

12 August 2022



JUSTICE refers Greater Manchester Police to equality and police watchdogs following their refusal to abandon racist entry policy at the Caribbean Carnival of Manchester

On 29 July 2022, JUSTICE joined with 11 organisations to call on the Greater Manchester Police, Manchester City Council, and the Independent Advisory Group to retract their racist and discriminatory policy which bans numerous individuals, including children and young adults, from attending the Caribbean Carnival of Manchester this weekend, on 13 to 14 August 2022.

The policy, which was exposed thanks to the vital work of organisations such as the Northern Police Monitoring Project, sets out grounds for refusal of entry which include being “a member of a street gang”, “affiliated to a street gang”, “perceived by others to be associated to a street gang”, “involved in criminal activity”, “arrested at [the Carnival] 2019/2020/2021”, or “involved or linked to Serious Youth Violence”.

These requirements will have a profoundly discriminatory impact on Black, Brown and minoritised communities, particularly so where the organisers can refuse entry on vague and undefined standards such as where an individual is “perceived” to be involved with a gang.

Our letter therefore highlighted the fact that the policy breaches the Greater Manchester Police’s and Manchester City Council’s equality and human rights-based legal obligations, the Police Code of Ethics, and undermines the aims and objectives of the Greater Manchester Police’s Race Equality Panel, which [state](#) that “Greater Manchester’s cultural heritage and history of community inclusion and social justice” must be “championed”.

On 11 August 2022, Greater Manchester Police and Manchester City Council responded, refusing to retract the policy. They confirmed that the letters had been sent following an assessment with reference to one or more of the six ‘criteria’ contained in the letter. This means individuals were sent letters based on a perception by undefined ‘others’ that they are associated with a “street gang” (amongst other ill-defined standards). Such vague standards are an open-door to racist and discriminatory policies and policing.

The response also claims that the organisations have considered their obligations under both the Equality Act 2010 and the European Convention on Human Rights. However, it provides no lawful basis for the issuance of the policy. We are deeply disappointed by the response.

At a time when the force [remains](#) under special measures, it is clear that greater accountability is needed to ensure that those who profess to uphold the law follow it themselves.

For this reason, JUSTICE will be referring the matter to the Equality and Human Rights Commission, the Independent Office for Police Conduct, and HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire Services, to assess Greater Manchester Police’s conduct.

We also call on Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, to hold Greater Manchester Police to account for issuing this policy in the first place.

JUSTICE’s Criminal Justice Lawyer, Tyrone Steele, said:

“This policy demonstrates that Black, Brown and Racialised children and young adults continue to suffer from criminalisation at the hands of the police. As well as being racist and

discriminatory, the policy is plainly unlawful. The response from Greater Manchester Police and Manchester City Council demonstrates that the force is not committed to earning the trust of marginalised communities. Everybody deserves to attend the Carnival this weekend free from discrimination.”

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 JUSTICE, the Alliance for Youth Justice, Big Brother Watch, Defend Digital Me, EQUAL, Fair Trials, Growing Futures, Hackney Account, The Howard League for Penal Reform, Liberty, Runnymede Trust, and the Zahid Mubarek Trust to Chief Constable Stephen Watson, Council Leader Bev Craig, Chair of the Independent Advisory Group, copying Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester; Deputy Mayor Baroness Beverley Hughes, dated 29 July 2022, can be read [here](#).
3. Please direct queries to Maddy Breen, press@justice.org.uk.