportionately used in a certain way, the manner in which it is being used and how, until such time that there is clarity on how it is being used, to what extent it can be used for you know challenging and monitoring, then we do not really know. We should not firm up ideas on whether it is a good thing or not. Let us wait for the evidence.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair in the Chair): Sian, did you want to come in on the issue of body-worn video cameras?

Sian Berry AM: No, it was just a question of whether or not it was already being dip-sampled.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: I have just picked that up. You have already described to us people who have not been treated well when they have had a stop and search and your own experiences. Would people you know - or even you - be prepared to make a formal complaint if you felt you had been poorly treated by the police, particularly potentially with body-worn camera there as well, and if not why not? What is the general feeling for the young people you know?

Jay Bance (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): Young people are not confident that any action will be taken if they do complain. That is just as simple as that. They are not confident that if they do go and make that phone call or do go through, they are not going to be taken seriously and they do not have much power. They feel powerless, like I said before.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Even though it is captured and so, if you have had a really bad encounter, it is - in theory at least - recorded, that would not encourage them?

Jay Bance (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): No, I do not think so.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Ok. Derreem?

Derreem Huggins (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): I would agree with Jay. In the past, about seven years ago, I made a complaint and nothing happened in my case. No further action was taken. They did not tell me. They did not get back to me about the things that the officer did or anything. A couple of other young people that I know just do not want to make a complaint because they feel like, if it happens to come up in the –

Peter Whittle AM: Record you mean?

Derreem Huggins (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): Yes, records, it would not be taken further. A lot of young people think that it would just get dismissed. The sergeant or whoever may tell them, “Look, do not do this again”, but there is no real effect or real consequence for that officer who has abused their power.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Do you think young people feel that if they did make a complaint, the police might think, “All right, they have complained about us”, and might pick on them more? Is that their other fear as well?

Derreem Huggins (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): Yes. They feel that they will be targeted more, yes, because they have made a complaint and they may have had been in trouble before in the past but, if they have not done anything and have tried to make a complaint, the police officer would be like, “Look, we know you. We will just keep an eye on you now”, or something like that.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Do you have anything to add?

Oluwatosin Adegoke (Stop and Search Monitoring Group, Hackney CVS): Yes, I know someone who has made a complaint and that did not really go down too well. He was left feeling unsatisfied with the results of the complaint. With the added body camera, I think it could add more confidence.

However, I think it is important to note that considering the already existing poor confidence in making complaints, if something does go down and it is on body camera, because someone already lacks confidence in the complaints procedure, it might take them a few weeks or a few days or a few months – I do not know – for them to summon the courage and push aside their bias. At that point, is the footage still recorded? Is it even archived? Is it stored on cloud storage? Is it temporarily stored on something for 10 days? I do not know. You might need to make it clear how the body camera works if you are going to somehow instil confidence in members of the public.

Peter Whittle AM: Just following on from what Caroline has just said, what was wrong? You said it was unsatisfactory with the complaint and how it was dealt with. What happened?

Oluwatosin Adegoke (Stop and Search Monitoring Group, Hackney CVS): That is a tricky point because it is not my testimony and so it is me hearing from a friend and --

Peter Whittle AM: You can mention it if you do not mention his name or whatever. Do you know what happened? Did anything happen?

Oluwatosin Adegoke (Stop and Search Monitoring Group, Hackney CVS): I am really not sure how to explain it, I must admit. It is something that has just been loosely told to me and so I cannot regurgitate it because I do not know too much about it. I just remember leaving a conversation and being like, “OK, you are unsatisfied with the results of that”. I am so sorry.

Peter Whittle AM: No, sure. What you are saying, basically, is that if you are worrying that if you make a complaint you might be victimised?

Derreem Huggins (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): You can be victimised. No consequence will be taken upon the officer.

Jay Bance (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): You might want to try to avoid the officer you just complained about and so, if you see that officer, you might feel intimidated in some way because you have made that complaint. You might feel like it might lead on to being victimised.

Neena Samota (StopWatch and Programme Director, St Mary's University): Can I just add to that, Caroline [Pidgeon MBE AM]? It is actually really interesting because, in theory, having a complaints system and having structures is a fine thing and absolutely we should have, but what is less understood or acknowledged is what it actually does to the complainant because the complainant often becomes the problem. That is borne out by evidence given to us also by young people that they in turn become the problem. They have to, like Jay [Bance] said, avoid the place or take another route. Young people going to college could be late for exams. What are they going to complain about and who will they complain to?

We have heard that some young people who were on their way to college to sit their exam were stopped by police, held and detained. Nothing was found on them. They entered the college and were late for the exam. Nobody was going to give them that extra time because how were they going to explain that? How do you make a complaint about something like that?

On Monday at StopWatch we met with the Independent Office for Police Conduct and explained exactly the same situation. Who is responsible for that? How do we account for that part of the time taken away? The claims can be made on either side as valid and legitimate, but there is no resolution. Oftentimes having a complaints system where the complainant is then posed as the problem is just so detrimental.

Deji Adeosun (Youth Leadership Manager, Hackney CVS): I wanted to say that sometimes I do feel in relation to complaints that there is too much emphasis on wanting there to be a complaint made by members of the public. In reality when complaints are made, often - as has already been mentioned - nothing has been done or it appears that nothing has been done.

For me, the real push here would be for more transparency. If you really want to give members of the community confidence in the police complaints system, then they need to see that things actually happen when they make a complaint. Nobody sees anything. Complaints are made but we do not know what processes have happened. It is not communicated back. That individual is unsatisfied. You are not really sure why they are unsatisfied.

Also, more importantly, how did they come to that decision? The couple of complaints I have had before have always been knocked back as not serious enough and it needs to be something so, so serious, but we really need to be having members of the community almost involved or being able to see officers that are being reprimanded when they have done something wrong. That would give me more confidence, but at the moment we are sitting here and I do not even know if that takes place. I am sure it does, but who knows? When was the last time? Nobody knows.

If you want more people to come forward, then we need more transparency from the police. If not, it is just going to be the same.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Lovely. Thank you very much.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair in the Chair): The second section that we will ask you questions about is about community engagement and I will hand over to my colleague Assembly Member Susan Hall.

Susan Hall AM: Thank you. We have slightly touched on this. What impact does stop and search have on your relationship with the police? I do not know which one of you wants to start with that. Do you want to start, Derreem?

Derreem Huggins (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): The impact it has had on me is that the only time I would go to a police officer is if I had travelled somewhere that I am not familiar with and - I do not know - my battery is dead and I am looking for a specific road. I would go to them and ask them for directions, but I would not really go out of my way to speak to any of them in my local area even because, even if you talk to them, they do not respond in a way where you feel calm. You always feel on edge, basically. Yes, the impact it has had on me is that I would not really go out of my way to speak to them.

Oluwatosin Adegoke (Stop and Search Monitoring Group, Hackney CVS): That is a tricky question for me because it is assumed that there was a relationship to impact. One of my colleagues before spoke earlier about how the police do not even, say, go into a shop and say hello or go into the community area and just check out what everyone is doing. Do you know what I mean? There is no built relationship to impact. Stop and search has no real effect on my relationship with the police because I do not have a relationship with the police. That is in some sense part of the problem with feeling comfortable in my own home.

Susan Hall AM: Do you think particular communities feel more this way than other communities?

Oluwatosin Adegoke (Stop and Search Monitoring Group, Hackney CVS): I can only speak for my own community. I am not [sure] about that question.

Susan Hall AM: You have friends in various different communities. Does everybody feel the same way in your areas?

Oluwatosin Adegoke (Stop and Search Monitoring Group, Hackney CVS): Considering that all three of us are from different communities and I feel this way and they do too, then, yes, I guess so.

Susan Hall AM: Do you feel the same way?

Jay Bance (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): Yes, I agree completely.

Derreem Huggins (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): Yes, I agree.

Neena Samota (StopWatch and Programme Director, St Mary's University): Just to add, research evidence would show also similar levels of lack of trust and confidence and the disproportionate nature of the over-policing and under-protection is also applicable to Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities. We are not discussing that today, but that is just to answer the question about whether there are any other communities involved. Yes, there are.

Susan Hall AM: Do you think it is mainly the communities that are particularly stopped and searched, the BAME communities, that have this feeling?

Derreem Huggins (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): I would say yes because, even if it is not me or it is not my friends, if I am walking past, the majority of people I see who get stopped and searched are from BAME groups.

Peter Whittle AM: No one has a relationship with the police anymore. They are completely reactive, it seems to me. I do not know. Sorry. Just from my own perspective, I do not have a relationship with the police. They are never around. They are never there. I live in Woolwich. It is the same thing. They are never there.

Susan Hall AM: We are in this situation. It is for the police to keep us all safe. Black boys are particularly vulnerable inasmuch as they are disproportionately victims and so something has to be done. This has to be highlighted because something has to happen in the BAME communities to stop these atrocities that are happening. It is the police who are responsible for keeping us safe.

What do you think that they could do to give you more confidence in them in order that they can then try to keep you safe? That is what we have to find an answer to. What could they do that would make you feel happier around stop and search? There is no doubt that that does get knives and firearms off the streets. What could they do to give you more confidence in that or is there something you think that could replace it? Something has to be done. We cannot carry on as we are now. We are looking for suggestions for answers from you.

Deji Adeosun (Youth Leadership Manager, Hackney CVS): I have been thinking about this as well for the last few years and actually I have come to another conclusion. First and foremost, the police and everybody needs to acknowledge, especially in the BAME community, that people have suffered trauma. They have suffered police brutality, this disproportionality in terms of stop and search, deaths in custody, even just normal interactions, provocations, you name it.

Actually, what has been happening is that rather than acknowledging that there has been an issue before and we need to put our hand up, there needs to be healing that takes place in the communities on both sides. The police need to heal. The community needs to heal. We need to acknowledge that we did not get it right before and we need to acknowledge that. We need to go through a healing process and then together we need to come up with a new way in which we want to be policed as a community, working alongside the police, not the police telling us what they are going to do or vice versa, but everybody coming together around the table, similar to how we are today, and having an adult-to-adult conversation.

The problem is that we have just been putting a plaster over some cracks that have taken place and then expecting there to be change. Look, my first interaction with the police was a negative one. I have a son and I am hoping that his first interaction with the police will be a positive one. I am hoping he does not get stopped and searched first. If you have been stopped and searched first or you have been pushed up against a police car or your parents have gone through that, how do you expect to feel?

Jay Bance (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): It is something that is passed on through the different generations in these BAME communities. It is a very hard subject to change if this is something your parents have experienced and your parents' parents have experienced. It is something that has been passed on through generations and generations in these similar communities.

Deji Adeosun (Youth Leadership Manager, Hackney CVS): We have never had an apology. There has not been an apology to say, "Look, with the "sus laws"¹, we got it wrong there. We have learned from it and this is what we are going to implement". No, what happens is that we get told, "We are going to do this and we are going to do that". Without the acknowledgment to say that they have seen some of the errors in the policing, how can the community feel confident?

¹ stop and search of a suspected person under S4 of the Vagrancy Act 1824.

Susan Hall AM: OK. How would the police send a signal, then, if it is inbred with you more or less because it has happened to your parents, etc? You have admitted it goes on and on generation after generation. We absolutely have to find an answer to this for the sake of all your mums who send you out thinking, "My God, are they are going to be safe when they go out there?" The fact is that kids go out with knives because they think it will make them safer. We absolutely have to put a stop to that.

From the different communities, what would you say to the police? How can we put a stop to this absolute devastation that is going on on the streets of London? What would you say in your opinion was the answer? Because we have to find answers.

Jay Bance (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): In terms of building a better relationship with the police, it is not something that can happen over a short period of time, as you said, because it is inbred into these individuals in these BAME communities. Like we said, it is having a better presence in a community rather than having a negative presence in the community in terms of people, when they see the police, first thinking, "OK, I feel safe now", rather than thinking, "What is going on? Am I going to get stopped?" They just do not want to go the direction they were headed in. It is about bringing that positive presence into the community rather than a negative one.

Susan Hall AM: It is interesting because you did say earlier that you actually feel safer if there is a police officer there and if there are a couple of gangs. There is a conflict within yourself really there, is there not? You are happy to have them there to stop gang rivalry or whatever, but it is more on the one-to-one basis that there is an issue, then?

Jay Bance (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): Yes. Also, to add to what you said about gangs, it is quite hard to say what a gang is because a lot of these communities we are talking about have built up estates. The young children grow up together and usually they hang out in big groups of people. These people are usually, in my experience, victimised because they are considered to be a gang because they are with a big group of people.

Deji Adeosun (Youth Leadership Manager, Hackney CVS): We need to have the whole of the police structure singing the same hymn, as it were. For example, we have a good relationship with our local officers in Hackney, who are making every effort to build relationships, but then we have Trident [and Area Crime Command]. They come in in their vans to - from the police perspective - rescue the day or quash tension. They come in and literally kick bins over and mess things up. From a young person's perspective, a police uniform is a police uniform. We cannot tell the difference between a local officer and someone who has come in from one of their bases outside of the borough. We need all of the officers being receptive and sensitive to the community. It just feels like there is a handful of officers, the ones who stand outside the schools, to give us the engagement with the community and then everyone else just carries on as normal. That is not going to work, either.

Neena Samota (StopWatch and Programme Director, St Mary's University): I would just like to add there that I would really invite the Committee Members also to think about this issue in a slightly different way. If we ask the question, "We have to do something about this", yes, but actually, given the levels and the data and the evidence in relation to what extent it has been effective, it has not. There has been enough evidence, including the Home Office evidence, that even in tackling serious youth violence it has not been effective.

Therefore, the serious question we should consider should not be discussing stop and search and the use of stop and search in relation to crime. Deji [Adeosun] said it earlier. It is an issue of trauma. It is an issue of harm. We have created significant harm that we have not stopped to tackle and to address. We move from one harm to the next. This discussion and debate on the use of stop and search as a tactic and whether it is

useful or should be used for this crime more than that crime is totally detrimental. We are just spiralling. It would be a really better way of discussing this issue of stop and search if we do not discuss it in relation to crime.

You asked the question about how do we make it better. The interactions here can be made better by asking the police: (1) to cut down the levels of stop and search; and (2) to really give evidence if they are stopping someone and to actually prove and to give a legal justification and a moral justification for making that particular stop. That is the way we are going to change.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair in the Chair): I hesitate to interject but I think I must. The families that we have had before us here, the Mizen family in particular, actually want stop and search; done properly of course, but they want more stop and search. I have yet to come across, certainly, in my part of east London families who have lost loved ones and so on who do not want stop and search, as I said, done properly. I also feel this is the logic of what you are saying: do not look at stop and search in the context of crime but look at it in the context of trauma.

Neena Samota (StopWatch and Programme Director, St Mary's University): Yes. It is because of the significant amount of trauma that has been created, the gaps in complaints, the issues of trust and confidence. When you put that together, it is --

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair in the Chair): I understand what you say about trauma, but it is your words, "Do not look at it in the context of crime". I am struggling to work out the logic of what you are saying. Where are you going with that?

Neena Samota (StopWatch and Programme Director, St Mary's University): It is used in the context of controlling crime, yes. Bear with me for a second because, although the language is used that it is being used to control crime, when we actually look at the evidence it has not controlled crime enough. It is not effective. The data itself - the MPS's own police data - demonstrates that the proportion of arrests, fines and detection rates are really low.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair in the Chair): Yes, we have some figures in our briefing.

Neena Samota (StopWatch and Programme Director, St Mary's University): We have to understand how this stop and search power as a tactic is being used and applied because here is the evidence. This is how it is being applied. We are creating a much more significant series of problems in that way. Therefore, when we talk about stop and search, we should be questioning specific instances of stop and search, how that has been undertaken by the officer and what the justification for that is. That is where the gaps are in practice.

Sian Berry AM: Neena, I wanted to ask you a few more questions because I am interested in the comments you made in your introduction about the intersectionality of deprivation and race and the spatial distribution of stop and search across London. As I understand it, you said that there is a strong correlation between deprivation and stop and search and that that goes beyond the correlation with actual crime levels. Is that right?

Neena Samota (StopWatch and Programme Director, St Mary's University): Yes. This data you will find in our recent report, which was done by our colleagues at the London School of Economics (LSE), StopWatch and the drugs charity Release. There are variations between boroughs that are strongly linked to the levels of deprivation. Overall rates of stop and search are highest in the more deprived boroughs, where there is considerable inequality existing already. The rates of stop and search appear to be more sensitive, when you look at the data, to deprivation and inequality rather than crime. Even more recent research by

[Paul] Quinton [Evidence and Evaluation Adviser, College of Policing], Ben Bradford [Professor, Security and Crime Science, University College London] and Matteo [Tiratelli, Teaching Fellow, Sociology, University College London] has suggested the exact same thing about the use of stop and search, to separate it from crime.

What we are looking at is how this particular power is being used in areas of deprivation and inequality rather than addressing crime. The concentration of stop and search in boroughs with high levels of deprivation and inequality actually fuels disproportionality. If you look at the study - there are graphs and charts in our report as well which you are welcome to look at and I will send a copy of that to the Committee - disproportionality is highest in the relatively wealthy and affluent boroughs, which is quite interesting. White people are subjected to very low rates of stop and search in such locations while black people continue to experience heightened rates of intervention even when they are passing through and they do not even live there. This pattern is consistent with ethnic profiling because it indicates that black people and black communities are being singled out for suspicion on that basis. Those are interesting trends and patterns within the boroughs across London and it is a really worrying situation.

Sian Berry AM: Yes.

Neena Samota (StopWatch and Programme Director, St Mary's University): After that, the use of stop and search, claiming that it is effective is --

Sian Berry AM: Yes. I am just trying to think of some other examples of how that might manifest itself if police were dealing with a particular incident. I am just thinking. Say there was a mugging or a series of burglaries going on in an area that was not deprived. If police were meeting the residents of the area on the street and there was a live situation going on, I am thinking they might go up to those people and say, "Have you seen anything?" It was interesting to me the example you gave - I think it was Jay [Bance] - of being stopped when it was coming out of your house. Was that you? It was you, sorry [Derreem Huggins]. I have written them both down. I was listening.

You had just come out of your house and there was apparently a live incident going on. The police in that situation said, "We want to stop and search you". They did not say, "Have you seen anything going on?" They were not engaging with you as a member of the community who might help them solve the crime, they were merely casting suspicion upon you. That seems to me like part of the key to this. Something that might help is police dealing with members of the community as people who might help them rather than people who are under suspicion. It does not seem to me, from the examples you have given, that that is how the police treat you at all. Is that ringing true?

Deji Adeoshun (Youth Leadership Manager, Hackney CVS): That rings true. I have never heard of that, in terms of that kind of approach. A similar situation happened to one of my members on the Stop and Search Monitoring Group. He literally stepped out and he was searched. He was not asked, "Have you seen anything?" He was told he fits the description, actually, like you [Derreem Huggins] mentioned earlier. Yes, there is a different approach to different areas. It is clear. That is what I am trying to allude to. There is a bigger thing going on here and we need to get into that and unpick what that is rather than just keep doing the same old thing.

Sian Berry AM: Yes. Sorry, just to continue with the example, say in that situation you asked, "Have you seen anything?" and you were talking to the perpetrator, in those circumstances the perpetrator would probably start to act suspiciously and then you would have grounds to search them. But it is just coming in, seeing you there and thinking you might be suspicious. That seems to me like not a good enough reason.

Neena Samota (StopWatch and Programme Director, St Mary's University): That is the heavy-handed approach. What we have also heard at StopWatch very routinely now - and this has also happened to one of my students at university - cases where the instant response of the police is to start handcuffing you, even before they have started doing anything. That is a really worrying issue. That has been observed by some of our members but equally worrying is: how can you start handcuffing people? There are issues. There is some real disregard for civil liberties here, obviously, but it is the manner. It all speaks to the manner in which police are conducting themselves. I am not saying all but this particular issue has come to our attention and we would like to know what the policy is around that. Is there a policy? Is there a procedure which has suddenly changed that we do not know about where you are stopping someone for questioning and you handcuff them? That is really worrying.

Florence Eshalomi AM: Thank you so much for the information and evidence you have been giving today. One of the things that I have been discussing with some of the young people in Lambeth and Southwark is around the fact that they feel that the police need a lot more training in terms of unconscious bias, especially when it comes to black men. Some of the people I spoke to said that they feel there is a stereotype about the fact that specifically black men are aggressive and angry, and with that sort of embedded unconsciousness, when they are going out and approaching their job that is almost sometimes ingrained in them already. What is your take on some of that training? Also, do you feel that a lot more needs to be done with some of the younger kids? Again, we are seeing more younger children - we are talking about primary school aged children - being involved in drugs and criminal activity. At what age do you feel that we should start building up that relationship with young people and the police?

Derreem Huggins (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): As early as possible. From Year One, I feel, because the earlier you get them to work or speak to each other, there would be a better understanding. Through the years, even though they might come across bad experiences with some policemen, they would still see or still remember that there are good policemen out there. Even the way the training is, if police had a bit more communication training when speaking to young people instead of approaching them like they have automatically done something wrong, I feel that would help as well. Having them from as early as possible, Year One maybe in primary schools.

Oluwatosin Adegoke (Stop and Search Monitoring Group, Hackney CVS): Is the question at what age should --

Florence Eshalomi AM: In terms of helping to address some of that community engagement and community tensions, do we need to start looking at relationships with the police from a much younger age? As Deji [Adeoshun] said, your first experience with the police was a negative one. Should we try to boost up more support of police going into schools and youth clubs? Do you feel that is working? There is a great campaign which I am sure some of you have seen, 56 Black Men, in terms of challenging that stereotype to say, "Just because I am in a hoody it does not mean I am associated with a gang". How do we change some of that mindset which unfortunately is with some officers?

Oluwatosin Adegoke (Stop and Search Monitoring Group, Hackney CVS): Yes, that is definitely effective, getting them involved in youth clubs and secondary schools as soon as possible. Also, community check-ups. Police knocking on your door and just speaking to a parent can be potentially more effective than getting them into a school because then you have that experience being passed down to the children at whatever age. As long as it is coming from a trusted source, then it might be more effective.

With challenging unconscious bias, you can challenge it with the method I have just described or with lead Sergeants or lead officers scrutinising their team. When Deji and I went into our local police office, one of the officers had taken it upon himself to scrutinise each member. He was quite high up and he would scrutinise

them following a specific method. He might have called it the HAND technique or something, an acronym for ways that you should approach stopping people. What he found out was that lots of officers would jump to the conclusion of stopping and arresting someone with the wrong premise. He would be challenging that on a regular basis. On top of method one of getting officers to get more involved in the community, you also then have internal challenges to the unconscious bias. I think the second one is potentially more effective than the first.

Deji Adeosun (Youth Leadership Manager, Hackney CVS): Just to follow up on that quickly, definitely, up to about six or seven [years old], if you speak to young people they like the police and they have no reason not to like the police. They see them driving around in police cars and all sorts of things. What we need to do is get to them when the perception starts to change.

The unconscious bias training is key and that cannot be done by an MPS officer. All training is done by officers. It needs to be done by somebody outside who understands and gets it because unconscious bias is playing a key role in policing. You are hearing the statistics from Neena [Samota] and some of those officers will say, "I do not have a particular bias", but --

Florence Eshalomi AM: But it is evident.

Deji Adeosun (Youth Leadership Manager, Hackney CVS): But it is evident, obviously, in the way that you are policing. We need to be braver and we need to be open to having these discussions. It was in the Stephen Lawrence report [Macpherson Report 1999] about institutional racism. It is still there. Let me call it out. What has been done to really address that? We need to go back to that report, look back and say, "Are we addressing these things?" because some of that institutional racism is what we are seeing play out in some of the interactions that we have been talking about.

Susan Hall AM: Just very quickly then because I am under [time] pressure, I absolutely agree with that but do you think there is an unconscious bias against the police just because they are police from some of the community?

Deji Adeosun (Youth Leadership Manager, Hackney CVS): What there is is the trauma. We did ask this in the summer with a group of young people. Some young people have not had an experience with the police, but they have a negative perception of the police because it comes from their parents. You are right, some of that has come from the family and I guess that is why we need to go through this process.

Susan Hall AM: We need to find the answer to all of that. We have to pursue it and find something. I have two very quick ones that I have to ask. I should think that they are easily answered and quickly.

How can people find out about their rights with regard to stop and search? Are there gaps in the information available about people's rights and, if so, how can we fill those gaps? Ever so quickly.

Neena Samota (StopWatch and Programme Director, St Mary's University): OK. Can I take that and Deji can add to that? Yes, there are definitely gaps. I know at different points in time the police and MPS have tried to provide information about knowing your rights and campaigns and so on, but I would be with Deji there and also yourself in terms of looking at community organisations as the conduit, local community organisations that help with that engagement process. Police should not shoot down into the local schools and start doing engagement because that is not helpful. If at all, that is a regressive move. It should be done and mediated through experienced organisations that are actually doing the work.

Even at StopWatch we have pages and sections that outline [information]. We provide information and work with a range of community organisations, providing information on how to complain. We produced the Complaints Guide in 2016 based on consultation with community members and with young people. Also, we produced a guide for parents and children in 2017. These are sections, ways in which we can inform communities and make them better aware of what their rights are. At the moment, like we heard earlier in relation to the body-worn videos as well, there is not enough information coming from the police themselves as to what is the right procedure. Based on that, the rights then become more clear.

Susan Hall AM: I know they have produced lots and lots of leaflets. It is probably how they are getting them out. That should be looked at. Thank you, Chair.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Just to pick up on this point, back in November [2018] the Commissioner of the MPS told us that in many of our schools, young people are given really good explanations of both section 1 [Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984] and Section 60 [Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994]. I am wondering, perhaps to Jay [Bance] and Derreem [Huggins], were you taught about those rights in school, where do you think would be the best setting to be informed about those rights and who should provide it?

Jay Bance (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): I have never experienced being informed of those rights at school. I went to two schools as well and that was not the case at either of them. In terms of getting that education across to young people, the police need to partner up with people who do have that solid relationship with those young people. If they do partner with the people who have that sort of relationship and there is that connection there, the police can pass on that information to those people who have that relationship. They can partner up and do this in the local community, like youth clubs or other areas where young people gather.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: But you did not have that at school. Derreem, did you?

Derreem Huggins (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): No, I did not have anything like that at school but it would be a good idea if it was part of the curriculum at school. Know your rights. It is something everyone needs to know, so why not distribute it in a way that all the young people can get it and it is compulsory? Yes, make it compulsory.

Oluwatosin Adegoke (Stop and Search Monitoring Group, Hackney CVS): Diversify distribution and, yes, have it in schools but do not rely on it being in schools.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: You are not aware particularly of the police delivering it in schools?

Oluwatosin Adegoke (Stop and Search Monitoring Group, Hackney CVS): It did not happen at my school. I learnt it from my youth club.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: That is helpful, thank you.

Peter Whittle AM: Just carrying on from what you said earlier, can I ask you if as part of your monitoring, just on a basic principle level, you see the need for stop and search? That sounds like a really dumb question to ask at this point, but I think it is crucial. Do you think that stop and search is necessary, not whether you think it is being done right, or would you want to see it abolished?

Deji Adeosun (Youth Leadership Manager, Hackney CVS): The simple answer is yes, stop and search is needed because there are some young people or individuals carrying stuff. To abolish it completely would not be the right move. But yes, it needs to be done properly and it needs to make sense. When it is targeted at

particular groups, that is when it becomes a problem. Yes, you do need stop and search. You cannot not have it.

Oluwatosin Adegoke (Stop and Search Monitoring Group, Hackney CVS): I understand why you would suggest that but it is a tool for finding out more information. If you have reason to suspect someone, you then use the tool to find out more information. It is necessary in that sense but it only works in a very specific way. It is about finding those conditions.

Peter Whittle AM: I see. You are not against the principle of it as such.

Oluwatosin Adegoke (Stop and Search Monitoring Group, Hackney CVS): No. The execution.

Peter Whittle AM: Fair enough. I just wanted to clarify that. That is all.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair in the Chair): I have one more question and then we will move to the next section. Neena, you talked quite rightly, in my opinion, about the need to get information out to community organisations and work with community organisations. This debate actually started back in 1981 or before that. Some of us remember the Brixton riots, uprisings, disturbances or whatever you call it, and stop and search was a key factor. Before Macpherson [The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, 1999], when some of us got into politics, we had the Scarman Inquiry [1981], which recommended and in fact police consultative groups were set up under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act of 1984. Today we have independent monitoring groups and we have various community events and Safer Neighbourhood Boards. Are these structures not working? It is coming up on 40 years from the Scarman Inquiry in 1981 and 1982.

Neena Samota (StopWatch and Programme Director, St Mary's University): Absolutely. I have personally also been looking into this issue. To what extent have scrutiny groups monitoring been effective? There are periods where they are effective, when we all come together, wish to make a change and do effective work, and then there are moments after we establish the structures. It depends on different boroughs, if you are talking just about London, when the Chairs of certain monitoring groups are imposed forever. Where are the changing faces? Where are the young people who are engaging in those community monitoring groups? There is a real problem in relation to creating structures which then just become bureaucratic exercises in themselves. We need to change that and that is why I am not surprised you have not seen any change, because that in itself has become the embedded nature of the working of these monitoring groups.

We need to be more proactive, making sure that monitoring groups: (1) work effectively; (2) that the data is provided to them in an effective and timely manner; and (3) training. We at StopWatch have been saying to young people who join monitoring groups, "Please get the training. Understand how disproportionality should be understood in your local area and in your local context". These are some of the things I would highlight in relation to monitoring groups.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair in the Chair): Thank you. Of course, if there was time we could carry on with this discussion but we are going to move to the third section, which is the use of Section 60, to be led by my colleague Assembly Member Dismore.

Andrew Dismore AM: Neena, perhaps we will start with you. What is your view of how Section 60 is used in London?

Neena Samota (StopWatch and Programme Director, St Mary's University): There is a real interesting history about Section 60 searches, as you may be aware. It increased dramatically with the introduction of

Operation Blunt [2] in 2008 across London - it was an anti-knife crime operation - and the Home Office Tackling Knives Action Programme. The evaluation of these projects showed no measurable impact on reducing the levels of knife crime at all. From between 2005 and 2010, the use of Section 60 rose more than 300% generally but for black people it rose by 650%. This was some information that was analysed at StopWatch. At StopWatch we undertook some research and found that in 2010, black people were 23 times more likely to be stopped and searched under Section 60. The MPS also tightened the use of its power.

The 2013 review, as a result of which the Best Use of Stop and Search (BUSS) scheme emerged, led to even tighter authorisation of the regime, which limited the use of this power in local areas. The use of Section 60 has seen a dramatic dip since the Home Office review in 2013 and since 2014 it has come down. However, looking at the most recent data, again, it is worrying that from 2014 to 2016 we saw significant reductions in the use of Section 60 police powers but from 2017/18 there has been a rise again. I am sure this is responding to the usual theme of knife and gang-related activity. In the London region itself there were 1,838 uses of Section 60 stops and searches and the total arrests made on that was a very small proportion.

There is, again, a question. You may bring back the use of this power but we have not learned from previous mistakes, where Section 60 was called out as being extremely problematic. The issue went all the way to the European Court [of Human Rights] and to our Supreme Court as well. Bringing it back but on the other hand, at the same time, reducing the threshold for suspicion; put together, these two things are really worrying. I would watch Section 60 because it seems to be on the increasing trend again and we do not understand why because of the manner in which it is being used and the fact that what it is resulting in as an outcome is very small. On the other hand, we have brought back the other problems that it creates, which is poor confidence and trust in exactly those communities that we are discussing.

Andrew Dismore AM: Can I go on to the last issue? I want to come back to some other issues. When I have seen Section 60 used in Camden, for example, it has been around maybe one or two wards and it has been after a serious incident where people have been stabbed, murdered or shot at. Section 60 has been used primarily to try to put a lid on tit-for-tat. It is difficult to prove what would have happened if you did not have the Section 60. Would there have been warfare on the streets if they had not had that and brought in extra officers as well, which goes with a Section 60? Has it been effective in trying to stop tit-for-tat between different gangs?

Neena Samota (StopWatch and Programme Director, St Mary's University): If the police are responding to a situation that is live, that is happening, and there is an immediate response for which they have not only intelligence but some really important information, absolutely, the use of that -- but alongside informing community members that they are going to be applying it, using the BUSS scheme, effectively, using all of those triggers, explaining the use of the search and applying it in that area. It has happened in Brent and in some other areas across London as well. Absolutely good. If you follow that then the likelihood is that people will understand what it is being used for, it has been appropriately explained and the community is behind you. The problems have been when it has just been slapped down and there is a shutdown, people are just indiscriminately stopped and searched and not much information is given. We are all human beings. We want to know what the hell is happening.

Andrew Dismore AM: I am going to come on to the information and how to explain in a minute but just getting back to Section 60, in the circumstances I have just outlined, I do not think it has been used in Camden - which is one of my boroughs - in circumstances where it has not been as a result of something horrible happening. So long as it is explained to people and people know what is going on, that is OK from your point of view?

Neena Samota (StopWatch and Programme Director, St Mary's University): Absolutely. The BUSS scheme gives you all of those key points. The problem, again, is when it is not being done properly.

Andrew Dismore AM: What evidence is there that Section 60 has been used not in response to very clear intelligence or what is happening or is about to happen, but just doing it for the sake of doing it? Does that actually happen? How often and where in particular?

Neena Samota (StopWatch and Programme Director, St Mary's University): Currently, I do not have information on that. Nobody has said that it has happened in an indiscriminate manner. It is simply based on what we are saying, that it has to be explained properly. That would be the good basis of applying Section 60. Because it is a suspicion-less search, if you are applying it and using it, the police have to be very, very careful. The onus lies on them, not on us. We are just seeing the fallout and then trying to make sense of it. What could have been done better here?

Andrew Dismore AM: Certainly, Section 60 has to be authorised quite high up the food chain and for a limited period, and usually - certainly in my experience - in a limited area, not a whole borough slapdown.

Perhaps we will come to Jay, Derreem [Adeoshun] and Oluwatosin [Adegoke] and ask you. What experience have you had of Section 60, if any? Do you know what Section 60 is, for example? Section 60 is a very specific police power that enables the police to stop and search people without having to have any reason for doing so, but usually because there has been a very serious incident or they have very clear intelligence it is going to happen. You have no direct experience of that?

Jay Bance (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): I have had experience of it, of being stopped and they are telling me -- this is an example of when something has happened in the area, right? So when something extreme has happened. Yes, I have had experience of it but I do not feel like my personal opinion is -- if something has happened in the area they should have enough evidence to have some kind of idea of who, where this happens or some form of explanation for where they should stop these people, if you understand what I mean, rather than, "I am going to just knock down everyone in that area and stop everyone I can until I find someone or some evidence in relation to the incident that occurred".

Andrew Dismore AM: From the police point of view, they would also say it is a deterrent to stop something happening rather than necessarily investigating what has happened. Deji, do you want to add to that?

Deji Adeoshun (Youth Leadership Manager, Hackney CVS): Just like Neena [Samota] says, in Hackney, for example, we have seen Section 60s go on a slight rise, but even though there has been a rise in the number of Section 60s, in terms of actual searches there have not been that many taking place. For us at the moment, we are just watching what is going to happen. Our main concern was that we did not have the free-for-all that we had before in 2011, because it did feel like a free-for-all where every person is just being stopped. It does seem like at the moment they want it to be measured and it is not a free-for-all at the moment. My opinion would be, again, it is that communication piece. Often it has been done and we find out after it has been implemented. It would be nice to know before that you were about to do it so that at least people are aware, especially if it is going to do what you want it to do, which is to be a deterrent. It is good to let people know.

Andrew Dismore AM: With the Section 60 that has been in my area, I usually get an email from the police, "We have just introduced a Section 60", or, "We have just applied for a Section 60" to let me know the area that they are covering. I get that email. Other people on the Safer Neighbourhood Board get that email. How do you think it should be communicated and how do you think it is communicated?

Deji Adeoshun (Youth Leadership Manager, Hackney CVS): I get the same email. I will put my hand up. I just think, "Why can they not stick it on their website, their social media?" For us, you are limited to your network. You want the whole borough to be aware.

Neena Samota (StopWatch and Programme Director, St Mary's University): Absolutley.

Deji Adeoshun (Youth Leadership Manager, Hackney CVS): For me, is there a clever way of making sure that everybody knows? Maybe text messages or something. It should go a lot wider than just the Safer Neighbourhood team.

Andrew Dismore AM: Of course it should. I am not disputing that.

Deji Adeoshun (Youth Leadership Manager, Hackney CVS): No, I agree.

Andrew Dismore AM: Totally fair. People have to know what is happening otherwise there is no deterrent. It is like nuclear weapons. There is no point having a nuclear deterrent if people do not know you have it.

Neena Samota (StopWatch and Programme Director, St Mary's University): If I may, I would just point out that in the recent figures for Section 60, 1,838 were applied. Only on 63 people did they find any offensive weapons. If they are applying it, they are applying it for this kind of reason and the things that you have just outlined, but the problem there again is that out of those 1,838 people, 811 were from black groups. Again, we see the disproportion. It is how it is also being applied. Who are the people in that Section 60 area who are being stopped and searched? Within this is also the hidden problem of stop and account, given Lawrence Inquiry recommendation 61. Have we progressed? No, we have not, because even on that one we have gone back. The MPS, without any consultation with its communities, decided to roll back on the recording and monitoring of that as well.

We are glad that the use of Section 60 has been drastically curtailed, which is wonderful. You have more safeguards around it and the requirement for authority given from a much higher level. However, even when it is on a slight increasing trend at the moment, we are seeing the same story again in relation to it being applied more disproportionately to black groups rather than other groups.

Again, going back to the deterrence example, deterrence is only in relation to the punishment, the speed of punishment, how it is applied and how it is received. It only has a very small impact. The issue really is that it is limited for that period of time, because if people want to stash away their knives or hide something they would have already done it. Again --

Andrew Dismore AM: The police would say, "Look, somebody has just been stabbed from Gang A. Gang A is therefore going to want to retaliate against Gang B. By flooding the area with officers with Section 60 powers, we have taken some of the heat out of that. Let things cool down a bit and then we can try to move forward from there. If we do not do that --"

It is a bit like trying to prove a negative with Section 60.

Neena Samota (StopWatch and Programme Director, St Mary's University): Yes.

Andrew Dismore AM: What we do not know is what would have happened had there not been a Section 60. Would we have had World War III on the streets or would nothing have happened anyway? We just do not know.

Neena Samota (StopWatch and Programme Director, St Mary's University): It is the use, definitely. It is a power that the police have. They use it. It is a valid use of the power when there is a reason for doing so but it is about the application and it is about engaging with the community. That communication is vital.

Andrew Dismore AM: Basically using social media is the only real way to get it out, I suppose.

Derreem Huggins (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): One way. I do not think it is the main way.

Andrew Dismore AM: How do you think it should be got out other than social media, bearing in mind it is usually only for 12 hours or so, very rarely more than 24 hours?

Derreem Huggins (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): Say, for example, on an estate you get these noticeboards or in a local park you get these noticeboards. If you just put up a little leaflet saying, "This is what is happening in the area, this is what the police are going to do" or whatever. I know a lot of young people will look at these noticeboards because they want to see what is going on in their area, whether it is to do with police or whether it is to do with something they like. There are different ways than just social media. It is about how to get it out there for the young people to see.

Andrew Dismore AM: Bearing in mind it is just for 12 hours or 24 hours.

Derreem Huggins (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): Yes. If it is for 12 hours, you put it on the noticeboard and then take it down. Say if I see it, I would be inclined to tell my friends, "This is what is going on". It would work.

Oluwatosin Adegoke (Stop and Search Monitoring Group, Hackney CVS): I think text message is the way to get it out.

Andrew Dismore AM: But that assumes that the people you want to get to know are following the MPS text, does it not?

Oluwatosin Adegoke (Stop and Search Monitoring Group, Hackney CVS): Yes, but not everyone might have data, for instance, or even be connected to the MPS social media. Text is a more unified method of communication.

GLA Deji Adeosun (Youth Leadership Manager, Hackney CVS): Also because young people are less likely to follow the MPS on Twitter and Instagram.

Susan Hall AM: Neena, you intimated that Section 60s are put in for no good reason in instances. Can you send this Committee some evidence of that? Certainly, the same as Andrew [Dismore AM], I have been involved in when they have been put in. The ones I have known about have been put in because of something drastic that has happened and the police want to calm things down in the local community. It is done very quickly by a very senior officer. It cannot just be put in willy-nilly. The trouble is that if people are listening to you and listening to you saying, "They are just put in", then they will believe that. If we can have evidence of that then we can take the police to task if that is the case, because it should not be done.

I have never seen evidence of that. I have seen it go out in consultation with the groups that you can. The point was well-made by Andrew. The problem is that these things go in very, very quickly in order to calm situations down so that there is not more bloodshed, which on occasions there has been. It is vital that it is done quickly. If Section 60 is put into place then that senior officer has the ability to get other officers in to help the situation. In an earlier question you [guests] said that you feel safer if there is a police officer around,

and they can do that. Their prime objective is to stop more violence on the street. If you have evidence that that is not happening then please do let us know.

If you have a disproportionate number of black lads being stopped on one of these Section 60s, it could be that there are two black gangs against each other and therefore there is stop and search there. These figures can be spoken about but sometimes you need to delve into why these things happen. Communication keeps coming up. Communication is absolutely vital because the police do things for a reason. If perhaps different groups of people understood why they did them, challenge [that] if that is not right but if they understood why it was done then perhaps that would start to ease the community tensions with the police. Perhaps you will send us the evidence of that.

Neena Samota (StopWatch and Programme Director, St Mary's University): What I was suggesting, looking at the data, was that every Section 60 is obviously authorised at a very high level, following the guidance given by the Home Office. I was merely suggesting there are instances where people feel, "Why was it applied?" because nothing was found, based on what was actually found as a result of putting that in place. If that is explained and monitoring groups understand that, then that is the point I was making.

Susan Hall AM: You are a monitoring group and I am saying to you, if you have any evidence then let us know.

Neena Samota (StopWatch and Programme Director, St Mary's University): Sure.

Susan Hall AM: If not, I do not think we should be suggesting that the police just do it willy-nilly because that does not help with community relations.

Neena Samota (StopWatch and Programme Director, St Mary's University): It does not, absolutely.

Susan Hall AM: No, it does not. Please find evidence so the police can answer to that, if in fact there is anything they have to answer to. Thank you.

Tony Devenish AM: I wanted to come back to the point that several of you made near the beginning in terms of community engagement. As Peter [Whittle AM] said, there is not an awful lot of engagement because the police numbers may have been cut and they are just running around London doing their job. Certainly, again, the Chair mentioned the 1981 riots that I am old enough to remember, where football was particularly used after the riots to try to get out there and talk to people. That was when I was your age. Do you guys ever invite your local police to any community events yourselves? Has anybody in your community that you know of ever asked them to come to something like a football match or even funding to set up a six-a-side football tournament, or have the MPS ever tried to engage with you in terms of community, individually or people that you know?

Derreem Huggins (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): Personally, there is this organisation that I used to work with in Islington and they help young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. They have invited the police a few times to a couple of their events and showcases and the police have not turned up. I do not know why but I know they have not turned up. On the other side to that, when you asked, "Do they engage with us?", me personally, no. They have not come to me, they have not tried to communicate or tried to engage with any young people that live in my area.

Oluwatosin Adegoke (Stop and Search Monitoring Group, Hackney CVS): With some of the work that we do, we have quite a good relationship with our local officers where they come in and they walk us through stop and search procedure, walk us through some of their arsenal, and we have set up plans to get the police

officers better engaged with the community. We have a list of certain events that are going to take place and we have come to an agreement with some of the officers and explained that we would like them to take place in, say, this event and so on. That is in the process of being executed, but until then, no.

Deji Adeosun (Youth Leadership Manager, Hackney CVS): Just following on from what Oluwatosin was saying, we do have a good relationship with our police in Hackney. In terms of engagement, it is very much peaks and troughs. It really does depend a lot of the time on the senior officers who are currently in charge, formerly Borough Commanders, now Basic Command Units (BCUs). If they have a passion to have community engagement, that is filtered down to the officers and they engage. If you have a Commander who does not really care, then they disengage. What we lack is a bit of consistency. When it happens, it works really, really well. Football is a great icebreaker, anything like that, where it moves the subject away from stop and search and actually it is about the person, but it is not consistent enough. That is what I would advocate for.

Tony Devenish AM: Thank you very much.

Neena Samota (StopWatch and Programme Director, St Mary's University): With the reorganisation of the boroughs as well, particularly engagement is going to become even more challenging because of the areas that people now have to cover. I have spoken to police officers who are struggling with engagement and they are being pulled in many different directions. It is challenging.

Oluwatosin Adegoke (Stop and Search Monitoring Group, Hackney CVS): What is also something I have noticed is that the effort for police engagement is made by our organisation, an organisation whose fundamental service is for the community, but at other meetings or other organisations - say an organisation that is run by members of the community, who are not being paid to provide a service to the community - they will not try to make the effort of engaging with the police. What I am saying is that the engagement is only made by an organisation that is specifically there to provide a service to the community. Members of the community are not making the engagement, if that makes sense.

Tony Devenish AM: Thank you.

Sian Berry AM: I have a slightly legal question which I am hoping either Neena [Samota] or Deji might know. When a Section 60 order is in place, is it the case that all the searches that take place in that area are then carried out under Section 60, or do the officers have the discretion to use Section 60 powers or the usual ones in each individual search?

Deji Adeosun (Youth Leadership Manager, Hackney CVS): I am not too sure. My understanding would be that if Section 60 is in place, I would say that is a greater power and they would just use those powers.

Sian Berry AM: They would just use those powers, would they not, I would have thought?

Neena Samota (StopWatch and Programme Director, St Mary's University): Yes, absolutely.

Sian Berry AM: One of the things that I wanted to ask, you have mentioned that the overall level of searches under Section 60 is not going up to the levels that it was when it was previously used an awful lot.

Neena Samota (StopWatch and Programme Director, St Mary's University): Yes.

Sian Berry AM: The number of Section 60 Orders overall is also not above the level it was back in 2011 or 2012. One thing that Members of the Assembly have been asking about, though, is the number of times it is

used on a borough-wide basis. I know Assembly Member Dismore said that in Camden it is only used across a couple of wards but I know I have had at least eight occasions in 2018 when it was used borough-wide.

Andrew Dismore AM: What, in Camden?

Sian Berry AM: Yes.

Andrew Dismore AM: I do not think so.

Sian Berry AM: Yes. It is in a Mayor's Question -.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair in the Chair): We can sort that out later.

Sian Berry AM (Chair): It was on Twitter in November [2018]. It is not easy to find them all on Twitter and so I am waiting for more Mayor's Questions to come back, but certainly in 2018 up to May the number of borough-wide Section 60s exceeded the whole of 2013 and we have had further data since. We are way above on the level of borough-wide use. The question we have here is: we understand its use. It is a reactive thing. It follows a serious incident. There is a high-risk situation, you flood the area with officers to deal with that situation and you need those extra powers for that time.

What we do not understand is what the rationale is for putting the powers in place across a whole borough because you are not flooding the whole borough with officers. It is not possible, necessarily, to do that communication with people about what the powers are, and we are hearing about a few cases where people are being searched in a different area, maybe not even related to that crime, and being told they do not need to be told the reason and not understanding because they had not heard that it was in place.

I just wondered, Neena, do you understand why there might be such an increase in borough-wide use? Obviously, when some of the senior officers were speculating about relaxing the requirements on the usual powers my hackles pricked up. Maybe the use of Section 60 across wider areas might be a way of relaxing the powers instead. I have my concerns about this. I do not have any conclusions to draw because I am not really clear, from what the police have told us, why the use of borough-wide Section 60 is going up quite so much. I am interested in your thoughts, basically.

Neena Samota (StopWatch and Programme Director, St Mary's University): OK. Yes, there could be some truth to your speculation because of the fact that the Section 60, once you have it in response to a very serious incident, can be applied and you can conduct a lot of searches. Within that, perhaps police are also trying to get a lot of intelligence which they would otherwise not get because the legal safeguards around the use of the other powers are quite tight and they have to give the receipt. There is so much other stuff and safeguards around that. In Section 60, once it is applied, you have to stop - it is a suspicion-less search - and respond to the officer asking you the questions.

Obviously, very serious incidents have gone on last year and earlier this year. We therefore see that as a response to addressing the issue. To what extent? Research has already demonstrated that the sudden surge in the use of Section 60 does not have any effect on the underlying trend in non-domestic violent crime such as knife crime, a shooting and so on. Again, it is worrying that the trend is increasing. At StopWatch, it is even more worrying that it is still being disproportionately applied on black people. The problems are still there.

However, I am not talking down the seriousness of the incidents that are being responded to, absolutely, and that is why we have the reason for applying Section 60 in the first place. The level of authority that is required is legitimately, validly, quite high and it should be taken really seriously as long as, again, its use is

demonstrably explained, justified and validated to the community members. That is where some of the gaps are, as I was suggesting earlier. Sometimes people just do not know why it has been applied, and somebody else, like you have just said, may have the odd experience of being searched and being asked questions when that was not the purpose of applying Section 60. It is dependent on those individual interactions that police officers have that could lead to these sorts of conclusions on a daily basis. What do the young people think about that when they are being stopped, do they understand the purpose of Section 60 and so on?

Sian Berry AM: We have some outstanding questions about whether there have been any complaints. We are still speculating as to what is going on and we will keep monitoring it. Would anyone else like to comment on the borough-wide Section 60s? I know there have been quite a few borough-wide Section 60s in Hackney.

Jay Bance (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): It is quite interesting, this Section 60 thing. I am asking a genuine question now because it was in my head while you were speaking. Is a large presence of police not enough? Rather than stopping and searching everyone, if there is just a large presence of police after one of these incidents is that not enough to prevent a further crime?

Sian Berry AM: Again, like we said, the number of searches is not rising as much as we would have thought.

Jay Bance (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): Rather than stopping and searching everyone in the borough, just the presence of police. Would that not be enough to prevent further crime?

Susan Hall AM: Can we just answer that? The thing is that if you have rival gangs going for each other they might be tooled up, basically, and therefore the stop and search is important because if they are going to attack each other - we all know it happens because we see the dreadful consequences - it is likely that some of them have knives or worse with them. Therefore, it is, I would suggest, important that stop and search does go on so that they [the police] can take as many weapons off the street as possible and make it impossible for those two groups to get together and cause yet more mayhem. That is what I would say to that.

Sian Berry AM: We are just continuing to weigh up the benefits and the risks, I think.

Florence Eshalomi AM: There are pros and cons of Section 60. Obviously, representing Lambeth and Southwark, I have seen a few borough-wide Section 60s. You will have all seen in the news yesterday that a 15-year-old was shot in West Norwood and I am just waiting for the email from the police to say they will probably be issuing a Section 60 around that area because that is the response we have had on the back of some of the incidents.

In terms of what my colleague, Assembly Member Hall, was mentioning around some of the issues with the gangs, do you feel that a straight approach or response of saying, "We are going to have that blanket Section 60" works in stopping some of this, or should we see more police actually present when there are no incidents, building up some of that community relationship? My concern, agreeing with Assembly Member Berry, is that we then by default fall into Section 60s when we should look at building on that community relationship and addressing some of the trauma and distrust with the police.

Deji Adeosun (Youth Leadership Manager, Hackney CVS): The answer to your question would be the latter. Sometimes - I do not know; my tongue is tied at the moment - it is too simplistic, the method that we employ. "There has been an incident so therefore we are going to have a Section 60 and we are going to find weapons". To be honest, if someone is going to carry a weapon they are pretty aware a Section 60 is going to be enforced and they are not going to be holding the weapon. Often the people who commit these crimes are never the ones who are stopped having those knives in the first place. Often the people who are found with the knives - I do not have the evidence to corroborate this - feel they need to hold them as a form of defence.

Perpetrators are not going around just holding knives. They are very smart in what they do. If they are going to do something, they will stash it straight after. The likelihood of a police officer finding them with a knife under a Section 60 is probably highly unlikely.

But yes, the point about the police presence. Even if you had two rival gangs – let us just use that as an example – with 10 on each side and you had one officer just outside here, just one officer standing there – what could one officer do? – they would not attack each other. They would not attack each other. They would not do that. They have that much respect. Sometimes that is the point we are trying to make. Just that one person can stop an incident. Not having anybody at all, then yes, it is possible that this free-for-all could happen. That is why I made the point of the visibility and having them around, not just when an incident takes place but there. Yes, that is a step in the right direction.

Florence Eshalomi AM: It is the numbers.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair in the Chair): Yes, we agree. Should we move on?

Florence Eshalomi AM: Yes, thank you.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair in the Chair): The last section and possibly the most important section is the way forward. What needs to change? What message can be sent from this meeting to the Mayor and his Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime? I would like to ask each of you just one simple question. The shorter the answer the better and if you could be as precise as possible. If you could change anything about the way stop and search powers are used, what would it be? I do not know if you just want a few seconds to reflect, to think. One thing that you would change about the way stop and search powers are used. As I said, this debate has been going for some 40 years now, if not longer. Rest assured that everything here is recorded. As I was going to say it at the end of the meeting anyway – but this will feed into our policy and deliberations and this has been very useful so far. One precise thing or, being charitable, a couple of things you suggest can be done to improve things. Neena, do you want to kick off?

Neena Samota (StopWatch and Programme Director, St Mary's University): May I? As StopWatch but also as an academic teaching about these things, we should start with the lack of moral justification in relation to the extent that this particular power of stop and search impacts disproportionately on minority ethnic groups. That is the first thing that needs to change. That is why StopWatch came about. Also, ultimately recognising and understanding for everyone, including the police officers, that this power is highly intrusive. It is deeply humiliating for the person experiencing it. In the rush of the training and becoming a police officer, let us not lose sight and track of this particular feeling that you are then empowered to impose on a member of the public.

Really it is trying to decrease the number of stop and searches and providing a valid justification for how it is used and when it is used. I would also go ahead and say monitoring groups should ask the question, “When are these powers used effectively?” It gets back to the question of: (1) effectiveness: and (2) significantly reducing ethnic disproportionality, because despite all these safeguards, despite all these changes, our disproportionality levels are still very high and that is unacceptable.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair in the Chair): Effectiveness, justification, training.

Oluwatosin Adegoke (Stop and Search Monitoring Group, Hackney CVS): For me, mine is connected to clarification. If I was stopped and I have gone through the process but at the very end of that stoppage I was handed a flier which gave me all of the information -- let us not say “all” but explained my rights and

what I am entitled to do when I was being stopped and searched, if I was then stopped and searched again in the future I would know exactly how to deal with it. That is what I would change.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair in the Chair): Do you want to come in, Peter? Should I go through the panel or do you want to come in now?

Peter Whittle AM: Yes. I was just going to say one thing that seems to come up from what we have all been talking about as a theme is simply that there should be many more police much more visible and embedded in the community. Neighbourhood policing, wouldn't you say? Is that not what this is, really? This is what it is all about in the end, not just people coming into situations. Am I right in saying that?

Oluwatosin Adegoke (Stop and Search Monitoring Group, Hackney CVS):

Deji Adeosun (Youth Leadership Manager, Hackney CVS): Yes.

Jay Bance (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): I agree with Neena [Samota] completely. She covered the most important things that need to change with regards to the unconscious stereotyping and morally stopping people for the correct reasons. What is also important, like he [Oluwatosin] said, is educating the young people on what their rights are and why these searches are being taken so the young people can have a greater understanding towards the police when these actions are being taken towards them.

Derreem Huggins (Peer Outreach Team, GLA): I would say just being clear on why you are stopping a young person and if they tell you that they have not done anything wrong -- if they do not look suspicious and you are telling them they look suspicious -- it is the whole approach, really. Do not stereotype as much. One time, I had slits in my eyebrows and that is the reason I got stopped and that is the reason I got searched, because they thought I was a part of a gang because I had slits in my eyebrows. That is not a valid reason, to be honest.

Deji Adeosun (Youth Leadership Manager, Hackney CVS): Mine, quite simply, in addition to colleagues, is greater community engagement from the top down and down up. That starts from the Commissioner all the way down, not just some Police Community Support Officer that you are going to send along. From the Commissioner down, they need to be all heavily engaged in the community and they need to value it. It needs to be valued because it is key.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair in the Chair): Thank you very much for all that. I really would like to thank you, on behalf of the Committee, for attending today. Please rest assured that a lot of thinking and planning does go into meetings like this so that we make the most of your time. I know you have taken time away from your schedule to come here. As I said earlier, it will feed into our deliberations. I am sure we will be coming back to this topic again but there are many valuable lessons from today. Your input will be taken very seriously. I know it is difficult to talk about personal circumstances and all of that but I applaud you for coming forward and saying what you had to say.

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