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Research into young Londoners' experiences and perceptions of stop and search

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Summary

On behalf of the London Assembly Police and Crime Committee, independent research organisation OPM conducted five focus groups with 36 young people in five areas of London, to seek their views on police use of stop and search. The research focused on whether young people had noticed any changes to the use of the power since the implementation of a new approach by the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). It also sought young people's responses to MPS targets and performance data relating to stop and search.

How stop and search affects young people's attitudes to and relationships with the police

- Stop and search is a part of day to day life for many young people in London. While there was widespread acceptance that the power is a necessary one for tackling crime, young people had serious concerns about whether it is being used correctly. They perceived that young people are often stopped because of their appearance rather than based on specific intelligence, and that police officers do not always follow procedure or conduct stop and search in a professional manner.

- Young people felt victimised by repeated stop and searches, embarrassed to be seen involved in a stop and search, and annoyed to have their time, and police time, wasted. The impact of this on their attitudes to and relationships with the police was to create a strong sense of injustice and resentment. Stop and search makes a big impact on how young people feel towards the police (although it becomes relatively less important where a young person has other significant experience of the police).

Changes since the introduction of the new approach to stop and search

- Two of the five groups felt strongly that there have been changes to stop and search since the introduction of the MPS new approach; other groups had noticed changes but to a lesser degree. All noticed a reduction in the overall number of stop and searches and thought that this was positive. Other changes included: more targeting of stop and search through police doing more surveillance prior to approaching a young person; stop and search more likely to be escalated, for example to an arrest; stop and search being 'replaced' by other action, such as police trailing and observing young people, and reduced police presence in the area.

- Some thought the fall in the number of stop and searches they had experienced might be attributable to their growing up and appearing more mature. Others were reluctant to acknowledge that things may have improved, due to strong negative views of the police.

- The key change that young people wished to see going forward was around the attitude and manner of the police when conducting a stop and search. They wanted the police to be more respectful, polite, calm and friendly, and avoid aggressive or patronising language and behaviours. They requested that police ensure discretion and dignity by avoiding conducting a search in a busy place in view of others, and avoiding unnecessary personal contact. Other potential improvements included a proportionate number of officers to conduct a stop and search, an extended time limit between stops and a more intelligence-led approach rather than targeting of 'familiar faces'. The police should clearly explain both their reasons for the stop and search, and the young person's rights.

- One group acknowledged young people's role in effecting change – they should also moderate their 'attitude' and be responsible for their dress.

Awareness of and views on the MPS commitments and targets

- Young people were not aware that a new approach, and associated targets, had been introduced. Nonetheless, they were not surprised to hear about this; there was a general consensus that it made sense and reflected positive intentions. There were varying degrees of recognition that the targets are having an effect 'on the ground'.

- Young people widely agreed that the 'intelligence-led' aspect of stop and search is very important, to reduce the chance of being stopped without good reason. They also agreed that the target to focus on looking for weapons rather than drugs reflects the right priorities. However, there was some concern that the targets could make police more likely to 'harass' young people known to them in order to increase their arrest rate without increasing the number of stop and searches they conduct. Some participants identified a risk of communicating the commitments: people may think that if the police are less likely to stop them, they are more likely to get away with crime.

- Despite a generally positive reception for the commitments and targets for change, some young people expressed a high degree of cynicism around whether they will make any difference, based on their strongly held negative views of the police. To really make a difference to young people's views, the commitments and targets for change must be backed up by visible action.

Responses to MPS performance data

- Young people were shown performance data demonstrating improvements in police use of stop and search powers. They were generally unsurprised by the direction of travel in terms of performance improving, but tended to underestimate the extent of the improvements. They were especially surprised by the 90% reduction in searches conducted under Section 60.

- Most were impressed by the figures and some felt that the data showed real effort on part of the police, especially participants who had already noted changes over the past year and tended to have least negative relationships with the police. Some had reservations, with a minority feeling that it was hard to believe these figures; they questioned whether the data gave the complete picture, or whether some contextual detail may have been omitted. Some felt their relationships with the police were 'too broken' for the data to make any difference to their views: to rebuild these relationships would require far more than simply seeing some numbers.

- That said, most agreed that the data should be communicated to young people, so must have felt it had some merit. The most useful data to share would be that which shows that stop and search is becoming more targeted, 'smarter' and more effective (rather than simply the overall reduction). Suggested ways to communicate with young people were via mass media (adverts, posters on bus stops), youth media (such as youth radio stations), and schools and colleges (posters, assemblies, PSHE lessons).

- There was a strong note of caution that targets and performance data are not a 'magic bullet' for improving young people's perceptions of the police, but could be used as part of an overall relationship-building effort by the police. What will really show young people that there is change is to make the change – young people will notice it on the ground.

Introduction

Background and context

In August 2013, OPM was commissioned by the London Assembly's Police and Crime Committee to conduct research with young Londoners about their experiences and perceptions of stop and search. The research forms part of a wider investigation by the Police and Crime Committee into changes to the Metropolitan Police Service's (MPS) use of stop and search powers following the riots in August 2011, to which the use of stop and search was identified as a contributing factor.

The research took place during September 2013.

Aims and objectives of the research

There were four key research questions which this work sought to address, as follows:

- How stop and search affects young people's relationships with, and attitudes to, the police
    - considering both participants' individual experiences and whether and how their friends', families' and peers' attitudes to stop and search affect their own perceptions of the powers
- MPS policy
    - whether young people are aware of the MPS Commissioner's commitments to improve stop and search and the associated targets
    - whether they believe the targets will make a difference and whether other action is needed by the MPS leadership team
- Practical changes in the last year
    - whether young people have noticed any changes in the quantity, type or quality of stop and search since the new policy was introduced
- The influence of performance information on attitudes
    - whether young people's views change when they see performance data on stop and search.

Methodology

We worked with youth organisations to set up and run five focus groups in different areas of London. The groups were attended by 36 young people in total, and took place in Hackney, Waltham Forest, Hammersmith, Southwark and Tower Hamlets. The majority of participants were male, aged 16-20 and of black or Asian ethnic background. There was a broad mix of backgrounds, including ex youth offenders, ex gang members, students, community volunteers and NEETs (those not in education, employment or training). One group were members of a youth independent advisory group in their borough, and had previous experience as young offenders or victims of crime.

To inform the design of the materials for the focus groups, we held a workshop with members of the GLA's peer outreach team, a group of young people aged 15-25 who engage with and gather the opinions of young Londoners to inform the work of the GLA. The

workshop also provided training to the participants in designing and conducting research; both the London Assembly and OPM saw this as an opportunity to offer learning and skills to the peer outreach workers, as well as gaining their help in designing the research to make sure it was engaging for focus group participants. Peer outreach workers also attended the focus groups alongside the OPM facilitator, in a support role.

This report

The rest of this report presents the findings of the research under the headings of the four research questions. The last section offers some conclusions.

A full methodology, focus group materials and details of groups can be found in the appendices.

Findings

1. How stop and search affects attitudes to and relationships with the police

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Focus group activity

We asked participants to reflect on their experiences of stop and search and how these experiences affected their relationships with and attitudes towards the police.

Participants were asked whether they had personal experience of being stopped and searched, or were aware of the experiences of friends, family or others in their community, in order to understand the extent of their experience of stop and search.

Additionally we asked participants whether they had any wider contact with the police (beyond stop and search), in order to understand how factors other than stop and search influenced their relationships with and attitudes towards the police.

Where perceptions come from

The research revealed that for many young people, stop and search is the primary way in which they interact with police out of school, college or other training and workplace environments. As such, their experience of it, the officers who conduct it, and the ways in which it is conducted has a direct impact on their wider attitudes towards and relationships with the police as a whole.

However, stop and search becomes relatively less important where a young person has other experience of the police or legal system. For example, participants with previous criminal convictions see stop and search as just one aspect of their wider experience of the police. This is the same for young people who have seen close family members or friends engage with the police in other contexts.

Experience of stop and search

The large majority of young men we spoke to had direct experience of stop and search: they had been stopped and searched individually or as part of a group. This contrasted with the experience of the young women: only one of the nine girls we spoke to had direct experience. Participants reported that the peak level of stop and searches tended to happen once they reach 15 to16, and then declined into their late teens and 20s. Nonetheless, all participants were aware of stop and search powers and viewed them as part of day to day life for young people in London.

Despite this belief that the powers are part of 'everyday life', participants suggested a range of **factors and behaviours** that could make stop and search a more or less likely occurrence. Many of these factors run along with the idea that being stopped and search is down to being in the 'wrong place, with the wrong people at the wrong time'. For example, they described how association with certain places or spaces that might have reputations for anti-social behaviour might lead to a stop and search, particularly during certain times of the day or when hanging out in larger groups.

'They just say you're in a drug infested area and you've got a hood on so we're stopping and searching you.'

Participants described the types of **dress or behaviours** that fit with 'gangster' stereotypes, for example emulating American hip hop artists by wearing low-slung jeans, hoodies and branded trainers, and walking or talking in a certain way: one group debated whether it was the responsibility of young people to change the way they dress, or the responsibility of the police not to stereotype them on the basis of it. Participants tended to talk more about the signifiers of dress and attitude in the likelihood of being stopped and searched, than those of race and ethnicity per se.

For participants with more extensive criminal records, their experience of stop and search tended to be more frequent given that they were **known to the police** as previous offenders. These participants felt that their past plays a huge role in how often they are targeted by police, as one participant commented:

'I've been to prison three times. I've done a lot of crime and stuff in my life, so even though my life's changed now, I know for a fact that my actions play a big part in how my life's going to turn out, so I have to know that, do you know what, the local police are always going to keep an eye on me, I'm always going to be labelled as that, I'm always going to be sort of seen as that, and I have to deal with that.'

These young people debated the impact of being a familiar face to police (and therefore experiencing regular stop and searches). In particular they explored the extent to which they understood why the police targeted them, and whether it amounts to a form of victimisation and does not support young people's efforts to leave their past behind. As another participant explained:

'I have been working for a certain amount of years, I haven't been in trouble for a certain amount of time, so I shouldn't be on their radar anymore.'

Positive experiences and perceptions

Whilst some young people struggled to say anything positive about the police (particularly amongst the younger participants, perhaps reflecting an element of 'bravado') the research did reveal some positive experiences and perceptions of stop and search. In particular, there was a general acceptance that stop and search is both a **necessary and useful** power and that it can help (and has helped) communities by preventing crime. One participant explained how stop and search prevented a potentially significant incident from taking place:

'When I was a teenager, we've been on our way to actual gang fights to go and actually meet up with this other crew and have a fight, and my mates were put on a random stop and search, my mates have been nicked for knives on the way there. Do you get what I'm saying? So the police have actually saved someone's life by doing a stop and search. Do you get what I'm saying? At the end of the day, that's happened.'

In this way, young people recognised that stop and search is a legitimate tool which the police use to do their job, and an important way for them to intervene quickly if they have reason to suspect that a criminal activity is about to take place. However, despite this general belief that the power in itself is a necessary one, participants still attributed the 'success' of the stop and search down to the professionalism of the **individual police officer**, whether that is who the police decide to stop or in the way they carry it out. Their perception was that the power itself is useful but the way it is implemented by individual officers is inconsistent. As one young person commented:

'There's always good and bad apples. Sometimes you get the bad apples, I mean- you know, it's just a [fact] of life.'

Negative experiences and perceptions

Professionalism of police officers

When participants described their direct experiences of stop and search, it usually centred on how they had been treated by the individual officers involved. As already discussed, many young people see the power as a necessary one, but have concerns about the way the power is carried out. The **manner and approach** of some police officers was strongly criticised and young people recounted various personal or second hand accounts of unprofessional conduct. Particular complaints included a sense that officers could be disrespectful and rude in the way they talk to young people, invade their personal space or act in a deliberately aggressive or domineering manner to intimidate and assert their power over them.

'Police seem to care more about acting tough than doing a good service.'

For participants, this type of unprofessional conduct served merely to 'inflame' the situation, making a young person more likely to respond in anger and resist the search.

'I'm not saying all police officers are disrespectful, like, but you get the ones, like, around here you get the ones most of the times who are disrespectful.'

'The men [police men], like, they shout at you and, like, they proper be aggressive. They try to be the dominant one…. They try showing you they've got more power over you.'

Additionally, there was a strong sense that police do not always **follow procedure** and whilst it is difficult to back up this claim with evidence, there is a clear perception that police cannot always be trusted to conduct stop and search in accordance with the rules. Together with the unprofessional conduct already described, these low levels of trust can lead to a negative cycle between police and young people, as the behaviours (including aggression and lack of respect) of one group reinforce that of the other. Participants debated the extent to which citing their rights could inflame or diffuse a situation: for some, challenging the police about their rights could just aggravate them further, whereas for others it was an assertive way to calm things down.

The stigma of being stopped and searched

As well as the conduct of the individual police officer, participants suggested that other aspects of how the search is carried out can also have an impact on perceptions of the power and police. For example, young people talked often of the need for the police response to be **proportionate** to the suspected crime. There were several anecdotes in which young people felt that too many officers were involved in a single stop and search incident, inflating the 'criminality' of the situation beyond what was necessary. This perceived over-reaction is made worse when young people are stopped frequently or repeatedly by the same officers, or by different officers within a short space of time.

'I feel angry because it's like I haven't done anything bad so I think why's the police officer picking on me? And I've done, like, quite good stuff for the community.'

Young people not only described a sense of **unfairness** (and anger) when frequently stopped without a 'successful outcome', but also analysed the psychological impact of feeling

victimised or stigmatised. Several participants described how the process (both in terms of being targeted and the way the search was carried out) made them feel like a criminal:

'I'm not even a criminal. But again, I feel like the police are targeting me.'

'I think sometimes they make you feel like you're a criminal and you're not as well.'

One participant felt that his negative experiences of the police, mainly through stop and search but also the result of other experiences, encouraged him to become the person they **stereotyped** him as; in other words, he was treated as a criminal so he began to act as one.

'I don't know. I just remember being, like, just turning 11, starting to get stopped and searched. Even though I come from a really, like, just broke background - a deprived background - I never really wanted to be a proper hoodlum; I just wanted to get a job. That's like when I was that young. In fact, at one stage I actually wanted to be a policeman, yes? But I got stopped and searched consistently. It just… like, it just something clicked. Like, if you want that from me, all right, [I'll be that person]. Do you know what I mean?'

For participants, stop and search is bad enough when it occurs alone or in front of friends, but when (as had happened to a number of participants) it occurs in front of family, or **in full view** of the community, it can have wider repercussions.

- One young person who reported that he had been aggressively stopped in front of his child questioned how his son will view the police when he grows up.

- For another young person involved in volunteering, he described how the stop and search in the street might have been seen by the young people he mentored, or worse, a potential future employer.

- Another described how it happened in front of his girlfriend's mum:

'The most embarrassing one I've had I think was the time in front of my ex-girlfriend's Mum, just before I'm about to go in the house, and that's just embarrassing because the Mum's going to think, ah you're bringing in, what's it called, 'affairs' into the house… And it's like, almost like your reputation is tarnished just a little bit.'

These experiences of the process of stop and search, and the lack of consideration of the officers that conducted them, have significant impacts on the relations and attitudes between young people and the police.

Inefficient use of police time

Another side effect of the process of stop and search, particularly the sense of an excessive police response to the scale of the suspected crime, is that it leads young people to question the extent to which stop and search was a good **use of time and money**. Not only are unsuccessful stop and searches seen as inconvenient and a waste of time of the person being apprehended, but they are seen as a waste of police time too.

Personal experience of unsuccessful stop and searches leads young people to question police decision-making and use of resources more widely, particularly when the excuse for a stop and search seems unjustified or trivial, as one participant explained:

'It happened to me before like I was cycling on my bike and they stopped me, and I'm thinking 'really?' for a case of having no rear lights on my bicycle? Five of you need to stop me? In the rain? Really? And they're like 'yeah, yeah just a routine search.' How is it a routine search? Stop being stupid.'

The following exchange occurred between three young men in one group who debated the extent to which the police response is proportionate to the suspected criminal activity, and consequently, how this can be unnecessary and a waste of their and police time.

M1   When they do actually stop you, I think they take it, like, a bit overboard… they stopped one of my friends, yes? He was talking to them normal and obviously they were just kind of like using their power to their advantage. They were like, can you please stop talking like that? [My friends] weren't even talking with an attitude. He was, like, talking normal. And [the police] were like, can you please stop talking like that? We can just arrest you now, do paperwork and you can go home and blah, blah, blah… And, like, it's just really unnecessary.

M2   Sometimes they do go overboard because I remember one time I was chilling in the park, it was at night, just me and my boys, and we just, like, finished having a spliff-

(Laughter)

M3   Again, though, this is the thing. Again, you're in the park at night time smoking weed, do you not deserve to be stopped?

M2   Yes, but we finished everything, yes? We told them we'd finished it. And they're still just searching the whole park, yes, with a torch and everything and they proper, like, spent 20 minutes just searching the park, and then for another 20 minutes searching us.

Q And what was your reaction to that?

M2   I don't know. Like, crime's crime, isn't it? But I don't know, that was overboard.

M1   Why are [the police] wasting their time, yes, because they've seen someone smoking in a park? It's not logical if you were a drug dealer to sit in a park and smoke there, isn't it? It's just not something you would do.

2. Changes since the introduction of the new approach to stop and search

Focus group activity

We informed participants that changes to the stop and search powers had come into effect in January 2012, mainly in response to the riots. The aim was to improve stop and search.

Without going into detail of the specifics of the changes, we asked the groups to consider whether they had noticed any changes.

After this we asked participants whether there were any additional changes they would like to see in the police's use and conduct of stop and search. They could discuss this as a group, or produce posters in smaller groups to then feed back on to the whole group.

Awareness of changes

Participants **had noticed changes** to stop and search since January 2012, although the nature of this change and the attribution of change varied between the groups and between individuals in groups. Two of the five groups described particularly nuanced ways in which the police were carrying out the power differently to previous years. This was particularly the

case for participants with criminal convictions and/or those who had had more experience of the stop and search power in practice.

For the other groups, they reported a sense of some changes (e.g. there were being stopped and searched less) but generally with less certainty, and less detail or consideration as to why this might be:

- For some of the younger participants, there was a reluctance to acknowledge that there might have been any change for the better, given their strong negative views of the police.

- Often, any improvement in their personal experience of stop and search over the last year was put down to personal rather than police change, for example, they thought that they were being stopped less because they had changed the way they dressed, or because they looked older and more responsible compared to a few years previously.

What changes young people have noticed

Fewer stop and searches

The most widely reported change across all groups was the sense of a reduction in the overall number of stop and searches. Most participants agreed that this has had a positive impact on both individual young people (in feeling less unfairly targeted) and even improved the relationships between the police and the wider communities:

> *'They've gone about it the right way, like they've cut down the amount of people that they stop and search, it's not obviously as frequent, and they only do it when they need to do it, and I think, because they've done that now, you can see that the relationship with the police and the communities has started to get better.'*

In terms of more specific changes to stop and search, participants reported a variety of ways in which they feel the police are now carrying out the power, as follows.

More targeted stop and search

One group thought that the reason that they had been experiencing less frequent stop and searches was that the power is being used in a more targeted way: to target specific and/or more serious criminal activity.

- They had noted increased police surveillance of local drug dealing, which means that when stop and search takes place it focuses on those who are directly involved in the activity, rather than just anyone who happens to be around it.

- They also noted that the police are prioritising their efforts relative to the scale of the crime, for example, by focusing on a Class A drug dealer rather than a group of friends sharing a spliff in the park. As one participant commented:

> *'But I think the police, they're taking different approaches now. So, in my area… they just film [drug dealers] or get under-covers to purchase from them… So rather than someone like me getting stopped and searched on my estate, I think they kind of have more of an idea of who's actually doing what, so they know not to trouble me'.*

This more targeted approach to stop and search, where police were clear about their reasons to use the power, was seen as a better, more tactical use of resources by participants.

Changed focus of stop and search

The group who noted the more strategic police intervention against drug dealing also thought that the focus for other stop and searches has changed over the last year. For example, as they are being stopped less for personal drug searches, they feel that that police have a greater focus on robberies and opportunist street crime, a move which was very popular amongst the group.

More successful – and effective - stop and searches

Given the sense that stop and search is becoming more targeted and evidence-led (based on surveillance), participants who had experienced a significant reduction in number of stop and searches felt that the new approach is overall more successful and leading to more arrests, i.e. a more effective use of the power.

> *'They [the police] know [where] they're targeting. They're not stop and searching people for no reason. That's what happened, like, I think, like, two years ago. They'd stop and search you for no reason. I think now, they know who they're targeting, not wasting people's time, that's it. Actually, I like that.'*

Replacement of stop and search with other interventions

Despite these positive statements, some participants still felt cynical as to the extent to which these changes to stop and search reflected a genuine step change in police attitudes towards young people or in terms of the policy. In some instances, the negative cycle of interaction between young people and police was reportedly so entrenched that participants found it difficult to credit the police with any positive change. These participants explained that while they are being stopped and searched less frequently, the police are still very much a part of their life on the streets. For example, they reported being 'trailed' by police, as a way to let them know that they are still being observed and suspected of criminal activity.

Less police presence in the area

The reduction in stop and search wasn't universally embraced as a positive in itself by all the participants. Indeed, some argued that it might actually give young people the sense they can 'get away with more' if they realised this was the case. This concern was raised by those who reported a lower police presence in the area, who worried this could create a space in which criminal behaviour could go unnoticed.

Another group interpreted the reductions in stop and search and police presence as a result of public sector cuts, rather than a strategic step change in policy.

What changes young people would still like to see

Whilst there was a general consensus that the overall number of stop and searches has reduced over the last few years, participants were keen to propose ways in which the process of stop and search could be further improved. Participants made a distinction between a reduction in the *quantity* of stop and searches, and the need for improvement in their *quality*, around which most proposals centred, as follows.

Attitude and professionalism of police

As already discussed, the attitude and manner of police towards young people during a stop and search has a fundamental impact upon the relationship between them. Participants wanted the police to be respectful, polite, calm and friendly, and to avoid being aggressive, sarcastic or patronising. They suggested that both body language and tone of voice are important during the process to maintain a professional tone. They also asked that the police offer routine thanks and apologies to the young person stopped and searched:

> *'Especially when you've kind of disturbed someone's day and you haven't found anything on them, apologise, and just say, you know, I'm really sorry for disturbing your day, thank you for your cooperation, you're free to go.'*

Respect during the process of stop and search

Participants also emphasised the importance of conducting the stop and search in a respectful manner, and in a way that minimises the 'criminalisation' of the young person. To offer discretion and protect dignity, participants suggested that stop and searches should not be conducted in busy places in full view of the public, but off the main road or somewhere nearby but out of general view. They also asked for officers to avoid unnecessary personal contact, ensuring body searches are limited and metal detectors used if appropriate. These kind of considerations are valued where they have been shown by the police:

> *'You know what, I've always appreciated when they, you know, go off the main road or around here? So it's not embarrassing or things like that.'*

Another request was that the police response be proportionate to the suspected crime, specifically, for fewer officers to be involved in a single stop and search. Not only would this prevent drawing so much attention from bystanders, it would help the young person feel less criminalised. Linked to this are two other ways to reduce the sense of stigma of stop and search:

- More communication between the police so that the time limits between stops are longer
- The process should be intelligence-led, and not just about stopping familiar faces.

Communication of young people's rights

One way to improve the trust in the police is for young people to believe that the police are following the correct procedures, both in their reasons for conducting the stop and search and in the ways they conduct it. Participants described how full communication of their rights during the stop and search would help this process, in particular for police to explain the reasons for that particular stop and search. A full explanation would also reduce the anxiety of young people, for those who don't fully understand the process or who are concerned about stop and search as an invasion of privacy:

> *'I think it's just data gathering. It's data gathering because you put your name down on the thing- whether they say they're going to erase it once your name's down it's logged for life so I mean it's data gathering. I'm a very private man so I don't agree with it one single bit. I don't like my name being logged somewhere.'*

Additionally, the police should not assume that young people don't know their rights. Participants gave some examples where this had happened and how the young person involved had 'caught out' the police for not following correct procedure. This type of

behaviour is another factor that contributes to the breakdown of the trust of young people in the police.

'You know, a lot of times the police prey on people not knowing about their rights.'

Responsibility of young people in the process

One group acknowledged their own sense of responsibility in contributing to improvements to the stop and search process. The older participants in this group, who had more experience of the police through previous criminal activities, reflected on the ways in which young people can influence through their role in the process. For example, there was a debate over their responsibility in terms of how they dress and their attitude and whether they could moderate both to prevent their being stereotyped in a particular way.

'If you wear that new jumper because 50 Cent wears that jumper, but you know 50 Cent has come from a drug-dealing background on the streets shooting people and being shot at. You're emulating a person who's from that lifestyle, therefore you have to make a conscious decision to say if I want to act like that person, I have to take the consequences and take the backlash that that person suffers as well.'

Other participants disagreed, arguing that the police should never stereotype in any circumstances. However, participants did agree that a negative attitude from young people could aggravate the situation and that therefore a calm, informed response by young people to stop and search might prevent further escalation. As one participant explained:

'I know sometimes people who get stop and searched, they may get very angry so sometimes they might be a bit, like, say snide comments. And then the police might reply. So just keep it professional.'

Delivering the changes

As well as reflecting on the changes they would like to see, participants made suggestions as to how these could be effected. They had the following ideas:

- **Training:** participants felt there is a role for young people to get involved in designing and delivering training to police, particularly in terms of how the process could be improved through a more professional attitude and conduct.

- **Supervision and monitoring:** participants in one group wondered whether police should be better monitored to ensure that they are following procedure and conducting themselves professionally. This could be through filming a stop and search or through other supervision routes. This would bring an element of accountability into the process.

- **Advertising and/or campaigns to raise young people's awareness of their rights:** participants felt there is a definite gap in young people's knowledge and awareness of their rights in face of stop and searches. They would like there to be more advertising and/or campaigns to help improve this situation and this could happen either on a widespread scale (e.g. TV advertising), be disseminated through leaflets or be taught in in schools, e.g. in PSHE lessons. As one participant commented:

'I think young people just need to be made aware of their rights more... If we have access to a certain official document that says these are your rights and everyone has them... At the end of the day they send out leaflets about awareness and things like this about drugs, STDs, why not send out leaflets about our human rights and say this is what to do when stopped by police or whatever.'

3. Awareness of and views on the MPS commitments and targets

> **Focus group activity**
>
> Participants were first asked whether they were aware that the MPS Commissioner has set out commitments to change the approach to stop and search, and associated targets.
>
> Then they were invited to look at the commitments and targets and give their views on these[1].
>
> Finally we asked participants whether and, if so, how this information should be communicated to young people.

Participants' awareness of the commitments and targets

Participants were **not aware** that the MPS Commissioner had made commitments to improve stop and search or that there were targets associated with these. Even the participants who were part of an Independent Advisory Group were not aware of this.

The only exception across all of the groups was a participant who was also a police cadet, and had learned about it as part of his cadet activities.

This suggests that any formal communications efforts by the MPS have not reached young people effectively.

However, most participants were not surprised to hear that the commitments exist. This chimed with their own experience of changes since the riots, as described above. Some participants were able to suggest what the commitments might be, even though they had not heard of them explicitly:

> *'I'm assuming it's more effective stop and searches. I think, if I'm correct, the rate of too many stop and searches without conviction would be high. So I think they wanted it to be more [effective]... So stop and searches would lead them to convictions.'*

Views on the commitments and targets

Overall reactions

Participants generally agreed that the commitments and targets **made sense** and most felt that they **indicated positive intentions** on the part of the MPS in terms of improving their approach to stop and search.

> *'I think step one, it's a good point from their behalf that this is being acknowledged and they're actually openly said we're going to try to make it more effective, so we're not going to just keep trying to, you know, have these unsuccessful, unnecessary stop and searches that are obviously, you know, getting us all down and upset with the police and stuff.'*

There was a consensus that in principle it is right that the police should have targets in place in order to set out standards and goals that they should work to, although some participants

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[1] The information presented can be found in Appendix 2

wondered whether these are really 'new' – they seem like what the police ought to have been doing anyway.

There were varying degrees of recognition that the commitments and targets are **having an effect 'on the ground'** in terms of young people's experiences of stop and search. Those who had noticed changes could see the links between the stated commitments and their own observations in their communities.

The commitments and targets also chimed with some of the changes that participants said that they **would *like* to see** (as opposed to what they had actually seen happening). This suggests that the commitments and targets embody the right ideas, even for those young people who did not feel they had seen them being put into practice.

Comments on specific commitments and targets

1. Making stop and search more intelligence-led

There was strong support for the commitment to making stop and search more intelligence-led. This would reduce the very common feeling that young people are stopped and searched based only on their appearance (profiling) or because they are known to the police.

Concerns and suggestions around this commitment were:

- A small number of participants noted that the term itself had unhelpful connotations, namely associations with very serious and high level crime:

  'Is it like where terrorists are? I mean, when you hear intelligence, you think about going to war, with trying to stop a crime against the state.'

  This highlights the importance of language when communicating with young people.

- The police could *gather* more intelligence to inform their decision on whether to stop and search someone, by watching and waiting the suspected individual for longer before approaching them.

  'I think instead of, you know, instead of approaching people who are just hanging around, I think they should watch them, instead of just going and putting, just because they're chilling. I don't know, if you- It's like saying I saw a group of boys there and I thought they were doing something. And I went there straightaway and I stopped and searched. But if I'd stayed back and then, you never know, you might see a druggie come by and come to him, that's when you know you've got an actual reason, because you can say I saw a druggie come.'

2. Focus on preventing serious crime

The focus on preventing serious crime was supported. Participants agreed that searches for weapons are more important than searches for drugs, as set out in the associated target. This was because:

- Weapons were seen to have the potential to cause greater harm than drugs and therefore merit greater attention by the police
- More 'senior' drug dealers were seen to be unlikely to carry drugs themselves, instead giving this task to 'youngers' (younger people who act as runners delivering drugs to users), and therefore searches for drugs would not target the dealers higher up the chain.

However, participants in one group suggested that sometimes people were carrying weapons in order to defend themselves, rather than with the intention of committing a crime. This was because they did not feel that the police would protect them and felt the need to protect themselves:

'Nothing has happened since I've been stabbed and chased, they take statements, 2- 3-4 weeks later, no follow up, no updates, no arrests.'

3. Making stop and search more effective at tackling crime

The commitment to making stop and search more effective at tackling crime was also broadly supported.

However, there was some concern that the associated target (20% of stop and searches to lead to an arrest, cannabis warning or penalty notice for disorder) could mean that:

– police may be more inclined to make an arrest than they might have been if this target did not exist (in order to meet the target)

– police may target and 'harass' young people known to them, in order to increase their arrest rate and meet the target, without increasing their number of stop and searches.

Whether the commitments and targets will make a difference

Views on whether the commitments will make a difference were very much determined by whether or not participants had seen a difference themselves already in practice, given that the commitments have been in place for over a year:

• Those who had seen changes for the better agreed that the commitments and targets were making a difference to their experience on the ground and to their views of the police. They also saw the logic of reducing stop and search in order to improve perceptions of the police:

'If you reduce it, you're reducing the number of people that you piss off, in other words.'

• Those who had not seen a difference in their own experience or observations of stop and search since the commitments and targets have been in place expressed cynicism as to their effectiveness and whether they had or would make any difference. They wondered:

– Whether the fact that the commitments have been set and targets attached suggest that the police were using stop and search inappropriately before (i.e. the existence of the targets almost confirms young people's negative views of the police)

– Whether police will observe these commitments, or are they 'just words':

'Some of them might take it seriously, the women might take it seriously, but CID are not, they are just gonna laugh at this.'

From these discussions it was clear that views were strongly affected by the degree to which participants already held very entrenched negative views of the police. Some acknowledged that it would be very difficult for any information or indeed action by the police to change their views.

Communicating the commitments and targets to young people

There were **mixed views** about whether the commitments and targets should be communicated to young people more widely and effectively than they have been to date.

- Some felt that since the targets demonstrated positive intentions by the police, young people should be made aware of them, because this information has the potential to improve perceptions of the police and thereby make young people less antagonistic.

  '[Young people] should be aware of it as well. I think we would give the police less of a harder time if we actually know that they're trying not to give us a harder time.'

- However, in terms of really making an impact on young people's perceptions, simply telling them about the targets was not seen to be sufficient. Participants felt that young people would need to see evidence that they are being put into practice in order to change their views. Evidence could mean:

  – More persuasively than targets alone – data showing police performance against the targets. Transparency and accountability on performance was seen as essential to making the targets meaningful.

  – Most convincingly - seeing changes on the ground (i.e. experiencing, hearing about or observing fewer stop and searches; better grounds for searches; a higher rate of successful outcomes of searches)

  'Like, it's okay saying, yes, okay, we're going to reduce it, we're going to do this, we're going to do that, but we all know that when it comes to, like, government things and police things, their saying they're going to change something means January 2015. So how does that really change anything? Do you know what I mean? Like, realistically, it doesn't. Change doesn't happen in those kind of institutions overnight.'

  'I would rather they changed it and then came into schools and say have you noticed that there have been fewer stops and searches and then you can say, oh yes, actually, I haven't heard of one in a while.'

- Two of the 5 groups raised a possible negative effect of publicising the targets, suggesting that people may think if the police are less likely to stop them, they are more likely to get away with crime.

  'I think the target, instead of being- decrease the number of section 60 searches, just only carry it out when it's necessary. Yes? Don't decrease the number, because you never know – you might need to do it.'

  – However, they nonetheless thought that it was important in principle that the police are transparent and open about their approach and aims.

4. Responses to MPS performance data

Focus group activity

The performance data was presented to participants via a multiple choice game; they had to pick the figure that they thought showed how the MPS have performed on each of four measures.

We then revealed the correct figures, and asked for participants' reactions to them[2].

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[2] The performance data can be found in Appendix 2

Participants then discussed whether and if so how best to communicate this data to young people.

Participants' responses to the performance data

Overall responses

In the multiple choice exercise, participants tended to **correctly identify the direction of travel** in terms of changes in police performance – that is, they selected answers showing that performance has improved on each of the four measures presented[3].

However, they tended to **underestimate the extent of the improvements** in police performance, often opting for the answer which indicated some, but not the most, improvement. Universal surprise was expressed at the fall in section 60 searches (90%); the extent of this reduction was seen as quite considerable.

In general the majority of participants felt that the **figures reflected their own experiences** over the past year or so in terms of fewer searches and, for some participants, reduced use of section 60 as grounds for a search.

> *'I actually do believe that because I haven't heard section 60 in quite a while.'*

Impact on views

Therefore most were **impressed by the correct figures**, either openly or grudgingly:

- Some felt the data showed real effort on part of the police and were happy to acknowledge that they were impressed by the figures. These were the participants who had already noted changes over the past year and tended to have least negative relationships with the police

  'It shows that the police are, like, they're really, like, working their backsides off to, I don't know, get better relationships with young people and people in the community and stuff. They don't want to be hated, like, because there's obviously, like, over quite a few years, they've had a lot of hate towards them but now they really want to change that.'

- Similar to their responses to the targets, others **struggled to accept any positive information** in the context of their abiding negative views of the police. Their relationships with the police were 'too broken' for the data to make any difference to their views. To rebuild these relationships would require far more than simply seeing these numbers.

  – Nevertheless, most agreed that the data should be communicated to young people, so they must have felt it had some merit.

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[3] It is worth noting that participants may have been influenced in their estimates of performance data by the discussions preceding this part of the session, because they had been made aware of the targets, which indicate a desired improvement by the police. However, when asked if their answers would have been different had they undertaken this exercise before the discussions, participants who had noticed positive changes in their areas thought they would have given the same answers regardless.

Questions about the data

A small number of participants expressed **doubts as to the truth or accuracy** of the performance data. They found it hard to believe that the figures were accurate, or were being presented honestly. This was especially so for the data on section 60 searches, as it indicated such a degree of change, and some young people questioned whether the figures gave a true or complete picture:

> *'I'm still quite sceptical, to be honest. I think, yes, I'm still quite sceptical about the police. I think some of these figures, I- yes. I mean, I don't quite believe them, really.'*

> *'I think there's like a fine print on some of the statistics that we haven't seen but, yes, I don't know – it hasn't really changed my opinion much. I have a massively strong opinion on the police anyway, so it hasn't really changed my opinion much.'*

These participants were those who had extremely negative and deep-seated attitudes towards the police (for example, one had spoken earlier of the mistrust she had felt since her early childhood towards the police as a result of her father's opinions).

Communicating MPS performance data to young people

The vast majority of participants felt that **it would be useful to communicate the data** to young people, in terms of exerting a positive influence on their views of the police.

The data showing that stop and search is becoming more targeted, 'smarter', and more effective was suggested to have the most potential to affect young people's perceptions. This was because the biggest issue that young people have with stop and search was seen to be the sense of unfairness in relation to who gets stopped and why.

Participants thought that it would be preferable to focus on communicating this specific data, rather than simply focusing on the overall reduction in the number of stop and searches which, while an impressive and attention-grabbing figure, was for some associated with the risk that 'criminals' might 'take advantage' of the lower likelihood of being stopped.

Ways to communicate the information to young people were proposed by participants as follows:

- Advertisements and posters in public places, in communities, such as on bus stops or billboards
- Youth media, such as youth radio stations
- Via well known figures who appeal to young people (a rap artist was proposed by one group)
- Piggybacking onto mainstream media that engages young people, such as by having a TV advertisement during a popular programme (the TV series 'Top Boy' on Channel 4 was given as an example)
- Schools and colleges, such as via posters, talks in assemblies and PSHE lessons.
  - However, there was a suggestion that young people may tend to 'switch off' during a presentation at school, and that therefore this may not be an ideal channel on its own.

Social media was not seen as the most appealing way for the police to communicate with young people; it tended not to be mentioned as frequently as the other options because young people see social media as social – a space for friends and peers ('*No-one wants to follow the police on Twitter!*').

Potential impacts of communicating the data on young people's perceptions

Participants were keen to caution that the performance data would not act as a 'magic bullet' in changing young people's perceptions of the police; it would have to be used as part of an overall relationship-building effort by the police.

Again, participants re-iterated that what will really change young people's views is for the police to make a change – young people will notice it on the ground.

> *'Like, make an advert but you will still have to see [change on the ground] because obviously if you just make an advert but there's no visible change, then why would people believe it? It has to be hand in hand, kind of thing.'*

Part of a wider communications and engagement effort

As well as making young people aware of performance data and targets, participants also frequently mentioned the need to communicate with young people about their rights in relation to stop and search. They thought that if young people knew their rights, and the police knew that they knew, then this would mean the police would be more likely to respect these rights and act in accordance with them. Again, the term 'professional' was used, indicating that young people take issue with the behaviour and attitudes of some individual police officers on the ground, far more than with the procedure and policy as written.

Participants talked about other ways in which the police could foster more positive perceptions amongst young people. This included the police engaging with children from a younger age, getting to know young people in an area through positive and friendly interactions such as joining in with their football game. They should also have a presence in schools, giving young people information about their rights and also responsibilities (making young people aware of the consequences of illegal activity).

Conclusions

As is already well known, young people hold very strong views on stop and search and on the police. Undoubtedly stop and search is a major contributor to negative attitudes held by young people towards the police. However, it appears that the MPS policy on stop and search introduced following the riots is having an impact on young people's experiences on the ground, to varying degrees (depending on the area they live in and/or their age) and with varying degrees on impact on their overall perceptions of the police (depending on their pre-existing perceptions).

Most (although not all) participants had noticed changes to stop and search over the past year to 18 months, primarily fewer stop and searches, but some also noted more targeted stop and searches (less 'random'). Participants were uniformly unaware that this may have been linked to a change in approach, with some having thought it was because they had got older and assumed that the police tended to stop 'older' young people less often. Clearly any intended communications from the MPS to young people about the existence of the new approach had not reached them.

However, when told about the change in approach, participants generally recognised that it related to the changes they had noted in their own experiences. The MPS commitments and targets around stop and search also made sense to them, and were generally seen as positive in terms of intent. Nonetheless, some participants were unconvinced that the targets would make a difference on the ground, due to their scepticism towards the police generally.

Performance data was well received by the participants, more so than the targets, as it was seen to demonstrate actual change rather than simply good intentions. However, some participants responded cautiously to the data, their entrenched negative attitudes making it hard to accept positive information about the police.

In conclusion, participants felt that there was definite potential to improve young people's perceptions of the police by communicating the changes that have been made to stop and search. But this would only work in the context of young people being able to observe tangible change on the ground, which means police officers using stop and search powers appropriately, behaving professionally during a stop and search, ensuring young people know their rights, and making concerted efforts to engage positively with young people more widely.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Methodology

Overall approach

We worked with youth organisations to set up and run five focus groups in different areas of London. To inform the design of the materials for the focus groups, we held a workshop with members of the GLA's peer outreach team, a group of young people aged 15-25 who engage with and gather the opinions of young Londoners to inform the work of the GLA.

The workshop also provided training to the participants in designing and conducting research; both the London Assembly and we at OPM saw this as an opportunity to offer some learning and skills to the peer outreach workers, as well as gaining their help in designing the research to make sure it would be engaging for focus groups participants.

Training and design workshop

The training workshop was attended by 14 members of the peer outreach team. The first part of the half-day session gave an introduction to research, covering development of research questions, methods, sampling, design, fieldwork and analysis.

In the second part of the workshop we gained the peer outreach workers' input into the design of the topic guide for our focus groups. In small groups, they considered the four research questions, and devised questions and activities around each of them. This provided very useful ideas and suggestions to inform the guide, which included a 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire' style session to enable focus group participants to engage with MPS performance data.

At the workshop, we offered participants the opportunity to attend a focus group with the OPM facilitator, in a support role.

Focus groups

Recruitment

We worked with youth organisations to set up and run the five focus groups. We provided an information sheet to be given to young people telling them about the research and what their participation would involve. We also offered an incentive of a £25 high street shopping voucher, in order to encourage take-up and in recognition of young people's time.

Sample

In total 36 young people attended the five groups, which took place in Hackney, Waltham Forest, Hammersmith, Southwark and Tower Hamlets. The mix of participants included the following:

- The majority were male (about a quarter were female)
- The majority were aged 16-20; some were older (up to 26) or younger (15)
- There was a broad mix of ethnicities; the majority were of black, Asian or other minority ethnic background

- There was a broad mix of background including ex youth offenders, ex gang members, students, community volunteers, NEETs (those not in education, employment or training)

The majority had personal experience of stop and search and all had indirect experience, knowing others who had been stopped and searched and/or witnessing stop and searches taking place in their communities.

One of the groups was made up of members of a Youth Independent Advisory Group, who advise the police in their borough on issues affecting young people in relation to policing and crime. These participants had personal experience as young offenders or victims of crime. Over the summer they conducted research with other young people in their community to gather their views on stop and search, and therefore were able to feed in these wider views during our focus group.

Details of the focus groups can be found in Appendix 4.

Facilitation

Groups lasted around 1 hour 45 minutes and took place at each youth organisation's usual base, a familiar and accessible environment for the participants.

Each group was run by an OPM facilitator, and supported by a young person: two GLA peer outreach workers volunteered to support at two groups each, while the fifth group was supported by OPM's own peer mentor. We asked the support facilitators in advance what role they would like to play at the group, and this included helping to facilitate discussions, supporting participants to complete activities and taking notes on flipcharts.

At the start of the groups, we sought participants' consent to take part. At the end of the groups, we asked them to complete a feedback form, and provided a signposting sheet with links to further information about stop and search, as well as a flyer about the GLA peer outreach team and how to get involved with it. A summary of the feedback forms can be found in Appendix 5.

Activities at the focus groups included discussions as a whole group and in small groups, creating posters, responding to visual materials setting out data and taking part in a 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire' game.

The full topic guide can be found in Appendix 2 and materials in Appendix 3.

Analysis and reporting

Audio recordings of the groups were transcribed, with the same researcher who facilitated the group then analysing the transcript. The data was summarised into an analysis framework in Excel, including verbatim quotes to ensure that the sense of the discussions was preserved.

Headline findings were provided to the London Assembly on 10th October in advance of this full report.

Appendix 2. Focus group guide

Time (1 hour 45 including break)	Topic	Activities
15 mins	Arrival and welcome	• **Facilitator to introduce self and explain purpose of the group** THE RESEARCH. I am from OPM etc. We are doing this research for the London Assembly's Police & Crime Committee. The London Assembly is an elected body which looks at how effective the Mayor's policies and activities are. The Police & Crime Committee looks at how the Mayor's work affects policing in London and at wider crime issues that matter to Londoners. The Police & Crime Committee are doing an investigation into stop and search. As part of this we are holding 5 focus groups with young people in London to find out what young people think about stop and search. OUR REPORT. We will produce a report which will help the Committee to make recommendations to improve policing and stop and search. CONFIDENTIALITY. No names will be used in our report, it's all confidential. We'll record the discussions but no-one will hear the recording except for the research team at OPM. Any questions? • **Agree 'ground rules' for discussion** There are no right or wrong answers - everyone has their own views so please respect others' opinions Listen to each other and talk one at a time Don't share what others have said outside this room. No-one has to talk about their personal experiences if they prefer not to. • **Participants to complete a consent form** • **Participants to introduce themselves – name, age, how long have been involved with the youth group/organisation** • **Icebreaker**

15 mins	**1. Attitudes and relationships with the police**	**We would like to know about how stop and search affects young people's relationships with the police, and attitudes to the police.** **This might be based on your own experiences of stop and search, if you have been stopped and searched yourself.** **Or it might be how friends', families' and peers' experiences and attitudes have influenced your views.**
		First it would be useful to get a sense of whether people here have experience of stop and search, either yourselves or people you know. *-You don't have to say if you prefer not to, but can we have a show of hands – if you've experienced a stop and search yourself? And if you know someone else who has?* Show of hands (experienced yourself / know someone else) *- How do you feel about stop and search?* *(Prompt: What kind of feelings, words or images come to mind when you think of stop and search? Discuss in twos and threes first if they want to, then each pair to give a few feelings or words etc and say why.)* Flipchart feelings about stop and search *- How does stop and search make you feel about the police?* *(if not already covered above. In twos or threes if they want, then whole group discussion.)* Flipchart attitudes towards the police *- Did your views of the police change after experiencing a stop and search (either your own or someone else's experience, like a friend?)* Show of hands – yes it changed views / no stayed the same. *- How did it change your feelings (e.g. more negative, more positive?)* Show of hands – better / worse. *- Why was that?* Whole group discussion.

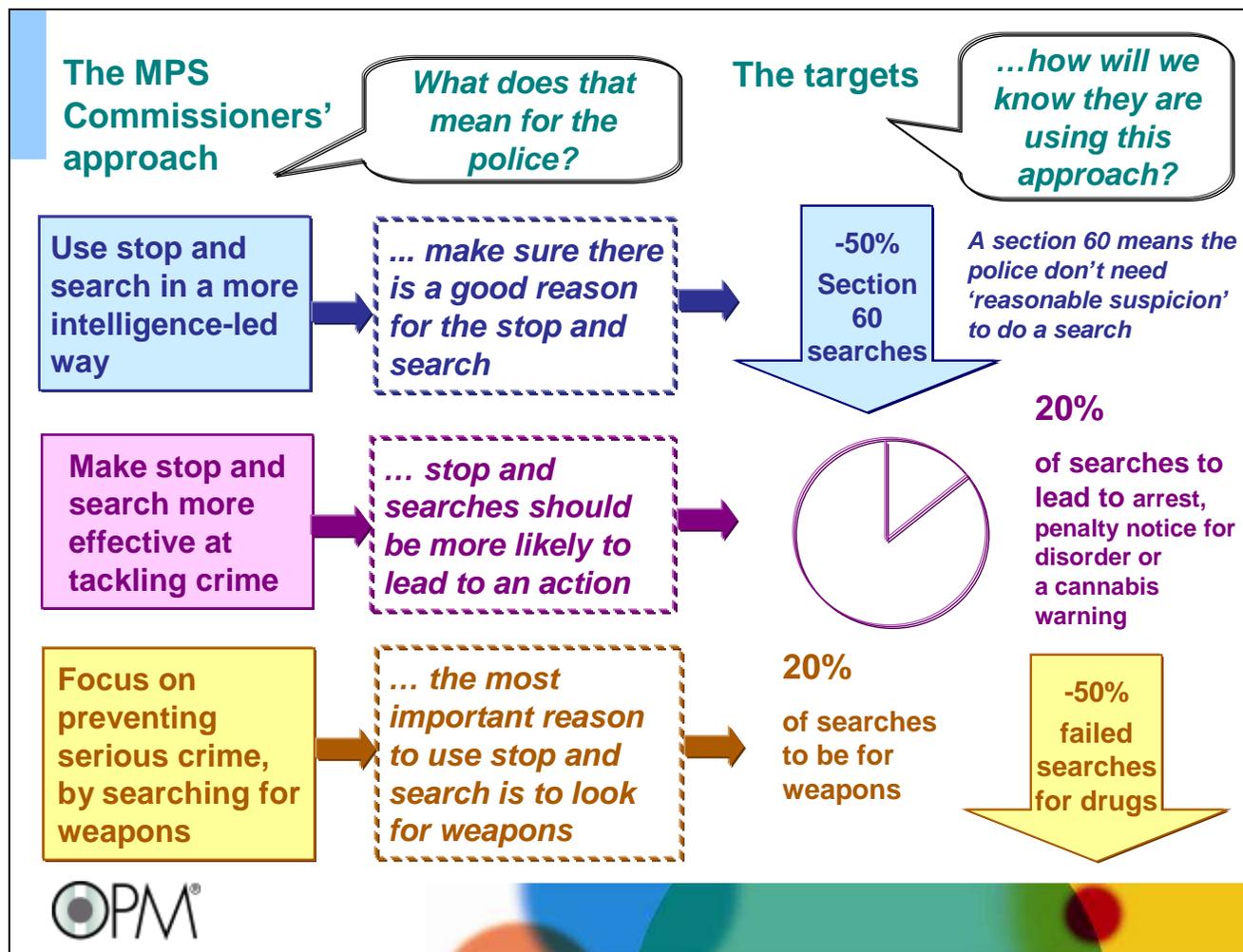|		
		Is there anything else – apart from stop and search – that has changed your views of the police over time, and if so, what and how?
		Facilitator - try to get a sense of how important a factor stop and search is in influencing young people's perceptions. If there are other reasons why views changed, what were these and how does stop and search compare in terms of importance.
20 mins	**2. Changes in the past year**	**A new policy around stop and search was introduced over 18 months ago [in Jan 2012], mainly in response to the riots. The aim was to improve stop and search.** **So we would like to know whether young people have noticed any changes in stop and search in the past year.**

		• So, in small groups I would like you to talk about two questions:
		
		- 1. Have you noticed any changes to stop and search in the past year or so?
		
		If so, what changes have you noticed?
		
		(Prompt – changes in how often stop and search happens / changes to who gets stopped and search / changes to the experience of stop and search e.g. the way that the police talk to you (their tone and manner), the information they give you, how it makes you feel).
		
		- 2. And what changes would you like to see - what would you like to see the police doing differently – what would you recommend to the police that they do in the future?
		
		• Activity – in small groups of 3
		
		    Discuss questions 1 and 2 [If have not noticed any changes in the past year, can just talk about question 2, recommendations]
		
		    Then make a list of rules or guidelines that you think the police should follow, on a poster [A3 paper and pens provided].
		
		    It could cover things like those mentioned in the list of prompts above, or other things.
		
		    Could focus on either: one aspect in detail / the top three things in detail / or just a list of general rules.
		
		• Feedback to whole group
		
		    1. whether you have noticed changes in the past year, and if so what
		
		    2. talk through the posters showing your recommended rules and guidelines for the police

10 mins	***Break***	*Drinks and snacks available*

20 mins	3. MPS policy and targets	**[Since January 2012] The MPS Commissioner has made a number of commitments to improve stop and search, and for each of these, there are targets which will help to show whether or not the police are improving stop and search.**
		We would like to know whether you are aware of these commitments and targets and what you think about them.

		- Was anyone aware that the MPS Commissioner made commitments to improve stop and search?
		- And that there were targets associated with this to show whether it is working?
		Show of hands – yes /no/not sure
		- If yes, how did you know about them? (i.e. where did you find out about them – e.g. at school, in the media, from the police?)
		Whole group discussion
		- If yes, what do you think these commitments or targets are?
		Whole group discussion
		- If no, continue to next point…
		• Facilitator to set out the commitments and targets, give out handouts showing them.
		• Discuss in twos or threes:
		- What do you think of these targets?
		- Do you think the commitments and targets will make a difference – positive or negative – for whom - why/why not?
		- Thinking back to the posters, what targets could be set for the police in order to know whether they've been following your recommended guidelines – i.e. using stop and search well, and conducting stop and searches in a good way?
		• Feedback to group
		Will targets make a difference?
		Any other commitments or targets the police should have?
		• Write on post its (alone or with others)
		- How could the MPS tell young people about their commitments around stop and search? What would be good ways for them to communicate this message to young people?

		• Participants to write communications ideas on post-its and stick on the wall.
		• Facilitator to review post-its with group
15 mins	**4. Performance data**	**The police keep records of stop and search – including how many stop and searches take place, the reasons for these and the outcomes (e.g. whether someone gets arrested as a result of the stop and search).**
		We'd like to share some of this information with you, and see what you think about it and whether it makes any difference to your views about stop and search and about the police.
		• Facilitator to present performance data through 'Who wants to be a Millionaire' type game… Use slides or handouts [Four multiple choice questions about figures on stop and search – for example, 'by how much has the number of stop and searches changed over the past year? Is it a 5% reduction, a 20% reduction or a 10% increase?'].
		• Check each question is clear.
		• Ask YP to note their answers on a piece of paper without discussing, and then take show of hands for each one [note the results!].
		• For each question, give the correct answer and then ask:
		- Are you surprised by the correct figure – why/why not?
		- Why do you think there was a difference between the answer you chose and the correct answer? (i.e. if YP answers show they thought performance was worse than it was, why did they have that impression?)
		[Facilitator – if participants question the validity of the data – i.e. they don't believe the figures – explain that there are systems in place to ensure that the police do record this information accurately (they have to call in the stop and search to the station as they are doing it. If they don't, the person can make a complaint which must be recorded). If they see the police as 'corrupt', ask what the police could do to change that perception, especially with young people]
		• After completing all 4 questions, ask:
		- Has seeing this data made you feel differently about stop and search than before? In what way? Why/why not?
		Final task
		- Is there anything else you change about the poster guidelines, after all the discussions we've had today? (Prompt –anything you would add? Anything you could take off the guidelines because the police are already doing it?)
		• Whole group discussion, or write on a post it and stick it on the relevant poster.

10 mins	Thanks & close	• **Thanks and explain next steps:** We will be writing a report for the Police & Crime Committee and they will be discussing it in October, as part of their wider investigation into how stop and search is working. They will then make some recommendations to the MPS about how to improve it. • **Participants to complete a <u>feedback form</u>** • **Participants to receive <u>incentive</u> and <u>certificate of participation (you need to write their name on it)</u>** • **Participants to receive a <u>signposting sheet</u> with information and links about stop and search, and a <u>flyer about the GLA's peer outreach team</u> and how to get involved with it** (the peer outreach team helped us to design the focus groups)

Appendix 3. Focus group materials

MPS commitments and targets

MPS performance data

Compared to the previous 12 months…

1. **The number of stop and searches has fallen by 30%**
2. **The number of section 60 searches has fallen by 90%**
3. **The successful outcomes rate has risen from 15% to 21%**
4. **The proportion of negative drugs searches has fallen by 28%**

Appendix 4. List of focus groups

Group	Area	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Other information	Number of participants
The Crib	Hackney	15-18	M & F	Mix	Youth club	6
London Tigers	Tower Hamlets	16-21	M	Majority Asian and Muslim	Sports club	9
SE1 United	Southwark	16-21	M & F	Mix	Activities include homework club, volunteering and learning	5
Tomorrow's People	Hammersmith	16-26	M & F	Mix	NEETs attending a 12-week course focused on employment	9
Waltham Forest YIAG	Waltham Forest	15-25	M & F	Mix	Have been involved in youth offending or victims of crime. Advise police on stop and search. Have done research with their peers on stop and search.	7

Appendix 5. Summary of feedback forms

The vast majority of participants across all groups 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the following statements on the evaluation forms, which they were invited to complete at the end of the session:

- I enjoyed take part (17 strongly agree, 16 agree, 1 don't know)
- I learned something I didn't know before (22 strongly agree, 11 agree, 2 disagree)
- I was able to give my views (17 strongly agree, 17 agree, 1 disagree)
- I feel my contribution will be useful to the research (17 strongly agree, 13 agree, 5 don't know)
- The event was well organised (22 strongly agree, 11 agree, 2 don't know)