

**Councillors Morrison and Anwar along with the Scrutiny Manager attended the Lewisham Youth Independent Advisory Group at Lewisham Police Station on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2019.**

- The group started a year ago and was designed to be a safe space for young people and a chance to chat to local Police and share concerns and ideas.
- The Police were working with schools. This was happening more now compared to the past but there was always room for improvement.
- There were 11 young women at the meeting and all felt that they didn't mind the idea of stop and search and it could make people feel safer but it was important it was done "fairly and politely".
- The young people reported that it could be a humiliating interaction and there should be more emphasis on respect and politeness.
- All the young people present felt it needed to be a clearer and regular and fairer process and there should be more understanding of your rights as a member of the public if you are stopped.
- Some concerns were raised that increasing searches may mean people stash knives therefore stop and search would be pointless and individuals involved in stashing would be missed and this would not actually help make communities safer. Weapons sweeps would therefore need to be more frequent too.
- Police and young people had worked together in schools to do workshops and role plays. This had been useful for Police and young people. Phil Turner from Second Wave was present at the meeting and commented that they did lots of work with Police and young people.
- A member of the Police present at the meeting felt looking at conversion rates did not show the full picture of how effective stop and search was. Often other issues were discovered through stop and search and could help with intelligence and wider issues.
- Often stop and search was around reports and complaints of ASB. Although offences around street drinking or drug use could be minor they could be having significantly negative effects on the local communities and this needed to be addressed.
- Sometime a Police presence could de-escalate a problem.
- Communication skills by the Police were important – Second Wave stated they were targeting probation officers who tended to be younger with their training and maybe they should be more focussed on older officers too.
- Those present felt communication with the public and communities should be a mandatory part of Police training.
- Police officers were encouraged to be polite – "thank you for time". Many of the young people present felt this did not always happen.
- The young people felt positive seeing Police from the BAME community. One reported how positive she felt when she saw a Black female officer and that the numbers should better reflect the community they serve.
- BAME representation was important as was having positive role models from different communities.
- Regarding body worn cameras, some young people present felt people were confused why they were being filmed. They would have liked to have understood this better before being confronted.
- The Police at the meeting felt positive about body worn cameras. They were often filmed by the public and it was important that they had their own records.
- Some young people felt it would be good to have a rule about how many Police officers could carry out a stop and search on one individual as it could feel intimidating.
- One young person reported that they had experienced unkind remarks from the Police "young people like you like to stab people like me."

- Some young people felt there should be rules in place regarding the number of inexperienced officers working together and that there should always be more experienced officers present too.
- Communication beforehand was felt to be very important. Communities and the Police should work together.
- One young person suggested reminding police officers to put themselves in shoes of the person being searched.
- One commented on how female Police Officers may be better at deescalating situations.
- One person commented that Police should have the skill set to work with public because each interaction can shape opinion of the Police and the Policing system.
- The Police sometimes experience abuse such as being spat at and sworn at and sometimes assault. It was a challenging role. Police are human and could make mistakes and sometimes maybe people forget the challenges. Many do not enjoy carrying out stop and searches.
- The young people present all felt working in schools would be positive and Year 4 and 5 would be a good place to start.
- One officer commented that Stop and Search was highly politicised and sometimes seemed to be arbitrarily imposed or restricted from central government which was not necessarily helpful for community policing.