



Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee

Report title: Updates on actions relating to the in-depth review into the Impact of Stop and Search and Prevent

Date: 1 March 2021

Ward(s) affected: All

Contributors:

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Outline and recommendations

This report updates the Committee on actions relating to the in-depth review into the Impact of Stop and Search and Prevent on Community Relations in Lewisham.

Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee is asked to note the report and provide feedback on any further actions it would like to see.

Timeline of engagement and decision-making

- March 2019 - Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee published their report on a review into the Impact of Stop and Search and Prevent on Community Relations in Lewisham.
- 24 April 2019 - Recommendations were presented at Mayor and Cabinet.
- 10 July 2019 - Community Services response to the Referrals to Mayor and Cabinet

1. Summary

1.1. This report updates the Committee on actions relating to the in-depth review into the

Impact of Stop and Search and Prevent on Community Relations in Lewisham.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee note the report and provide feedback on any further actions it would like to see.

3. Policy Context

- 3.1. Since the last report on this subject to the Committee, The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, published an Action Plan to improve trust and confidence in the Metropolitan Police and to address community concerns about the disproportionate use of certain Police powers affecting Black Londoners.

<https://www.london.gov.uk/publications/action-plan-transparency-accountability-and-trust-policing>

- 3.2. The Action Plan was developed following a series of consultations with more than 400 individuals and groups that either work with or within Black communities. The work was undertaken in response to concerns raised about the disproportionate use of Police powers, including stop and search, the use of force and Taser. Communities told the Met and City Hall that they wanted to see increased transparency in Police actions, decisions and communications; a Police service that better reflects the city it serves; and improved community monitoring and involvement in reviewing the disproportionate use of Police powers and complaints.
- 3.3. The policy context for Prevent remain largely unchanged save a small amendment to the wording in relation to Higher Education institutions. That said, the focus of Prevent is increasingly shifting towards addressing Far Right Extremism, which may be of interest to the Committee.

4. Updates on Referrals (recommendations)

- 4.1. In March 2019, the Lewisham Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee published their report on a review into the Impact of Stop and Search and Prevent on Community Relations in Lewisham.
- 4.2. The review focused on two distinct areas where the implementation of national policies had been felt by local communities to disproportionately target particular groups. These are “Stop and Search” and Prevent. The Committee received evidence over the course of the review highlighting many aspects of stop and search policy and of the Government’s Prevent Strategy including background information, community views, local and regional organisations, national, regional and local statistics and good practice examples.
- 4.3. The review outlined a number of recommendations, which were presented at Mayor and Cabinet on 24 April 2019 with the Community Services response presented to Mayor and Cabinet on 10 July 2019.
- 4.4. Since July there have been considerable developments in relation to Stop and Search in particular with the launch of the Mayor of London’s Action Plan - Transparency, Accountability and Trust in Policing (Working together to provide a Police service that has the confidence of all Black Londoners). In addition, the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) has undertaken a Review of Stop and Search and made eleven recommendations for the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) to improve the way it exercises stop and search powers and addresses disproportionality.
- 4.5. The IOPC completed five investigations involving the stop and search of black men by MPS officers and reviewed the collective evidence gathered to consider disproportionality, legitimacy and how force was used.

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- 4.6. The IOPC's finding echoed many of those made by the Committee in its review and found that the legitimacy of stop and searches had been undermined by:
- A lack of understanding about the impact of disproportionality
 - Poor communication
 - Consistent use of force over seeking cooperation
 - The failure to use body-worn video from the outset of contact
 - and continuing to seek further evidence after the initial grounds for the stop and search were unfounded.
- 4.7. <https://www.policeconduct.gov.uk/news/review-identifies-eleven-opportunities-met-improve-stop-and-search>
- 4.8. These two documents support the work of the Committee and form the basis of ongoing work with the Police and the Community on this hugely important issue.
- 4.9. However, progress on the work has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, to a greater or a lesser extent, and this report gives the committee further updates on the 12 referrals.

Stop & Search

- **Referral 1:** That the Council should provide additional support to the Lewisham Community Monitoring Network for Stop and Search. This is through the Stop and Search Sub-Committee of the Lewisham Safer Neighbourhood Board. This support could include officer time, support with publicity and understanding data and/or a co-opted Councillor appointment to the group.

2019 Response: The Council, through the Public Protection and Safety Division, will continue to support the Stop and Search Scrutiny Committee, both through the direct provision of data analysis and analysing this data for local scrutiny. The Cabinet Member for Safer Communities provides support to the group and will liaise with them to find out how best the Council can support them further. Once the Safer Neighbourhood Boards Website is functioning, the Council will link any information about the Community Monitoring Network to the website. The Council is clear that supporting this work across the Safer Lewisham Partnership is important.

Update: Since the initial response, the Council's structures have been overhauled with the replacement of the Public Protection and Safety Division with the wider Communities, Partnerships and Leisure Division. In addition to dealing with Crime and Disorder issues the new Division also leads on Community Development and offers the opportunity to re-examine the Community Engagement functions of the SNB in a wider context. The Council has made an offer of greater formal support to the SNB and is currently recruiting a new Community Coordinator with an expanded role that encompasses Community Engagement for all local crime issues to support with this process. This support will be supplemented by improved data resources for the various boards – see referral 5.

In addition to this, a new BCU wide, 'Use of Force and Stop & Search Board' has been established, which Council Officers work with the Place to support. The Board has three main objectives linked to the Mayor's Action Plan:

- To improve public confidence through enhanced scrutiny and transparency by local authority and community board members.
- To ensure a partnership approach by enabling stakeholders and the community to identify new and innovative approaches.
- To support the MPS in learning from experience from others and to constantly strive to improve.

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- **Referral 2:** That the Council should facilitate and support the distribution of “know your rights” cards to young people in the borough. This could be through distributing the MOPAC cards to schools and youth clubs or using the S.E.A.R.C.H cards from the organisation Y. Stop and/or their videos for young people on knowing their rights on stop and search. The importance of young people knowing their rights in respect of stop and searches is crucial.

2019 Response. This is an important recommendation and is something that we have completed in the past and will continue to work on in the future. The Crime, Enforcement & Regulation Service will work closely with the Police, Lewisham’s Young Mayor and team, Youth First and other key partners to review how best to get these cards circulated and the support needed around the messaging on this topic disseminated to schools, youth clubs and other youth organisations throughout the borough.

Update: Officers are currently working with the Police to explore whether a direct survey of all those stopped and search could be undertaken to ensure a ‘live’ picture of activity. If possible, this would have a number of benefits relating to identifying ‘bad’ stops and improving training, improving community confidence and increasing the richness of the data to be considered when scrutinising Police activity.

- **Referral 3:** That the Council should work with the Police, schools and youth groups to support increased dialogue between Police and young people. This should include supporting the Lewisham Police Youth Independent Advisory Group and helping to raise its profile. This work should also specifically include working in Primary Schools as starting at a younger age was seen as key by many of those who gave evidence to the Committee’s review. The work should also include increasing preventative work with young people and community groups to avoid section 60’s being enacted. The Committee noted that the young people from whom they had heard were not against stop and search in principle but were concerned about unfair targeting and young people having very negative experiences of stop and search and therefore of the Police. There also appeared to be some inherited generational mistrust of the Police.

2019 Response: The Council will work closely with the Police and other partners to support dialogue between Police Officers and young people. A key manifesto commitment made by Lewisham’s Young Mayor was to support more dialogue between the Police and Lewisham’s young people; and Council officers will assist him to achieve this. Work has been undertaken to engage secondary age young people on topics such as stop and search, either through direct engagement with schools Police Officers or through involvement in a wide number of personal safety programmes (mainly aimed at secondary age young people). Additionally the Council, Police and community partners have more recently been working with primary schools in the borough, listening to young people’s individual and collective concerns and working with both students and Teachers to map the issues and create safety plans that manage the concern.

Update: Significant elements of this work have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the closure of schools and other youth venues, but this remains a major priority for both the Council and Police.

- **Referral 4:** That the Mayor write to the Chief Superintendent of the South East Borough Command Unit (BCU) stressing the importance of Police training including unconscious bias training and that this should be on-going and delivered to frontline staff. This is an issue of importance for all Londoners. The Committee felt Police training to ensure all officers understand the huge importance of the quality of the interaction for young people in particular was essential. The quality of the interaction had an impact not just on the

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individual stopped but on the community in general and on good community-Police relations.

2019 Response: The Council agrees that unconscious bias training is incredibly important for Police and frontline staff. Senior Police Officers in Lewisham (and across the BCU) have undertaken unconscious bias training alongside other senior officers and Partners on the Safer Lewisham Partnership. Unconscious bias training was delivered as mandatory corporate training for all officers between October and December 2018. All officers receive four Professional Development Days training per year, so one day was allocated to this training. In addition, as part of the Leading for London programme (which is leadership training for all officers from the rank of Sergeant and above), everyone received input from the unconscious bias programme. Lewisham Police, along with other partners in the Safer Lewisham Partnership have committed to work towards making Lewisham a “trauma informed borough” and unconscious bias training is a key facet in the training all agencies need to acquire to achieve this. A letter will be sent to the Chief Superintendent of the South East BCU to raise this issue, and will highlight the importance that the quality of interactions have on community relations.

Update: In recognition of the importance of this issue, the Met has committed to increase community input by default into specific aspects of the training given to new recruits. This will be made possible by investment of £1m per year.

The Met has also set positive Police objectives for recruitment, with an aim to achieve 40 per cent of its new recruits from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds from 2022. The Commissioner has also decided that the Met will immediately re-introduce the London residency criteria for most new recruits, which will be supported by £300,000 of City Hall investment to encourage young Black Londoners to consider a career in policing.

Officers will continue to work with the Police to ensure that all training is appropriate and delivered within an understanding of the Lewisham context.

- **Referral 5:** That the Mayor write to the Chief Superintendent of the South East BCU asking him to ensure that local complaints data is readily available for the public, the community monitoring group and for Members of the Council, and requesting that alternative complaints mechanism be considered. Complaint statistics are challenging to find and their needs to be more transparency about the figures and trends. A letter will be sent to the Chief Superintendent of the South East BCU to raise this issue.

2019 Response: Complaint data is available from the Metropolitan Police website, but as highlighted in your referral can be difficult to find. Making information easy to access is important and we will ask that this data is presented in a more user-friendly way.

<https://www.met.police.uk/foi-ai/af/accessing-information/published-items/>

Update: The Council is currently working with the Police to ensure that this, and other data, is presented to the various scrutiny meetings, and the wider public, in a more accessible format. To this end the Communities, Partnerships and Leisure Directorate is currently recruiting to a Data Scientist post to ensure that the service has the correct skills to deliver against this important agenda.

- **Referral 6:** That the Council looks at stop and search complaints procedures with the possibility of alternative ways to consider complaints being identified. This should include investigating a way to facilitate and support young people to make complaints through a third party mechanism.

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2019 Response: Council Officers will work with the Lewisham Young Mayor, Youth First and other youth organisations to identify how to develop more supportive routes for young people to make stop and search complaints. Council officers have also asked Fearless.org, the youth focused arm of Crimestoppers to consider options, which could support similar reporting.

Update: See referral 2.

- **Referral 7:** That the Mayor request to the Chief Superintendent of the South East BCU, that members of Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee be allowed to better understand through the appropriate mechanism, how unconscious bias training is delivered to the Police.

2019 Response: The Council will facilitate for members of the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee to better understand the whole range of training that Police Officers receive, in addition to unconscious bias training. Officers receive initial training and ongoing support and education. A letter will be sent to the Chief Superintendent of the South East BCU to raise this issue.

Update: The Chief Superintendent of the South East BCU has confirmed that he is happy to answer any specific questions that the Committee has directly and has extended the offer to all members to join the Police in their day to day operations so they can better understand how their training is put into practice. Any member wishing to take up this offer should contact relevant Council Officers to discuss the arrangements.

- **Referral 8:** That more information on the intelligence gathering process for implementing section 60s should be shared with the Committee. This is to ensure there is no in-built bias at the pre-decision stage.

2019 Response: Council Officers will work with Senior Police Officers to establish how this is best shared with the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee. Police regularly receive intelligence from a range of sources. This can often be confidential or anonymous. Many section 60s are implemented as a result of intelligence received following a violent incident or through intelligence received via social media.

Update: The South East BCU have committed to communicate Section 60s in fast and slow time with justifications and data. Future reports can be presented to the Committee as required.

Prevent

- **Referral 9:** That the Mayor write to the Home Secretary regarding the lack of availability of local data on referrals to Prevent and Channel and outcomes. The letter should stress the importance of ensuring there are sufficient built-in scrutiny mechanism in which local areas can feed into the Prevent programme. A lack of local data limits the ability to scrutinise locally and assess whether the Prevent strategy affects certain communities disproportionately.

2019 Response: Since the completion of the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee review, it was announced that there would be an independent review of Prevent nationally. Lewisham Council is happy to contribute to this national review, and we will emphasise Lewisham's request to be able to scrutinise Prevent performance at a local level, using local data.

Update: See referral 12

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- **Referral 10:** That the Council better communicate the emphasis on the safeguarding aspect of Prevent to the local community.

2019 Response: The Council is working on how to better communicate the emphasis on safeguarding to the local community. Prevent in Lewisham is already fully aligned with local safeguarding policies and procedures including engaging with communities. There is on-going work to improve this communication, including two Home Office funded projects in Lewisham in 2019/20 that will focus on better community engagement. There will also be continued engagement opportunities with Members. A communications plan will be implemented, which will focus better communication on the fact that Prevent is intrinsically linked to safeguarding.

Update: Whilst the realities of Prevent continue to be communicated through established channels, there have also been sessions delivered to the Young Mayor's Panel, Lewisham Migrant and Refugee Forum and the parents of Lewisham school children. The impact of the Covid Pandemic has limited community engagement opportunities this year and it is hoped that a more comprehensive programme can be implemented moving forward. From March 2021, the Executive Director for Children & Young People, Pinaki Ghoshal will Chair the Prevent Delivery Group. This will ensure that Prevent is fully aligned with other safeguarding issues, as well as raising its profile amongst senior officers.

- **Referral 11:** That the Council explore the benefits of a community based referral pathway that allows issues to be dealt with by trusted individuals with the confidence of the community. Increased community dialogue around Prevent was very important.

2019 Response: We will highlight the information on Prevent available on the Council's website - [Lewisham Prevent Programme](#) and [Advice for front line workers on Prevent](#). It is recognised that a connection to the local community can be of great benefit to those working with vulnerable people. To support this, a key component of this year's Prevent Delivery Plan is to try to identify and recruit local people who would be willing to be Prevent "intervention providers", who would be commissioned to work with individuals deemed to be vulnerable to radicalisation. The Lewisham Prevent 2019/20 work programme has a greater focus on community engagement.

Update: Work is currently underway to standardise the Prevent referral process through the use of a national Referral form; the Lewisham Prevent Manager is a member of the working group, which will achieve this.

Recently, research was commissioned by the Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism to ensure that Prevent was as effective, informed and transparent as it could be. Leading independent research company ICM Unlimited was appointed to conduct two online surveys; a 'public' survey, which included booster samples of British Muslims and students (demographics among whom concerns around the policy have historically been expressed), and a 'professionals' survey, which included both education and healthcare professions (parts of which sectors are covered by the Prevent Duty). In total there were over 2,700 respondents across England and Wales, all of whom were already aware of the Prevent programme. This represents some of the most robust data yet on knowledge and attitudes towards the Prevent programme, and offers crucial findings on how delivery can be improved.

Generally, the results of the survey were very encouraging, and challenged recurrent

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criticisms that Prevent was a 'toxic brand' that did not have the support of communities. Some of the key findings include:

- 58% of the general public viewed the programme favourably compared to just 8% who viewed it unfavourably
- When asked to describe Prevent, the most commonly selected answer amongst respondents (46%) was that it was a safeguarding programme
- Both Teachers and healthcare professionals benefit significantly from training; confidence in spotting the signs of radicalisation and making a referral increased by 20-30% in those that had received training.
- The results showed that as knowledge about Prevent increases so too does support for the programme, and in turn likelihood that individuals will seek help for someone they are worried about.
- Whilst the results show that Prevent is widely supported amongst all demographics of those already aware of the programme, there is more work to do in increasing awareness, improving access to training for professionals, and broadening understanding of the safeguarding role that Prevent plays in addressing all forms of extremism.

ICM Unlimited have also published the results on their website.

- **Referral 12:** Once the terms of reference of the national review into Prevent are agreed; the Committee should consider them at a future meeting to decide whether they wish to look into this further. This would be highlighted in the work programme report for the first meeting of Safer Stronger of the next municipal year specifically requesting an officer update on the national review.

2019 Response: There is support for this along with Lewisham Council contributing to this national review.

Update: Lord Carlile, who had been appointed to lead the Review, stepped down from his role in December 2019 following legal challenge. In January 2021, a new Independent Reviewer, William Shawcross was appointed. The terms of reference and timescale for the Review will be reported in due course.

5. Report author and contact

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