
Race and policing: An inspection of race disparity in police criminal justice decision-making (August 2023)

Response from: Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Hampshire and Isle of Wight

Hampshire and Isle of Wight were one of 17 force areas inspected as a part of this thematic inspection. The public expects policing to be proactive in tackling racial injustice, this ranges from racism in all its forms; to support victims of hate crime; to be more effective at engaging with Black and Asian minority ethnic communities; to be subject to proper scrutiny and, crucially, to expose and deal with any remaining people working in policing who are racist.

Of the 13 recommendations made in this inspection report, four are for Chief Constables, highlighting that while individual forces have a level of accountability, a number of changes and reforms come in from the top, at a national and strategic level to disseminate to our frontline. The ethos of being open, honest and transparent in decision making should echo from the ground up. The British model of policing by consent should instil within the public trust and confidence in policing, within policing activity and procedural justice. This approach does not come without its challenges and obstacles, however we must strive to ensure we are making the best decisions with the available information, keeping our residents and communities at the heart of this.

Data and a developing evidence base provides us with a better understanding around any imbalances in policing and the CJS, and the links between ethnicity and criminality. As Police and Crime Commissioner I can assure our residents and communities that any racial injustice will not be tolerated, that race disparity will not be overlooked. I will continue to hold my Chief Constable to account within race disparity in police criminal justice decision-making. The force and my office have a number of mechanisms in which members of the public volunteer their time to provide additional scrutiny and oversight, such as the OPCC Out of Court Disposals (OOC) panels, the OPCC Body Worn Video (BWV) panel and the force's Independent Advisory Group (IAG).

Noted as an area of good practice I am proud to see that the effective collaboration of the Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB), which as PCC I chair, has been recognised locally. This thematic report identified the sub-group of the board coming together to analyse information on the journey from arrest to prison remand, and to understand whether any disproportionality was evident. We recognise the importance of an evidence based approach to making real investment and change. As chair of the LCJB I see first-hand the value of our partnership working, the criminal justice landscape is complex and multi-faceted and no single agency is responsible for the system as a whole.

Donna Jones
Police and Crime Commissioner

Recommendations

Recommendation 6:

By 30 September 2024, chief constables should make sure that forces carry out comprehensive analysis of race disparity in police criminal justice decision-making. Where this analysis indicates that people from ethnic minority backgrounds are disproportionately affected, police forces should explain, or revise, their ways of working.

OPCC Response:

I will work alongside my Chief Constable to ensure that the force undertakes a comprehensive analysis of race disparity in police criminal justice decision-making, and where necessary, changes are made as a result of this.

Recommendation 8:

By 30 September 2024, chief constables should make sure that information from the Youth Justice Board summary disproportionality toolkit relevant to the force area is included in their force's analysis of police criminal justice disparity.

OPCC Response:

I will review with my Chief Constable that the information from the Youth Justice Board summary disproportionality toolkit relevant to the force area is included within the force's analysis of police criminal justice disparity.

Recommendation 10:

By 30 September 2024, chief constables should make sure that work takes place with communities, police and crime commissioners, and other agencies to establish or build on arrangements for the scrutiny of police criminal justice disparity.

OPCC Response:

I will work alongside my Chief Constable to make sure that work takes place with my office, communities and other agencies to build upon arrangements for the scrutiny of police criminal justice disparity.

Recommendation 11:

By 30 September 2024, chief constables should make sure that information about criminal justice disparity is published on force websites, or that force websites clearly link to other websites where this information can be found. Published information should include any explanations for identified disparity and actions forces will take to address it.

OPCC Response:

As part of my oversight and scrutiny role as PCC, I will seek assurances from my Chief Constable that the relevant work for this is being undertaken and that the information about criminal justice disparity is published on force website.