



## Black Voices On Policing:

A blueprint to improve locally led engagement and scrutiny

## Summary Report

August 2023



# Black Voices on Policing Consultation

Black Thrive and Psi were commissioned by MOPAC to carry out a consultation to support the overhaul of existing engagement and scrutiny mechanisms used to hold the police to account.

The consultation aimed to gather Black people's views on what needs to change for them to:

- feel represented and/or involved in influencing decision making locally
- have confidence that their engagement in local policing is meaningful and leads to positive change
- be aware of how they can engage and scrutinise community policing
- have greater trust and confidence in the police service and their ability to respond to their diverse needs

# Black communities experience of policing in London

Black peoples' lived experience of policing, police data and numerous independent inquiries highlight that the Metropolitan Police Service is institutionally racist. Black communities are consistently harmed as a result of over policing and under protection. If we look at Stop and Search practice Black people are more likely to be Stopped and Searched. They also receive harsher penalties when compared to White people\*:

Between Jan 2020 - Dec 2023

**636,491**

**Stop and Searches**



**x 2.7**

**More likely to be  
stopped**

**113 out of 1000 Black people  
stopped vs 42 out of 1000  
White people stopped**

**74.8%**

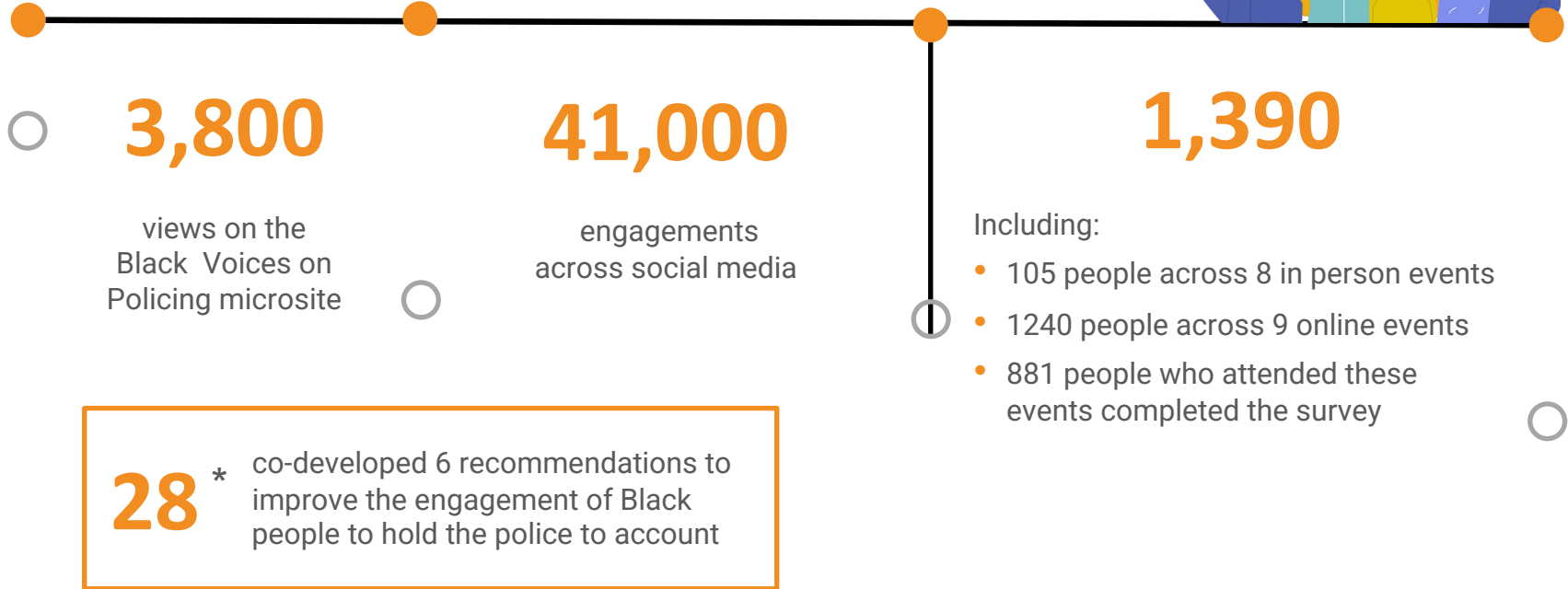
**No further Action**



\*This illustrates one aspect of policing. The data shows that Black people experience poorer treatment from police across all areas of policing

# What we did

The consultation ran between October 2022 and March 2023



\* The group included young people, community activists, voluntary organisations, local councillors, academics, health professionals, and representatives from the police and MOPAC

# Londoners who took part

Figure 1: Survey participant race/ethnicity

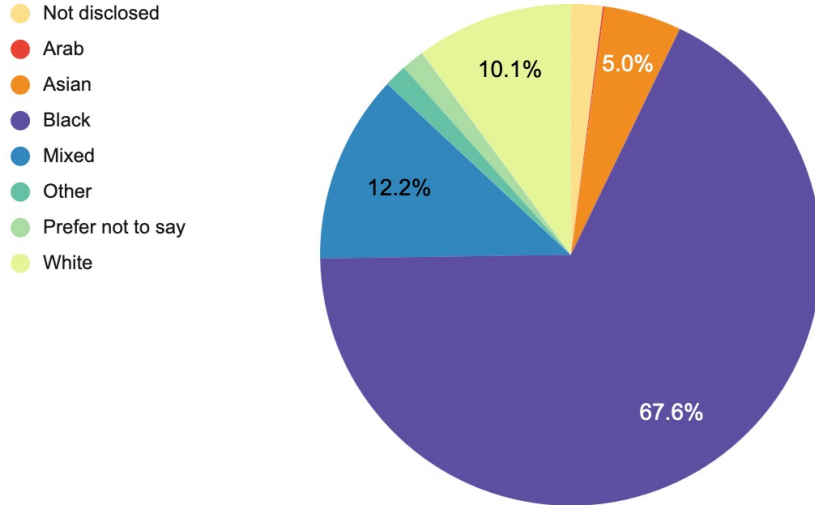
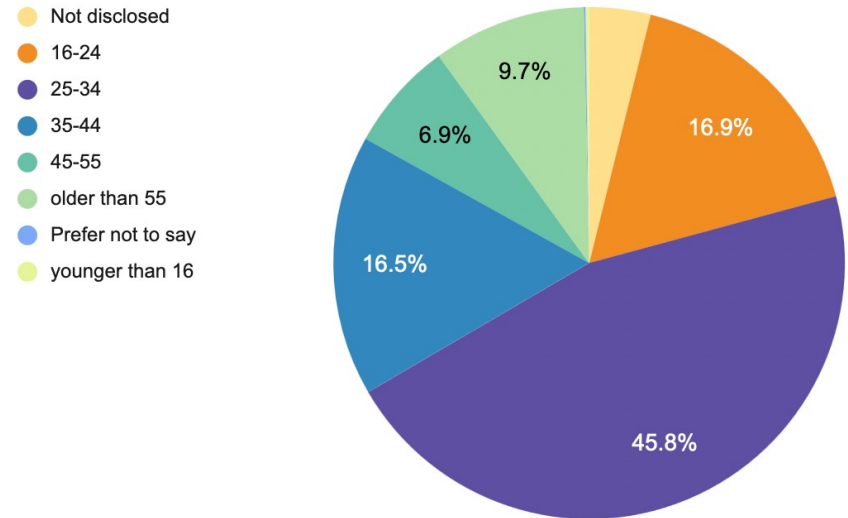


Figure 2: Survey participant age



# Londoners who took part

Figure 3: Survey participant gender

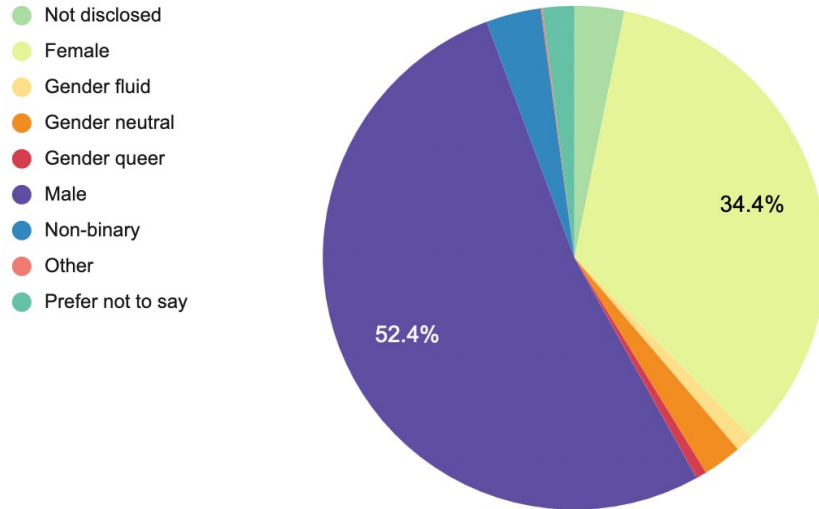
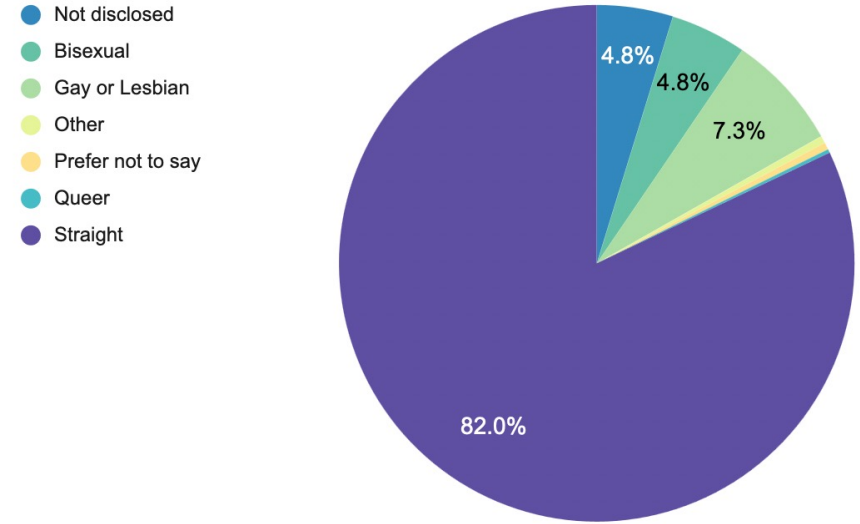


Figure 4: Survey participant sexual orientation



# Londoners who took part

Figure 5: Survey participant religion

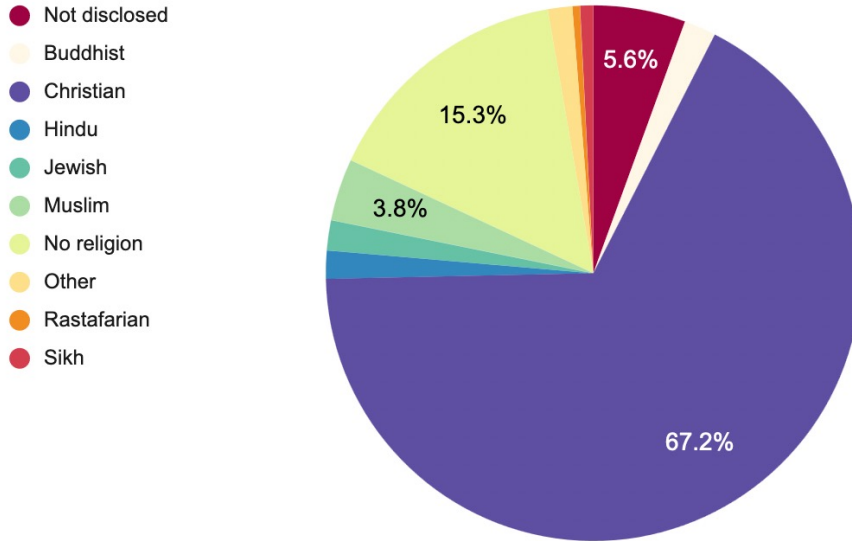
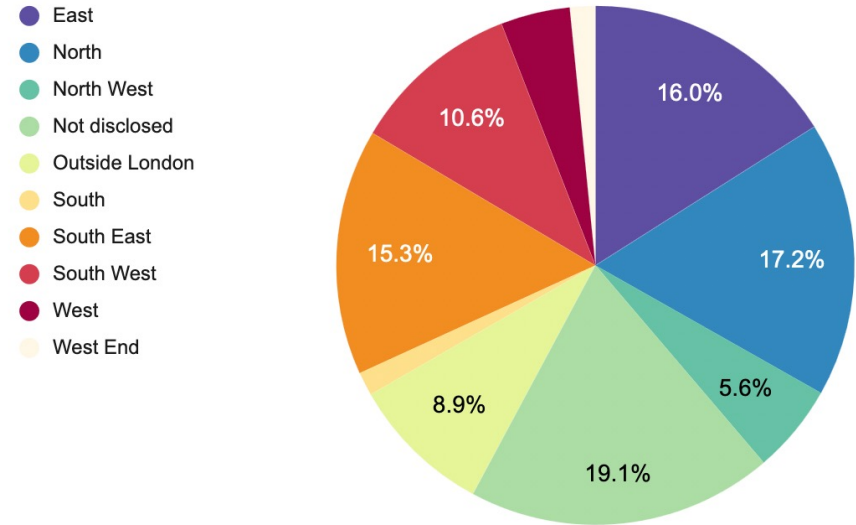


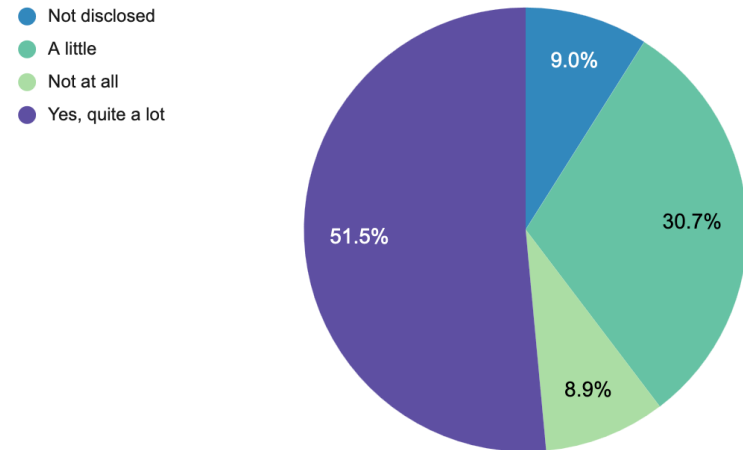
Figure 6: Survey participant location



# How effective are current engagement and accountability mechanisms at reaching communities\*?

- 51% of people surveyed were aware of locally led police engagement and scrutiny mechanisms
- 31 % said they knew a little
- 9% not aware of any engagement or scrutiny mechanisms

Figure 7: Survey participant awareness of existing engagement and scrutiny mechanisms



\* Figures are for respondents from all ethnic groups



We asked people their views on the existing engagement and scrutiny mechanisms.

They also shared their ideas for improvements

# Strengths of existing engagement and scrutiny mechanisms

- Respondents felt it was important to have engagement and scrutiny mechanisms to hold the police to account
- 17% of people could not identify any strengths of the current model of engagement and accountability
- Most people felt these mechanisms needed to be overhauled

***'What seemingly worked well are ward panels and the local safer neighbourhood Board. It enabled people to vent' and express their views about policing matters. However, these views and expressions were blatantly ignored and lack follow-up action.'***

*Black, 35-44, Female, Straight / Heterosexual*

# Weaknesses of existing engagement and scrutiny mechanisms

- A poor relationship between the police and locally-led police engagement and scrutiny groups
- Lack of genuine participation and action from the police in response to feedback from the community
- Lack of representation from people who identify as Black African or African-Caribbean
- Communities are not well informed about the existence of engagement and accountability groups
- Lack of accountability of existing engagement and scrutiny mechanisms
- Institutional racism within the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) makes communities reluctant to engage

***‘Ward panel style structures need to be more inclusive of all voices being heard, not just a select few and more representation of Black communities’***  
*Black, over 55 years, male, straight*

***‘These mechanisms are not promoted enough and it doesn’t feel safe enough to critique the police to the police’***  
*Black, 16-24 years , Male*

# Opportunities to improve engagement and scrutiny of the police

- The community could be involved in scrutinising the police complaints procedure and oversight bodies
- Involve Black communities in the recruitment and training of police officers
- Improve the community's access to data and powers to scrutinise policing practice
- Focus on coproducing community safety solutions with communities
- Improve representation of people from Black backgrounds and ensure that young people are meaningfully engaged
- Develop a communications strategy that uses multiple channels to raise awareness of opportunities
- Resource community led engagement and scrutiny groups to have the capacity to fulfil their role

***'Scrutiny panels shouldn't be viable without a cross section of Black representation available. Police should report back what progress is being made on key areas of concern to Black communities. Communities should be part of creating the measures for success If they don't approve they should not be implemented. The police should be our service...Why would we pay for the police to harass us?'***

***Black, 45-55, Female, Straight / Heterosexual***

# Threats that would prevent meaningful engagement and scrutiny

- Lack of trust in the Metropolitan police
- Lack of confidence in MOPAC's ability to hold the police to account
- A lack of commitment and investment from senior leaders
- Communities not being made aware of the opportunities to get involved
- Resistance to change
- Racism, trauma and power imbalances
- Lack of time and resources for the work to make an impact

***'Barriers include lack of trust, dishonesty, hatred, discrimination like race, religion, gender, area where one lives or cultural differences. If we all are not singing from the same hymn sheet, then things won't work'***

*Black Caribbean, Older than 55, Female, Bisexual*

***'Resistance to change can be a significant barrier to getting policing and crime reduction right'***

*Black African, 35-44, Male, Straight / Heterosexual*

# Key features needed for future engagement and scrutiny

- Needs to be local and grounded in the experiences of the local community
- Structures should be independent of the Police
- Black communities need to be represented and have access to Black-led forums
- Young people should have the opportunity to access leadership roles
- An expectation that all stakeholders embody anti-oppressive practice
- Priorities and solutions should be coproduced with communities
- Community-led groups should be resourced to support the police and MOPAC to engage with communities
- Opportunities to get involved should be well advertised and accessible
- People should be compensated for their participation in engagement and scrutiny mechanisms
- There needs to be a focus on taking action to improve Black communities experience of policing and a process to hold stakeholders to account when they do not deliver

# How will we know if the new mechanisms are working?

- Reduction in the number of Black people being harmed due to over policing or being under protected
- Data transparency and evidence of improvements
- Community providing more positive feedback (e.g. surveys, focus groups, etc.)
- Independent community-led evaluations and assessments of progress made
- Poor practice is challenged, there is evidence that people and organisations are held to account and plans for improvements are actioned

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***'The outcome of this work should be independent and realistic, community-led reports, action plans and guiding principles/policies/procedures'***  
*Black, 35-44, Female, Straight / Heterosexual*

# Recommendations codesigned with the community

## **Recommendation 1: Begin by building trust and confidence in the police service**

Racism within the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) has undermined the community's trust and confidence in the police. Failing to address the root causes of the community's concerns will impede genuine engagement and hinder progress. MOPAC and the Met Police must demonstrate a commitment to anti-racism practice and MOPAC should use their levers to hold the Met Police accountable when addressing racism within their policies, processes and practice.

## **Recommendation 2. An independent body to support and scrutinise pan-London and locally led engagement and scrutiny of policing in London**

For a structure to genuinely represent the experiences and views of Black communities it is imperative that they operate independently of MOPAC and the Met. This will ensure that calls for action are not silenced and reduces the risk of their work becoming performative. MOPAC should fund an independent entity to lead on pan-London police scrutiny and accountability and provide support and governance to locally led groups.



### **Recommendation 3. Police & Community Safety Race Equity Framework (PCSREF)**

To co-develop an overarching framework to provide increased independence and scrutiny of MOPAC, MPS and other stakeholders leading on addressing racism within the police and in relation to community safety. The Police and Community Safety Race Equity Framework (PCSREF) should serve as a centralised platform (online and offline) where communities can collectively agree on priorities, collaborate on finding solutions and have a transparent means to track the implementation and effectiveness of community led police engagement and accountability initiatives.

### **Recommendation 4. Building trust and engaging young people in accountability mechanisms**

Power needs to be redistributed so young people have greater influence over policing practice. Young people's experiences should inform the work of locally led engagement and scrutiny groups. They should be empowered to challenge poor practice. Pan-London work also needs to be delivered to reduce the negative impact of policing on the health and wellbeing of young people. MOPAC and the MPS need to demonstrate that the police workforce are safeguarding children and young people in the use of police powers/practice and actively reducing the inequities they face.

### **Recommendation 5. Improving the effectiveness of locally led police engagement and accountability groups**

The consultation aimed to gain insight into the critical features needed for existing engagement and scrutiny groups, such as the MOPAC led Safer Neighbourhood Boards and Community Monitoring Groups, to engage Black communities to hold the Police service to account. These groups and wider scrutiny and accountability mechanisms, (e.g., MPS Independent Advisory Groups) have been ill-equipped to involve and sustain the engagement of Black communities. Locally led police engagement and scrutiny requires governance via an independent body to support, resource (including compensation for people who lead local groups) and provide an infrastructure to effectively hold the police accountable on behalf of their wider communities.

### **Recommendation 6. Collaborating with voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations (VCSE)**

Locally led police engagement and accountability should involve community organisations to ensure that key messages and opportunities to participate in engagement and scrutiny are communicated to the wider community. VCSE's should also act as a critical friend to the independent body, MOPAC and the police for making progress on the recommendations that emerged from the Black Voices on Policing consultation.

# A new blueprint to improve engagement and police accountability

