

16 February 2022

JUSTICE calls for the Home Secretary and the Mayor of London to ensure the new Metropolitan Police Commissioner is committed to rooting out racism



JUSTICE's Chief Executive, Fiona Rutherford, has today written to the Home Secretary, copying in the Mayor of London, in relation to the appointment of the next Metropolitan Police Commissioner. The letter draws attention to the JUSTICE report *Tackling Racial Disparity: Children and the Youth Justice System* (2021) and its recommendations which are of particular relevance to removing racial bias within the youth justice system.

The letter highlights our findings that racism is an incontrovertible reality of our justice system, and particularly so in its impact on children. Children from ethnic minorities make up 18% of the 10 to 17 year old population and yet 52% of the same age group in custody are from ethnic minorities. Children from ethnic minorities are also less likely to be diverted away from the criminal justice system. Instead, they are more likely to be stopped and searched, remanded in custody, and subsequently receive a custodial sentence. This is unacceptable, and requires urgent redress. Moreover, it is evident that the actions of the Metropolitan Police have further eroded the trust of ethnic minority communities in London.

JUSTICE calls for the new Commissioner to be equipped to recognise and to address the entrenched injustices faced by these communities. Our report's 45 positive and practical recommendations would go some way to achieve that aim, such as:

- abolishing the Gangs Violence Matrix;
- suspending further section 60 stops and searches pending a Home Office review;
- enforcing mandatory child-focused training for all police;
- requiring all complaints concerning children be investigated by the Independent Office for Police Conduct; and
- mandating that police turn on their body worn video cameras before every stop and search so that improper conduct is prevented or caught.

It is only actions such as these that will demonstrate the necessary commitment to meeting the legitimate expectations of London's ethnic minority communities. JUSTICE hopes that this will be a key focus when considering the candidates for the new Commissioner.

JUSTICE's Chief Executive, Fiona Rutherford, said:

"It is disappointing that, 23 years on from the findings of Sir William MacPherson that Stephen Lawrence's murder had been "marred by a combination of professional incompetence, institutional racism and a failure of leadership", the Metropolitan Police, and its culture, have not made progress. We call on the Home Secretary to ensure that the new Commissioner is equipped to take these deep structural issues seriously. London's communities impacted by discriminatory policing practices deserve better".

Notes to Editors:

1. JUSTICE is an all-party law reform and human rights organisation working to strengthen the justice system in the United Kingdom. For more information, please visit www.justice.org.uk.
2. The letter from Fiona Rutherford to the Home Secretary and the Mayor of London can be read [here](#).

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3. The JUSTICE Working Party report *Tackling Racial Disparity: Children and the Youth Justice System* was published in February 2021 and can be read [here](#). The report examines the causes of racial disproportionality in the Youth Justice System of England and Wales and offers solutions to seek to increase decision-makers' understanding of the child as well as eliminate, if not minimise, bias and discrimination throughout the system
4. This Working Party, set up and supported by JUSTICE and drawn from its membership, included experts from the legal system. The Working Party was chaired by Sandra Paul, Partner at Kingsley Napley LLP and its members were Judge Mehran Behvandi, Social Entitlement Chamber, Sam Cottman, Director of Pro Bono, Travers Smith LLP, Garry Green, Doughty Street Chambers, Maya Sikand QC, Recorder and Barrister, Doughty Street Chambers, Kate Aubrey-Johnson, Garden Court Chambers, Maya Chandegra, Travers Smith LLP, Pippa Goodfellow, Director of the Alliance for Youth Justice, Millicent Grant QC (Hon), DCC Adrian Hanstock, NPPC Lead for Stop and Search, British Transport Police, N. Lynn Hiestand, Retired Partner, Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP, Dr. Laura Janes, Legal Director at Howard League for Penal Reform, Jude Lanchin, Bindmans LLP, Samantha Magness, Head of Policy, Crown Prosecution Service, Danielle Manson, Garden Court Chambers, Adam Mooney, Programme Manager, over-represented children, Youth Justice Board, Katya Moran, Co-head of the Youth Justice Legal Centre, Naomi Redhouse (Observer), District Judge, Amal Ali, Policy Officer, the Criminal Justice Alliance, Claire Sands, Research and Policy Manager, the Howard League for Penal Reform, Kimberley Lamb, Director of Bedfordshire Violence and Exploitation Reduction Unit, and Tariq Desai, Criminal Justice Lawyer (Rapporteur).
5. Please direct queries to Stephanie Needleman, Legal Director at sneedleman@justice.org.uk.